

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, EAST GOSHEN
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. NAME

- A. This Church shall be known as the United Church of Christ, East Goshen, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

- A. The avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward humankind; and to strive for righteousness, truth, justice, and peace.

ARTICLE III. POLITY

- A. This church shall be a part of the United Church of Christ and it 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.
- B. The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs subject to the Articles of Incorporation granted it by the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania approved and filed in the Department of State on the 1st day of March in the year of our Lord, 1972.

ARTICLE IV. FAITH AND COVENANT

- A. This church recognizes the Holy Bible as the rule of faith and practice and holds that living in accordance with the teachings and example of Jesus Christ is the foundation of fellowship. The creative and redemptive work of this congregation is empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Each Member of this church shall have the undisturbed right to follow the teachings and example of Jesus Christ according to the dictates of his own conscience.

This church recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion.

We acknowledge the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, and historic creeds of the United Church of Christ. We adopt as a further expression of our faith the following:

United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the Form of a Doxology

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 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 you. Amen.

- B. Covenant. We enter together into covenant with God and each other to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, to watch over and assist each other in love and faithfulness, to devote ourselves with all we have to the service of Christ and to promote the interest of God’s kingdom as we are led by the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized and has been confirmed or has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. There shall be two categories of membership: Member and Associate Member.
 - 1. Member
Members shall:
 - (a) Support the church by
 - (1) Attendance at worship,
 - (2) Participation in the Sacrament of Holy Communion,
 - (3) Prayer for the life of the congregation,
 - (4) Financial support and
 - (5) Participation in the work and witness of the congregation.
 - (b) Have voice and vote in the governing of the congregation.
 - (c) Have the right and privilege to serve on the Council of the congregation and its committees.
 - 2. Associate Member
Associate Members shall:
 - (a) Support the church in the same manner as a member.
 - (b) Have voice but not a vote in the governing of the congregation.
 - (c) Have the right and privilege to serve on Program committees of the Council.
- B. A Member in good standing may, on their own request to the Pastor or the Church Council, be granted a letter of transfer. If wishing to join a body not in fellowship with this church, they may be dismissed with a certificate of church membership.

- C. Members who, for a two-year period, have failed to communicate with this church, observe its sacraments and have not contributed to its support, may, by a majority vote of the Church Council, be removed from the membership roll and placed on a conditional list.

Members removed from the active membership roll shall be eligible for a letter of transfer or dismissal. They may, by majority vote of the Church Council, be reinstated to the active membership roll upon demonstration of renewed support of the church as written in Article V. A.

- 1. In the prolonged continuation of a Member's failure to support the fellowship by their presence and stewardship, this church shall patiently endeavor to secure their continuance in its fellowship.
- 2. Any Member who desires a letter of dismissal is entitled to receive it upon application to the Pastor or to the Church Council.
- 3. The right to vote shall be suspended and membership shall terminate when a letter of dismissal is granted, or at the end of the third year if inquiry fails to give grounds for continuing membership.

ARTICLE VI. GOVERNING BODY

- A. The governing body of this church shall be the Members assembled in church meeting. The vote of a majority of Members present at the meeting shall be the action of the church. A quorum shall consist of 25% of the Members.

ARTICLE VII. THE CHURCH COUNCIL

- A. The Church Council shall constitute the Board of Trustees and shall be the executive body of this Congregation. It shall be composed of the Pastor or Pastors ex-officio, President of the Congregation, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer (chair of Finance Committee), and one voting representative of each of the following Program Committees: Worship, Spiritual Life, Congregational Life and Building & Grounds. A majority of the Church Council members shall constitute a quorum.

- B. The President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and the Chairs of program committees shall be elected by majority vote cast at the annual meeting of the Congregation. They shall be elected for one year and may serve a maximum of four consecutive terms in any combination of offices. No person may serve more than one office simultaneously. After the conclusion of four consecutive terms, they shall be ineligible of re-election to any office until the period of one year has transpired. Officers shall take office immediately following their elections and the Officers of the Council shall constitute the Officers of the Congregation.
- C. Positions of Council are nominated by the Nominating Committee.
- D. The Church Council shall fill vacancies by appointment.
- E. It shall be the privilege and the responsibility of the Church Council to make policy regarding the details of the offices. If the Council so desires, it shall instruct the proper officers on all financial matters, including the payment of bills. There shall be an annual review and report to the Congregation. The Church Council shall be the policy-making body of the church and shall have the church in mission as a major concern. The Council shall keep complete, accurate and current records of all its proceedings and of all church records.
- F. The Church Council may authorize any budgeted expenses if funds are available. Any items, not budgeted, exceeding 5% of the budget must receive the approval of the Congregation.
- G. The Church Council shall meet once every month. A majority of its membership shall constitute a quorum. Special meetings of the Council are subject to the call of the President. Special meetings shall be confined to the purpose for which they were convened.
- H. The Ministry of Congregational Life for the Congregation shall be conducted by a committee chaired by a Chair(s) elected by the Congregation to be a member(s) –one vote- of the Church Council. Any Member or Associate Member who wishes to assist in this Ministry may serve on the committee. Its concern shall be for the ministry of Congregational life in such matters as fellowship, social activities, special celebrations, and outreach and mission.

- I. The Ministry of Spiritual Life for the Congregation shall be conducted by a committee chaired by a Chair(s) elected by the Congregation to be a member(s) -one vote- of the Church Council. Any Member or Associate Member who wishes to assist in this Ministry may serve on the committee. Its concern shall be for the Spiritual and faith formation and growth of all ages of our congregation and for the Spiritual care of our members.
- J. The Ministry of Buildings and Grounds for the Congregation shall be conducted by a committee chaired by a Chair(s) selected by the Congregation to be a member(s) –one vote- of the Church Council. Any Member or Associate member who wishes to assist in this Ministry may serve on the committee. Its concern shall be the care and custody of the property and equipment in such matters as property improvement, maintenance, equipment, inventory, and long-range planning.
- K. The Ministry of Worship for the Congregation shall be conducted by a Chair(s) elected by the Congregation to be a member(s) –one vote- of the Church Council. Any Member or Associate member who wishes to assist in this Ministry may serve on the committee. Its concern shall be coordinating with the Pastor(s) and Church Musician(s) the form and content of the Worship experience. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, sanctuary readiness, altar care, and communion. The Worship Committee shall convene any necessary search for church musicians.
- L. The meetings of the Church Council shall be open to all Members and Associate Members. Visitors to the meetings may have voice in the discussions but may not vote. Matters dealing with personnel issues shall be conducted in closed session.

ARTICLE VIII. STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. The Finance Committee shall be chaired by the Treasurer. This committee includes the Financial Secretary and Assistant Treasurer.
- B. Pastoral Relations Committee
 1. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be established for the purpose of supporting and maintaining an open and healthy relationship between the pastor and members of the congregation. It shall function in two ways: as an advisory group to the pastor and as a support for the pastor's leadership. The

Pastoral Relations Committee is accountable to the congregation.

2. Committee members shall be members of UCC EG and shall be appointed by the Council President and the pastor(s) subject to approval by the Church Council, each to serve a 3-year term, but not more than six consecutive years. One person from the Search Committee who presented the pastoral candidate shall be appointed to serve one term following the arrival of the new pastor.
3. Meetings shall be held on a regular basis, with an agenda. The pastor or any member of the Committee may call a special meeting. Any records or communication shall be privileged and be totally confidential.
4. When it becomes necessary to form a search committee for a new pastor, one member of the Pastoral Relations Committee will serve on the Pastoral Search Committee.

C. Personnel Committee

1. The Personnel Committee shall consist of the Pastor (ex-officio), Vice President of Council and two other members. This committee is to handle human resource matters.
2. Responsibilities include hiring, evaluations, and salary recommendations for non-pastoral staff. When appropriate, the committee may recommend terms for termination to the Council.

D. Nominating Committee

1. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of one member from the Church Council and two members from the Congregation at large.
2. Nominations shall be made for the offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Chairs of the Program committees by a committee appointed each year by the Church Council.
3. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting at which the election is held, provided that the person who is nominated has been contacted and has given consent.

ARTICLE IX. THE PASTOR

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Church Council, in consultation with the Conference, to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of Pastor, following prescribed guidelines in the Manual of Ministry of the United Church of Christ.
- B. The Council shall present to the Congregation the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. A favorable vote of the Congregation constitutes a call.
- C. The Call shall state the terms of the (Pastoral-Congregational) relationship and shall include the Congregation's agreement to participate in the Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ, the Minister's Health Insurance Program or its equivalent and other terms agreed upon between the pastoral candidate and the Congregation.
- D. The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. When a minister accepts a call to this church, the church and they shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation or recognition. A report of this service shall be signed by the proper officer of the Association and by the Conference Executive, and copies shall be sent to the Secretary of the United Church of Christ and to the Council for Church and Ministry.
- E. Termination/Resignation: In order to terminate this relationship, 90 days' notice shall be given by either party. The procedure shall be in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.
 - 1. If the church initiates the termination, the Pastor may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of voting members present at a duly called Special Congregational Meeting (see Article XI B) held three months prior to the proposed date of dismissal. Voting will be by written ballot. The three-month provision may be modified by mutual agreement between the Church Council and the Pastor.
 - 2. When the Congregation decides to terminate the relationship, the termination shall be approved by action of the Congregation. When the Pastor resigns, the resignation will be accepted by the Council who will notify the Congregation. The President shall send notice of such termination to the Conference Executive and to the Association.

ARTICLE X. PROPERTY

- A. The Church Council may, in the church's name, sue or be sued, acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise; and own, hold, invest, reinvest, or dispose of property both real and personal for such work as the church may undertake; and may purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for and transfer, rent, lease and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the church. Significant matters shall be referred to the Church Membership; "significance" shall be determined by Council.
- B. Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift, or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE XI. CHURCH MEETINGS

- A. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation shall be held in the month of January. Prior to this meeting, the Church Council, the officers of the church, the Pastor(s) and all church organizations shall submit their annual reports in writing.
- B. Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the Council or by a petition to the Council signed by not less than 25% of the Members. The Council shall call such meetings within three weeks from receipt of the petition, and adequate notice of such meetings shall be sent to the membership. Special meetings shall be confined to the purpose for which they were convened.
- C. All congregational meetings shall be called after proper notification of the membership. Notification shall consist of a membership mailing and public announcement in the church worship services at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE XII. RULES OF ORDER

- A. Robert's Rule of Order, Revised, shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by the Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS

- A. Amendments to this Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any duly called church meeting by a two-thirds' affirmative vote of the members present, the text of the proposed amendment having been mailed to the membership at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

This revision of the Constitution and By-Laws was approved by the Membership at the duly called Congregational Meeting on September 11, 2022.