

# THE BYLAWS of the Trinity United Church of Christ

Approved at the JUNE 30, 2019, Congregational Meeting

## ARTICLE I Government

1. The governing body of this congregation shall consist of communicant members in good standing.

## ARTICLE II Consistory

2. The Consistory shall be the executive body of the congregation and shall serve as the final authority on all matters except those reserved for the congregation. It shall be composed of twelve (12) elected members. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The Pastor or Pastors shall serve as ex-officio members of the Consistory. Recommendations submitted by these ex-officio members shall be given proper consideration by the Consistory.
3. The Consistory shall organize itself. A President and Vice-President shall be elected for a term of one (1) year. The President shall serve as Chairperson of the Consistory and moderator of the congregation. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall so serve. A Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Financial Secretary shall each be appointed by the Consistory for a term of one (1) year. An Assistant Treasurer, an Assistant Secretary, and an Assistant Financial Secretary may also be appointed by Consistory. The President shall serve as the chief executive officer of the congregation in all legal matters. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President is authorized to sign legal documents.
4. The President and Vice-President may succeed themselves for one (1) additional term and then must be out of office for a year before they can be re-elected. The Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary may succeed themselves for two (2) additional terms (totaling three years) and must be out of office for one (1) year before a reappointment occurs unless extenuating circumstances are brought before the church leaders and a waiver of this prohibition is granted.
5. Consistory members shall be elected by a majority vote cast at a Congregational Meeting. They shall be elected for terms of three (3) years. Consistory members may serve two consecutive terms, then must rotate off Consistory for at least one year prior to consideration for re-election. If a Consistory member is appointed to serve an unexpired term, that member, once elected, may serve two consecutive terms. The Treasurer and Secretary, or their assistants, shall serve as ex-officio members of Consistory with voice, but not vote, unless serving concurrently as a duly elected member of Consistory.
6. When elected for the first time, Consistory members shall be publicly installed.
7. Three consecutive unexcused absences of a Consistory member at the regular meeting shall lead to the forfeit of office by default, and the Consistory shall proceed to fill the vacancy of the delinquent member. It shall be the duty of the President to visit a Church Consistory member immediately after the second consecutive absence and talk with the

person concerning the above-mentioned procedure. A vacancy occurring because of delinquency shall be regarded as the candidate's resignation and the Consistory shall declare the office vacant by a majority vote.

8. The Consistory shall transact the business of the Church between congregational meetings. It shall keep a complete and accurate record of its proceedings, to be custodian of all congressional records, and report to the congregation at its regular and special meetings. It shall submit records to the Penn Central Conference as occasion may require.
9. The Consistory shall receive and approve the report of the Treasurer. The congregation will adopt an annual budget and the Consistory will make every effort to operate the affairs of the church within that budget.
10. The Consistory, upon review of the budget, may authorize an unbudgeted expense, but if that expense exceeds \$7,500, it must receive the approval of the congregation.
11. The Consistory, through its President and in consultation with the Pastor or Pastors, shall appoint - Task Forces as deemed necessary.
12. The Consistory shall meet at least six (6) times a year for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings, subject to the call of the President or Pastor/s, may be held. The Consistory shall determine the date of its meetings.
13. The Consistory meetings shall be open for visits by church members unless otherwise closed by the President.
14. Members of Consistory are communicant members of the Church in good standing chosen by the congregation and installed to the office.

The duties of the Consistory shall be:

- a. To minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation by visiting the sick, comforting the distressed, and confronting the wayward.
- b. To create a climate of evangelism within the congregation and help inspire programs which will bring persons face-to-face with the Living Christ.
- c. To counsel the Pastor/s regarding applicants for church membership and to ~~examine~~ assist Confirmands preparing to make a commitment.
- d. To assist the Pastor/s in planning and carrying out a church program which will bring people closer to God, and to aid the Pastor/s in providing meaningful services designed to strengthen the spiritual life of individuals or strengthen the work of the church.
- e. To make necessary arrangements for administering the sacraments or conducting the rites of the church.

- f. To determine the duties of and evaluate the performance of all Church staff, and to make recommendations concerning salaries and benefits.
- g. To periodically review the church membership and determine the number of members in good standing so a quorum can be established for the congregational meetings.
- h. When the need arises, to appoint a Search Committee responsible for a pastoral vacancy and supply, with at least two (2) of this committee coming from the Consistory.
- i. To review a yearly budget to be presented to the congregation for approval at its annual meeting.
- j. To periodically review the giving of the congregation and take such steps as are necessary to help deepen the stewardship of the congregation.

### ARTICLE III Ministry

- 15. The ministry of the church as exemplified in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ shall be carried out through various ministry teams and committees and task forces that shall be under the supervision of and subject to the Consistory of the Church. Persons shall be encouraged and challenged to serve according to their gifts. The ministry teams are as follows:

#### WORSHIP

This team is responsible for the entire program of worship in the life of the congregation. The team shall seek to evaluate the effectiveness of worship services as well as the sacramental and ritual practices of the church against the background of historical traditions and the needs and morals of our contemporary culture. The Music Ministry of the Church shall be considered an integral part of the work of the Worship Team.

#### FAITH FORMATION

The Faith Formation Team organizes, directs, implements, and evaluates the total program of spiritual development and Christian nurture for the church. This shall include specific programs of Faith Formation for all age groups within and beyond the confines of the walls of the Church.

#### STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Team assumes responsibility for helping with the financial program of the Church by fostering and promoting the practices of stewardship among the members of the Church. The financial program shall reflect the material needs of Trinity as well as the mission of the denomination with the universal Body of Christ. The team shall also be responsible for challenging members to be good stewards of their time, talents, and treasure. The team shall advise the congregation regarding the use of their resources to foster and promote the Christian way of life.

## EVANGELISM

The Evangelism team coordinates and promotes activities and programs which call members, friends of members, and members of the community at large to a Christian faith which is personal, to a faith community which is communal, and to a life of discipleship in the world which is social. It will develop experiences that will assist all members of the Church to grow to the full stature of mature Christians. The team shall concern itself with the well being of all members as well as the spiritual health and growth of the congregation, encouraging members to engage in opportunities to witness to, and on behalf of, God's mission in the local church, our local community, and the world. The team is also responsible for marketing the church and the church's mission to the broader community and the world.

## JUSTICE AND WITNESS

The JWM team's mission is to "advocate, educate, and take action to demonstrate God's love for all of creation" in order to live into this vision: "a just, compassionate, and peaceful world that honors all of God's creation." The purpose of the team is to help the congregation follow the command found in Micah 6:8, to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly." It shall also be the responsibility of this team to carry out the mission of the church by reaching out into the local community, the nation, and the world with programs of service, and to identify needs, design opportunities of service to meet these needs, and promote and publicize these opportunities. The team will also inform and educate the congregation as to the mission program of the United Church of Christ.

Chairpersons shall be elected for each Ministerial Team by the teams' members for a period of one year and may succeed themselves for one additional year. If there are extenuating circumstances, the chairperson may continue for an additional one year team with Consistory approval.

## COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES OF THE CONSISTORY

16. As provided for in Article II, Paragraph (11), the Consistory shall appoint committees and task forces to accomplish the work of the church. Those committees and task forces may include, but not be limited to the following:

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by Consistory for the purpose of making nominations for offices to be filled. The committee will function for one year and help fill any vacancy during that year. This committee will prepare a slate of officers as provided for in this document to be placed in nomination at the Fall congregational meeting. Public notice of nominations shall be given from the pulpit, by bulletin, or by letter a minimum of two weeks before the annual election. The congregation may make nominations for each office from the floor, but those nominated must give their consent before their name is placed in nomination.

#### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

A Personnel Committee shall be appointed by Consistory for the purpose of providing supervisory oversight to the staff of Trinity Church. This Committee shall develop and implement personnel policies, provide job descriptions, conduct periodic reviews and make salary recommendations for all staff. All staff persons shall have a written job description that is reviewed annually.

#### PROPERTY COMMITTEE

A Property Committee shall be appointed by Consistory for the purpose of maintaining, repairing, and making improvements on all buildings, grounds, and equipment of the Church. The committee shall make periodic inspections of the church to determine needed repairs and preventative maintenance of the church facility. The committee is to coordinate repair work, either by hiring contractors and/or soliciting volunteers from within the church membership to accomplish the needed work.

#### BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

A Budget and Finance Committee shall be considered a sub-committee and directly related to the work of the Stewardship Team. This committee shall be appointed by Consistory for the purpose of preparing for Consistory a budget sufficient to operate the ministries of the Church for each Fiscal Year. This Committee shall also provide oversight to the Church Treasurer, Church financial secretary and the Trustees when needed as determined by Consistory.

#### PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

A Pastoral Relations Committee shall be appointed for the purpose of supporting the Pastor(s) and maintaining an open relationship between the ordained minister(s) and the congregation. Members of this committee help the pastor and members of the church share ideas, hopes, dreams and interpretations of mission. This committee also helps the pastor know what people in the congregation are thinking and the committee provides a framework for addressing conflicts and issues if they arise.

#### ARTICLE IV The Pastor/s

17. The congregation shall elect as ministerial staff only ministers who have been approved by the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ of which this congregation is a member.
18. The Consistory, upon recommendation of a Search Committee, shall nominate the candidate for any pastoral vacancy to be voted upon by the congregation. The congregation shall consider only one candidate at a time and shall vote by written ballot. The Search Committee will recommend to the congregation before the vote is taken what will constitute a deciding vote. If the person is elected, the Consistory shall issue a call according to the form prescribed by the United Church of Christ. The call must be confirmed by the Penn Central Conference.
19. A change of pastor/s shall be in accordance with the By-laws of the United Church of Christ.

20. The Pastor/s shall be elected for an indefinite period, unless otherwise agreed upon at the time of the call. In order to terminate this relation, 60 days' notice shall be given or an otherwise mutually agreed upon period of time between the Pastor/s and the Consistory.
21. It shall be the duty of the Pastor/s to set a good example for the congregation, to conduct all services on Sunday, Holy Days, and such other days as the congregation may desire, to direct the work of religious education, administer the Holy Sacraments, visit the sick, comfort the distressed, and perform all such duties as belong to the Pastor's office in the United Church of Christ. The Pastor/s shall be as free as possible to do the tasks for which that person is particularly prepared and called by God. The Pastor/s shall cooperate with the work of the Church at large and shall be a participant of the Church Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ. An annual report of pastoral duties shall be made to the congregation.
22. The Pastor/s are ex-officio member(s) of all organizations and committees of the Church and shall be notified of all regular and special meetings. No other minister shall perform religious rites in the Church without the Pastor/s knowledge and approval of the Consistory and/or the Worship Team. Speakers either during a temporary absence of the Pastor/s, or for special occasions, shall be invited by the Consistory and/or the Worship Team, in full cooperation with the Pastor/s.
23. Communicant members of this congregation are not obligated to give fees or prerequisites to the Pastor/s for performance of pastoral duties. If communicant members desire to present gifts for these services, that is their prerogative.
24. Salaries for pastoral staff, determined by the Consistory upon recommendation of Personnel Committee, shall be sufficient to preserve the dignity of the office and shall be renewed annually. It shall be paid in semi-monthly installments, or as may otherwise be agreed upon by the parties involved. All other contractual matters between the congregation and the minister are to be set forth in writing at the time of the Call. They may be changed from time to time by the congregation or the Consistory upon the mutual agreement of the Pastor/s. The Pastor/s shall be given a paid vacation and periodical study leave (sabbatical) as agreed upon in the Call.
25. If there is more than one ordained minister on the staff, the Consistory shall work collaboratively with the pastors to determine job descriptions designed to form a meaningful team ministry.

#### ARTICLE V Congregational Meeting

26. The annual Congregational Meeting shall be at a time chosen by the Consistory. At this meeting any pertinent business affecting the congregation for the coming year shall be discussed and acted upon and reports will be received from the Pastor/s and organizations of the Church. This meeting may also include a time of visioning and planning for the future. The adoption of the budget for the year and election of officers including consistory members will be held at this congregational meeting. This meeting may include some planned fellowship experience.

27. Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Consistory, or by petition to the Consistory signed by not less than 10% of the communicant members. It shall be incumbent upon the Consistory to call said special meeting within no more than four weeks from the receipt of said petition, and two weeks' notice of such meeting shall be sent to the membership by the Secretary of the Church, indicating the items to be presented for discussion and/or action.

## ARTICLE VI Members

28. Members of the congregation shall fulfill their vows of Church membership and labor faithfully to respond to Christ's call to be his disciple in and to the world. They should take an active part in the life and work of the Church. This shall include regular attendance at worship, diligent observation of private devotions which should include reading Scripture and praying for one another, liberal financial and moral support toward the maintenance of the Church and its benevolent undertakings, being a faithful Steward of all of God's Creation, utilizing the gifts God has bestowed upon us to carry out God's mission to the world, and sincerely endeavoring to apply the teachings of Christ to all human relationships and exhibiting extravagant welcome to all God's children.
29. All members are entitled to a full share in the fellowship and spiritual blessings of the Church, and to the service of its Pastor/s, officials, and other workers, as well as the Christian sympathy and support of all members.
30. All communicant members in good standing are entitled to voice, vote and office, unless otherwise stated in the Constitution or By-laws.
31. Members in good standing are those members who take seriously their vows of church membership and who faithfully participate in all the rites and privileges of the Church. If a member of the congregation neglects attendance at worship, neglects to partake of Holy Communion, and refuses to contribute, in relationship to their abilities and responsibilities, to the support of the church, the person can no longer be considered in "good standing".
32. The responsibility of members remaining in a position of "good standing" lies both with the members and the Consistory of the Church. The Consistory is charged with reviewing the membership periodically to determine the status of each member. They shall be charged with developing a plan, along with the Pastor/s for contacting persons who for some reason are not taking seriously their vows. If it can be determined that a person has not fulfilled the challenge of membership, through either regular attendance, participation in Holy Communion at least once during each year, or through financial support of Trinity UCC and gives no evidence of change of heart or conduct, the Consistory shall recommend that the member's name be placed on an inactive list and notify the person that they are no longer in good standing, thus they have no voice or vote in program or financial matters of the congregation. Members so notified will have the opportunity to show cause as to why they should continue in good standing. Final determination of each member's status shall be made by Consistory in consultation with

the Pastor/s. As an inactive member, that individual will no longer receive the regular mailings of the church, but the individual may opt to stay on the e-Tidings list. except that they can subscribe to Tidings on an annual basis at a rate to be determined by Consistory.

33. In order to maintain an active and responsible congregation that is working to do its best to carry out the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ, every effort shall be made to keep members in good standing. As persons on the inactive role are moved to become active once again, the Consistory will act to reinstate them to full membership privileges. They shall be notified.

#### ARTICLE VII

##### Obligation of the Congregation to the United Church or its Continuing Body

34. The congregation shall regularly contribute towards the support of all branches of the United Church of Christ, or their continuing body, according to the rules and actions of the designated association of the Penn Central Conference Mercersburg Association of the Penn Central Conference.
35. The President and Pastor/s shall, on behalf of the congregation, make such reports to the Association and Conference as may be required.
36. The required number of delegates and alternatives to legislative meetings of the Association and the Conference shall be elected by the Consistory. Travel expenses and registration fees of the Delegates and Pastor/s shall be paid by the congregation.

#### ARTICLE VIII

##### Finances

37. The financial support of the Church shall be in keeping with precepts and principles derived from the Word of God. Every effort shall be made by the Consistory and Stewardship Team to see that the truths of Christian Stewardship are placed before the congregation and that the entire support of the Church and its programs be derived through efforts of direct giving as the most natural and Christian way of responding and expressing thanks to God for God's bounty and Grace to us all.
38. The finances of the congregation shall be administered by a budget system that shall designate a benevolent, current, and other necessary expenditures. The proposed budget shall be approved by the Consistory for presentation to the congregation at the designated meeting. The congregation may make any desired changes in the budget that will then, upon adoption, be administered by Consistory.
39. A well-planned program to acquaint the membership with the total program of the church for the coming year, and present what programs will cost in terms of resources, both personal and financial, shall be conducted annually. Members will be challenged to make a commitment of money, time, and talents in support of the program.



40. There shall be a centralized treasury for the entire Church. The proper staff person, organization, or Consistory must properly authorize all bills submitted to the Treasurer. The Treasurer of the Church shall provide a petty cash fund for the church office, not to exceed One Hundred and Fifty Dollars and No Cents (\$150.00).
41. Our Church's Wider Mission challenge shall be in the budget and met in full each year. The goal is to give 10% of the church's current expenses to Our Church's Wider Mission. Other special appeals shall appear in the budget either as full pay items or as "second-mile" giving items.
42. An Emergency Fund shall be maintained for use by the Pastor/s, Consistory or its designee. This money is to be used to give help to those in need. It may be used to provide loans without interest to members in case of emergency, such as accidents or illnesses. Such loans shall be approved by a Committee of Consistory with every consideration given to maintain the confidentiality of the recipient.
43. Envelopes designed to encourage systematic and proportionate giving may be issued yearly to all members. Financial records shall be kept and sent at least twice per year. The Church School may use envelopes as a method for training young people to remember the blessings of God and the Word He calls us to do.
44. The Consistory may arrange for an annual audit of all financial records of the church to be completed in house with a formal audit conducted by a CPA every five years.

#### Trustees

45. Five (5) Trustees shall be elected by the congregation from among our members in good standing and shall be charged with the responsibility of managing the investment of the following assets: (1) The general unrestricted endowment fund; (2) all restricted endowment funds; (3) all educational funds.

Trustees shall be elected for three (3) year terms at the annual congregational meeting on as near a rotating basis as possible. The maximum continuous term that a trustee can serve shall consist of two (2) consecutively elected terms preceded by the completion of an unexpired term of someone else to which the trustee is appointed. Once a person goes off the Board of Trustees, the person shall not return as a board member until one (1) full year has expired from the time the trustee goes off the board.

Trustees shall be nominated by Consistory through the Nominating Committee and elected by the congregation; members of the Board of Trustees shall be carefully selected so as to provide the Board with the following elements: financial ability, financial experience, embodiment of Christian principles and ability to understand congregational need, as demonstrated by regular worship and sharing in the life of and work of the church.

Trustees shall organize themselves and meet on a regular basis.

Trustees shall report to Consistory annually in the month of April and more frequently as Consistory requests. The reports of trustees shall be designed to keep Consistory

informed of matters regarding these funds. Consistory may determine investment aims with advice and counsel of trustees.

#### Gifts and Memorials

46. Persons are encouraged to give special gifts and memorials to the Church and to remember the work of the Church in their wills. Any such gifts will be recorded by the Memorial Committee in a *Book of Remembrances* made available for everyone to see.

#### Educational Fund

47. An Educational Fund Committee of five persons shall be elected by the congregation. The term of office will be three years with terms being staggered. Persons may succeed themselves only for one additional term.

This committee shall administer an established Educational Fund according to guidelines and policy adopted by the congregation. Monies from this fund shall be available to young and old alike, individuals or groups desiring to pursue chosen fields of higher education or to grow within the realm of Christian education. The committee shall report quarterly to the Consistory and annually to the congregation.

#### ARTICLE IX Property

48. All equipment, purchased, made, or given for use in the church shall be the property of the entire congregation.
49. The Church Sanctuary shall be held sacred for worship, religious services, and the business of the congregation and larger interests of the Kingdom. The other portions of the buildings may be used for worship, education, fellowship, social and recreational purposes, provided all those things are in keeping with the high ideals of the Church. All Church property is designated as smoke, drug and alcohol free, with the obvious exception of Communion wine. Before any activity for the general public can be arranged in or on the Church property, the general nature and date must be approved by the Property Committee or its designee.
50. The use of Church properties for other congregational affairs, or by use of persons other than members of the congregation, shall be regulated by the Consistory. This covers such matters as weddings for non-members, meetings of organizations, not affiliated with the congregation, and other community activities.

#### ARTICLE X Organizations and Societies

51. All organizations or societies of the Church are subordinate to the Consistory and are directly responsible to that body. The Consistory has the right to make inquiries into the action of, and censure any group representative of the Church when it deems such action is necessary.

52. To be eligible for any office in any organization of the Church, such candidate must be a communicant member of the congregation in good standing unless an exception is made by the Consistory. Each situation will be considered on its own merit.
53. Teachers and leaders in the Faith Formation classes shall be communicant members in good standing of the congregation who demonstrate regular and faithful attendance at Worship services, unless special approval is granted by the Consistory. All teachers and leaders of the congregation working with children need to have the proper clearances and background checks as set forth by our insurance company and state mandates. In addition, teachers and leaders of any sponsored organization that uses the church facility must abide by all state and federal laws related to their interaction with children.
54. All other and subsequent organizations, not specifically mentioned in the Constitution and By-laws must be recognized and approved by the Consistory if they are to function as an integral part of the church.

#### ARTICLE XI Discipline

55. Discipline in cases of conduct deemed unchristian lies in the hands of Consistory except in the case of the Pastor/s. Discipline in the case of the Pastor/s shall be in conference with the By-laws of the United Church of Christ or its continuing body.

#### ARTICLE XII

56. Robert's Revised Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these By-laws. If appropriate, the rules may be modified or suspended to encourage collaborative discussion and resolution to arrive at a consensus agreeable to all.

#### ARTICLE XIII

57. Amendments to these By-laws may be presented in writing at any regularly called meeting of the congregation. Such proposed amendments may be changed, adopted or rejected by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present if those present constitute a quorum, and provided the membership has been notified of the proposed changes two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting.