

THE BY-LAWS

DEANSBORO CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Article 1

Name

The name of this church shall be the Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ.

Article 2

Preamble

This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior. It acknowledges as kindred 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 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.

Article 3

Object

The object 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 his will dominate in the lives of all, individually and collectively especially as that will is set forth in the life, teachings and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Article 4

Faith

There are many authentic testimonies of faith in creeds, confessions, catechisms and other statements of faith. This church shall require no specific formula as a test of faith.

Article 5

Covenant

In the presence of God, we give ourselves unreservedly to God's service, and take this to be our church. We will seek the welfare of our fellow members and walk with them in faithfulness and Christian love. As far as we are able, we will participate in the worship services of this church, observe its sacraments, and share in its work and support. We will endeavor to make this church a fruitful body of Christians.

Article 6

Polity

The church is not limited or impaired in the management of its own affairs. It shall adopt its own constitution and by-laws; its own covenants and confessions of faith; and its own methods of organization, worship and education. It shall admit members and provide for their dismissal. It shall call or dismiss its pastor and/or other church staff. It shall acquire, own, receive by donation, manage and dispose of property and funds.

The church shall be in covenant relationship with the United Church of Christ and exercise its responsibility for the labors and extension of that Church. The church shall hold the provisions of the constitution of the United Church of Christ relating to local churches and the actions, decisions and advice of the General Synod, the New York Conference and the Oneida Association in the highest regard.

Article 7

Membership

A member of the church shall be a person whose name is on the role of members.

A person shall become a member by being received into membership through public acceptance of its covenant.

People may be considered for membership based on:

- a) confession of faith and baptism, or
- b) reaffirmation of faith, or
- c) a satisfactory letter of transfer from another church

A member shall be removed from the membership role:

- a) upon requesting a letter of transfer to another church, or
- b) upon requesting to be released from membership, or
- c) upon a vote of the church on a recommendation of the Diaconate.

Article 8

Worship

Public worship shall normally be held each Sunday as determined from time to time by the Diaconate.

The Lord's Supper shall normally be celebrated monthly as determined from time to time by the Diaconate.

Baptism shall normally be celebrated in public worship as determined from time to time by the Diaconate.

Other services of worship shall be held as determined from time to time by the Diaconate.

Article 9

Government and meetings

The governing body of the Church is the members assembled for a congregational meeting.

Annual Meeting: The annual congregational meeting of the Church shall normally be scheduled between Easter and Pentecost of each year and shall be called by the Church Council. The annual meeting shall receive reports, elect officers and committees, and act on proposals.

Other Congregational Meetings: Other congregational meetings may be called by the Church Council. A congregational meeting shall be called by the Church Council on written request of five (5) members of the Church.

Rules for congregational meetings

The presiding officer at a congregational meeting shall be the Moderator or in the absence of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator or a person nominated by the Moderator.

Those eligible to vote at a congregational meeting are as follows:

On all questions concerning corporate, property or legal matters, members of the Church 18 years of age and older.

On all other matters, all members of the Church.

Congregational meetings shall be announced in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting at Sunday worship. The purpose or purposes of the meeting shall be clearly stated in the announcement.

Fifteen members shall constitute a quorum.

A majority vote is decisive except that the amendment of the By-Laws and the calling of a pastor shall require a two-thirds majority of eligible voters present and voting.

Congregational meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order Revised, unless otherwise provided in these By-Laws.

Article 10 Officers

The officers of the Church shall be a moderator, vice-moderator, clerk, and treasurer.

The responsibilities of officers shall be those usually associated with the office and the responsibilities assigned from time to time by a congregational meeting.

The officers normally shall be members of the Church.

The officers shall be elected at the annual meeting.

A vacancy shall be filled by the Church Council.

Each officer shall submit a report in writing to the annual meeting.

Article 11 Church Council

Members of the Church Council are the officers of the church, a representative of the Diaconate, the pastor and additional members as shall be determined from time to time. The Council shall determine the voting status of additional members.

The Council shall act on behalf of the Church between congregational meetings.

All council meetings are open meetings.

Article 12 Diaconate

The deacons shall be elected at the annual meeting and serve for a term of three years. The number of deacons shall be determined from time to time.

The deacons shall choose the chairperson of the Diaconate and a representative to the Church Council.

It shall be the duty of the Diaconate to minister to the needs of the Church and community in an equal partnership with the pastor.

Article 13
Pastor

The pastor shall be called for an indefinite time by two-thirds vote of the Church. When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the Council (unless a special committee is appointed for the purpose) after seeking the guidance of the Divine Spirit, shall with the cooperation of the executive head of the State Conference and others, make a canvas of available ministers, settle upon the one who in their judgement should be called to the pastorate, introduce the candidate to the Church and at a duly called meeting, propose an election.

The Pastor shall:

1. have charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church with the assistance of the diaconate.
2. seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ
3. preach the gospel
4. administer the sacraments
5. oversee all services of public worship
6. be available for counsel and pastoral advice
7. be an ex-officio member of all committees.

Article 14
Committees

The Church may appoint committees from time to time, and determine a committee's membership and responsibilities.

Article 15
Auxiliary Organizations

All organizations connected with the Church and using its equipment are regarded as integral parts of the Church and are under its general jurisdiction

Article 16
Amendments

These by-laws may be altered or amended by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at an annual meeting. Notice of the proposal to amend the by-laws and the text of the proposed amendment shall have been made in writing with the notice of the meeting.