

CONSTITUTION
OF
TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WADSWORTH, OHIO

Revisions adopted: November 14, 2010

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ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this congregation shall be Trinity United Church of Christ (TUCC) of Wadsworth, Ohio.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this congregation is to follow the way of Christ Jesus in loving God and neighbor with the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. It will provide for the worship of God, administration of the sacraments, the preaching of the gospel, education in the faith, fellowship among the members, service to the needy, witness for God in the world, and the establishment of right relations among people.

MISSION STATEMENT: Trinity United Church of Christ exists to share the love of God with our community and beyond.

ARTICLE III – AFFILIATION

This church shall sustain that relationship to the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ relating to local churches.

This church shall honor its covenants with other branches of the United Church of Christ, General Synod, Conference, and Association.

The government of this local church is vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all of its affairs, subject to the laws of the State of Ohio.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Sec. 1. Definitions

- A. ACTIVE – All persons who have been duly received by confirmation, letter of transfer, or profession of faith shall be considered active members and shall be entitled to the privileges and responsibilities of membership.
- B. ASSOCIATE – Any person who, because of geographic location(s) or other valid reason, desires to maintain an affiliation with another church may, with the consent of the Consistory, become an associate member. Associate members who participate at least annually in communion and/or financially support this church shall be entitled to the privileges and responsibilities of membership.
- C. INACTIVE – Any person who has failed to attend worship or to contribute toward the financial support of this church for twenty-four consecutive months shall be considered by action of the Consistory to be inactive and shall not be entitled to participate in the privileges and responsibilities of membership.

Sec. 2. Privileges and Responsibilities of Members

- A. It shall be the responsibility of all members to seek to lead a Christian life and to take an active part in the various functions of the church: regular attendance at worship; participation in the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism; support of the church with time, talents, and treasure; and presentation of candidates for baptism and confirmation.
- B. It shall be both the privilege and responsibility of every member to vote at all elections and on any question or decision submitted to the congregation for action.
- C. Any member may request in writing a letter of transfer or written verification of baptism.

Sec. 3. Inactivity of Members

- A. The Koinonia Board shall be responsible for assisting the Pastor(s) and Administrative Assistant in reviewing the membership rolls and reporting to the Consistory the names of those who have failed to attend worship or to contribute toward the support of the church during the previous year. The Senior Pastor shall contact such members, according to current standing procedures. After twenty-four (24) consecutive months of inactivity, it will be recognized that such members are inactive. A letter will be sent from the Consistory notifying the person of the change to inactive member status. The Consistory shall be responsible for making an annual revision of the inactive member roll.
- B. Any person who has been assigned to inactive member status by the Consistory may receive a letter of transfer, without prejudice, or may reactivate their membership by petitioning the chairperson of the Koinonia Board and by resuming the responsibilities of membership.

ARTICLE V – CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Sec. 1. Annual meetings

An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held at the beginning of the calendar year to transact the business of the church. Two (2) public announcements from the pulpit shall be given to the congregation, along with notice by mail and/or various forms of electronic communication, regarding the date, time, place and agenda. Business shall include, but not be limited to, receiving of annual reports; approval of the budget for the coming year; election of Officers, Delegates and Board members; and consideration of any additional business which is raised.

Sec. 2. Special meetings

Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Consistory by a petition to the Consistory signed by not less than sixty (60) persons on the active membership roll of the church. It is expected that a group of members requesting a special meeting would first make their request at a meeting of the Consistory. The Consistory shall call such meeting within six (6) weeks of receipt of such a peti-

tion. Notice stating the date, time, place, and purpose of special meetings shall be mailed and/or sent by various forms of electronic communication to all members not less than two (2) weeks prior to the date set for such meetings. At special meetings of the congregation, no items of business may be considered other than those specified in the call.

Sec. 3. Quorum

At any meeting of the congregation, the attendance of 60 active members shall constitute a quorum for transacting official business.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS AND DELEGATES

Sec. 1. Officers

- A. The Officers of the Church shall be the following: President, President-Elect, Recording Secretary and Treasurer and shall be elected by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. The President-Elect shall be elected for a term of one (1) year, followed by a one (1) year term as President. If the President-Elect is unable to assume the office of President, a President shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one (1) year. The Recording Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for two (2) year terms and shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms, but may be re-elected after the lapse of at least one (1) year. All officers shall perform the functions prescribed by this Constitution and by the parliamentary authority adopted herein.
- B. The President is the lay leader of the Church, and principal spokesperson for the congregation on matters of church policy. The President shall preside over all meetings of the Consistory and the congregation. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all boards of the church and may attend their meetings at his/her discretion. The President shall preside over the Nominating and Personnel Committees of the Consistory. The President appoints members to standing committees and task forces with the approval of the Consistory. The President or his/her designate will be responsible for organizing a group of active members to serve the elements for Holy Communion, in cooperation with the Church & Ministry Board.
- C. The President-Elect shall assume the functions of the President in the absence, resignation, or removal of the President or at the request of the President, and serve in such other capacities as the President may request. The President-Elect shall also serve as the Chair of the Research and Planning Committee of the Consistory.
- D. The Recording Secretary shall keep and archive accurate minutes of meetings of the Consistory and the congregation, conduct correspondence, and perform other secretarial duties as directed by the President.
- E. The Treasurer shall keep accurate records of all monies received and disbursed and shall not pay out any funds unless properly authorized by the Consistory. The Treasurer shall submit detailed reports of the finances of the church at meetings of the Consistory, at annual meetings of the congregation, and as requested by the President. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Stewardship Board, and a member of Consistory.

Sec. 2. Delegates

- A. There shall be two (2) delegates elected by the congregation to represent the congregation at the meetings of the Eastern Ohio Association, the Ohio Conference, and other meetings of the United Church of Christ and other ecumenical bodies as directed by the Consistory. The delegates shall report to the Consistory regarding the proceedings of meetings they have attended.
- B. The term of office shall be two years, arranged so that only one (1) delegate shall retire each year. Any person who is on the active membership roll of the church is eligible for nominations as a delegate.
- C. Delegates shall also serve as at large members of Consistory representing the congregation.

Sec. 3. Vacancies

- A. Vacancies during terms of office shall be referred to the Nominating Committee. The Consistory shall have the authority to act upon their recommendation to fill partial terms of office.
- B. In the event that the two (2) delegates are not able to attend a scheduled meeting, the President shall have the authority to appoint temporary replacement(s) from the membership of the church to insure representation of the congregation.

ARTICLE VII – ELECTION AND ORGANIZATION OF CONSISTORY

Sec. 1. Definition

The voting members of Consistory shall be the Pastor(s), President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, the two (2) Delegates, one (1) chosen representative (the Vice-Chair) from each board and the youth representative chosen by the youth and elected by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. The President shall vote in the event of a tie.

Terms of office shall begin *in January*. Any person who is on the active membership role of the church, and is not a paid staff member of the church, may serve as a Consistory member. No member may serve on Consistory over three (3) consecutive years without the lapse of an intervening year.

Sec. 2. Duties of Consistory

- A. The Consistory members are the legally responsible agents of the congregation, and shall be the planning, evaluating and coordinating body of the church. The Consistory shall have charge of the general affairs of the congregation, be responsible for the well-being and encouragement of the membership and assuring that the ministry and program of the church are accomplished through the development of appropriate policies. It is the responsibility of the Consistory to certify sponsored groups of this church for purposes of building-usage and insurance coverage. The Consistory shall order the collections of monies for local church expenses, denominational covenants and benevolent purposes. The Consistory shall keep an accurate record of its proceedings, be the custodian of all congregational records, and provide for an annual financial review of all monies and legacies.

- B. The Consistory shall call congregational meetings, implement the decisions of the membership, and shall exercise general powers authorized by the laws of the State of Ohio and by the Annual and called meetings of the congregation. It shall conduct, manage and control the business affairs of the church consistent with the Charter of Incorporation, this Constitution, and the actions of congregational meetings.
- C. The Consistory shall be responsible for insuring that funds are available to pay for all salaried staff positions and for recommending to the congregation the number of salaried staff positions. In addition, the Consistory through the Personnel Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that contractual obligations with employees are properly administered.
- D. The Consistory members may assist and support the Pastor(s) in the spiritual interests of the congregation, including the visitation of the sick and shut-in. They shall take heed to the high calling of their office, so that they may be examples to others and minister, according to their abilities, to the edification and comfort of all the members.

Sec. 3. Meetings of Consistory

- A. The Consistory shall hold regular monthly meetings, open to all members of the congregation, at such times as shall be decided by the Consistory. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. When a quorum is present at any meeting of Consistory, the vote of a majority of those members present shall decide any question brought before the meeting. The act of a majority of Consistory members present at any meeting at which there is a quorum shall constitute the act of the entire Consistory.
- B. Special meetings may be called by the President whenever necessary. In the event of the President's absence, inability, or unwillingness to act, the President-Elect may call a special meeting of the Consistory at his/her discretion or when requested to do so in writing by a simple majority.
- C. All meetings of the consistory shall be open to the entire membership of the church, and the agenda for regular meetings shall provide opportunity for any board, committee, church organization, or individual member to present reports and recommendations on matters of church programs, plans, and policy. When, in the judgment of the President, the sensitive nature of the matter under consideration requires that a portion of the meeting be closed, the Consistory shall on such occasions go into executive session restricted to voting members only. When the performance of the Pastor(s) is under consideration, he or she may be excused from that portion of the closed meeting. All decisions and votes shall be made in open meeting and recorded in the minutes.
- D. It shall be the responsibility of Consistory members to attend all regular and special meetings of the Consistory. Members shall be expected to notify the Recording Secretary when they will be unable to attend a meeting.

Sec. 4. Vacancies

- A. The Consistory may declare the office of a member vacant upon their death, resignation from the church, resignation from Consistory, or refusal to accept installation into office. The Consistory may also declare vacant the office of any member who has unexcused absences from three (3) consecutive regular Consistory meetings or five (5) meetings within a calendar year.
- B. Vacancies during terms of office shall be referred to the Nominating Committee. The Consistory shall have the authority to act upon their recommendation(s) in filling partial terms.

Sec. 5. Standing Committees of the Consistory.

A. Archive Committee.

- 1. The Consistory shall appoint a Church Historian, who shall serve as chairperson of the Archive Committee.
- 2. The Archive Committee shall preserve artifacts, audio-visual, and or electro-magnetic records and documents related to Trinity history including current events in the life of the congregation for deposit in the church archives. The Archive Committee shall present information and interpretation of the history of Trinity Church to interested persons or groups.

B. Nominating Committee.

- 1. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the President and President-Elect of Consistory plus all board chairpersons.
- 2. The Nominating Committee shall prepare nominations for all open officer, delegate, and board positions for the coming year. This committee shall prepare such nominations on a ballot, which shall be printed and posted in the church at least one (1) week prior to the annual meeting. The ballots thus prepared shall be official ballots at the congregational meeting. The Nominating Committee shall at other times make such nominations as maybe requested by the Consistory.

C. Personnel Committee.

- 1. The Personnel Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Church, namely: President, President-Elect, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, and of the chairpersons of Boards which shall be responsible for paid staff: i.e., Church & Ministry responsible for Pastor(s); Christian Education responsible for CE Director; Stewardship responsible for office staff; Music & Fine Arts responsible for choir director(s) and organist; and Trustees responsible for custodian.
- 2. The Personnel Committee shall meet when necessity arises for recommending to Consistory hiring and termination of “non-called” paid staff, and for recommending wages and benefits for succeeding years. Other duties include developing, reviewing, and

maintaining position descriptions and personnel policies, and facilitating evaluations of all paid staff.

D. Research & Planning Committee.

1. The Research & Planning Committee shall be comprised of the President-Elect, and at least four (4) members of the congregation appointed by the Consistory.
2. The Research & Planning Committee shall function as the strategic planning body for the church, with attention to both program(s) and facilities. The committee shall devise long and short term goals in keeping with the mission of the church. With the approval of the Consistory and the congregation, the Research & Planning Committee shall assist in planning and coordinating projects which are in keeping with the church's long range plans.

ARTICLE VIII – THE PASTOR(S)

Sec. 1. Call of the Pastor

In the calling of a Pastor, the Consistory shall act in accordance with this Constitution and with the advice of the prescribed regulations of other branches of the United Church of Christ. The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term by a three-quarters affirmative vote of the members present at a duly called congregational meeting. The congregation may at its discretion call associates or assistants to the Pastor.

Sec. 2. Duties of the Pastor(s)

The Pastor(s) shall preach the Gospel, conduct public worship services, administer the sacraments, assist the people in their education in the faith, visit the sick, comfort the distressed, exercise general pastoral oversight, and perform all such duties as belong to the office in the United Church of Christ. The pastor shall be responsible for directing the work of the church staff in consultation with the supervising boards. The Pastor(s) shall oversee the planning of the church's programs and shall perform all other administrative duties normally associated with the position. The Pastor(s) shall be ex-officio members of all boards and committees of the church and may attend their meetings at their discretion.

Sec. 3. Termination of Pastoral Relationship

Tenure of the Pastor may be terminated at any time with ninety (90) days notice by either the pastor or the church. Termination of the pastoral relationship shall be in accordance with the advice of the Conference and the Association and the call agreement.

ARTICLE IX – BOARDS

Sec. 1. Composition and Procedures

- A. Any person who is on the active membership roll of the church is eligible for election to boards or appointment to committees. Paid staff members may not serve on boards or committees if the Consistory considers that there is a conflict of interest. At the discretion of the Consistory paid

staff members may act as liaisons to boards and/or committees. All terms begin in the new fiscal year.

- B. Each board shall be comprised of nine (9) voting members elected at the Annual Meeting for three (3) year overlapping terms. Whenever possible no board member shall serve a consecutive term on the same board.
- C. When a member of a board or committee resigns or has three unexcused absences in a year, he/she shall be replaced by action of the Nominating Committee and the Consistory, as described in Article VII, Sec. 5, B.
- D. At the first meeting of a board following the Annual Meeting, each board shall elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary. The Vice-Chair shall serve as the board's representative to the Consistory and convene board meetings in the absence of the Chair. Each board of the church may determine its mode of operation and may create subcommittees which may include volunteers from the congregation. Any sub-committee chairs and members shall also be determined then or as soon as possible thereafter.
- E. Boards and committees shall transact official business only when a quorum of more than fifty (50) percent of the members are present.
- F. Each board, committee, and sub committee of the church shall maintain a current description of responsibilities and standing procedures, which shall be used in guiding the activities of the committee. Each board shall have authority to make decisions to carry out its responsibilities, provided those decisions are not in conflict with the powers and responsibilities of the Consistory and the congregation. Such decisions may be modified by the Consistory or by the congregation at regular or called meetings.
- G. Each board and committee shall prepare a proposed annual budget for use by the Stewardship Board as well as an annual report for presentation to the congregation. This budget and annual report shall be submitted to the Consistory at their October meeting.

Sec. 2. Board of Christian Education

- A. The Board of Christian Education shall be composed of nine (9) elected members of the congregation and the youth representative to Consistory. The Christian Education staff of the church shall be ex-officio members of the Board of Christian Education.
- B. Under the direction of the Consistory and the congregation, and in cooperation with the Pastor(s) and Christian Education staff members, the Board of Christian Education shall have responsibility for planning, supervising, and evaluating the educational work of the church. The Board is authorized to appoint teachers for Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and other special educational activities. The Board shall consult with the Trustees in matters relating to maintenance and appearance of classrooms. In addition, the Board of Christian Education shall participate in the selection of Christian Education staff members.

Sec. 3. Church & Ministry Board

- A. The Church & Ministry Board shall be composed of nine (9) elected members of the congregation.
- B. The Church & Ministry Board shall support and maintain open relationships between the Pastor(s) and the members of the congregation. This committee serves as an advisory group to the Pastor(s) and as support for the Pastor(s)' leadership. As support for the Pastor(s), the Church & Ministry Board interprets roles, functions, and needs of the Pastor(s) to the congregation and the needs of the congregation to the Pastor(s).
- C. The Church & Ministry Board shall also be responsible for supporting, evaluating and expanding the worship activities of the congregation, and to develop and direct programming which nurtures the spiritual growth of the congregation in cooperation with other Boards.
- D. The Church & Ministry Board shall shepherd and support the Trinity Care Givers Sub-Committee. The Care Givers shall assist the Pastor(s) in providing visitation and spiritual support to the sick, homebound and sorrowing members. Activities may include, but are not limited to, providing worship services for nursing homes, providing meals for the sick, providing meals following funeral services, and meeting other urgent needs of members.

Sec. 4 Koinonia Board

- A. The Koinonia Board shall be composed of nine (9) elected members of the congregation.
- B. The Koinonia Board shall support the Pastor(s) and other Boards, as needed, with the evangelism ministry of the congregation, including, but not limited to, identifying, reaching out to, and visiting potential and prospective members, publicizing the ministries of the church, and providing programs to assist in assimilating adult and youth members into the life of the church.
- C. The Koinonia Board shall assist the Pastor(s) and Administrative Assistant in reviewing the membership rolls for inactivity of members, contacting inactive members, and advising the Consistory in situations involving two (2) years of member inactivity.
- D. The Koinonia Board shall facilitate fellowship among members by planning and coordinating social activities in which the entire congregation may participate. The committee may enlist organizations of the church to serve as sponsors for such activities. Activities may include, but are not limited to, receptions for new members, Lenten dinners, and a summer church picnic/brunch.

Sec. 5 The Mission Board

- A. The Mission Board shall be composed of nine (9) elected members from the congregation.

- B. The Mission board shall initiate, enable, and coordinate the mission and service activities of Trinity Church and the United Church of Christ in the world. Specific duties include, but are not limited to: Interpreting and promoting Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and other mission programs of the United Church of Christ; planning special mission fund raising and offerings; recommending to the Consistory plans for distributing miscellaneous benevolent funds; conducting an ongoing program of mission education; initiating programs that respond to needs of persons in the Wadsworth community.
- C. The Mission Board shall interpret the ministry of the larger church to the congregation and serve as the receiving body for reports of the Delegates to the Eastern Association, the Ohio Conference, and General Synod and the Instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ.

Sec. 6 The Music and Fine Arts Board

- A. The Music & Fine Arts Board shall be composed of nine (9) elected members of the congregation. The Music staff of the church shall be ex-officio members of the board.
- B. The Music & Fine Arts Board shall provide music and other art for the worship services and nurture the spiritual growth and enrichment of the Trinity membership through the arts in additional ways.
- C. The Music & Fine Arts Board shall coordinate the music program of the church, oversee the acquisition and maintenance of musical instruments, and determine policies for use of instruments by outside groups or individuals. The Board may plan and arrange guest concerts with the approval of the Consistory. In addition, the Board shall participate in the selection of music department staff members.
- D. The Music & Fine Arts Board shall promote the visual arts through displays; offer programs in religious drama; and other such programs which promote Christian spirituality through the arts.
- E. The Music & Fine Arts Board shall advise the Board of Trustees regarding the décor, architecture and aesthetics of the church environment; assess how the physical environment impacts upon the spiritual life of the congregation; and be responsible for decorating the church for special services and/or seasons of the church year, such as Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter.

Sec. 7 The Board of Trustees

- A. The Board of Trustees shall be composed of nine (9) elected members from the congregation.
- B. The Trustees shall be the legal agents of the Consistory and the congregation. Under the direction of the Consistory and the congregation, the Trustees shall have responsibility for the care and maintenance of the property of the church, including provisions for adequate insurance. Subject to the approval of the Consistory, the Trustees shall determine the rules and fees for use of the church by outside organizations and persons, and shall validate that such outside organizations have adequate insurance. The Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer real estate property without specific authority from the congregation. In matters of a

special nature, such as remodeling, erection of buildings, or the use of any church property for purpose(s) other than commonly used, the Trustees shall obtain approval of the Consistory. In addition, the Board of Trustees shall participate in the selection of custodial staff members and share responsibility with the Senior Pastor for supervision of custodial staff.

Sec. 8 The Stewardship Board

- A. The Stewardship Board shall be composed of nine (9) elected members from the congregation. The Treasurer shall serve as a member of this committee. The Chair of the Board or his/her designate may serve as the Assistant Treasurer in the event of illness, disability, or absence from the city. The Treasurer shall not serve as Consistory Representative for The Stewardship Board.
- B. Under direction of the Consistory and the congregation, and in cooperation with the Treasurer, the Stewardship Board shall be responsible for the financial affairs of the church, including providing for an annual review of all financial records, monies, and legacies. This committee shall prepare the operating budget of the church for approval by the Consistory and the congregation and shall issue directions for payment of all bills, as instructed by the Consistory. In matters of a special nature, such as the investment or reinvestment of assets, the Stewardship Board shall obtain approval of the Consistory. The board shall have no power to borrow money without specific authority of the congregation. With the approval of the Consistory, the Stewardship Board may authorize the issue of credit cards to the Pastor(s) and selected staff members.
- C. The Stewardship Board shall be responsible for the enlistment of the time, talent, and treasure of the congregation. This Board shall plan and coordinate the annual stewardship drive of the church, as approved by the Consistory, and shall prepare and distribute an annual time and talent survey to the congregation.

ARTICLE X – FINANCE

Sec. 1 Fiscal Year, Budget, and Annual Financial Review

- A. The fiscal year shall be January 1 to December 31.
- B. The Stewardship Board shall be responsible for preparation and presentation of the annual budget for the church at the annual meeting. Such budget will be submitted to the Consistory for approval. The approved budget in its final form shall be submitted by Consistory to the congregation for approval at its Annual Meeting.
- C. An annual review of all financial records, monies, and legacies shall be arranged by the Stewardship Board with the approval of the Consistory.

Sec. 2 Blanket Fidelity Bond

For the protection of the church's finances, the church shall obtain a blanket fidelity bond to cover all individuals in the church who handle financial matters, whether they be officers, staff, or members.

Sec. 3 Special Projects and Large Expenditures

- A. All special projects presented to the Consistory and/or the congregation for approval shall include identification of the source of funds or specific plans for raising the necessary monies for the project.
- B. For expenditures in excess of four (4) percent of the annual budget for a single project, the Consistory shall first obtain the approval of the congregation at a special meeting called for that purpose.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND REVISIONS

Sec. 1 Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any duly called meeting of the congregation, provided that the substance of the proposed amendments(s) has been announced to the congregation for at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the meeting. A copy of the proposed amendments or revisions shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the church for two weeks prior to the meeting, and copies thereof made available for all members of the congregation who desire one.

Sec. 2 Bylaws

The congregation may enact Bylaws for the government of the church as may be deemed necessary, provided that (1) they do not conflict with this constitution or that of the United Church of Christ and (2) that the provisions in Section I, above, are fulfilled.

Sec. 3 Review and Revision

This Constitution and any Bylaws shall be reviewed at least every five (5) years by a committee appointed by the President, with the approval of the Consistory. Amendments and/or revisions shall be considered by the congregation as outlined in Section 1, above.

ARTICLE XII- RULES OF ORDER

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution.