

The Constitution of Trinity United Church of Christ

ARTICLE I IDENTITY

- 1) The name of this church shall be TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF WOOSTER, OHIO
- 2) The principal location of this church shall be 150 East North Street, Wooster, Ohio.
- 3) Trinity United Church of Christ is a part of the United Church of Christ and shall sustain that relationship to the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the Constitution and by-laws of the United Church of Christ adopted July 4, 1961, relating to local churches.
- 4) In the event of the dissolution of this Church, its assets and all property and interests shall be transferred to the Eastern Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ, or any legal successor thereof.

ARTICLE II MISSION STATEMENT

- 1) The purpose of the church will be:
 - a) To call the world to discipleship,
 - b) To assist members of the congregation to fulfill the responsibilities inherent in the covenant of Trinity United Church of Christ,
 - c) To celebrate the sacraments.

ARTICLE III FAITH AND COVENANT

Section 1 Faith

- 1) This Church acknowledges Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of humanity, as its sole head. We acknowledge as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. We look to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, in order to further God's creative and redemptive work in the world.
- 2) In accordance with the teaching of our Lord we recognize two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion, both of which we make available to all who will receive in faith.
- 3) Our expression of faith is found in the traditions of Protestantism and in the Statement of Faith adopted by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.
- 4) We claim the responsibility of the church in each generation to make this faith its own.

Section 2 The Statement of Faith of The United Church of Christ

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 worlds 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 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 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 your 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 you. Amen.

Section 3 Covenant

We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the Word and Will of God. We promise to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We further covenant to aid each other in fulfilling these obligations by our sympathies, our counsels and our prayers. 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 has the Church of every age, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Qualifications

- 1) Membership in this Church shall be open to any person who:
 - a) Publicly professes faith in Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior,
 - b) Has been baptized,
 - c) Has been affirmed for membership by vote of the Consistory,
 - d) Accepts the Church covenant and laws,
 - e) Is formally received into Church Membership.

Section 2 Rights and Duties

- 1) Members shall pledge themselves:
 - a) to regularly attend the worship of this Church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper,
 - b) to live ever increasingly the Christian life,
 - c) to share in the life and work and prayer of this church,
 - d) to contribute generously to its support and benevolences,
 - e) to seek diligently the well being of the membership and the community,
 - f) to vote at all Church meetings.

Section 3 Termination

- 1) Any member may on written request be granted a Letter of Transfer or other such document as will allow continued involvement in another Christian community.
- 2) If, because of a change of faith or other reason, a member requests to be released from membership obligations, the Church shall patiently endeavor to secure his/her continuance in its fellowship. Failing in such effort the Consistory will grant the request and issue the appropriate letter of release.
- 3) Members who have failed to attend this Church's public worship, receive holy communion, and/or contribute to its support in any way for a period of two years shall be contacted by the pastor and/or representative of the Consistory and be encouraged to return to activity. If this attempt fails, the names of such members will be removed from the membership list by action of the Consistory.
- 4) A member whose address has been unknown for two (2) years may, by action of the Consistory, be removed from the membership list.
- 5) If a member persistently breaches the Covenant vows, the Consistory shall offer a hearing and make an effort to bring the member to amendment. If efforts to bring the member to amendment are unsuccessful, the Consistory may censure the behavior and/or terminate membership.

Section 4 Restoration

- 1) Any person whose membership has been terminated may, upon written request of the individual, be restored by vote of the Consistory.

ARTICLE V GOVERNMENT

- 1) The government of this Church shall be vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject to the laws of the State of Ohio relating to corporations not for profit.
- 2) The governing body of this Church shall be the members assembled in a congregational meeting at which a quorum is present. A quorum shall consist of ten percent (10%) of the total membership of the church as reported in the current denominational year book.
- 3) A majority of those voting shall be decisive for the transaction of business, unless otherwise provided herein or mandated by law.

ARTICLE VI General Provisions Regarding Consistory, Church Officers, Standing Committees

- 1) The term of office for all Officers of the church shall be one year.
- 2) The term of office for members of Consistory and Standing Committees shall be three years.
- 3) Church officers, one third (1/3) of the members of Consistory and of each Standing Committee will be elected by the Church at each November Meeting.
- 4) Standing committees may appoint sub-committees as needed to accomplish their duties.
- 5) After serving three successive years, a Church Officer, an member of Consistory, *or a member of a Standing Committee* will, for one year, be ineligible for re-election to that position, except the Treasurer and Secretary where, in the interest of continuity, persons holding these offices may be re-elected thereto without limitation.
- 6) Service as a Church Officer, except for the position of Treasurer, shall require prior service as a member of Consistory.
- 7) The Treasurer and all others authorized to handle church funds shall be bonded in an amount to be determined by the Committee for Finance.
- 8) Nominations from among the membership shall be made for the aforementioned officers, members of Consistory, and Standing Committees by Nominating Committee members who shall be appointed by action and vote of the Consistory.
- 9) Nominations for all officers, members of Consistory, and members of Standing Committees shall be published in the Sunday Bulletin on the two Sundays immediately preceding the Meeting at which elections are to be held. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting at which the election takes place.
- 10) When elected, the officers, Consistory Members, and Standing Committee members shall be installed during a public service of worship.
- 11) Except for the Moderator whose vacancy will be filled by the Vice Moderator, vacancies in any office, Consistory position, or Standing Committee occurring other than at the completion of a term shall be filled by an appointment by the Consistory until the next regularly scheduled election.

ARTICLE VII

The Consistory

Section 1 Membership

- 1) Pastors serving full-time and the Director of Christian Education shall by members of Consistory with voice but no vote.
- 2) Duly elected members equal to the number of standing committees of the Church, to serve as liaison to a particular committee.
- 3) The Secretary and Treasurer shall be members of Consistory with voice but no vote.
- 4) Moderator and Vice Moderator
- 5) Quorum shall consist of the majority of members of Consistory (voting and non-voting) for the purpose of transaction of any business.

Section 2 Duties of Consistory

- 1) The Consistory
 - a) Shall be the ultimate authority in making all decisions, subject to the will of the church gathered for congregational meetings,
 - b) Shall be the legal trustees of Trinity United Church of Christ, Inc.
 - c) Shall meet regularly for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it,
 - d) Shall be the policy making body of the Church,
 - e) Shall administer the business of the church,
 - f) Shall recommend and administer the expense budget of the church,
 - g) Shall provide for the support of the Church's programs,
 - h) Shall discuss, enact, reject, or refer to a congregational vote all issues and proposals of members of Consistory and/or the Standing Committees of the Church,
 - i) Shall determine the use and occupancy of the Church property,
 - j) Shall assemble for a special meeting when requested *in writing*, with the substance of the meeting clearly stated, by the Moderator or one quarter of the Consistory members, and after the notification of all Consistory members,
 - k) Shall aid the Minister in the celebration of the Sacraments,
 - l) Shall recommend a Pulpit Committee for election by the Church when a vacancy exists in an office of minister,
 - m) Shall appoint delegates to Denominational meetings,
 - n) Shall appoint a Pastoral Relations Committee "to foster constructive communication between the congregation and its pastoral leadership and to implement the congregation's responsibility for the professional and personal well-being of the Pastor," which shall be comprised of the current Moderator and the previous 3 past Moderators.
 - o) Shall appoint the Church Nominating Committee, and such other committees as it may from time to time deem necessary,
 - p) Oversee, evaluate, and recommend terms and benefits of employment of all salaried staff,
 - q) Shall authorize on the behalf of the church the signing of all personnel contracts with power to hire, dismiss, renew, or refrain from renewing all personnel,
 - r) Shall, when duly authorized by vote of the congregation, act on its behalf to borrow funds, purchase, sell, mortgage, transfer and convey any real estate or other properties, owned or acquired by the church without obtaining the authority of any Court to do so.

All acts and decisions of the Consistory are subject to the will of or revision by the Church assembled in public meeting.

ARTICLE VIII Church Officers

- 1) The Officers of the Church Shall be:
 - a) The Moderator who:

- i) Shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Church,
 - ii) Shall preside at meetings of the Consistory,
 - iii) Shall preside at all business meetings of the congregation,
 - iv) Shall be a member of Consistory and an ex officio member of all committees of the church.
- b) The Vice Moderator who:
- i) Shall be a member of Consistory,
 - ii) Shall, in the absence of the Moderator, possess and perform all functions, duties, roles, and rights pertaining to that office.
- c) The Secretary who:
- i) Shall keep a complete record of the transactions at all Consistory meetings, and all business meetings of the church.
 - ii) Shall have custody of all records of the Church, Constitution, and Register of membership, baptisms, weddings, and deaths,
 - iii) Shall notify all officers, at-large members of Consistory, and members of Standing Committees of their election,
 - iv) Shall preserve on file all communications and written official reports and give notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary,
 - v) Shall present a written report at each Annual Meeting of the state of Church Membership, including the items of line ii) above.
- d) The Treasurer who:
- i) Shall be an ex officio member of the Finance Committee,
 - ii) Shall keep an account of all monies raised for the purpose of supporting all aspects of the work of this church,
 - iii) Shall sign checks to pay financial obligations of the church undertaken in accordance with church policies and practices,
 - iv) Shall exhibit financial records and documents to the Consistory at any time the Consistory so requests,
 - v) Shall prepare a written report of Church finances, certified by an Auditor, to be presented at each Annual Meeting,
 - vi) Shall provide for the timely deposit of all monies and/or contributions received by the Church,
 - vii) Shall provide for the listing of all pledges, gifts, and payments made to the Church and shall credit same to the appropriate accounts,
 - viii) Shall maintain appropriate confidentiality of all donations.

ARTICLE IX

Standing Committees

Section 1

Duties

- 1) The Standing Committees
 - a) Shall meet regularly for the transaction of the Committee's Business.
 - b) Shall regularly report their work to the Consistory.
 - c) Shall work to implement the policies and program of the Church as articulated through Congregational meetings and the Consistory.

- 2) The Chairperson of each Standing Committee:
 - a) Shall be elected by the Standing Committee from among its members at the first meeting following the annual meeting of the Church,
 - b) Shall preside over all meetings of the Standing Committee,
 - c) Shall review the duties of the Standing Committee with all new members,
 - d) Shall monitor the status of on-going projects, budget, and accomplishments of the Standing Committee,

- e) Shall delegate to individual members elements of the Committee's responsibilities,
- f) Shall provide for the keeping of records of projects, accomplishments, and other items needed for inclusion in the Standing Committee's Annual Report,
- g) Shall work in concert with the Consistory Liaison to produce and publish Standing Committee minutes, and accomplish effective communication with the Consistory,
- h) Shall at the completion of the term, turn over responsibilities, authority, and materials to the newly elected chairperson.

Section 2 Identification

- 1) The Standing Committees of the Church shall be:
 - a) The Worship Committee shall:
 - i) Appoint and assist in all devotional and religious services of the Church,
 - ii) Act as pulpit supply Committee in the temporary absence of Trinity's clergy,
 - iii) Provide for the presence of persons and materials necessary for all services of worship,
 - iv) Provide for the supervision and coordination of visual and performing arts ministries of the Church,.
 - v) Appoint and prepare for sacramental celebrations.
 - vi) Provide opportunities for spiritual development such as, but not limited to, prayer groups, prayer chain, worship planning groups, retreats, etc.
 - vii) Recommend and oversee the expenditure of the Spiritual Life budget annually.
 - b) The Mission Committee shall:
 - i) Be aware of the special needs of the congregation, community, nation and world concerning issues of poverty, health, housing, the environment, disaster response, justice and peace.
 - ii) Devise and implement programs to meet the needs identified and to work ecumenically to address these concerns.
 - iii) Educate the congregation and community of the special needs and projects designed to address those needs by utilizing Church newsletters, worship announcements, mass media and newspapers.
 - iv) Encourage the congregation to participate in Mission and to provide opportunities for mission trips and projects.
 - c) The Christian Education Committee shall:
 - i) Organize, coordinate, and present educational opportunities, including mid-week programming, for all ages which will assist participants to fulfill the covenantal responsibilities of membership in this church,
 - ii) Administer the Church School; recommend curriculum; recruit, train, and supervise teachers and administrators; promote student participation; and maintain adequate and appropriate records,
 - iii) Promote parishioner participation in the Ohio Conference Camping program,
 - iv) Promote inter-church educational opportunities in Wooster and the greater community,
 - v) Recommend and oversee the expenditure of the Christian Education budget annually.
 - vi) Oversee and support the high school youth programming including mission activities and fundraising.
 - d) The Evangelism Committee shall:
 - i) Promote the name, programs, worship, and activities of the church to the community at large,
 - ii) Organize and present a program to encourage Wooster area residents to participate in the work of the church,
 - iii) Encourage new participants to join in membership of the church,
 - iv) Produce and publish materials to interpret the mission of the church to Wooster area residents,
 - v) Recommend and oversee the expenditure of the Community Relations budget annually.
 - e) The Fellowship Committee shall:
 - i) Encourage and foster a spirit and feeling of friendship, love, joy and closeness among our members and throughout our community.
 - ii) Organize and administer a program of assistance for the people of the church family.
 - iii) Organize and administer a program of church family trips, outings, and gatherings.
 - iv) Organize a program to assist incorporation of new participants into the life of the church.

- v) Organize and administer a program of lay visitation.
 - vi) Develop programs and organizations that welcome and invite participation of our members with similar interests and needs.
 - vii) Recommend and oversee the expenditure of the Fellowship budget annually.
- f) The Property Committee shall:
- i) Plan and execute a program for maintenance, repair, and up-grading of all physical properties of the church.
 - ii) Administer all church purchasing.
 - iii) Oversee the church equipment inventory for insurance purposes
 - iv) Provide for facility utilization and scheduling.
 - v) Oversee secretary's record keeping of Key Distribution for exterior doors and interior doors.
 - vi) Recommend and oversee the expenditures of the Building and Maintenance Committee budget annually.
- g) The Finance Committee shall:
- i) Maintain responsibility for the care, custody, management, and investment of all tangible assets, monies, investments, credits, and obligations of the Church.
 - ii) Establish and oversee the functions, policies, and procedures of an Endowment Committee whose responsibility it is to manage and invest all endowment and memorial funds of the Church and to encourage the continued growth of this fund.
 - iii) Administer the payment of church expenses, bills and obligations.
 - iv) Prepare the annual budget of the Church and obtain the consent of the Congregation to accept this as the official budget for the year.
 - v) Have an audit of the church records and procedures every three years.
 - vi) Oversee the preparation, maintenance, and distribution of all financial records of the Church.
 - vii) Ascertain that the financial reports are prepared and distributed on a regular basis and that they satisfy the needs of the recipients and staff.
 - viii) Ascertain that there are appropriate procedures in place to provide an acceptable separation of duties to insure financial integrity of Church monies and assets.
 - ix) Annually review the insurance coverage of the Church including all of its properties, employees and potential liabilities. Also maintain separate records of all physical assets of the Church.
 - x) Arrange for the appropriate bonding of all employees.
 - xi) Responsible for the preparation and maintenance of a long-range financial plan.
 - xii) Report to the Congregation at mid-year and end of the year the financial position of the Church.

ARTICLE X MINISTER

- 1) A minister
 - a) Shall be called or dismissed by an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of those present and voting at a congregational meeting especially assembled for that purpose,
 - b) Shall be regularly ordained according to the practice of our Church and Denomination, and hold ministerial standing in the Eastern Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ,
 - c) Shall serve for such term as is contracted with the Church. However, if the Church or Minister desires to sever their relationship and cancel their contract, either may do so by giving to the other at least three months' written notice,
 - d) Shall be a member of the Church and an ex-officio member of all its committees, elected or appointed,
 - e) Shall present a written report to the Church membership at each Annual Meeting,
 - f) Shall be charged with the spiritual welfare of the church,
 - g) Shall lead the membership into Christian service.

- 2) The Senior Minister
 - a) Shall be the Chief Operating Officer with responsibility for day to day operations, implementation of policy, supervision and assignment of all staff,

- b) Shall have charge of all spiritual services of the Church, preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, and conduct services of public worship,
- c) Shall oversee the religious instruction offered through this Church,
- d) Shall be given the privilege of granting use of Church property for weddings, funerals, Baptisms, and special services of worship.

ARTICLE XI MEETINGS

- 1) For Worship:
 - a) Services of Worship and Holy Communion shall be held on such Sundays and at such other times as may be recommended by the Minister and the Worship Committee.
- 2) For Business:
 - a) The Meeting for the Election of Consistory Members, Church officers, and Standing Committee Members shall be called for that purpose and held during the month of November in the year prior to the start of the terms,
 - b) The Annual Meeting shall be held at such place and time during the month of January as the Consistory shall determine. At that time, the Church Budget shall be voted upon and the Annual Reports of all organizations and professional staff shall be presented,
 - c) The Annual Meeting and Special meetings to act upon matters pertaining to finances, property, elections of officers, calling or dismissing a minister, or amendment of the Constitution shall be called by the Consistory at its pleasure or upon receipt of a petition signed by 10% of the church membership. For at least two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting, the Secretary shall cause the notice of the meeting to be read at the services of worship,
 - d) In matters of buying, selling, or mortgaging real estate a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting shall be necessary to decide such purchase, sale, or mortgage,
 - e) When requested by the Consistory or any 3% of the Church members, the Moderator shall call from the pulpit special business meetings not requiring notification in the manner prescribed otherwise. The particular purpose of such a meeting shall be clearly stated in the notice.

ARTICLE XII ORGANIZATIONS

- 1) The Church regards as integral parts of itself all groups formally organized for the purpose of its ministry. New organizations shall be formed only with the approval of the Consistory.

ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENTS

- 1) This Constitution may be amended by a two thirds (2/3) vote of members present and voting at an Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting provided the proposed Amendment has been stated in the call for that meeting.

ARTICLE XIV RULES OF ORDER

- 1) Roberts Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution.

ARTICLE XV Implementation

- 1) Thirty days following a vote taken at a duly called meeting, this document becomes the Constitution of Trinity United Church of Christ, Inc., and replaces any and all previous Constitutions.