

# **THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

## **For ZION UNITED**

### **CHURCH OF CHRIST**

#### **ARTICLE I - Name and Location**

The name of this church shall be Zion United Church of Christ located in Peru, State of Illinois.

#### **ARTICLE II. - Purpose**

According to insights received from Holy Scriptures, the avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the Sacraments, to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal, to render loving service toward mankind and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

#### **ARTICLE III - Policy**

Section 1. This church shall be part of the United Church of Christ and it shall sustain the relationship to the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ adopted at the Third General Synod meeting at Philadelphia, PA., on July 4, 1961, relating to local churches.

Section 2. The government of this church is vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to laws of the State of Illinois relating to corporations not for profit.

#### **ARTICLE IV - Faith and Covenant**

**FAITH.** This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ the Son of God and the Savior of Man. It acknowledges as brothers in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

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

#### **ARTICLE V - Membership**

Section 1. Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized, has been confirmed, or has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In accordance with the gospel covenant which binds into a unity, faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races, membership is open to all without regard to race or color.

Section 2. Members shall pledge themselves to attend the worship services of the church, to partake of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, to live the Christian life, to share in the life and work of the church, to contribute to its support and benevolences, and to seek diligently and to help develop the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

Section 3. Any member may, on his own request, be granted a letter of transfer. If a member requests in writing to be released from membership obligations, the church shall, through the pastor, grant the request and terminate the membership. In the absence of a resident minister, such a request shall be acted upon by the Church Council. Such action shall be presented to the Church Council at the earliest date and entered into the Church Council minutes.

Section 4. A member whose address has long been unknown or who for a period of two years has not attended the church's worship, has not partaken of the Holy Sacrament, or has not contributed to its support, may by recommendation of the Church and Ministry Committee of the Church Council and vote of the Council be placed on a conditional list. If, after the expiration of the third year the relationship remains unchanged in spite of spiritual care, the name may be dropped from the membership roll by further vote of the Council.

Section 5. If a member persistently breaches his covenant vows, the Council, after due notice has been given, a hearing before the Council has been offered, and faithful efforts have been made to renew his relationship with our Zion Church, may censure him or suspend or terminate his membership.

#### **ARTICLE VI - Governing Body**

The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in an officially called 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 5% of the membership.

#### **ARTICLE VII - Amendments**

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at an officially called church meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present. Public announcement of the proposed amendment shall be made on the two Sundays prior to the meeting.

#### **BY-LAWS**

##### **ARTICLE I - Official Boards**

The Official Boards of the church shall be the Church Council and the Board of Christian Education.

##### **ARTICLE II - Council**

Section 1. The Council shall be the executive board of this church. It shall be composed of the Pastor and 9 to 12 duly elected church members. Five of its members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. The Council shall organize itself each year within one week following the annual meeting, electing a President, a Vice-President and a Secretary. The Council shall form such boards or committees as will serve to further the purpose of the church.

Section 3. Nine to twelve members shall be elected by a majority vote cast at the annual meeting. They shall be elected for three years. In order to provide continuity, no more than three seats should be vacated in any one year. A person shall not be elected to the Council for more than two consecutive terms.

Section 4. Nominations shall be made for the Council by a committee consisting of the previous year's retiring members and/or those appointed by the President. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting at which the election is held.

Section 5. When elected, the council members shall be publicly installed in their respective offices by the minister at a worship service in accordance with the laws of the United Church of Christ.

Section 6. Vacancies on the Council shall be filled by action of the Council for the unexpired terms.

Section 7. The Council shall be the policy-making body and shall transact the business of the church. It shall have the following responsibilities: 1) determine the financial needs and responsibilities of the church and present these to the congregation; 2) approve the payment of bills; 3) provide for the auditing of financial accounts; 4) provide for the adequate support of the staff; 5) keep a complete and accurate record of its proceedings; 6) be the custodian of all church records; 7) report to the church at its regular and special meetings; and 8) take care of special needs affecting the welfare of the congregation. All acts and deliberations of the Council are subject to the will of and revision by the congregation.

Section 8. The Council may authorize any extraordinary expense if funds are available but if borrowing exceeds \$5,000.00, it must receive the approval of the congregation.

Section 9. The Council shall meet at least once every month for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings are subject to the President's call.

Section 10. A member of the Council who is absent without explanation from three regular meetings per annum shall be replaced as described in Section 6.

### **ARTICLE III Church Ministries**

Section 1. The seven continuing ministries of the church shall be Worship and Spiritual Growth, Pastoral Care, Evangelism, Christian Education, Mission and Outreach, Building and Grounds, and Stewardship. Each ministry shall consist of at least five members (including the Chairperson). Members except for the chairperson shall be appointed by the church council with recommendations by the nominating committee. Chairpersons shall be elected as described in Article II Section 3.

Section 2. The Worship and Spiritual Growth Ministry shall advise and assist the minister concerning worship services including music, arts, sermons, children's and youth involvement, liturgy, schedule of services, greeters, ushers, communion, and flowers. Spiritual groups such as vespers and prayer groups are also included in this ministry.

Section 3. The Pastoral Care Ministry centers on caring for our members and helping them to feel God's love and care. Areas of focus include training laity for visitations and support, maintaining and creating support groups as needed, and coordinating transportation, meals, flowers, gifts, and cards for those in need.

Section 4. The Evangelism Ministry has as its tasks evangelism education within our church, publicity through newspapers, letters, and other means, hospitality especially to visitors and newcomers, orientation for new and prospective members, teaching about our church and denomination, taking their pictures, giving them a tour, assimilation of new members so they feel they belong, and inactive member ministry to contact those we have not seen in a while.

Section 5. The Christian Education Ministry shall have the mission to enable all people of the church to learn and grow in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Specifically this includes management of the Church school including curriculum, teacher recruitment and training, supplies, and funds, adult education, Retreats, Bible studies, programs for youth, confirmation, and children's ministries.

Section 6. The Mission and Outreach Ministry fosters our church's mission and passion to show Christian love beyond our church membership. This includes hands on projects, financial support, and participation in conference, association, and other cooperative event?

Section 7. The Building and Grounds Ministry focuses on all aspects of our church properties as a means to achieve, house, and preserve our church. This includes repairs, renovations, new buildings, accessibility, parking, beautification, and signage.

Section 8. The Stewardship Ministry has as its goal to strengthen our church by encouraging the growth of the Christian spirit of giving. This includes gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Section 9. Each Ministry is responsible to present to the Council a budget request at an appropriate time for the preparation of the church budget.

Section 10. Each Ministry shall provide a written report to be sent to the congregation before the annual meeting.

### **ARTICLE IV - Pastor**

Section 1. The duties of the pastor shall be to set a good example to the congregation and to conduct service on Sundays, holidays and such other days as the congregation desires.

Section 2. To direct the work of religious education, to preach the Gospel, to administer the Holy Sacraments, visit the sick, comfort the distressed, prepare young people for Confirmation, and to perform all such duties as belong to the Pastor's Office.

Section 3. He shall keep a record of all services performed and make an annual report of his work to the congregation.

Section 4. As soon as a pastoral vacancy has been announced, it shall be reported to the Association Minister.

Section 5. It shall be the responsibility of the Search Committee, appointed by the Council, to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of Pastor.

Section 6. In filling a vacancy or in securing supply ministers for the period of vacancy, the Search Committee must seek the counsel of the Association Minister and follow the recommended guidelines.

Section 7. Any minister may confer with the Association Minister concerning a pastoral vacancy. At the minister's request, his name shall be submitted by the Association Minister for consideration by the local church committee.

Section 8. The Search Committee shall present to the church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. A 75% favorable vote of those present and voting constitutes a call.

Section 9. The call shall be in writing, prepared with the advice of the Association Minister, and include a complete statement of the contractual arrangements. The minister, the Church Council, and the Association Office shall each receive a copy of the call.

Section 10. When a minister accepts a call to this church, the church and he shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation. A report of this service shall be signed by the Association Minister 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.

Section 11. The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period.

Section 12. Brotherly discipline of the Pastor shall be in conformity with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.

Section 13. If either party decides to terminate the relationship, the termination shall be by action of the Church Council, and notice of such termination shall be sent by the President of the Church Council to the Association Minister for appropriate action. In order to terminate this relationship, three months 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.

Section 14. The church may at its discretion choose an Associate Pastor, Assistant Minister, and/or Director of Christian Education.

#### **ARTICLE V - Treasurer**

Section 1. The treasurer shall disburse the funds of the congregation upon the order of the council, shall keep an account of all receipts and disbursements, shall make a monthly report to the council, and shall make a yearly report at the annual meeting.

Section 2. The treasurer must be a member in good standing.

Section 3. The treasurer shall be appointed by the Church Council.

#### **ARTICLE VI - Financial Secretary**

Section 1. The financial secretary shall keep records of weekly contributions and gifts, and make semi-annual contribution reports to the membership.

Section 2. The financial secretary or a designated appointee shall be responsible for depositing all monies after all worship services.

Section 3. The financial secretary must be a member in good standing.

Section 4. The financial secretary shall be appointed by the Church Council.

#### **ARTICLE VII - Property**

The church may in its corporate name sue, or be sued; acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise; own, receive, hold, manage, care for and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell assign, transfer and convey such property for the general purpose of the church; and it may receive and hold in trust

both real and personal property and invest and reinvest the same and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the church.

**ARTICLE VIII -- Church Meetings**

Section 1. The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held in the month of January. At this meeting, the Council, the officers of the church, the Pastor, and all church organizations shall submit their annual reports in writing.

Section 2. Special church meetings may be called by the Councilor by a Petition signed by 10% of the membership.

Section 3. There shall be a two week notice for congregational meetings. Such notice shall be sent to the membership by the Secretary.

**ARTICLE IX - Amendments**

Amendments to these By-Laws may be made at any officially called church meeting by a two thirds affirmative vote of the members present. Public announcement of the proposed amendment shall be made on the two Sundays prior to the meeting.

**ARTICLE X - Rules of Order**

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