

# CONSTITUTION

## ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this Church shall be Zion United Church of Christ.

### **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE, AFFILIATION, DOCTRINE AND QUORUM**

- A. **PURPOSE** – It shall be the purpose of this organization to establish in its community a Christian congregation for worship, to promote the Christian life and to advance the Kingdom of God by all available means, both at home and abroad.
- B. **AFFILIATION** – This congregation shall be an organic member of the United Church of Christ and shall be governed by the constitution, laws and rules of said Church
- C. **DOCTRINE** – The Articles of Faith of the congregation shall be those of the United Church of Christ, of which it is a member.
- D. **MEETINGS** - The congregation shall have an annual meeting and such other meetings as are provided for in the By-Laws.
- E. **QUORUM** - For regular and special congregational meetings, twenty percent (20%) of the active members shall constitute a quorum. A quorum for the call of a minister will require fifty percent (50%) of the active members. A quorum for the termination of a minister shall require fifty percent (50%) of the active members,
- F. **RULES** – In case of dispute, Roberts Rule of Order, Revised shall prevail.

### **ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Persons who have been duly received into its congregation by confirmation, by letter of transfer, or by profession of faith shall be members of this congregation and shall be entitled to all its rights and privileges.

- B.** Active members shall have the right to voice and vote in the congregation and also to represent the congregation or charge on the Leadership Team or other judicatories of the Church as provided in the By-Laws.
- C.** Members who have permanently changed their residence to other cities or communities shall be encouraged by the Pastor to obtain letters of transfer and as soon as possible, unite with another congregation.

#### **ARTICLE IV. SPIRITUAL LIFE TEAM**

- A. SPIRITUAL LIFE TEAM** -The primary role of the Spiritual Life Team is to nurture, guide, and minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation as a whole.

#### **ARTICLE V. LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- A. LEADERSHIP TEAM** -The Leadership Team shall consist of 4-6 members. The Pastor (or Pastors) and Treasurer shall be an ex-officio members of The Leadership Team. It shall have jurisdiction and oversight of the congregation and all of its organizations. The primary responsibility of the Leadership Team is the Vision of Zion UCC. A majority of the total membership of the Leadership Team shall constitute a quorum. It shall be organized as provided for in the By-Laws.

#### **ARTICLE VI. ADMINISTRATION**

- A. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** - The supreme legislative and administrative power of the congregation is vested in the congregation itself, assembled in meeting duly and legally called as provided in the By-Laws.
- B. CONGREGATIONAL PREROGATIVE** – It is the exclusive right of the congregation to decide such questions as the buying and selling of real estate, building projects which alter the Church property, extensive repairs on Church property which exceed Eight Percent (8%) of the total yearly budget or \$5,000 whichever is greater, the call and rejection of a pastor, questions of polity of the congregation as well as amendments to the Constitution or By-Laws. Prior to the determination of any matter

presented to the congregation requiring its attention, such matter will be first presented to the Leadership Team for its consideration and recommendation. Any action taken by the Leadership Team shall be reported to the congregation at the time of such Congregational Meeting. For the transaction of all other business, the administration of the Church is entrusted to the Leadership Team, chosen and composed as provided in the By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE VII. PASTOR**

- A.** The congregation shall elect as a Pastor only a minister who has been recommended or approved by the Congregation's Search Team and the Association and/or Conference of the U.C.C.
- B.** Two representatives from the Leadership Team and two representatives from the Spiritual Life Team shall act as a Search Team on pastoral vacancy and supply when the need arises, with the provision that for this purpose, the Committee's membership shall be augmented by three members from the Congregation-at-large.
- C.** The Search Team shall nominate one candidate approved by the Association and/or Conference for the pastorate to be voted upon by the congregation. The congregation shall consider only one candidate at a time and vote by ballot for or against his/her election. Election shall be upon the receipt of Eighty-Five Percent (85%) of the vote of those present and voting. When a candidate is elected, the Search Team shall then tender him/her a call according to the form prescribed by the Association and/or Conference. The call must be confirmed by the Association and/or Conference.

## **ARTICLE VIII. ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

- A.** When deemed necessary, an assistant or associate pastor may be secured to aid the Pastor in ministering to the needs of the congregation. The congregation shall elect as an Assistant Pastor only a minister who has been recommended or approved by the Congregation's Search Team and the Association and/or Conference of the U.C.C.

- B.** Two representatives from the Leadership Team and two representatives from the Spiritual Life Team shall act as a Search Team on pastoral vacancy and supply when the need arises, with the provision that for this purpose, the Committee's membership shall be augmented by three members from the Congregation-at-large.
- C.** The Search Team, with the approval of the Pastor, shall nominate one candidate approved by the Association and/or Conference for such position to be voted upon by the congregation. The congregation shall consider only one candidate at a time and vote by ballot for or against his/her election. Election shall be upon the receipt of Eighty-Five Percent (85%) of the vote of those present and voting. When a candidate is elected, the Search Team shall then tender him/her a call according to the form prescribed by the Association and/or Conference. The call must be confirmed by the Association and/or Conference.
- D.** An Assistant Pastor when elected shall not be automatically considered a candidate for pastor should the occasion arise.

#### **ARTICLE IX. PROPERTY**

- A.** The congregation may in its corporate name, sue and be sued, hold, purchase and receive title by gift, grant or other conveyance, of and to any property, real or personal with power to mortgage, sell or convey the same.
- B.** In case of a division in the membership of the congregation, both parties shall submit the question of the right to the property to the Association and/or Conference and the decision of said judiciary shall be binding on all members of the congregation.
- C.** In case of dissolution of the congregation, the title to the property shall vest in the Southwest Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ or its successor.

## **ARTICLE X. ORGANIZATIONS**

- A. All organizations are subordinate to the Leadership Team and/or the Spiritual Life Team and shall report to the Leadership Team annually or upon request. Further, they shall report to the congregation at its annual meeting.

## **ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS**

- A. Additions or alterations to the Constitution or By-Laws shall be made in the following manner:
1. Where a proposed constitutional amendment has been recommended by a consensus vote of the Leadership Team and notice has been given to the congregation of such proposed amendment for at least two weeks, the change can then be effected at a duly called meeting of the congregation by two thirds (2/3) vote of the active members present and voting.
  2. Where a constitutional amendment is proposed in a meeting of the congregation without previous reference to the Leadership Team for study, it shall be so referred and reported on at the next duly called meeting of the congregation where the amendment to be adopted must receive two thirds (2/3) vote of the active members present and voting.
  3. The By-Laws shall be amended in the same manner as the Constitution.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

- A. **ZION VISION STATEMENT** – Zion Church is a living Church of hope that passionately shares the saving love of Jesus with all people everywhere by what we say and what we do.
- B. **ZION MISSION STATEMENT** – Our Mission Statement is the way in which we seek to live out the Vision of our Church.
- It is because we believe that people and creation are important to God:
  - We lovingly embrace our neighbor
  - Humbly welcome the stranger
  - Gently encourage the seeker
  - Teach and train the believer
  - Tenderly care for the hurting
  - Practice good stewardship of God’s resources,
  - While prayerfully working to build God’s new world of peace and justice in the here and now
- C. **OBLIGATION TO THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
1. Delegates and alternates preferably members of the Leadership Team or Spiritual Life Team as numerically prescribed by the Constitution or By-Laws of the Assembly, Association or Conference, shall be selected by the Leadership Team at the time the meeting date is announced to represent the congregation, together with the Pastor at the annual or other called meetings of the Assembly, Association or Conference. Expenses of the Pastor and delegates not paid by the Assembly, Association or Conference shall be paid by the congregation.
  2. The congregation shall regularly contribute towards the support of all branches of the United Church of Christ and the Conference according to the recommendations of the General Synod and Conference.

3. The congregation, either through its Pastor or competent officer, shall make such reports to the Conference authorities as may be required of it and in every way submit to just and lawful discipline.
4. Official year of the congregation shall be from January 1 to December 31.

#### **D. PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

##### 1. Privileges

- a. All members are entitled to a full share of the fellowship and the spiritual blessings of the Church and to the service of its Pastor, officials and other workers as well as to the Christian sympathy and support of all members.
- b. All active members of this congregation are entitled to voice, vote and hold office unless otherwise stated in the Constitution or By-Laws.

##### 2. Definition of an Active Member

- a. Active members participate in the life of the church with the following criteria:
  - i. Have attended worship service during the preceding year, or
  - ii. Contributed financially to the support of the church and/or its benevolences, or
  - iii. Served on a ministry team, or
  - iv. Demonstrated loyalty and support in some other manner.
- b. Active members have voting privileges at Congregational meetings and constitute the membership of the congregation used as a basis for establishing a quorum.

##### 3. Categories of Membership

- a. Active members (see 2 above)
- b. Non-Voting member (cannot vote because they have not met active member requirements)
- c. Special Care (home bound, shut in, retain voting privilege)
- d. Exceptions as defined by the Spiritual Life Team

#### 4. Responsibilities

- a. Members are encouraged to live out the Vision and Mission of Zion United Church of Christ.

### **E. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS, VOTING**

1. Annual meeting of the congregation shall be held in the month of January each year.
  - a. At least two weeks' public notice shall be given of the time and place.
  - b. Annual reports, election of members of the Leadership Team and such other items of business that may come before the congregation shall be considered at the annual meeting.
2. Special meetings may be called by either the Leadership Team, Spiritual Life Team or the congregation:
  - a. The call of a special meeting by the Leadership Team or Spiritual Life Team shall require a consensus vote of its members present and voting;
  - b. Upon the written request of Five Percent (5%) of the active members, the Leadership Team shall issue a call for such a congregational meeting within two weeks after the request has been received for a time no later than three weeks after the date the call is issued. Such written request shall state the purpose of the meeting.
  - c. Likewise, the call of a special meeting by the consensus vote of the Spiritual Life Team shall be issued by the Leadership Team to the congregation.
  - d. Two weeks' public notice shall be given of the time, place and purpose of a special congregational meeting unless it pertains to an emergency repair situation. Only such business as has been mentioned in the call may be transacted at such special meeting.
3. Voting – The usual method of voting is by voice vote, use of hands, or by standing vote. However, secret ballot may be used at the discretion of the congregation if so ordered by a majority vote of those present

and voting, except in the call or rejection of Pastor when vote shall be by secret ballot.

## **F. LEADERSHIP TEAM**

The Zion Leadership Team works cooperatively with the Zion Spiritual Life Team. These two bodies are on equal standing within the church structure.

1. Purpose
  - a. The Primary Responsibility of the Zion Leadership Team is the Vision of Zion UCC.
  - b. The guiding questions for this responsibility are:
    - i. Is the Vision still relevant?
    - ii. Does the Congregation understand the Vision?
    - iii. Is Zion living the Vision?
2. In order to fulfill its Primary Responsibility, the Zion Leadership Team:
  - a. Reviews, and approves or denies all requests to form new Ministry Teams.
  - b. Creates and executes an annual action plan for communicating the Vision
  - c. Prepares the annual church budget for congregational approval
  - d. Monitors budget expenditures during the year.
  - e. Approves or denies non-budgeted fund requests, up to \$5000.
  - f. Refers non-budgeted fund requests of \$5000 or more to the Congregation for approval.
  - g. Responsible for the creation of a Church & Ministry/Pastoral Relations Ministry Team. This team is responsible for the management/supervision of all employees including the Pastor(s). Duties will include annual performance reviews (every two years for Pastor(s)) and any recommendations for improvement. The Pastor may confide in members of the Ministry Team for personal issues and those pertaining to church relationships. This Ministry Team will consist of at least 3 members, one of whom is an SLT member and 2 members at large.
  - h. Responsible for posting the ministry team guidelines on the Zion website.

### 3. Leadership Team Organization

- a. The Zion Leadership Team consists of 4-6 people. In addition, the Senior Pastor and Treasurer are ex -officio members of the Leadership Team.
- b. Lay members of the Leadership Team serve a 2-year term, with the option to serve one additional 2-year term (maximum 4 years total). Terms of service will be staggered so that half the members' terms end each year.
- c. A lay member of the Zion Leadership Team who has completed the maximum 2 2-year terms cannot serve on the Leadership Team for at least one year before serving again.
- d. A nominating committee shall be formed consisting of 1 Leadership Team member, 1 Spiritual Life Team member and 1 member from the congregation to prepare a slate of qualified candidates who are willing to serve, for the approval of the Congregation at the annual Congregational meeting. Election of Leadership Team shall be by a majority vote at the Congregational meeting.
- e. Uncompleted Leadership Team terms will be filled by the Leadership Team and confirmed at the next regularly scheduled Congregational Meeting. Any person resigning from Leadership Team before the end of his/her regular term shall submit the resignation in writing to the Leadership Team.
- f. To be nominated for and serve on the Leadership Team, a layperson must:
  - i. Be an active member at Zion, as defined by the Spiritual Life Team.
  - ii. Have actively and continuously participated in a Ministry Team or Fellowship Group for the preceding 12 months.
- g. Leadership Team decision-making is by consensus.
- h. The Leadership Team will unanimously decide upon chairperson, co-chairperson and secretary; the treasurer will serve as an ex-officio member.
- i. Installation of the new members of the Leadership Team as voted in the annual Congregational meeting will be held on a following Sunday.

#### 4. Finances & Contracts

- a. Requests for payment from the General Fund by Ministry Teams for items included in a Ministry Team's congregationally approved annual budget and plan will be submitted by the Ministry Team Leaders on a Check Request Form.
- b. The Leadership Team is also the legal representative of Zion UCC.
- c. Two members of the Leadership Team will sign all legal documents as required.
- d. The Leadership Team will direct the actions of the Church Treasurer in all financial matters and arrange for an annual financial audit by outside party (CPA).
- e. The Leadership Team is responsible for all state/federal government forms required for maintaining the church's 501c status.
- f. Leadership Team members who are Leaders or members of a Ministry Team requesting funds in excess of their congregationally approved annual budget, or contracts beyond their approved annual plan will abstain from the Leadership Team decision on the request.
- g. All bank accounts held by the Congregation or grand fathered groups or Ministry Teams that use the Zion federal identification number, should use the Zion office address for statements and other bank communications.

#### **G. SPIRITUAL LIFE TEAM**

**SPIRITUAL LIFE TEAM** – The Spiritual Life Team shall consist of the Pastor (or Pastors) and any active members of the congregation with spiritual gifts as defined below. The moderator will be the leader of the Spiritual Life Team as noted in 'c'. Minutes of the quarterly meetings must be recorded and forwarded to the church secretary for record keeping.

1. The primary role of the Spiritual Life Team is to nurture, guide and minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation as a whole. The Spiritual Life Team shall exist in an equal, shared partnership with the Leadership Team. A secondary role is to encourage and pray for the work of the Leadership Team.

- a. The Spiritual Life Team will seek input and advice from the Leadership Team as and when necessary for the spiritual well being of the congregation.
- b. The Spiritual Life Team will call the Leadership Team to prayer meetings for the purpose of praying for the needs, direction and vision of the Leadership Team and congregation.
- c. The moderator should be a unanimous decision agreed upon by the SLT members and serve a two-year term.

## 2. Qualities of a Spiritual Life Team Member

- a. Spending time in prayer and modeling a Christian witness.
- b. Praying for the sick.
- c. Watching out for the church in humility.
- d. Watching out for the spiritual life of the flock.
  - i. Baptisms, weddings, funerals, membership (including mentoring).
  - ii. Helping to settle disputes in the church.
- e. All members comprising the Spiritual Life Team will endorse, promote, and seek to live out, to the best of their abilities, the Vision & Mission Statement of the congregation.

## 3. Determination of Service

All persons within the congregation shall, at a minimum, be invited once a year to be a part of the Spiritual Life Team. Members on the Spiritual Life Team may also personally invite members of the congregation to become a member. The Spiritual Life Team will admit a person, an active member, to serve on the Spiritual Life Team upon:

- a. Agreement by the Pastor and active SLT members who have determined, by conversation and interview, that the interested individual meets the above criteria and has the capacity to engage in active ministry
- b. After determining that the individual meets (see #2 above), an offer to serve on the Spiritual Life Team will be made by the Pastor(s).
- c. Installation as an SLT member will occur during worship according to the UCC Book of Worship.

- d. Names of all installed SLT members will be shared at Annual Meeting and submitted to the Church Secretary for record keeping.

#### 4. Length and Effectiveness of Service

The length of service for a SLT member is any length or period of time that an SLT member feels that they can serve the Lord and the congregation based upon their available time and the circumstances of their life. It is accepted by the Spiritual Life Team that times of service may vary for each individual member.

#### 5. Meetings

- a. The Spiritual Life Team will meet quarterly for conversation, prayer, decision-making and training, pertaining to the spiritual life and care of the congregation.
- b. Reports of these meetings, other than confidential matters, will be made available to the congregation.
- c. Additional or special meetings may be held at the call of the Pastor or at the request of the Spiritual Life Team.

#### 6. Responsibilities

The Spiritual Life Team will be responsible for the following areas of congregational life:

- a. Visitation and Care of the Membership.
  - i. Members, other than Special Care, who are absent an extended period of time will be brought to the attention of the Spiritual Life Team.
  - ii. Decision-making pertaining to the admission, attendance, and maintenance of membership will be determined by the Pastor(s) and the Spiritual Life Team. Any changes pertaining to membership will be promptly reported to the Church Secretary for record keeping at least, annually.
- b. Preparation and distribution of Holy Communion.

## **H. MINISTRY TEAMS & FELLOWSHIP GROUPS**

1. All ministry, mission and operations of Zion are performed by Ministry Teams. Each Ministry Team:
  - a. Must submit a “Ministry Team Creation” form to the Leadership Team; the Leadership Team must approve the Ministry Team before it can begin operations.
  - b. Is headed by a Team Leader and an assistant Team Leader who are active members of Zion, and are the contact points for the Ministry Team. (Active member requirements and individual member standing are determined by the Spiritual Life Team.)
  - c. Has a defined scope and purpose that support the Zion Vision.
  - d. Recruits its own members and plans its own work.
  - e. Communicates its plans, programs, needs and successes to the Leadership Team and the Congregation.
  - f. Prepares an annual Funding Request, which is then included in the annual budget that is approved by the Congregation.
  - g. Works cooperatively with all other Ministry Teams.
  - h. Requests approval by the Leadership Team for the expenditure of any funds that are outside the Ministry Team’s approved plan/budget.
  - i. The Ministry Team leaders should report to the Leadership Team twice a year.
2. Ministry Team Leaders can sign contracts (professional services, employee agreements, etc.) for work/projects that fall into their congregationally approved annual plans and budgets, with the exception of bank accounts. Contracts and agreements that are not in the Ministry Team’s approved annual plan and budget must be approved/signed by 2 members of the Leadership Team.
3. Groups and Ministry Teams that have been grandfathered in when the Leadership Team/Ministry Team model is adopted may continue to keep existing separate bank accounts or cash funds, but will not open/create any new ones. Grandfathered Groups and Ministry Teams that keep their own bank accounts will not be funded through the church’s General Fund.

4. Each Ministry Team may organize itself internally (i.e., act as a whole, create sub groups, assign roles within its scope to individuals) as best suits its needs.
5. Ministry Teams and Fellowship Groups may be formed at Zion.
  - a. Ministry teams:
    - i. Must be consistent with the Zion Vision
    - ii. Are approved by the Leadership Team when formed
    - iii. Are funded through the Congregation's General Budget
    - iv. Are expected to justify their ongoing existence to the Congregation. (The primary justification of their existence is their effective and cost efficient contribution to the Zion Vision.)
  - b. Fellowship Groups:
    - i. Must be consistent with the Zion Vision
    - ii. Exist for the fellowship and benefit of their own members
    - iii. Manage their own finances (i.e., may keep their own accounts, raise their own funding, use their funds for their own purposes)
    - iv. Cannot request funds from the General Fund through the Leadership Team.

## **I. TRUST FUND**

A separate Board of five (5) Trustees of the Trust Fund of Zion United Church of Christ is hereby authorized. It shall be elected by the Leadership Team for a term of five years as set forth in detail in the Trust Agreement. This Board of Trustees shall receive, hold and administer all money and property received by gift, devise or bequest for the Trust Fund. It shall report annually or upon request to the Leadership Team and congregation. It shall be governed in all matters by the Trust Agreement.

## **J. PASTOR**

1. Term of Office – The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relation, three (3) months notice shall be given by either Pastor or congregation, unless by mutual consent. Termination of such relation by the congregation shall require a Seventy Five Percent (75%) vote of those active members present and voting.
2. Duties – It shall be the duty of the Pastor to set a good example to his/her congregation and to conduct all services on Sunday, Holy Days and such other days as the congregation may desire, to direct the work of religious education; administer the Holy Sacraments; visit the sick; comfort the distressed; and to perform all such duties as belong to the Pastor's office of the United Church of Christ, or as may appear in other covenants, agreements, job descriptions, as mutually agreed upon by the Pastor, Leadership Team & Spiritual Life Team. He/she shall keep a record of all services performed and make an annual report of his/her work to the congregation.
3. Rights – The Pastor is ex-officio a member of the Leadership Team, its Ministry teams and other auxiliary organizations within the Church. As long as he/she is Pastor, no other minister shall perform any religious ceremony in the Church, or fill the pulpit, without his/her consent. The Pastor's salary shall be paid promptly at least in monthly installments and shall be sufficient to relieve him/her of temporal cares as far as possible and to preserve the dignity of his/her calling subject, however, to the provisions of the contract between Pastor and the congregation. His/her moving expenses, when he/she assumes charge, shall be borne in fully by the congregation.
4. Housing Allowance - The Pastor shall be provided with a housing allowance at the expense of the congregation. He/she shall also be provided with an allowance for sundry items to cover the operation of his/her automobile in his/her ministering to the needs of the congregation. The amount of such allowance shall be at the discretion of the Leadership Team
5. Dispute or Controversy – In the event of a dispute of controversy, which involves the Pastor and congregation or any member thereof,

such matter shall be first brought to the attention of the Leadership Team and Spiritual Life Team. If the Leadership Team and the Spiritual Life Team cannot resolve the matter, it shall then be presented to the proper Association Officer. The congregation shall exercise the final prerogative in matters of this nature.

#### **K. ASSISTANT PASTOR**

1. Term of Office – The Assistant Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relation, three (3) months notice shall be given by either Assistant Pastor or congregation, unless by mutual consent. Termination of such relation by the congregation shall require a Seventy Five Percent (75%) vote of those active members present and voting
2. Duties – It shall be the duty of the Assistant Pastor to aid the Pastor in ministering to the needs of the congregation. The Assistant Pastor shall look to the Pastor for instructions as to any further duties that from time-to-time circumstances may require. Additional duties as described by the Leadership Team and spiritual Life Team.
3. Rights - The Assistant Pastor is ex-officio a member of the Leadership Team, its Ministry teams and other auxiliary organizations within the Church. The Assistant Pastor's salary shall be paid promptly at least in monthly installments and shall be sufficient to relieve him/her of temporal cares as far as possible and to preserve the dignity of his/her calling subject, however, to the provisions of the contract between Assistant Pastor and the congregation. His/her moving expenses, when he/she assumes charge, shall be borne in full by the congregation.
4. The Assistant Pastor may be provided with a housing allowance at the expense of the congregation. He/she shall also be provided with an allowance for sundry items to cover the operation of his/her automobile in his/her ministering the needs of the congregation. The amount of such allowance shall be at the discretion of the Leadership Team

**L. INDEMNIFICATION**

Except as otherwise provided by applicable state statutes, not the “Trustees”, not any member, nor any officer of this “Corporation” shall be liable personally for any error or judgment or for any act or commission in connection herewith except in the case of bad faith, willful misconduct or fraud, nor shall they be liable personally for any debt or obligation of the “Corporation” of any member thereof, and the members shall jointly indemnify each other, the “Trustees”, and the Officers against any liability, loss or damage, except in the case of bad faith, willful misconduct or fraud, attributable to their respective services hereunder.

**M. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

A review of the Constitution and By-Laws should be conducted every seven years.