

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**  
**St. Paul's United Church of Christ**  
**Attica, NY 14011**

**ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this church is St. Paul's United Church of Christ, located in Attica, State of New York.

**ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

The avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God; to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ; to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity within the church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward people; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

**ARTICLE III. COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS**

As a member of the United Church of Christ, St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Attica, New York will relate to the denomination in a covenantal manner. St. Paul's United Church of Christ will seek God's will and be faithful to God's mission, attending to its responsibilities in relation to all covenantal partners. Its decisions are made in consultation and collaboration with other parts of the United Church of Christ, including its Association, Conference, and the Denomination.

As a member of the body of Christ, St. Paul's United Church of Christ is called to honor and respect the ministry of the entire church. St. Paul's United Church of Christ listens, hears, and carefully considers the advice, counsel, and requests of others in these covenantal relationships, with whom we seek to walk and work together in all God's ways.

**ARTICLE IV. FAITH AND COVENANT**

Our statement of faith is that of the United Church of Christ:

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit,  
God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death, and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

Adopted 3/30/2014

## **COVENANT**

We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the word and the will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of God, 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 forebears, 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**

1. Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized; who has had sufficient instruction regarding the meaning and responsibilities of church membership and / or been confirmed; whose name has been presented to the church council; and who makes public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. At the time of confirmation, the Confirmands become members of this congregation.
3. Members shall participate in the life and mission of the family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local congregation as it serves the community and the world.
4. Letters of transfer will be written to another congregation, if requested by the member.
5. The voting age is that as defined by New York State religious law.
6. The membership list shall be reviewed by the Deacons every 3 years. The Deacons and Pastor shall seek to encourage inactive members to maintain their covenantal vows over the next 2 years. At the end of the 2 years, if no involvement has been noted, a letter from the Deacons will be sent asking if they would like to be remain a member or be removed from membership due to inactivity.

## **ARTICLE VI. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

For official congregational meetings, a quorum shall exist of 10% of the members. The vote of a majority of the members present at the meeting shall be the action of the congregation.

## **ARTICLE VII. COUNCIL**

1. The Council shall be the executive body of this church. It shall be composed of the Pastor or Pastors, 6 Deacons, and 6 Trustees. Members shall be elected at the annual meeting. The elected members will serve a 3-year term with 2 new members being elected each year.
2. The Council shall organize itself each year, electing a President and Vice-President. The Offices of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Secretary shall be appointed by the Council and may or may not be members of the Council. The Council shall form such boards or committees as will serve to further the purpose of the church.
3. The Council shall be elected by majority vote cast at the annual church meeting. At least 1 year membership in the church shall be required before a member may serve on the Council.
4. Nominations shall be made for the Church Council by a committee appointed each year by the Council. The Nominating Committee shall instruct the nominees of the responsibilities of the offices for which they have been nominated. The Nominating Committee shall also be responsible for nominating members for the Christian Education Committee, the Memorial Committee, Pastoral Relations, and the Investment Committee. Public notice of such nominations shall be given during the worship service or in the bulletin or newsletter at least 2 weeks before the election. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting at which the election is held.
5. When elected, the Council shall be publicly installed.
6. Vacancies of the Council shall be filled by the Council for the unexpired term. A vacancy is defined as 3 unexplained absences from 3 consecutive Council meetings.
7. The Council shall be the policy-making body and shall transact the business of the church, make provision for the determining and raising of the current expense budget, and provide for the auditing of financials accounts and for the adequate support of the staff. It shall keep a complete and accurate record of its

proceedings, be the custodian of all the church records, and report to the church at its regular and special meetings. All acts and deliberations of the Council are subject to the will of and revision of the governing body. All members of the Council are legal trustees of the church.

8. The Council shall instruct the proper Officers on all fiscal matters, including the payment of bills with monthly review by the Council.
9. The Council shall meet at least once every month, except for the summer recess, for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings are subject to the President's call. A quorum shall consist of 7 members exclusive of ex-officio members.
10. Council meetings are open to all church members. If a members wishes to address the Council, the member should first make their desires known to any Council member, who then informs the Council President. The Council shall be free to exclude any non-Council member from any particular part of the meeting.
11. Deacons are members of the church elected by the church and installed in their Office. They shall assist and support the Pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church. They shall be responsible for the provision of the elements for Holy Communion and shall aid in their distribution. They shall have jurisdiction in matters of membership as explained in Article 5, Section 6. Deacons shall take heed to the high calling of their Office, guarding faithfully all the spiritual interests of the church, visiting the sick, and ministering to the edification and comfort of all. The Deacons shall be concerned with matters of public worship.
12. Trustees are members of the church elected by the church and installed in their Office. They shall hold the care and custody of the property of the church as a sacred trust, whether real or personal, in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and this Constitution and By-laws, and under direction of the Council.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. PASTOR**

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Search Committee, elected by the congregation and following guidelines of the denomination, to seek a candidate for the pastor's position. The name of the person shall be presented to the congregation. A favorable vote of the congregation constitutes a call. In the call, the terms of the relationship are to be clearly stated, including the agreement to participate in the Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ, the health insurance coverage, and other terms agreed upon between the candidate and the committee. The pastor/ teacher, the congregation, and the association committee of Church and Ministry shall each receive and review a copy of the call. When either party decides to terminate the relationship, the termination shall be by the action of the Church Council and notice of such termination shall be sent by the president of the Council to the conference executive and to the association for appropriate action. Either side shall allow 60 days (or a mutually agreed upon time) before employment ceases.
2. The Pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.
3. The Council, after conferring with the Pastor, may at its own discretion, employ an Associate or Assistant Pastor.

#### **ARTICLE IX. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

1. The Christian Education Committee is the policy making for the Church School and the Pre-school. It has jurisdiction in the selection and use of the Church School curriculum, and recruiting and training teachers; adult education and Confirmation.
2. This committee shall consist of 6 members with 2 members being elected at the annual meeting. The elected members shall serve a 3-year term.
3. This committee shall meet on a regularly scheduled basis. A quorum shall consist of 4 members.
4. Vacancies occurring on this committee, other than the normal expiration of terms, shall be filled by appointment by the Church Council. A vacancy is defined as 3 unexplained absences from 3 consecutive meetings.
5. The Christian Education Committee shall elect its own Chairperson and Secretary, and shall keep records of its activities.

## **ARTICLE X. PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

1. The Pastoral Relations Committee supports and maintains an open and healthy relationship between the Pastor and members of the congregation by serving as an advisory group to the Pastor and as support for the Pastor's leadership.
2. The Committee shall consist of the Council President, the Chairperson of the Deacons, and 3 At Large members from the congregation to serve 3 year terms with 1 new member elected each year. Nominations to the committee are made by the Nominating Committee.
3. The Committee shall meet every 3 to 4 months.

## **ARTICLE XI. MEMORIAL COMMITTEE**

1. The Memorial Committee is responsible for the money given to the church designated for memorials. The committee shall consist of 5 members, to serve a term of 5 years with 1 new member being elected each year at the annual meeting. Nominations to the committee are made by the Nominating Committee, to be acted upon at the annual meeting.
2. A record of money given and of the memorials chosen shall be kept.
3. The Memorial Committee shall elect its own Officers.

## **ARTICLE XII. INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**

1. The Investment Committee is charged with the handling of investment funds only. This would entail monitoring the market and making recommendations to the Council regarding both investments and committee functions, for approval and implementation of their decisions. Responsibility for recordkeeping on these investments would be the committee's, so that a comprehensive report could be given at the Council's request. This report will also be made available in the annual report booklet.
2. The Committee shall consist of 3 members from the Congregation to serve 3 year terms with 1 new member elected each year. Nominations to the committee are made by the Nominating Committee.
3. The Committee shall meet as necessary, but at least once per year.

## **ARTICLE XIII. LOCAL MISSIONS**

1. The Local Mission Committee was originally established in 1991. It was one of the ideas generated by monies received from the estate of Robert E. Schnabel. The purpose of this committee was to provide for mission work that was not encompassed in any of our existing mission commitments through the United Church of Christ.

This mission work was to cover items of a local and possible immediate need. Past recipients of these monies have included the Senior Luncheon program, Meals on Wheels, Crossroads House, and families who may have been impacted by fires or other personal tragedies. Those who have served on this committee believe it has been a very important aspect of who we are at St. Paul's.

2. The Committee shall consist of 3 members from the Congregation to serve 3 year terms with 1 new member elected each year. Nominations to the committee are made by the Nominating Committee.
3. The Committee shall meet as necessary, but at least once per year.

## **ARTICLE XIV. PROPERTY**

1. The church may in its corporate name, sue or be sued, acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise, and own, hold, invest, reinvest or dispose of property, both real and personal, for such work as the church may undertake. It may 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. It may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property, and invest and re-invest the same, and make any contracts for promoting the objectives and purposes of the church.

2. Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interest of which it shall then be possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any Will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Western Association of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ.

#### **ARTICLE XV. CHURCH MEETINGS**

1. The annual meeting of the church shall be held in the month of January. At least 1 month notice must be given to the congregation as to the exact time and date of this meeting. This notice shall be given at regular worship services of the church.
2. At least 2 weeks prior to this meeting, the Council, the Officers of the church, the Pastor(s), and all church organizations shall submit their annual reports in writing.
3. Special church meetings may be called by the Council, or by petition to the Council, signed by not less than 5% of the members. The Council shall call such meetings within 3 weeks from receipt of the petition, and adequate notice of such meeting shall be given to the membership by the Church Council. The announcements for special meetings must be given on 2 successive Sundays, during a regular church worship service. This procedure constitutes legal notice. In any special meeting, only such business may be transacted as is specified in the notice.

#### **ARTICLE XVI. 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 or By-laws.

#### **ARTICLE XVII. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this Constitution and By-laws may be made at any duly called church meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of members present, public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) having been made prior to the meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XVIII. REVIEWS**

This Constitution and By-laws must be reviewed every 10 years.