



## **Constitution**

### **I NAME**

The name of this Church shall be  
**Trinity Reformed United Church of Christ**

### **II PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church is to bear witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ. This is done through:

- **Preaching** and teaching the Word of God to lead persons to commitment of faith.
- **Celebrating** the Sacraments.
- **Realizing** Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal.
- **Growing** in right living, which includes justice and peace.
- **Celebrating** the Lord's Presence and promises to all who labor and trust in His eternal kingdom.

### **III AFFILIATION**

This Church shall be a member of the United Church of Christ or its successors, having its standing in the Lancaster Association of the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ.

### **IV DOCTRINE**

This Church acknowledges as its sole head Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Savior.

It acknowledges as one 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 Scriptures and Ecumenical 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 reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among Evangelical Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion. It also recognizes the rites of Confirmation, Ordination, Marriage, and Burial.

Covenant— We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the Will of God. We propose 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 our forbearers, we depend upon 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.

### **V ORGANIZATION**

The Church shall be organized as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with its term of existence to perpetual.

## **VI MEMBERSHIP**

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, as provided in the By-laws.

## **VII GOVERNING BODY**

The governing body of this Church shall be the congregation consisting of the communicant members in good standing assembled in meeting as provided in the By-laws.

It shall be the prerogative of the congregation at the lawfully called meeting to decide the questions of buying and selling of real property, building projects, and extensive repairs of Church property, the call of a Pastor and the direction of the work of the congregation. For the transaction of all other business, the administration of the Church is entrusted to the Executive Team and other responsible working teams as provided for in the by-laws.

## **VIII MEETINGS**

The congregation shall hold an annual meeting and such other meetings as provided in the By-laws.

## **IX PROPERTY**

The Church may in its corporate name sue or be sued; acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise; own, hold, invest, reinvest or dispose of property, both real and personal, for such work as the Church may undertake; purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for, and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell assign, transfer and convey such property for the general purposes of the Church; 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.

## **X DISSOLUTION**

Upon the dissolution of the Church and after the payment of all liabilities, all of the assets of the Church including any devise, bequest, gift or grant in trust or otherwise, shall be transferred conclusively for the purposes and in such a manner or to such an organization or organizations, organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify for exemption under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

## **XI AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this constitution must be presented in writing at any lawfully called meeting of the congregation. Upon affirmative vote of the majority of the votes cast by the congregation a special meeting shall be called, by giving thirty (30) days, written notice thereof, to consider the proposed amendment. By a two-thirds vote of the members present at the subsequently called meeting of the congregation, the proposed amendment maybe changed, adopted or rejected.



## TRINITY REFORMED UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST BY-LAWS

### A. CONGREGATION

1. The members of the congregation assembled in meeting herein shall be the governing body of the church. (Official members on rolls.)
2. MEETINGS:
  - a. Regular Meeting– Regular meetings of the congregation may be called by the Executive Team. At least 1 annual meeting will be held each year.
  - b. Special Meetings– Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the by the Executive Team, or by a petition signed by at least **10%** of the members of the congregation in good standing. The only business to be conducted at such special meetings is that **specifically identified** in the meeting notice.
3. Ten (10) days written notice shall be given of all meetings of the congregation.
4. All members of the congregation in good standing shall be entitled to vote on any question coming before the congregational meeting.
5. A quorum shall consist of twenty (20) percent of the members in good standing, on church rolls.
6. Any question, motion, or other matter before the congregation assembled in meeting shall be accepted, amended, or rejected by the vote of a majority of the members voting except as follows:
  - The constitution may only be amended as provided in Article XI of the Constitution.
  - These By-laws may only be amended as provided in Section G below.

### B. EXECUTIVE TEAM

1. On or before the last Sunday in June, the President shall open a call for five (5) new Executive team members, one being an Elder or previous member of the Executive Team. Additional nominations and suggestions may be received at the congregational meeting. No nomination from the floor will be accepted unless the nominator has previously contacted the nominee and said nominee has agreed to serve. If multiple, the candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected to the Executive Team. Elections shall be held at the fall Congregational Business meeting.

2. The Executive Team shall consist of the five elected voting members including an elder or previous Executive Team Member, and the Pastor(s) as a non-voting participant.

The terms of the officers shall be one (1) year and they shall be twice eligible for re-election, for consecutive service of up to 3 years. After **3** consecutive terms (**three years,**) a **one year** period must elapse before being eligible for re-election.

3. The Executive Team shall select from among its elected members a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

4. The Executive Team officers shall also act as officers of the congregation and shall preside at meetings of the congregation.

5. The Pastor(s) and Executive Team shall have the authority to create work teams as needed, to which responsibilities for specific matters may be delegated. The members of these committees may serve voluntarily and indefinitely but the members shall be appointed or re-appointed on a yearly basis. These committees shall be dissolved by the Executive Team or the congregation, upon the completion/accomplishment of the purposes for which they were created.

6. The Executive Team shall be responsible for all matters relating to the employment of staff personnel, i.e. compensation, benefits, performance reviews, etc. The Executive Team may appoint and/or employ such employees as they and the congregation may find necessary; said employees shall have the authority and responsibility as delegated by job description.

7. The President with the approval of the Executive Team shall appoint members of the congregation to fill any vacancies that arise.

8. Any motion before the Executive Team shall be approved upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the members voting.

9. The Executive Team in collaboration with the recommendation of the specific working team may authorize any expenditure not exceeding \$4,000.00 and may create any debt not exceeding \$4,000.00 without the approval of the congregation. Any expenditure or creation of debt which exceeds \$4,000.00 shall first be approved by the congregation.

10. The Executive Team and the Budget Planning and Fiduciary teams shall approve an annual budget to be submitted to the congregation for approval at a congregational meeting.

11. The Executive Team and all other working teams shall meet monthly and shall be subject to the call of the President, except upon unanimous agreement of the team members. Meetings are open to the entire congregation.

## C. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. President: The President shall call all meetings to open and conduct such meetings, and see to the execution of all resolutions. The President shall remind the Pastor(s) to announce all regular and special meetings of the Congregation and shall insure that proper notification is carried out. The President is empowered to sign all contracts, loans, and deeds in the name of the congregation.
2. Vice-President: The Vice-President shall preside at all meetings when the President is not present or when business pertaining to the President and the President's administration is before the congregation. The Vice-President shall also endeavor to assist the President in the administration of executive duties. The Vice-President is also empowered to sign all contracts, loans, and deeds in the name of the congregation.
3. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall have charge of all monies for congregational support and benevolences including such monies as may be held in trust funds, endowment funds, memorial funds, etc. The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of all receipts and disbursements, and all financial transactions, subject at all times to inspection or clarification by any member of the congregation. The Treasurer and the Budget Planning and Fiduciary Team shall render a monthly report to the Executive Team and quarterly and annual reports to the congregation. The Treasurer and all Fiduciary Team members shall be bonded.
4. Secretary: The Secretary shall keep a record of all proceedings at the meeting of the congregation and attend to all correspondence on behalf of the Executive Team. The Secretary shall provide for custody and safekeeping of all bonds, mortgages, deeds, maps and other papers and evidences of land and property belonging to the Church. The Secretary is also empowered to sign all contracts, loans, and deeds in the name of the congregation.
5. The President and Pastor(s) are Ex-Officio members of all working committees of the congregation.

## D. ELDERS AS SPIRITUAL COUNCIL

*The Elders shall assist and support the Pastor in the spiritual affairs of the Church. An Elder shall be an example to others, watch faithfully over the spiritual interests of the congregation, and maintain order in the House of God, aid in visiting the sick and minister according to one's ability to the edification and comfort of all members.*

1. The Spiritual Council shall consist of all Elders of the congregation. The spiritual council with guidance from the Pastor(s), shall be entrusted with the spiritual affairs of the congregation. It shall evaluate the membership roles in accordance with the provisions of the By-Laws, and be confidential advisors to/for the Pastor(s).
2. The Elders shall choose a chairperson annually.
3. The Elders/Spiritual Council shall have original jurisdiction in matters of discipline except in the case of the Pastor(s) and employees. It may admit members in full communion and exclude those who may err in the faith or offend in morals. Letters of Transfer may be issued by either the Spiritual Council or the Pastor(s) alone, specifying the congregation to which the person is to be transferred.

The Elders may be called upon by the Executive Team for counsel regarding disciplinary matters related to employees.

4. The Elders or any/all other interested parties may assist the Pastor(s) in the distribution of the elements for the Lord's Supper as requested by the Pastor(s).

5. Meetings shall be held as determined by the Pastor(s) to consider and act upon applications for membership, requests for letters of transfer, and to discuss and devise plans looking towards the deepening of the spiritual life of the congregation. Special meetings may be called at the request of two elders.

#### E. PASTOR(S)

1. It shall be the responsibility of a Search Committee, appointed by The Executive Team to seek a candidate(s) for a vacancy in the office of Pastor(s).

2. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, it shall be reported to the Penn Central Conference Minister.

3. In filling a vacancy or in securing supply ministers for the period of vacancy, the Search Committee may seek the counsel of the Conference Staff.

4. The Search Committee may request the Conference Minister to secure relevant information about any minister whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy.

5. Any minister may confer with the Conference Minister(s) concerning a pastoral vacancy. At that minister's request, his/her name shall be submitted by the Conference Minister for consideration by the local Church committee.

6. The Search Committee shall present to the church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. A favorable vote of the Church constitutes a call.

7. In the call, the terms of the relationship shall be stated, including the agreement of the Church to participate in the UCC Pension Fund and the UCC Insurance Board (the Minister's Health Insurance Program,) and other terms agreed between the candidate and the Committee. The Minister, the Church, the Penn Central Conference, and its Lancaster Association shall each receive a copy of the Call.

8. When a Minister accepts a call to this Church, the Church and the Minister 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 Minister, and copies shall be sent to the Secretary of the United Church of Christ and to the Office for Church Life and Leadership.

9. The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, at least two (2) 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.

10. When either party decides to terminate the relationship, the termination shall be by action of the Executive Team and notice of such termination shall be sent by the President to the Conference Minister and the Association for appropriate action.

11. Discipline of the Pastor shall be in conformity with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.

12. The Church may at its discretion choose an Associate or Assistant Pastor(s), in accordance with the procedures of the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.

13. The Pastor(s) shall keep a record of services performed. The Executive Team will review the record annually. No other ministers shall perform any religious ceremonies in the Church without the consent of the Pastor(s).

14. The Pastor(s) shall keep an accurate record of all baptisms, communions, marriages, deaths and membership. The Executive Team shall review these records annually. All Church records shall be the property and responsibility of the congregation.

## F. MEMBERSHIP

1. **All persons** who have been duly received by confirmation, by letter of transfer, or by reaffirmation of faith, shall be members of this congregation and shall be entitled to all its rights and privileges, including the right to voice and vote in the congregation as well as the right to represent the congregation on working teams or other judicatories of the larger Church.

2. Members shall make a commitment, according to God's grace, to engage in the life and ministry of the Church to the best of their ability. Such engagement is characterized by the following opportunities:

- a. Participate in the Sacrament of Holy Communion
- b. Attend public worship
- c. Contribute financially to the support and benevolence of the Church
- d. Become involved in the ongoing life of the Church.

In addition, members shall pledge themselves to live the Christian life, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

3. Any member may request a letter of transfer. If, because of change of faith or for other reasons a member requests in writing to be released from membership commitment, the Church may grant the request and terminate membership. Such a request shall be reported by the Pastor to the Elders and the appropriate letter of release shall be issued.

4. A person may be removed from the membership roster if:

- a. Death occurs.
- b. A letter of transfer of membership to another church is requested.
- c. The member, after having discussed the circumstances with the Pastor(s) and/or appropriate church leaders, requests in writing to be removed from the membership list.
- d. The member has not had any contact with the Church for two (2) years. "Contact" means having participated in two (2) or more of the items listed in Paragraph 2 of this Section F of these By-Laws.

If there is no contact after a two (2) year period, the Elders are authorized to contact the inactive member by sending a letter asking whether they wish to continue membership in this Church. In the event no intention is declared by a given date, the membership shall be considered lapsed and no longer in good standing.

5. Persons may become Associate Members if they hold membership in another Church and are living in the area. Associate Members will have all the privileges of Church membership *except* the right to vote at congregational meetings, and to be elected to the Executive Team or to represent the Church at Association and Conference meetings.

#### G. CHURCH YEAR

The Church fiscal and governance year shall be from January 1 to December 31.

#### H. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

In all congregational meetings, Working Team meetings and all other Church meetings, The American Parliamentary Standard Code Procedure (2012) shall be followed. The President may present "orders of the day" at the beginning of a congregational meeting which shall be followed in the meeting unless rejected by a majority of those present.

#### I. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these By-Laws must be presented in writing at any lawfully called meeting of the congregation. Upon affirmative vote of the majority of the votes cast by the congregation a special meeting of the congregation shall be called, by giving thirty (30) days' written notice thereof, to consider the proposed amendment. By a two-thirds vote of the members present at any subsequently called meeting of the congregation, the proposed amendment may be changed, adopted or rejected.