

CONSTITUTION AND
BY-LAWS

[Approved October 3, 1976
Amended December 14, 1980
Amended November 23, 2008
Amended June 29, 2014
Amended November 22, 2015]

Consistory:

*Wendy Hoppel, President Charles LaSala, Vice President
Lisa Williams, Secretary Steph Anderson, Treasurer
Paula Abel, Matthew Binder, Ron Frable, Barry George,
Andrea Lazicki, Livia Mackes, Kim Williams*

Jerusalem United Church Of Christ
Trachsville, Pennsylvania
Rev. Kathryn Foster, Pastor

ARTICLE I. NAME

1. The name of this church shall be Jerusalem United Church of Christ located at Trachsville in the Township of Towamensing, County of Carbon in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

1. We believe that together we can best serve our God and each other by sharing our real and personal properties, abilities, and resources, as did the members of the early Church.
2. We believe that it is our duty, as servants and friends of God, to join together to do good to all people, to provide for the services of a minister or ministers, to provide for the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the sanctity of the family, to uphold the just authority of the State, and so to live in all honesty, purity, and charity that our lives will testify to Christ. We unite joyfully to receive the Word of God, bidding His people to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. We declare to them that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, and that He would have all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. In this purpose we will live, and in this service we would labor united.
3. To that end, we hereby state our mission: God calls the people of Jerusalem United Church of Christ thru its rich heritage and forward visioning to hear the good news and spread the gospel and embrace all people with Christian love.

ARTICLE III. POLITY

- (a) 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 Bylaws of the United Church of Christ adopted in the Summer of 2001 relating to local churches.
- (b) The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to Laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania relating to non-profit organizations.

ARTICLE IV. FAITH AND COVENANT

FAITH - This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior.

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 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 accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments: **Baptism and Holy Communion.**

"STATEMENT OF FAITH"

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 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 his 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. "

COVENANT- We covenant with our Lord and with one 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. As did our ancestors, 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.

COVENANT FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP & FAITH COMMUNITY BEHAVIORS

The Constitution & Bylaws formally endorse and embrace the Covenant for Christian Leadership & Faith Community Behaviors, developed by the Leadership Planning Team during the summer of 2007, as a guide for our behaviors as leaders and members of this faith community.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

1. BAPTIZED MEMBERSHIP

- a. Any person, who has received Christian Baptism is a baptized member of the Church.
- b. Baptized members shall be instructed in the Christian Way and the standards of faith and doctrine of the local church.

2. COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

1. A member of this Church is one who has received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and has been received into full communion by public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through one of the following means:
 1. The Rite of Confirmation
 2. Confession of Faith
 3. Letter of Transfer from another Christian Congregation
 4. Reaffirmation or Re-profession of Faith
2. Membership in the Church is open to all persons who hear and believe the Good News of God's love in Jesus Christ. All members are entitled to a full share in the fellowship and the spiritual blessings of the church, and to the service of its Pastor(s), officers, and all other workers, as well as to the Christian sympathy and support of all members.
3. All members of the congregation will receive adequate instruction and training in the doctrines and beliefs, as well as the practices of the Church. To the Pastor(s) and the Consistory shall be delegated the responsibility for making this instruction available.
4. The Consistory shall approve all applicants for membership into the congregation.
5. Anyone unable to attend public worship because of unique circumstances may be received by the Consistory acting in behalf of the congregation.
6. Associate Membership will be granted to those who wish to become members but also wish to maintain membership with another Christian faith community. Associate members have the same rights, privileges, duties and obligations as any other member. Associate membership shall generally be reserved for members whose other church is further than 50 miles away.

3. DUTIES OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

- a. Recognizing the nature of the Church as the People of God on Mission of which the local congregation is a part, members of the Church shall live righteous and godly lives; and labor faithfully to bring others to Christ. They shall take an active part in the life and work of the Church.

- b. Active relationship with this congregation should include, but not necessarily be limited to:
 1. Attendance at divine worship
 2. Devout use of the Holy Communion
 3. Disciplined use of private devotions
 4. Responsible financial and moral support toward the maintenance of the church and its benevolent undertakings;
 5. Inviting the un-churched to become members of the Church:
 6. Sincerely attempting to apply the teachings of Jesus Christ to all human relationships
 7. Regular exercise of the right and duty to voice and vote in congregational meetings
 8. Assuming such offices as the congregation may confer upon him or her, with diligence and zeal.
- c. Members who are parents, in cooperation with the congregation, shall provide adequate Christian training for their entire household, and shall give serious consideration to their fulfillment of the baptismal vows.

4. MAINTAINANCE OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

- (a) A member's name shall be maintained on the roll of the church by contribution to the support of the church and by receiving communion each year.
- (b) The names of deceased members shall be removed from the roll.
- (c) When a member moves from the bounds of the parish, the Consistory shall encourage him or her to join a Christian congregation in the new community within one year
- (d) Members shall be entitled to obtain a Letter of Transfer to another Christian congregation, upon receiving a written request from the congregation receiving the member and with the knowledge of the person making the request.
- (e) If a member unites with another congregation without receiving a Letter of Transfer, upon receiving adequate notice thereof the Consistory shall remove such name from the Church Roll.
- (f) A member's active covenantal relationship with the Church shall be changed to inactive when, by virtue of failure to heed the admonition of the Pastor(s) and the Consistory over a *two-year* period, he or she has given evidence of breach of Confirmation, Covenant, or Membership vows.

1. At the end of the first year a letter will be sent to the member gently reminding them of their membership covenant with the church

congregation and asking for contact with the pastor or consistory to determine the reason for their inactivity or to advise of difficulties with fulfilling their active membership covenant.

2. At the end of the second year if there is no resolution the member's name shall be placed on an inactive member list. They shall be informed of such action by letter, again asking for contact with the pastor or a consistory member as well as informing them that they may bring their membership up to date at any time by such contact and restoration of covenant. The letter may be delivered by any means deemed appropriate at the time.

3. Inactive members will not be entitled to rights and benefits of active membership until active membership is restored. However, the pastor and consistory, in Christian love, may use discretion in responding to individual requests.

(f) The Consistory shall review the membership of the Church annually, with the goal of restoring inactive members through friendly and open communication.

(g) All matters of discipline shall reside with the Consistory, which may make individual or group exceptions to determinations of membership as they decide is fitting.

(h) Notification may be sent by any currently accepted written mode be it postal, email, or other electronic device.

5. MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

The Church, through the Pastor and Officers, shall keep a complete record of Baptisms, Confirmations, Communicants, Members, Transfers, Marriages, and Deaths. All records shall be the property of the Jerusalem United Church of Christ. Upon dissolution of the congregation, all records shall become the property of the Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ, or its successor.

ARTICLE VI. CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND POLITY

1. THE CONGREGATION AND THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

(a) The governing body (voting members) of this congregation shall consist of all members in good standing.

(b) All responsibility for the life, work and mission of the Church ultimately rests in the hands of the congregation as a whole.

(c) Special church meetings may be called by the Consistory or by a petition to the

Consistory signed by not less than *10%* of the *current* membership. The Consistory shall call such meetings within three weeks from receipt of the petition, and adequate notice of such meeting shall be sent to the *current* membership by the Administrative Assistant.

- (d) A meeting of members duly called shall not transact business unless a quorum is present. The presence in person of ten (10%) percent of the *current* membership shall constitute a quorum. The members present at a duly called meeting can continue to do business until adjournment even though some members might withdraw from the meeting, leaving less than a quorum. In the event of a quorum not being present at any duly called meeting, another meeting will be called as directed in the Bylaws.

2. CONSISTORY

- (a) To effectively carry out and administrate the work of the church in orderly fashion, the congregation shall elect Consistory members in November of each year.
- (b) A Consistory member of the Church is chosen by the congregation and ordained or consecrated to his/her office. A Consistory member shall assist and support the pastor in the spiritual affairs of the Church. A Consistory member shall take heed to him/herself that he/she may be an example unto others. A Consistory member shall watch faithfully over the spiritual interest of the congregation, maintain order in the house of God, aid in visiting the sick, and minister according to his/her ability to the edification and comfort of the members; also a Consistory member shall aid in securing the funds necessary for the support of the Church in its various activities, foster the principles of stewardship, and dispense the charity of the church.
- (c) Consistory members shall be elected by a simple majority of the votes cast. A slate of at least one nominee for each position shall be submitted to the congregation by the Consistory. Additional nominations may be made by the congregation. No two members of an immediate family may serve at the same time. Immediate family is herein defined as spouse, mother, father, son, daughter or siblings.
- (d) Consistory members shall be elected for a two-year term. They may serve two consecutive terms, but thereafter, one year must intervene before they may be re-elected.
- (e) When elected for the first term, Consistory members shall be publicly ordained or consecrated to their office. After their ordination or consecration, they, with those who have been re-elected, shall be installed.
- (f) The Consistory shall organize itself on an annual basis. A President, Vice President and Secretary shall be elected from the Consistory for a term of one year.
- (g) A Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be appointed by the Consistory for a term of one year.
- (h) The Consistory shall meet at least once every month for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings may be called by the Secretary, when requested to do so by one-third of the members. Special meetings may also be called by the Consistory President in the case of time-sensitive matters. Proper notice of all meetings shall be given to all members, including the Pastor. Notice may be given by any currently accepted means including electronic notifications. When special circumstances require a vote be taken on time-sensitive issues and consistory members cannot attend a

special meeting in a timely manner, the consistory members may be notified by electronic means, with the written motion included in the electronic transmission. The validated electronic response of 1/2 of all consistory members will constitute a valid vote, given that all members have been given 1 week to read and respond to the electronic motion. Consistory members who do not have electronic transmission available will be contacted by other written means.

- (i) In managing the general affairs of the congregation, the consistory shall transact the business of the church, make provision for the determining and raising of the current and benevolent budgets of the congregation; the auditing of financial accounts; and the maintenance of complete and accurate records of its proceedings, and of all monies received and all expenditures of monies for congregational and benevolent purposes. For all un-budgeted expenditures, the Consistory shall approve all bills before payment and shall instruct the proper officers to make said payment. The Consistory may authorize any extraordinary expense but if that expense exceeds \$5,000.00 it must receive the approval of the congregation.
- (j) The Consistory shall manage Personnel and Pastoral Relations functions which include reviewing and evaluating the work of the Pastor, staff, lay leadership and congregation in mutual ministry, accountability to the Plan for Ministry and Mission, discussing and evaluating various courses of action for the Pastor and Consistory, evaluating and recommending appropriate forms of continuing education for the Pastor and staff members and acting as a "sounding board" for the Pastor. The Consistory may utilize the Executive Committee, comprised of the President, Vice-President and Secretary to carry out these functions.
- (k) The Consistory shall appoint such committees as it may deem necessary for the accomplishment of its work. Among the standing committees responsible to the congregation through the Consistory are, but not limited to, the following:
 - 1) Property Committee (church buildings)
 - 2) Worship & Music Committee
 - 3) Fellowship/Women's Committee
 - 4) Evangelism Committee Responsible for Evangelism, Mission & Outreach
 - 5) Stewardship Committee
 - 6) Member Care & Hospitality Committee
 - 7) Youth Ministry Committee
 - 8) Christian Education Committee
 - 9) Preschool Board
 - a. Responsible for the Preschool ministry of the church.
 - b. Preschool Board Policy shall be approved by Consistory.
 - 10) Spiritual Council.
 - a. Responsible to work with the Pastor to insure the spiritual welfare of the church remains healthy, mediate conflicts within the membership and leadership which cannot be resolved otherwise, hold the church membership and leadership accountable to live in accordance with the Covenant for Christian Leadership & Faith Community Behaviors

- b. Shall consist of the Pastor and four (4) members who have previously served as Consistory Officers and be confirmed by the congregation. Their term shall be two (2) years.
- c. Within six (6) months of its formation, shall create a policy/procedure for administering their responsibility and shall fully communicate it to the congregation

All of the standing committees of the Consistory will *have at least one* member of the Consistory, who will be responsible for reporting to the Consistory as to the actions of that committee. The President of the Consistory *and the Pastor* will be ex-officio members of all standing committees.

All Committees or other organizations in the Church which raise funds shall contribute 90% of the net profit of such fundraisers to the general fund, retaining 10% of the net profit for seed money for their next fundraiser.

ARTICLE VII. PASTOR AND DUTIES OF THE PASTOR

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Search Committee of the Jerusalem United Church of Christ, appointed by the Consistory to seek *an ordained* candidate for a vacancy in the office of Pastor.
2. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, it shall be reported to the Penn Northeast Conference Executive.
3. In filling a vacancy or in securing supply pastors for the period of vacancy, the Search Committee may seek the counsel of the Penn Northeast Conference Placement Committee.
4. The *Search* Committee may request the Penn Northeast Conference Executive to secure relevant information about any pastor whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy.
5. Any pastor may confer with the Penn Northeast Conference Executive concerning a pastoral vacancy. At the pastor's request, the pastor's name shall be submitted by the Penn Northeast Conference Executive for consideration by the local church committee.
6. The *Search* Committee shall present to the Consistory the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy.
7. If the Consistory finds the candidate favorable, the candidate is invited to conduct a trial sermon. A favorable vote by a simple majority of the members present, in keeping *with the aforementioned requirements for a quorum*, constitutes a call.
8. 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, the Ministers' Health Insurance Program, moving expenses, and other terms agreed between the candidate and the Consistory. The ministers, the church, and the Penn Northeast Conference Executive shall each receive a copy of the call.

9. When a pastor accepts a call to this church, the church and pastor shall join in requesting the Penn Northeast Conference to arrange for a service of installation. A report of this service shall be signed by the proper officers of the Church and by the Penn Northeast Conference Executive, and copies shall be sent to the Secretary of the United Church of Christ and to the Council for Church and Ministry.
10. The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, notice shall be given by either party in accordance with the executed Installed Minister Call Form. The formerly agreed upon notice may be waived if agreed by both parties. The procedure shall be in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ.
11. 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 Penn Northeast Conference Executive for appropriate action.
12. The pastor elected must be a Pastor *capable of receiving good standing* in the United Church of Christ.
13. The pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the congregation. The Pastor shall seek to enlist people as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, visit the sick and distressed, counsel with persons seeking help or advice, and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with the Consistory and various committees. The Pastor shall be a member ex-officio of the Consistory and all committees and organizations of the church.
14. Other pastors shall not be invited to participate in the life and ministry of the Church without the knowledge and consent of the Pastor *and Consistory*.

ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS

1. The *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT* shall keep a complete record of the transactions of all business meetings of the church. The *Administrative Assistant* shall issue letters of transfer, preserve on file all communications, documents and written official reports, notify, when necessary, all persons elected to office or committees, give legal notice of all meetings when such notice is necessary, report all communications intended for the church, conduct its correspondence.
2. The *TREASURER* shall keep accurate accounts of all monies received by the treasurer for the support of the church and its benevolences. The treasurer shall make a report at the regular meetings of the Consistory. The treasurer shall make all disbursements as authorized by the Consistory.
3. The *FINANCIAL SECRETARY* shall keep a record of each contributor's account, render an annual statement to contributors, and a summarized report to the Consistory *in its published Annual Report*. The financial secretary shall treat all individual pledges and gifts as confidential.

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 accepting gifts of any kind on behalf of the congregation, the Consistory shall strive to satisfy the wishes of the donor(s). However, once a gift has been accepted, whether of money or property, it becomes the exclusive property of the congregation and the congregation shall have complete rights concerning the use and disposal of such gifts.

3. Upon 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, shall be transferred to the Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE X. REVISED RULES OF ORDER

1. ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, revised, shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any duly called church meeting by a simple majority affirmative vote of the members present, in keeping with the aforementioned requirements for a quorum, public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) having been made two weeks prior to the meeting.