

Constitution of Zion United Church of Christ

Article I. Name

The name of this church shall be ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, located at 15 Koenig Circle, in the Town of Tonawanda and the State of New York.

Article II. Purpose

The express purpose of Zion United Church of Christ: to worship God and celebrate the Sacraments; to preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ; to extend loving service to all humankind.

Article III. Covenantal Relationships

As a member of the United Church of Christ, Zion United Church of Christ will relate to the various expressions of the church in a covenantal manner. Zion United Church of Christ will seek God's will and be faithful to God's mission, attending to its responsibilities in relation to all expressions of the church. Its decisions are made in consultation and collaboration with other parts of the United Church of Christ, including its Association, Conference, and the General Synod.

As a member of the Body of Christ, Zion United Church of Christ is called to honor and respect the work and ministry of each other part. Zion United Church of Christ listens, hears, and carefully considers the advice, counsel, and requests of others in this covenant. Zion United Church of Christ joins the various expressions of the United Church of Christ to seek to walk together in all God's ways.

Article IV. Membership

Persons become members of Zion United Church of Christ by: (a) baptism and either confirmation or profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; (b) reaffirmation or re-profession of faith; or (c) letter of transfer or certification from other Christian Churches.

1 **Article IX. Church Meetings**

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3 1. **A regular meeting** of the congregation shall be held in February;
4 congregation shall include all eligible voting members. During the February
5 meeting, reports of activities of all committees and organizations within the church
6 will be presented to the congregation, the congregation will also approve the
7 budget for the forthcoming year and elect members to the Consistory.

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9 2. **Special meetings** of the congregation may be called by the President of
10 the Consistory, a majority of the Consistory, or by petition of 10% of the
11 congregation. Said petition must be presented to the Consistory duly assembled
12 and such special meeting must be held within three (3) weeks after the presentation
13 to the Consistory.

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15 3. **Notices** for regular and special meetings shall be given to the
16 congregation two (2) weeks before the date on which the meeting is to be held.
17 Such notices shall be in writing and shall contain the time, place, and agenda of the
18 meeting. Special meetings shall be limited to the topics outlined in the notice.

19
20 4. A **Quorum** for congregational meetings shall be 10% of the
21 congregation.

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23 **Article X. Rules of Order**

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25 The parliamentary authority for Zion United Church of Christ shall be
26 Robert's Rules of Order.

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28 **Article XI. Amendments**

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30 The Constitution may be amended by a 3/4 affirmative vote of present
31 members in good standing. The By-Laws may be amended by a 2/3 affirmative
32 vote of present members in good standing.

By-Laws

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3 These By-Laws, consistent with the Constitution of Zion United Church of
4 Christ, further define and/or regulate the officers, boards, committees and
5 membership. They also describe its free and voluntary relationship with the
6 Western New York Churches in Covenant, the Western Association, and the New
7 York Conference of the United Church of Christ, with the General Synod of the
8 United Church of Christ, its Executive Council, and the Covenanted, Affiliated and
9 Associated Ministries.

Article I. The Ministry

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13 A Search Committee of Zion United Church of Christ shall be formed to fill
14 pastoral vacancies. The Search Committee shall consist of eight (8) members
15 appointed by the President with the consent of the Consistory.

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17 In filling a vacancy or securing pastoral services during the period of a
18 vacancy, the Search Committee will report the vacancy, and seek the counsel of the
19 Western Regional Conference Minister. The Search Committee will request that
20 the Western Regional Conference Minister secure relevant information about any
21 candidate whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy. The congregation shall call
22 a Pastor who has been approved following the guidelines outlined by the United
23 Church of Christ through the Western Regional Conference Minister. The
24 Congregation shall consider only one candidate at a time.

25
26 The Search Committee will work in conjunction with the Western Regional
27 Conference Minister to obtain approved profiles of candidates. Upon selection of
28 one leading candidate, the Search Committee will submit the profile of the
29 candidate to the Consistory. The Consistory will submit the candidate to the
30 Congregation. The congregation has the sole authority to call its Pastor through
31 election and this right shall never be delegated to individuals, to the church
32 Consistory, or to any committee.

33
34 Proper notification of the trial sermon must be given to all members. The
35 candidate will preach a trial sermon to the Congregation. Immediately after the
36 service, the Congregation shall vote by ballot for or against his/her election. A 3/4
37 affirmative vote will be required to extend a call to the candidate. When a Pastor
38 has been elected, the Consistory President and the Search Committee Chair shall
39 immediately notify the candidate of the results.

1 The church Consistory shall also extend to him/her a written Call, according
2 to the form prescribed by the General Synod. The Call must be confirmed by the
3 proper Conference and Association authorities. In the Call, the terms of the
4 relationship shall be stated, including the agreement of the church to participate in
5 the Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ, the ministers' health insurance
6 program, or other terms agreed upon by the candidate and the committee.
7

8 When an Ordained Minister accepts the call to Zion United Church of
9 Christ, the Minister and Church will join in requesting the Western Association to
10 arrange for a Service of Installation and Recognition.
11

12 If Zion United Church of Christ selects a ministerial leader who does not
13 have standing in the United Church of Christ, the minister will be required to seek
14 Dual Standing from the Western Association.
15

16 Upon assuming the pastoral call, the minister's moving expenses will be
17 borne by the Congregation.
18

19 If serious issues or divisive conflicts arise between the members of Zion
20 United Church of Christ and its pastoral leadership, the Consistory will seek the
21 assistance of the Church and Ministry Committee of the Western Association.
22 Should this committee have reason to question the fitness for ministry of any of the
23 leaders of Zion United Church of Christ, every effort will be made to cooperate
24 fully in the investigation, to remain in covenant with all parties, and to provide the
25 appropriate leadership and nurture for the congregation during and after the fitness
26 review.
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28 When a minister decides to terminate their relationship, notice of the
29 decision is sent to the Conference Minister and Western Association.
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31 When the current Pastor announces their resignation, retirement, or
32 termination, the Consistory will confer with the Western Association to select an
33 interim minister in accordance with the United Church of Christ guidelines.
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Article II. The Consistory

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37 1. The Consistory of Zion United Church of Christ is its primary governing body,
38 accountable directly to the Congregation.
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1 2. The Consistory will have nine (9) voting members and two (2) alternates
2 elected by the Congregation.

3
4 3. Three (3) members will be elected to the Consistory each year and will serve for
5 a three (3) year term for no more than two (2) consecutive terms. After a one (1)
6 year recess they are eligible to again serve on the Consistory. Nominees must be
7 members of the congregation for at least one year and must be at least eighteen
8 years of age.

9
10 4. Two alternates will be elected each year for a one (1) year term to the
11 Consistory. There are no term limits for alternates. Alternates are able to
12 participate but are unable to vote. Vacancies will be filled by the alternates;
13 fulfilling a vacancy will not deem them ineligible for two consecutive term limits.

14
15 5. The Consistory shall organize its governing body (President, Vice President,
16 and Secretary) during its first meeting of March.

17
18 6. The newly elected Consistory members shall be installed after the first
19 Consistory meeting in March, during a regularly scheduled Church Service.

20
21 7. The Consistory shall appoint a Treasurer and a Financial Secretary from outside
22 the Consistory. These terms are indefinite but can be terminated by the Consistory.

23
24 8. The Consistory will meet monthly as needed and no less than nine (9) times a
25 year. A quorum will consist of five (5) voting members.

26
27 9. The Consistory's work will include reviewing, modifying and pre-approving the
28 budget of the church; setting annual mission direction and goals for the
29 congregation; reviewing all Personnel actions; reviewing the work of all
30 committees through the President's Agenda; maintaining a policy manual of all
31 actions established by the Consistory; and taking such action as it deems necessary
32 to promote the mission of the Church.

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34 10. The Consistory will establish task forces when necessary to obtain its goals.

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36 11. The Consistory reports to the Congregation at least annually.

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38 12. The Consistory may authorize and approve any unbudgeted or extraordinary
39 expenditure not in excess of five-thousand dollars (\$5,000).

Article III. Committee Responsibilities

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1. Administration
 - Review and update insurance policies
 - Review and update church and historical records
2. Christian Education
 - Establish a Church School Staff
 - Select and approve Curriculum
3. Church Life
 - Plan lunches and dinners for special occasions
 - Coordinate Coffee Hours
4. Community Coordinators
 - Establish and update calendar of building usage
 - Approve and maintain records of key assignments
 - Update room rental rates and policies, for approval by Consistory
5. Count On Me
 - Provide support services, including meals for members in need, and bereavement luncheons.
6. Finance
 - Shall consist of the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, one Trustee, one or more member(s) of the Consistory, and one or more member(s) of the Congregation.
 - Prepare and present the budget annually at the Congregational meeting.
 - Arrange a bi-annual audit to be done by an outsider and a bi-annual audit to be done by a committee of three church members (appointed by the finance committee) on alternate years.
7. Health Ministry
 - Support the church in efforts to aid members and families during times of stress and crisis.
 - Plan activities to promote healthy lifestyles.
 - Oversee the Parish Nurse Program, which serves the health and spiritual ministries within the church.
8. House and Grounds

- 1 • Is responsible for the care and maintenance of all church property including
- 2 the cemetery.
- 3 • The House and Grounds Chairman supervises the Sexton.

4
5 9. Missions and Outreach

- 6 • Shall be responsible to establish a program in which all members can
- 7 participate in ministry and Christian outreach beyond the confines of the
- 8 Congregation, including United Church of Christ mission programs.

9
10 10. Pastoral-Parish Relations

- 11 • The committee will be selected jointly by the Pastor and Consistory
- 12 President.
- 13 • Provides the means for communication and compatibility between the
- 14 pastor, staff, and members of the Congregation.
- 15 • Together with the Pastor should review the church membership rolls on an
- 16 annual basis to determine which members are inactive and ascertain their
- 17 willingness to maintain membership.
- 18 • The Pastor will make the committee aware of disbursements of the
- 19 Discretionary Fund, *however, church members names will not be disclosed.*
- 20 • Shall maintain strict confidentiality.

21
22 11. Stewardship

- 23 • Is responsible for communicating to the Congregation the requirements for
- 24 fulfilling the mission of the church, including time, talent, and treasure.
- 25 • Shall create a welcoming atmosphere within the church to all people,
- 26 members and visitors.

27
28 12. Worship

- 29 • Is responsible for all groups involved in the conduct of worship including,
- 30 but not limited to, the altar guild, communion stewards, ushers, greeters,
- 31 choirs, and acolytes.
- 32 • With the assistance of these groups they shall assist the pastor in the
- 33 development of all programs and services to enrich the spiritual life of the
- 34 congregation.

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36 13. Memorial

- 37 • Will keep an accurate report of all memorial money and will disburse the
- 38 money for memorial use upon approval of the Consistory.

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1 **Article IV. Board of Trustees**

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3 **A. The Board of Trustees**

4 The Board of Trustees is charged with the care of all Church property, real,
5 personal, or otherwise. To fulfil that purpose, the Board of Trustees shall: manage
6 all endowed funds by ensuring their prudent use and/or investment; insure that the
7 terms of all bequests, legacies, and gifts to the church premises; and provide such
8 funding for Zion UCC missionary works as it sees fit with the regard to the
9 financial stability and needs of the Church.

10 It shall not be the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees to cover operating costs
11 and ordinary maintenance expenses of the Church’s real property. Those
12 responsibilities shall lie with the Consistory Board.

13
14 **B. Election of the Trustees**

15 Trustees shall be nominated by Consistory, and shall be submitted for
16 approval at the first Congregational meeting following nomination.
17 Trustees shall serve a term of five (5) years and may serve no more than three (3)
18 consecutive terms, and may only serve additional terms after a period of at least
19 one (1) year has elapsed since that Trustee last served the board.

20
21 **C. Structure**

22 The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine (9) members, each of whom must
23 be members of the Church, in good standing, for at least two (2) years at the time
24 of election.

25
26 The Board of Trustees shall contain at least one (1) “youth” member under
27 the age of 21. To the extent possible, the Consistory shall strive to ensure diversity
28 of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation of the board consistent with the
29 values of the UCC.

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32 **D. Vacancies**

33 In the event of any vacancy on the Board of Trustees; the Consistory may
34 nominate and install any qualified Church member, who shall serve with all rights,
35 powers, and privileges as a Trustee until the immediately following Congregational
36 meeting, at which time said Trustee shall be submitted to the congregation for
37 approval.

38
39 A Trustee may be removed from office only by a two thirds (2/3) majority
40 vote of the Board of Trustees, or by a two thirds (2/3) vote of Consistory.

1 **E. MEETINGS AND OPERATIONS**

2 The Board of Trustees shall meet no less than nine (9) times a year. Meetings of the
3 Board of Trustees shall be run pursuant to Roberts Rules of Order or such other
4 rules the Board may adopt in the future.

5
6 The Trustee with seniority of service shall serve as Chairperson, and shall be
7 responsible for all Trustee activity and shall direct and Chair all meetings of the
8 Board of Trustees.

9
10 The second senior member shall be the Vice Chair and shall coordinate committee
11 activities and reports.

12
13 The chairperson shall appoint a Secretary who shall be responsible for maintaining
14 all Trustee records and assigning authorship of reports to Trustees.

15 The Board of Trustees shall consist of three (3) sub-committees:

16
17 **Buildings and Grounds:** Shall be responsible for supervising all maintenance
18 and janitorial staff; shall maintain a current plan of maintenance of all Church
19 property.

20 **Missions:** Shall be responsible for assigning funds from the endowment income
21 for the purpose of Zion UCC mission work, and financial transactions for both
22 missions and endowment required expenditures.

23 **Endowment:** Shall consist of the three (3) senior members and be responsible
24 for investing, monitoring, and maintaining all Church gifts, bequests, and
25 legacies and ensuring and conditions imposed by those gifts, bequests, and
26 legacies are observed.

27
28 **F. FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS**

29 The Board of Trustees shall require no authority from the Consistory or
30 congregation to undertake financial transactions of any kind consistent with its
31 responsibilities and obligations under the Zion UCC Constitution. The Board of
32 Trustees must report to Consistory any financial transaction (movement of money
33 within the Endowment Fund) that exceeds the amount of \$5,000.00.

34
35 Any expenditure of endowment funds used to fulfill the purpose of the Board of
36 Trustees including capital improvements and missions exceeding \$10,000.00 must
37 be approved by Consistory. Any such expenditure that exceeds \$25,000.00 must be
38 subject to a Consistory and a Congregational vote.

1 Any expenditure that is deemed a property hazard by the Board of Trustees and the
2 Consistory shall not be subject to Congregational approval.

3
4 Two (2) Trustees' signatures are required to have money withdrawn from the
5 Church's endowment funds. Withdrawals can only be transferred into the Churches
6 checking account.
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9 **Article V. The Pastor**

10 **A. Duties of the Pastor**

- 11 • Conduct services on Sundays and such holidays as have been customarily
12 observed.
- 13 • Direct the work of Religious Education
- 14 • Administer the Holy Sacraments
- 15 • Visit the sick and comfort the distressed.
- 16 • Maintain a record of services performed, making a monthly report to the
17 Consistory and an annual report to the Congregation. The record shall
18 consist of:
19
 - 20 a. Baptisms
 - 21 b. Confirmations
 - 22 c. New Members
 - 23 d. Removals
 - 24 e. Marriages
 - 25 f. Deaths

26 **B. Rights of the Pastor**

- 27 • The Pastor is an ex-officio member of the Consistory, Consistory
28 Committees, and all organizations within the Church.
- 29 • No other minister shall perform any religious ceremony in the Church
30 without the consent of the current pastor.
- 31 • Any time that the pastor will be absent, the pastor will make arrangements
32 for substitutes with the approval of the Consistory President.
- 33 • The pastor will also make arrangements for an 'on-call' pastor in case of
34 emergencies during the pastor's absence; this will also be approved by the
35 Consistory President.
- 36 • If the pastor is incapacitated, the Consistory President will make necessary
37 arrangements.
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2 **C. Suspension or Termination of Service**

3 In order to terminate the service of the Pastor, three months notice shall be
4 given by either the pastor or by the congregation, unless it is mutually agreed to
5 waive said notice.

6 If a minister is suspended by the Church and Ministry Committee
7 (Committee on Ministry), they are immediately suspended without pay from Zion
8 United Church of Christ. If a minister's ordination standing is terminated by the
9 Church and Ministry Committee (Committee on Ministry), the pastor is
10 immediately terminated by the church.

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13 **Article VI. Membership**

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15 **A. Rights of the Members**

16 All members as defined by the Constitution are entitled to share fully in the
17 rites and sacraments, blessings and fellowship of the Church, and the use of the
18 facilities. All members in good standing are entitled to voice and vote and are
19 eligible for Church office subject to office prerequisites.

20
21 Members are entitled to Letters of Transfer by request as long as they are in
22 good standing.

23
24 **B. Duties of the Members**

25 As a member you are promising to participate in the life of the Church with
26 your time, talents, and treasures. You also promise to support the Christian
27 Education of youth and adults, and exercise the above rights.

28
29 **C. Adherence by Members**

30 By accepting and receiving membership in Zion United Church of Christ,
31 Tonawanda, New York, each person agrees and contracts to be bound and
32 governed by the Constitution and By-Laws thereof.

33
34 **D. Discipline**

35 If a member neglects to partake in Holy Communion or does not contribute
36 financially to the Church or is continually absent from worship for one (1) year, the
37 Pastoral-Parish Relations Committee will contact the member.

1 Alcohol, marijuana, or any illegal behaviors are not permitted on church
2 property. Smoking is not permitted within twenty-five (25) feet of any church
3 entrance.

4
5 Gambling is limited to Raffles and Chinese Auctions. All proceeds must
6 benefit the church or church organizations.

7 **Constitution Approved on February 27, 2011**

8 ***Amended March 12, 2023**