

By-Laws – Adopted 12.4.2022

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# CONSTITUTION

## Article I -- Description

The name of this Church is Clinton United Church of Christ (Congregational), located at 300 Tecumseh Road, in the Village of Clinton MI (49236), operating as an Ecclesiastical Corporation under Michigan Public Act 327 of 1931, hereafter referred to as “the Church.”

## Article II -- Organization

The Church is organized and operated under a congregational system with its affairs managed by the Church members for religious purposes. No part of the net earnings of the Church shall benefit its members, officers, or other private persons except the corporation may pay reasonable compensation for services rendered.

## Article III -- Purpose

Our purpose is to share the Good News through Jesus Christ, in both word and in deed, of God's love for all persons. By worshiping and working together as one body in Christ, we seek to provide a vital ministry of worship, spiritual growth, and outreach which focuses upon God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

We strive to bring all people to God through Christ, exemplify faithful living in our daily lives, and to express God's love in the world. As people of faith, we approach the threshold of the God of Jacob, engaging in mission and ministry, free to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Our mission statement is: “As prayerful disciples of the living God, we are a welcoming community of faith; inspiring in all the love of Jesus Christ and serving our neighbors near and far with compassion.”

## Article IV -- Faith and Covenant

### 1. Faith

The Church acknowledges as its sole head, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior. It acknowledges as kindred 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 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 the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

### 2. Statement of Faith

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,  
to 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.

### **3. 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 worshiping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our ancestors in faith, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the Realm of God and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

#### **Article V -- Polity**

The Church believes in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul and the right to private judgment. We hold to the autonomy of the local church and its independence of all ecclesiastical control outside of itself.

The government of the Church is vested in its Church family who exercise the right of control in all its affairs. All Church activities shall be in conformance with the Laws of the State of Michigan relating to ecclesiastical corporations and with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or any future federal tax code governing nonprofit corporations of this type. Thus, the Church shall not be involved in, or host on its premises, any political or legislative activities.

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

The governing body of the Church is those assembled in a Church meeting. A quorum will be met if at least 51% of those present are church members. Unless otherwise specified, the vote of a majority of those present at the meeting and those submitted electronically is the action of the Church. Any amendment to this Constitution will be in accordance with the By-Laws of the Church.

#### **ARTICLE VII -- Dissolution of the Corporation**

Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Church Council will, after paying or making provision for the payment of all debts, obligations, liabilities, costs and expenses of this corporation, distribute remaining property as follows: 1) property held on a condition requiring return or transfer shall be returned or transferred in accordance with that requirement; and 2) the remaining property shall be distributed to one or more tax exempt purposes as determined by the members.

# BYLAWS

## SECTION 1 – Membership

### 1. Qualifications for Membership

- A. Church membership is open to all faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.
- B. Any person who has been baptized, has been confirmed or instructed, and has made a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, or submitting a letter of transfer, may become a member.
  - a) **Confirmation:** After attending faith-instructional classes and then electing to make a Profession of Faith, a baptized youth may be received into Church Membership through confirmation.
  - b) **Affirmation of Faith:** Affirmation of Faith is a public confession of belief that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. Adults who have never been baptized and/or confirmed may become members through baptism and Affirmation of Faith.
  - c) **Letter of Transfer:** Members of another Christian Church can request a Letter of Transfer from their old church to this Church, upon application to the Minister.
- C. Persons unable to attend Church services because of unique circumstances may be received as determined by the Minister.

### 2. Member Responsibilities

- A. Members are encouraged to:
  - a) Participate in worship opportunities of the Church on a regular basis.
  - b) Participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.
  - c) Contribute to the support and benevolence of the Church.
  - d) Share wholeheartedly in its work.
  - e) Promote its spiritual welfare.
  - f) Encourage others to the Christian way of living by a profession of their faith and inviting them into membership in the Church.
- B. Individuals who are unable or otherwise not in a position to become members of the Church are welcome to participate in all aspects in the life of the Church.

### 3. Rights

- A. All members of the Church will have the right to vote on Church matters and to serve as elected officers.
- B. Under the laws of the State of Michigan, only members who have attained the legal voting age of 18 years will have the right to vote upon questions involving:
  - a) The acquisition and disposition of property.
  - b) The expenditure of money.
  - c) The calling or dismissal of a Minister.
- C. All members of the Church are entitled to a voice at any open meeting of the Church.
- D. All members can, at any time, contact the Minister, Moderator, Pastoral Relations Team, or Council Members-at-large to seek guidance.

### 4. Change in Membership

- A. Membership in the Church may be changed in the following ways:
  - a) Any member may, by personal request, be granted a letter of transfer.
  - b) Any member who desires to withdraw from the Church roll will be granted a letter of withdrawal upon written request.

## SECTION 2 – Minister

### 1. Minister Responsibilities and Duties

- A. The Minister, as Pastor and Teacher, in conjunction with the Worship Team, will oversee the spiritual welfare of the Church and its members. To this end the Minister will:
  - a) Preach the gospel.
  - b) Administer the sacraments and oversee all worship services.
  - c) In conjunction with the Worship Team, shall minister to the sick and those in need.
  - d) Administer the activities of the Church in cooperation with the various Church Teams.
  - e) Present a monthly report of pastoral activities to Church Council and Worship Team.
- B. The Minister is an ex-officio member of the Church Council and all Teams of the Church. The Minister's attendance at Council and Worship Team meetings is expected. Attendance at other Team meetings may be requested.

### 2. Pastoral Relations Team

- A. The Pastoral Relations Team shall promote harmonious relationships between the Minister and the Congregation. The three members of this Team will be members of the Church who are recommended by the Pastor in consultation with and approval by the Worship Team.
  - a) The term of service is two years.
  - b) Members of the initial Pastoral Relations Team for a new Minister may be selected from the Search Team.
- B. This Team will hold regular meetings with the Minister not less than quarterly.
- C. Special meetings may be called by either the Minister or the Team or requested by a Church member.
- D. A list of the Pastoral Relations Team members will be published in the annual directory.

### 3. Evaluation

- A. The Minister will be evaluated annually by the Worship Team. The evaluation will be presented to the Minister by the Worship Leader and Moderator.
- B. A new minister will be evaluated six (6) months after the call.

### 4. Termination

- A. The covenant between the Minister and this Church may be dissolved by either the Minister or at a special meeting by a majority vote of a quorum according to Article VI – Governing Body.
- B. In either case, three months written notice must be given.
- C. In securing pastoral services during the period of vacancy, the Search Team, through the Conference Minister may seek the counsel of the Conference for an interim Minister.

### 5. New Minister

- A. A new Minister will be called at a special meeting by a majority vote of the quorum according to Article VI – Governing Body
- B. In the call, the terms of the covenant between the Minister and this Church will be documented.
  - a) These terms will specify compensation and benefits available for the Minister, such as participation in the UCC Pension Fund on the Minister's behalf, and any other terms upon which agreement between the Minister-candidate and Council has been reached.
  - b) The Minister, this Church, the Covenant Association, and Conference Minister will each receive a copy of the covenant.
- C. When a call has been accepted, the Covenant Association will be requested to arrange for a service of Installation or recognition.

## **SECTION 3 – Church Council**

### **1. Members of the Church Council**

- A. Moderator – two-year term
- B. Assistant Moderator – two-year term
- C. Clerk
- D. Treasurer(s)
- E. Building & Grounds Leader
- F. Worship Leader
- G. Finance Leader
- H. Two (2) Members at Large – two-year term
- I. A quorum will consist of a simple majority

### **2. Responsibilities**

- A. The Council, with the help of God, is charged with guiding the Church toward a sustainable future.
- B. Council will meet monthly or any other time by special call of the Minister, the Moderator, the Assistant Moderator or any four Council Members.
- C. All meetings of the Council are open meetings.
- D. Executive session (a discussion which is not open to the general membership) may be called by a majority vote of members present.
- E. No action, including discharge or discipline, may be taken while in Executive session.
- F. Any member of the Church family may attend any Council meeting and may participate in any and all discussions but has no voting privileges.
- G. Council will assume final responsibility for the performance of all Teams and Officers of the Church. The Council may assign various responsibilities among the Teams and Officers when such assignments do not conflict with this Constitution and By-laws.
- H. Council may appoint Ad-Hoc teams as needed.
- I. Vacancies in all Offices or Teams may be appointed by the Council.
- J. Council is empowered to clarify and interpret the provisions of the Constitution and By-laws.
- K. Council is responsible for hiring, reviewing, and termination of all paid personnel in consultation with the appropriate Team and make recommendations based upon the evaluations. An Executive Session is required for discussion of employee issues.
- L. Council shall appoint a Response Team to handle any alleged violations of the Safe Church Policy.
  - a) This Team shall consist of three to five members, to include both males and females, none of whom are involved in the complaint.
  - b) The Response Team shall be joined by the Moderator unless the complaint involves him or her. In this case, the Assistant Moderator shall join the Team.
  - c) The Response Team shall present the findings of their investigation to the Council. The Church Council shall make the determinations and take action appropriate to address the matter.
- M. Council will oversee the receipt and disbursement of all funds required for the corporate life of the Church. Only Council has authority for expenditures in excess of \$3,000.00 or purchase of real property and has the right to request the Buildings & Grounds Team to seek bids for a project.
- N. Council will review the Constitution and By-laws and recommend changes for presentation to the Church family.
- O. The Council may, at its discretion, vote to present special recognition to anyone who has given outstanding service to the community and/or the Congregation.
- P. Select, supervise, and evaluate all paid employees, with the exception of the Minister and Treasurer(s), in conjunction with the Minister and appropriate Team.

## **SECTION 4 – Duties of the Officers**

### **1. Moderator's Duties**

- A. Guide the Church in a manner that promotes harmony and good will and work with Council toward a sustainable future.
- B. Preside at all meetings of the Church Council, and of the Congregation.
- C. Oversee day to day operation of the Church in the absence of the Minister.
- D. Call special meetings of any Team as necessary.
- E. Together with the Finance Leader, evaluate the Treasurer(s)' performance annually.
- F. Together with the Worship Leader, present to the Minister a performance evaluation, prepared by the Worship Team, annually. Records will be retained in the Church office.

### **2. Assistant Moderator's Duties**

- A. Perform all duties of the Moderator in the absence of the Moderator.
- B. Represent Moderator as Ex-officio of any Team as requested.
- C. Preside over meetings when business pertaining to the Moderator is before the Congregation or Council.
- D. Assist the Moderator when requested.
- E. Advance to the office of Moderator after serving as Assistant Moderator.

### **3. Clerk's Duties**

- A. Keep a faithful record of proceedings of the Church and Council.
- B. Maintain a record of all Congregation Meetings on an annual basis.
- C. Verify the accuracy of all records of Church marriages, births, deaths and baptisms, maintained by the Church Secretary.
- D. Maintain the Official Church Constitution and By-Laws to be stored in the Secretary's office.
- E. Present minutes of congregational meeting to the next council meeting for acceptance.
- F. Final approval of congregational meeting minutes will be available at the next Congregation meeting.

### **4. Treasurer(s)' Duties**

- A. Receive all tithes, offerings, gifts, dividends, interest income and proceeds from sales.
- B. Disburse monies for expenses of real or personal property:
  - a) Approved by established budget.
  - b) Expenditures less than \$3,000.
  - c) Expenditures approved by Council.
- C. Keep a complete record of such receipts and disbursements.
- D. Prepare monthly reports detailing income, expense, and balance for each of the Church's accounts.
- E. Publish and discuss these reports at regular monthly meetings of the Council.
- F. Prepare a report for review at the Annual Meeting.
- G. Compile annual individual giving records for regular attendees, keeping all giving records confidential. Year-end giving records will be postmarked by January 31 of each year.
- H. Serve on the Finance Team.
- I. Meet with Moderator and Finance Leader for an annual performance evaluation.

### **5. Auditor(s)' Duties**

- A. Audit and verify the accounts of the Treasurer monthly.
- B. Report to the Council as deemed necessary.
- C. Submit an Annual Report to the Church Secretary by January 10.
- D. Serve on the Finance Team.

## **6. Members at Large Duties**

- A. Be alert to the concerns and wishes of the church family and be willing to take issues to Council as requested.
- B. Attend Council meetings monthly or as scheduled.
- C. Communicate Council responses to the church family.

## **SECTION 5 – Teams**

### **1. Teams will be as follows:**

- A. Buildings & Grounds Team will ideally be six appointed volunteers.
- B. Worship Team will ideally be six appointed volunteers.
- C. Finance Team will ideally be two appointed volunteers. The Treasurer(s) and Auditor(s) are voting members of the Team.
- D. Ad-Hoc Teams, including Christian Education, World Missions & Christian Concerns, Music, Fellowship, Memorial, and Nominating, will be established by the Council as deemed appropriate. The Council shall appoint the Teams and Leaders of any Ad-Hoc Team and provide direction for the Team.

### **2. Each Team will consist of:**

- A. Team Leader who will be elected at the Annual Meeting and serve on Council for a term of two years. The Team Leaders must be a member of the church. If the Team Leader is unable to serve on the Church Council, another volunteer from the Team will be appointed who must be a member of the church. The Team Leader will call meetings when deemed necessary or when requested by the Moderator or Council.
- B. Recording Secretary will volunteer from the members of the Team. The Recording Secretary will record the minutes of all meetings. The approved minutes will be submitted to the Church Secretary for record keeping.
- C. Members of the Team will be appointed at the Annual Meeting and encouraged to serve a minimum of one year.

### **3. Responsibilities of the Building & Grounds Team:**

- A. Be responsible for the care and custody of all property of the Church (except music).
- B. Review and recommend actions on all property improvements.
- C. Obtain Council approval for improvements not included in the annual budget.
- D. Purchase, sell, or transfer real or personal property of the Church and obtain Council approval for real estate transactions and all expenditures in excess of \$3,000.
- E. Recommend selection, provide direction to, and offer feedback to custodial staff.
- F. Prepare an annual report of actions taken, expenditures, and pending actions.
- G. Submit an Annual Report to the Church Secretary by January 10, which summarizes Team activities for the preceding year.
- H. Submit a budget request, if needed, to the Finance Team by October 15.

### **4. Responsibilities of the Worship Team:**

- A. Tend to the spiritual well-being of the Church family in conjunction with the Minister.
- B. Fill the pulpit in the absence of the Minister.
- C. Establish the time of Church services.
- D. Approve all cooperative services with other churches.
- E. Oversee in the preparation and administration of the sacraments. Be responsible for the care of the elements and communion service.
- F. Appoint a Pastoral Relations Team in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.2, Pastoral Relations Team.



- G. Take an active interest in the sick and those in need.
- H. Evaluate the Minister once each year.
- I. Submit an Annual Report to the Church Secretary by January 10, which summarizes Team activities for the preceding year.
- J. Submit a budget request, if needed, to the Finance Team by October 15.

**5. Responsibilities of the Finance Team:**

- A. Review the budget and financial health of the Church.
- B. Monitor financial transactions and propose changes as warranted.
- C. Monitor the audit process and propose changes as warranted.
- D. Review budget amendments and offer a recommendation to Council.
- E. Prepare an annual budget for Council approval by November 1 each year.
- F. Recommend salary adjustments for Council approval.
- G. Present the budget to the Congregation by the second Sunday of December for approval.
- H. Assist in fund-raising activities of the Church.
- I. Monitor the performance of invested funds and Capital Improvement.
- J. Recommend improvements to the Church investment policy.
- K. Assist any Pastoral Search Team.
- L. Arrange for appropriate Worker's Compensation and other insurance pertaining to employees of the Church.
- M. Arrange for appropriate property insurance for the Church.

**SECTION 6 – Endowment Fund**

The Church maintains an Endowment Fund whose purpose is to sustain the mission of the Church. The assets of the Endowment Fund shall be managed as stated in the Endowment Agreement and all assets of the fund shall be held in the name of the Church. Assets contributed to the Endowment Fund shall be invested and only the earnings shall be used to sustain the mission of the Church.

**SECTION 7 – Meetings**

**1. Meeting Notice**

- A. All Congregational meeting notices shall specify the time, place, and purpose. The Notice shall be sent to the Church family by the Church Secretary either electronically or by mail, at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

**2. Annual Meeting**

- A. Annual Meetings should be held by the next-to-last Sunday in January at a time and place designated by the Church Council. At this meeting the annual reports of the Teams will be presented, Officers will be elected, and other business shall be transacted as needed.
- B. All reports made at the Annual Meeting will be in writing and for the preceding fiscal year.
- C. Installation Sunday should be held by the Sunday following the Annual Meeting.

**3. Budget Meeting**

- A. A meeting to approve the budget for the coming year should be held by the second Sunday of December of each year.

#### **4. Special Meetings**

- A. Special Meetings will be called in the same manner specified above for the calling of an Annual Meeting upon request of the Minister, the Church Council or the written application of any ten qualified voting members presented to Church Council.

#### **SECTION 8 – Rules of Order**

All business meetings are to be conducted according to "Robert's Rules of Order."

#### **SECTION 9 – Amendments**

This Constitution and By Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the quorum according to Article VI – Governing Body at any Congregational meeting called for that purpose with proper notice having been given as required by Section 7.1.