

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS FOR
DREISBACH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(As amended March 13, 2016)

ARTICLE I. NAME

1. The name of this church shall be Dreisbach United Church of Christ located in Buffalo Township, Union County, in the State of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

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

ARTICLE III. POLITY

1. This Church shall be a part of the United Church of Christ and it shall sustain that relationship to the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ adopted July 4, 1961, relating to local churches.

2. The government of this Church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to the Laws of the State of Pennsylvania relating to corporations not for profit of ecclesiastical corporations.

ARTICLE IV. FAITH AND COVENANT

Faith – This Church “acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of humanity. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and 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 accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among Protestant Christians, it recognized two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper or Communion.” (From the preamble of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.)

Our expression of this faith is the “Statement of Faith” which was approved by the Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ held in Oberlin, Ohio, July 5-9, 1959, and submitted to the Synods, Conferences, Associations, and churches for their approval and use. (The General Synod encourages this use of the Statement of Faith in congregational worship, in private devotions and for purposes of study.)

Covenant – We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. 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 and has been confirmed or has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

2. There shall be three categories of membership.

a. **Active Members:** Active members are those who regularly attend worship services of the church, celebrate the Lord's Supper, live the Christian life, share in the life and work of the church, contribute to its support and benevolence, and seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community. Those who fulfill these responsibilities shall be entitled to vote at all meetings of the congregation, if present, and shall enjoy full privileges of membership in this church. Members who are homebound or in a nursing home or in the military or college students will also be considered active members.

b. **Inactive Members:** A member whose address is unknown, or who, for a period of three years, has not met the responsibilities of active membership as stated in Article V, Section 2a, may, on a vote by the Consistory be removed from the Active Membership Roll and placed on an Inactive Membership Roll. These members do not have voting rights, are not counted statistically, and are not entitled to other privileges of church membership.

c. **Non-resident Members:** Any person who lives at a distance from the congregation so as to make it impossible or impractical to meet the active membership responsibilities and who wishes to keep their "home church" ties, will be put on a Non-resident Membership Roll. These members do not have voting rights, are not counted statistically, and will receive other privileges of church membership at the discretion of the Pastor and church officers and/or according to printed church policies (such as for weddings and funerals).

3. Any member may, on his/her own request, be granted a letter of transfer. If wishing to join a body not in fellowship with this Church, s/he may be granted with a certificate of Church membership, which will be mailed to the pastor of the Church to which s/he is joining.

If, because of change of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct, a member requests in writing to be released from her/his membership obligations, the congregation shall patiently endeavor to secure his/her continuance in its fellowship; but failing in such effort, the congregation may grant the request and terminate her/his membership. Such a request shall be approved by the Pastor and the Consistory, and letter of release shall be issued.

4. If a member persistently breaches his/her covenant vows, the Elders and/or Deacons, after due notice has been given to her/him, a hearing before the Consistory has been offered him/her, and faithful efforts have made to bring her/him to amendment in accordance with the law of Christ, may censure him/her, or suspend or terminate her/his membership.

ARTICLE VI. GOVERNING BODY

1. The governing body of this Church shall be the membership assembled in a congregational meeting. The vote of a majority of members present at the meeting shall be the action of the Church. A quorum shall consist of 10% of the active membership roll.

ARTICLE VII. CONSISTORY

1. The Consistory shall be the executive body of this Church. It shall be composed of the Pastor, the Elders, Deacons, the Trustees, and Youth Representative. One-half of its members shall constitute a Quorum.

2. The Consistory shall organize itself each year, electing these officers: a President, a Vice-President, and a Secretary and shall form such boards or committees as will serve to further the purpose of the church. The Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary shall be elected from either the Consistory or the congregation.

3. The Consistory shall elect three (3) members to the Cemetery Board. One member shall be elected each year for a period of three (3) years. The member shall abide by the constitution and/or by-laws of the Cemetery Association until such time as the Constitution of Dreisbach United Church of Christ and the Cemetery Association is terminated.

4. Three (3) Elders, six (6) Deacons, and three (3) Trustees shall be elected by a majority vote cast at a congregational meeting. They shall be elected for one term, a period of two (2) years. When a member's term expires, his/her name may be placed on the ballot and s/he may be re-elected for a second term. After a member has served for two terms, a period of four years, s/he may not serve on the Consistory for a period of one (1) year.

The Youth Representative shall be a member of the congregation, and be elected by a majority vote cast at a congregational meeting. S/he shall be elected for a two (2) year term and shall be a voting member of the Consistory.

5. Nominations shall be made for the offices of Elder, Deacons, and Trustees by a committee appointed each year by the Consistory or elected by the congregation at a previous annual meeting. The Youth Representative to the Consistory shall be nominated by the Youth Fellowship with the candidate(s) to be voted on by the congregation. Public notice of such nominations shall be given from the pulpit, bulletin, or monthly newsletter at least two weeks before the election. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting at which the election is held.

6. When elected, the Elders, the Deacons, the Trustees, and Youth Representative shall be publicly installed in their respective offices. When installed, they will constitute the executive body, each having an equal vote.

7. Vacancies on the Consistory shall be filled by the Consistory for the unexpired term.

8. The Consistory 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 as well as for the reviewing for accuracy financial 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 Church records, and report to the congregation at its regular and special meetings. All acts and deliberations of the Consistory are subject to the will of and revision by the governing body.

9. The Consistory shall instruct the proper officers on all fiscal matters, including the payment of bills, with monthly review by the Consistory.

10. If any one expenditure exceeds \$5,000.00, the Consistory must receive the approval of the congregation. However, in the event of an emergency and repairs are immediately needed to the building, the Consistory is authorized to make these necessary repairs.

11. The Consistory shall appoint committees as it may deem necessary, review committee structures annually, and appoint new committee members as needed.

12. The Consistory shall meet at least once every month for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. (Meetings normally should include prayer and study and should emphasize policy deliberations.) Special meetings are subject to the President's call.

13. The Elders are members of the congregation, elected by the congregation and ordained to their office. Elders assist and support the Pastor in the spiritual affairs of the Church. They serve as examples to others and watch over the spiritual interests of the Church, maintain order in the Church, organize the visitation of the sick, and edify and console all members. Elders provide the elements for the Lord's Supper and, when invited by the Pastor, aid in their distribution.

14. The Deacons are members of the congregation elected by the congregation and installed in their office. Deacons assist and support the Pastor in promoting the general welfare of the Church, ensuring tithes and offerings are appropriately accounted for and distributed, maintaining information about attendance at services, developing the annual budget, leading the congregation as it reaches out to those in need, and, in consultation with the Pastor, overseeing the work of paid staff (not including the Pastor).

15. Trustees are members of the congregation elected by the congregation and installed in their office. They shall have 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 Consistory.

16. The Youth Representative shall be a member of the congregation, elected by the congregation and installed in their office. The Youth Representative shall represent the voice of the youth of the Church in the deliberations of the Consistory.

ARTICLE VIII. PASTOR

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Search Committee consisting of seven active members, appointed by the Consistory, to seek a candidate for the vacancy in the office of Pastor.

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

3. In filling a vacancy or in securing interim ministers for the period of vacancy, the Consistory must seek the counsel of the Penn Central Conference and follow the procedures of the United Church of Christ.

4. The Search Committee shall present to the Church the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. A favorable vote of the majority of the active membership of the Church constitutes a call.

5. In the call, the terms of the relationship shall be stated, including the agreement of the church to participate in the Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ, United Church of Christ Insurance Boards, and other terms agreed between the candidate and the Search Committee. The minister, the Church, the Association, and the Conference Minister shall each receive a copy of the call.

6. When a minister accepts a call to the Church, the congregation and s/he shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation or recognition. A report of this service shall be signed by the proper officer of the Association and by the Conference Minister.

7. The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, sixty days notice shall be given by each party or altered by mutual agreement. The procedure shall be in accordance with the policies of the United Church of Christ.

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

9. The congregation may, at its discretion, choose an Associate Pastor(s).

ARTICLE IX. 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 and 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 reinvest the same and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the church.

2. In the event of dissolution of the Church, its assets and all property and interests 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, made before or after such dissolution, may be transferred to Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ or other Christian organization as determined by the active membership.

ARTICLE X. CHURCH MEETINGS

1. The Annual Meeting of the congregation shall be held in the month of January. At this meeting, the Consistory, the officers of the church, the Pastor(s), and all church

organizations shall submit their annual reports in writing. The books and records of all officers, classes, committees, groups, etc., shall be reviewed annually for accuracy.

2. Special congregational meeting(s) may be called by the Consistory or by a petition of no less than ten (10) percent of the active membership to the Consistory. The Consistory shall call such meetings within three weeks from receipt of the petition, and adequate notice of such meetings shall be sent to the membership by the Secretary.

ARTICLE XI. RULES OF ORDER

1. *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS

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