

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, SHERBURNE, NEW YORK**  
**BYLAWS**

Article I. NAME

The corporate name of the church is the “United Church of Christ, Sherburne, New York”. For all other banking , government-related and church matters the name of the church will be the “Sherburne United Church of Christ” in order to differentiate this church from other United Church of Christ organizations.

Article II. MISSION

The mission of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God and in making God’s will dominant in the lives of people, individually and collectively, especially as that will is set forth in the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Article III. POLITY

This church acknowledges Jesus as its head and finds in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Divine Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience, its guidelines in matters of faith and discipline.

The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted it by the Secretary of the State of New York.

While the church is amenable to no ecclesiastical judicatory, it accepts the

covenantal obligations involved in free fellowship of the United Church of Christ churches, and pledges itself to share their common aims and work.

#### Article IV. DOCTRINE

This church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, and believes that we are called by God to live in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ. All members shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The following statement of faith, therefore, is not a requirement for membership but an expression of the spirit in which the church interprets the Word of God.

### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STATEMENT OF FAITH

Adapted by Robert V. Moss

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify:

God calls the worlds into being,  
creates humankind in the divine image,  
and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord,

God has come to us  
and shared our common lot,  
conquering sin and death  
and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

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

God calls us into the church  
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,  
to be servants in the service of the whole human family,  
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.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel  
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,  
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,  
the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing,  
and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.

Amen.

## Article V. MEMBERSHIP

The members of this church shall be persons who have been recommended by vote of the Diaconate and who publicly accept the church's mission as set forth in Article II. The Pastor shall present prospective members to the Diaconate. The Diaconate shall consider in its recommendation the following: (a) presentation of satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches; or (b) if letters are not available, reaffirmation of faith; or (c) confession of faith and baptism.

1. RECEPTION. Persons approved by the Diaconate shall be received at a regular service of the church according to the United Church of Christ Book of Worship.

2. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS. Persons wishing to retain membership in another denomination may also join the United Church of Christ, Sherburne, New York, as Associate Members. Said persons shall have full privileges of membership.

3. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP. The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles and usage of the United Church of Christ churches, and particularly as follows:

(a) An active member is defined as one who takes part in our church by: (1) attending a church service at least once a year, (2) receiving Communion within the last year, or (3) supporting the church financially.

(b) Any member in active standing who desires a letter of transfer, or termination, with or without recommendation to another church shall, upon request,

be entitled to receive said letter with notification to the Diaconate.

(c) Members whose addresses have long been unknown or who for a period of two years, in spite of contact by the church, have not communicated with the church or contributed to its support, may on recommendation of the Diaconate and Pastor to the Executive Committee, be transferred to an inactive list. From the date of transfer such person shall cease to be reported on the active membership roll.

## Article VI. SERVICES AND MEETINGS

### 1. WORSHIP

(a) Services of worship shall be held at given hours each Sunday, except when temporarily suspended by vote of the church or suspended in case of emergency by the Executive Committee or Pastor.

(b) The sacraments. The sacrament of Communion shall be celebrated as the Diaconate shall determine. Communion is open to all. The age at which a child partakes of communion shall be at the discretion of the child's parent/s or guardian. The baptism of adults and children shall be administered at such time as the Pastor or, in his/her absence, the Diaconate may schedule.

(c) Other services of worship, inspiration, prayer and study may be held as determined by the Diaconate and/or the Pastor.

### 2. BUSINESS MEETINGS

All committee meetings shall require a quorum. A quorum shall consist of a

simple majority of the total membership of the committee. A voter must be a church member. All voting, unless otherwise specified, shall require a majority vote of those present.

(a) ANNUAL MEETING. The annual meeting will be held on the first Sunday following the 14th of January, or as determined by the Executive Committee. All boards and committees shall provide a written report to be presented at the Annual Meeting. The church Moderator will call the meeting to order.

Suggested Agenda:

1. Open meeting with prayer
2. Clerk read minutes of last Annual Meeting and any special meetings
3. Approval of minutes with corrections or additions.
4. Treasurer's report
5. Stewardship chairperson's report
6. Financial audit report
7. Report of the Board of Trustees and committees
8. Report of Diaconate and committees
9. Report of Missions Committee
10. Report of Pastor-Parish Committee
11. Report of Women's Fellowship
12. Report of Pastor
13. Election of new officers

Procedure:

1. Slate from Nominating Committee
2. Other nominations

3. Ballot
4. Recognition of new members
5. Memorial silence for members who have died
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment with prayer

(b) BUDGET MEETING. A meeting of the church for the proposal, discussion and adoption of a budget for the ensuing fiscal year shall be held before the Stewardship Campaign on the second Sunday of November. At this meeting the church shall receive proposals through the Board of Trustees for the budget for the ensuing year. Approval of the budget shall be by secret ballot and require a two-thirds affirmative vote of members present at the meeting.

All committees of the church requiring church funds for their operation are required to submit to the Board of Trustees a written budget item giving full details of proposed expenditures before the September meeting of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall examine these requests and confer as necessary with heads of committees regarding their inclusion in the overall budget at its September meeting. The Treasurer shall give a report at the budget meeting comparing the expenditures to date with the approved budget for the year.

(c) SPECIAL MEETINGS. Special meetings for business may be called by the Pastor, the Executive Committee, or by petition of 20% of the active membership. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in the call and must be announced from the pulpit at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the

meeting.

(d) EMERGENCY MEETINGS. An emergency meeting may be called by the Moderator and/or Pastor without the required 2 weeks notice.

### 3. EDUCATION

Christian education shall be a high priority of this church. Direction for said Christian education shall be provided by the Diaconate and the Pastor. The church will seek to establish several levels of Christian education including: Sunday School, Adult Education, and Confirmation classes.

## Article VII. BOARDS/COMMITTEES

All board terms shall be three years. A member may serve two consecutive terms. After serving two full terms, a member shall be ineligible for one year. No member's term shall be longer than seven years. With the exception of the Pastor, officers and members of boards and committees shall be active church members for at least one year.

All board and committee meetings shall require a quorum. A quorum shall be defined as one more than half of the total membership of a committee. The Pastor shall serve as an ex officio member of all standing boards and committees.

1. DIACONATE. The Diaconate are spiritual lay leaders of the church. It shall be the duty of the Diaconate to cooperate with the Pastor in ministering to the spiritual interests of the church and community. They will assist the Pastor in all aspects of

worship, including the preparation and administration of the sacraments. In cooperation with the Pastor, they shall have sole jurisdiction in administration of Diaconate funds. They shall receive applications by letter, or otherwise, for admission to church membership on confession of faith. They shall make an annual survey of the church roll. They shall provide for the supply of the pulpit in case of vacancy and in the absence of the Pastor. They shall provide for the welcoming of members and guests of the church and for suitably trained officers for all its services. The Diaconate will appoint a superintendent of the Sunday School who will be chairperson of the Education Committee and will serve on the Executive Committee.

The Diaconate shall consist of nine members, three of whom shall be elected annually. The Diaconate shall organize by the election of its own chairperson, secretary, and such officers or subcommittees as it may ordain. The chairperson will automatically serve on the Executive Committee. If unable to attend an Executive Committee meeting, the chairperson will appoint a member of the Committee to represent the Diaconate.

2. BOARD OF TRUSTEES. The Board of Trustees shall have the care and custody of the property of the church and have charge of its financial affairs subject to the regulations prescribed by the laws of the State. The Board shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer real property valued in excess of \$2,500 without approval of the Executive Committee. Emergency expenditures that exceed \$2,500 require notification and consultation with members of the Executive Committee.

If yearly expenditures exceed line items in the Budget, they need to be

approved by the Executive Committee. A non-budgeted expenditure of \$10,000 or more needs to be approved by the congregation in a special meeting called by the Executive Committee.

The Trustees and Executive Committee will work in tandem to secure funding for projects that the Executive Committee deems necessary.

All committees of the church requiring church funds for their operation are required to submit to the Board of Trustees a written budget item giving full details of proposed expenditures before the September meeting of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall examine these requests and confer as necessary with heads of committees regarding their inclusion in the overall budget at its September meeting. The Treasurer shall give a report at the budget meeting comparing the expenditures to date with the approved budget for the year.

The Board shall employ a sexton who shall be responsible to and under the direction of the Pastor and the Board.

The Board of Trustees shall consist of the non-voting Treasurer of the church who is elected and six other members, elected for terms of three years in such manner that the term of two members shall expire annually. The Board of Trustees shall meet regularly each month and special meetings may be called as provided by the Board. A quorum of voting members shall be required to transact business.

The Board of Trustees shall organize by the election of its own chairperson, who shall automatically serve on the Executive Committee with a Board-appointed alternate to serve in the chairperson's absence. Any vacancy on the Board may be filled by the remaining Trustees until the next Annual Meeting of the church.

### 3. MISSIONS COMMITTEE.

Mission Statement: Being called by Christ to serve others in the world, we the Missions Committee of the United Church of Christ in Sherburne, New York, are empowered to minister to the spiritual, emotional and other needs of the people in our community and the larger world.

Goal: To provide leadership in empowering the congregation to do outreach ministry in the community and the world.

Purpose: To assess the needs of individuals and families in the community and determine in what manner and to what degree the United Church of Christ in Sherburne, New York, can address those needs by: providing financial assistance, providing basic necessities, and helping people to discover other available resources. The Committee will also promote hands-on mission activities, financial assistance, and supplies on a global basis.

The Missions Committee shall be composed of seven members. There shall be two officers: a chairperson and a secretary. These officers shall be selected annually by the members of the Committee at the first meeting of the new year. A quorum of four shall be required for approval of expenditures.

The chairperson shall provide overall leadership to the Committee. The chairperson shall be responsible for preparing and distributing an agenda for each meeting, provide guidance and direction at meetings, assign duties to members, and establish meeting dates. The chairperson shall attend the monthly meetings of the Executive Committee.

The secretary shall take notes at all regular and special meetings. The minutes of the latest meeting shall be distributed with the agenda for the next meeting.

The Missions Committee shall request that the Board of Trustees place an amount of money in the annual budget to support missions. The Committee may

make a direct appeal to the membership of the church and may also consider special fundraising projects, if the need arises.

4. PASTOR–PARISH COMMITTEE. It shall be the duty of the Pastor-Parish Committee to serve as a liaison between the Pastor and pastoral staff and the congregation and to provide and support a relationship between the Pastor and the members of the congregation that will allow for the greatest effectiveness in the exercise of ministry (both lay and clergy).

A yearly evaluation of the Pastor shall be conducted by the Committee no later than the end of May or at least three months prior to the time of salary recommendations. In conducting their evaluation the Committee shall solicit input from the congregation. The Pastor, and the Committee if needed, shall conduct a formal evaluation of pastoral staff on the same schedule.

The Pastor–Parish Committee will be responsible for submitting to the Board of Trustees their recommendations for the Pastor’s and pastoral staff’s salary and benefits.

The Committee shall meet as needed, at least quarterly. The Committee shall organize the election of its own chairperson who shall automatically serve on the Executive Committee with a board-appointed alternate to serve in the chairperson’s absence.

The Pastor–Parish Committee shall consist of the Pastor and six other members, representative of age and gender. They shall be elected for terms of three years in such manner that the terms of two members shall expire annually.

5. STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE. The purpose of the Stewardship Committee

shall be to encourage stewardship development of the congregation by promoting time, talent, and treasure toward the benefit of the church. This will consist of an annual stewardship campaign, cleanup day, and ongoing training and stewardship opportunities.

During October and November, a stewardship campaign will be conducted in cooperation with of the Board of Trustees for underwriting the annual church budget.

The Stewardship Committee, consisting of three members, shall be elected with one person being replaced each year.

6. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. It shall be the function of the Executive Committee to visualize the entire task of the church, to advise the Pastor in the formulation and execution of a well-rounded program. The Executive Committee shall act for the church between church meetings. Their decision shall be final unless reversed at a church meeting. The Executive Committee will work in conjunction with all committees for the good of the church. The Executive Committee shall submit to the Annual Meeting a suggested comprehensive program involving the chief objectives of the church for the coming year.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the following people: chairperson of the Diaconate, chairperson of the Trustees, chairperson of the Missions Committee, chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Committee, Treasurer, Clerk, Superintendent of Sunday School, representative to the Sherburne Area Council of Churches, representative of Women's Fellowship, Stewardship Chairperson, the Pastor, and the Church Moderator, who will serve as chairperson. If a member of the Executive Committee is unable to attend a meeting, he/she will appoint a

committee member to attend and vote on their committee's behalf. A representative from the high school youth group shall serve in an ex officio capacity. The Pastor will preside in case of the absence of the Church Moderator and will, in cooperation with the Moderator, be responsible for the agenda. The Executive Committee shall meet monthly unless voted otherwise. The Executive Committee shall at its September meeting discuss the financial situation of the church, including recommendations to the Trustees for the budget for the coming year.

The Executive Committee shall appoint the various delegates to the State and Association organizations. At its October meeting the Executive Committee shall appoint a Nominating Committee.

After having consulted with chairpersons of each board and committee the Nominating Committee shall provide the following slate of officers to be elected annually:

- (a) Treasurer
- (b) Clerk
- (c) Moderator

The Nominating Committee shall provide the following slate of officers and committee members to be elected to a three-year term. These officers and committee members may serve for two consecutive terms:

- (a) 3 members of the Diaconate
- (b) 2 Trustees
- (c) 2 (or 3) members of the Missions Committee
- (d) 2 members of the Pastor-Parish Committee
- (e) 1 representative to the Sherburne Area Council of Churches

This slate shall be presented at the November meeting of the Executive Committee for review prior to its presentation at the Annual Meeting. Election of officers and committee members shall take place at the Annual Meeting. The Executive Committee will set the time and date of the Budget Meeting in the month of October and the Annual Meeting in the month of January. The Executive Committee shall appoint a two-member Audit Committee during the month of January to serve for the year. The books of the Treasurer shall be audited internally annually. Every third year a complete audit of all financial accounts and expenditures shall be conducted. Prior to the Annual Meeting all accounts and all records pertaining to the management of the assets of the church shall be examined by the Audit Committee and a report made and filed with the clerk at the Annual Meeting.

When a vacancy occurs in the Pastorate, the Executive Committee shall appoint a Search Committee which is representative of the church membership. In cooperation with the New York Conference, United Church of Christ, a canvass of available Pastors will be made. A recommendation will be made to the church as to the Pastor who should be called. The calling of such pastor shall follow the procedures prescribed by the New York Conference, UCC.

#### Article VIII. OFFICERS

1. PASTOR. The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Diaconate. The Pastor shall seek to enlist followers of Jesus Christ and shall be responsible for the training of new members, for preaching the gospel, for counseling the troubled, for administering the sacraments, and have under his/her care all services of public worship and correlate the activities of the church in cooperation with the various boards and committees.

The Pastor shall notify the Diaconate of sickness, need, or death in church families.

The Pastor shall regard as “privileged communication,” communications received in counseling and confession provided that the circumstance is specific; that is:

- (1) it must be made to the Pastor in his or her professional capacity:
- (2) it must be made in the course of a church-authorized discipline, *i.e.*, a confession penitential in nature.

The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time by a two-thirds vote of the qualified membership present at the electoral meeting. His/her selection will be recognized and his/her installation accomplished according to established procedures. He/she shall become a member of the church and of the Association to which the church belongs.

The church may at any time, by a two-thirds vote at a meeting called by the Executive Committee for that purpose (a three-week notice publicized) request the resignation of the Pastor to be submitted to the Executive Committee within 60 days and to take effect within 90 days following the vote of the congregation.

It is understood that the covenant agreement between the Pastor and the church may also be terminated by the Pastor who is required to give 90 days notice. If either the church or the Pastor feels there is unfairness in the termination of this call, either party has the right to refer the matter for hearing to the Association Committee on Authorized Ministry.

The Pastor shall serve as an ex officio member of all standing boards and committees.

2. CHURCH MODERATOR. The church Moderator is the executive officer of the church. He/she moderates over all meetings of the church. He/she is chairperson of the Executive Committee and is responsible for the proper execution of its duties. He/she shares with the Pastor responsibility for the agenda of the Executive Committee.

3. CHURCH CLERK. The Clerk shall keep records of all annual and special meetings and record all admissions, dismissals, baptisms, marriages, and deaths. The Clerk shall preserve on file all written official reports and conduct all correspondence so far as this is not otherwise provided. The Clerk shall assist the church secretary in keeping a current file of addresses of all members.

4. TREASURER. The Treasurer of the church shall be elected annually and while holding office will be a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees, but a voting member of the Executive Committee. The Treasurer will receive, record, and deposit such repository as Trustees shall designate, all funds of the church, disbursing the same as directed by the Board of Trustees and shall submit his/her financial records to the Church Audit Committee annually for examination. The Church Treasurer shall be bonded. Bonding shall be provided by the annual budget.

Under the direction of the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer will have custody of, jointly with the Trustees, all papers relating to the property of the church and its investments.

The Treasurer may, when directed by the Board of Trustees, invest the reserve fund and endowments of the church as determined by the Board.

Likewise, the Treasurer may be directed to sell any securities held by the

church when deemed by the Board of Trustees to be in the best interest of the church with the approval of the Executive Committee.

#### Article IX. RULES AND REGULATIONS

The requirements of Section 163 of the New York State Religious Corporations Law will be observed in governance of the United Church of Christ, Sherburne, New York.

Corporate meetings of this church shall begin January 1, and all officers, boards and committees shall assume their duties at the time of installation and continue until their successors are installed.

#### Article X. FINANCES

1. OFFERINGS. This church shall seek support by contributions of individuals and organizations. Opportunity shall be offered to all members of the church and congregation to make written pledges to the support of its budget, ordinarily through the Stewardship Campaign. The church reserves the right to accept or reject any gift and its stipulations.

2. APPORTIONMENT. This church will cooperate with and support the apportionment plan of the Association and State Conference to which it belongs.

3. PERMANENT FUNDS. All legacies and other special gifts, the income thereof to be made available to meet the financial needs of the church, shall be

invested in accordance with the terms of the bequest.

Invasion of the principal will be subject to the due process of the law.

4. RESERVE FUND. All bequests and special gifts not specifically appropriated by the donors to some other purpose shall be entrusted to the Board of Trustees for investment or use, whichever is in the best interest of the church.

5. MEMORIAL FUND. Memorial gifts to the church shall be placed in this fund and shall be subject to the judgment of the Board of Trustees both as to its investment and use. Whenever feasible, the donor will be consulted as to the appropriateness of its use.

6. PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND. Gifts made to this fund shall be distributed by the Pastor for local mission needs.

## Article XI. PROPERTY

1. For incorporated churches—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 purpose of the church.

2. Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any devises, bequests, gifts or grants contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Conference of the United Church of Christ. (This is not required by the General Synod, and we want to make it plain that the United Church stands firmly on Article 21 of the Constitution but under the Internal Revenue Service regulations, if it is not specified that the assets on dissolution will be distributed to the membership, the church will not qualify as an exempt organization. See Internal Revenue Code Section 501 (c) (3) and the regulations thereunder.)

## Article XII. RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these Bylaws. A Parliamentarian shall be appointed annually by the Executive Committee to make rulings in regards to Parliamentary procedure.

## Article XIII. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these Bylaws may be made at any duly called church meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present, announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) having been made two weeks prior to the meeting, by inclusion in the church bulletin.

When changes in the Bylaws are considered necessary, at least every five years, a Bylaws Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. A written report of changes will be made and presented to the Executive Committee and then to the church for approval in accordance with the terms of the preceding paragraph.

Members of the 2007 Bylaws Review Committee

Helen Braun, Pastor–Parish Committee

Betsy Campbell, Diaconate

Michael Drahos, Chairperson Bylaws Committee and Member-at-Large

Heather Dunshee, Trustees

Greg Fuller, Executive Committee

Marilyn Fuller, Women’s Fellowship/Missions

Judith Lathrop, Clerk

Tom Morris, Trustees

Reverend I. Kelly Shiflett

Adopted 7/29/07