

**ST. JOHN'S
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(Evangelical and Reformed)**

CONSTITUTION

**1811 Lincoln Way East
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania 17202**

**CONSTITUTION
OF
ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1811 Lincoln Way East, Chambersburg, PA 17201**

**ADOPTION: By vote of the congregation on November 17, 2002.
Amended June 4, 2006
Amended June 7, 2015
Amended November 10, 2019**

PREAMBLE

The United Church of Christ was formed June 25, 1957, by the union of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and The General Counsel of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States in order to express more fully the oneness in Christ of the churches composing it, and to make more effective their common witness to Him, and to serve the Kingdom of God in the world. St. John's United Church of Christ, Evangelical and Reformed Church, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, founded in 1848, was formed of this union in 1957, and acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, Son of God the Savior. St. John's, to enable the Church more effectively to accomplish its ministries and missions in the name of Jesus Christ, hereby adopts this Constitution.

**ARTICLE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Paragraph 1. Name of Congregation. The name of this Church shall be St. John's United Church of Christ, Evangelical and Reformed, hereinafter St. John's, a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Paragraph 2. Purpose. St. John's purpose is to bring together followers of Jesus Christ in the worship of God. St. John's seeks to make God's will a reality in the lives of all people. St. John's declares itself to be a community of Christians that gathers together in worship and service and strives to practice the principles of the Gospel. As members of the Body of Christ, we acknowledge our responsibilities to:

- a. receive the historic Christian faith as expressed in Word and Sacrament;
- b. make this faith our own; and
- c. share this faith with others. Further, believing that the Christian Church in all its many forms and manifestations is the embodiment of the on-going life of Jesus Christ in every place and time, we acknowledge the Church to be of divine origin and thus Holy.

Paragraph 3. Principles. St. John's recognizes Jesus Christ as its sole head, and as members we pray to be Jesus's instrument in all the church's actions. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we pledge ourselves:

- a. to work for the unity of the church within our congregation, within our denomination, and with all other Christians, regardless of their denominational affiliation;
- b. to seek the welfare of God's people both spiritual and physical;
- c. to live lives of faithfulness, joy and generosity as an expression of gratitude to God for all the gifts which are ours as members of the Body of Christ.

Paragraph 4. Affiliation. St. John's is a member of the United Church of Christ. St. John's is in covenant with the United Church of Christ whose Constitution (In effect July 2, 2013) states in Article V "The autonomy of the Local Church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. Nothing in this Constitution and the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ shall destroy or limit the right of each Local Church to continue to operate in the way customary to it."

Paragraph 5. Doctrine and Statement of Faith. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall always have the primary place in the preaching and teaching of this congregation. Additionally, recognizing our roots to be in the traditions of the Reformed Church, the doctrinal positions of the Heidelberg Catechism shall be honored at all times. The articles of faith of this congregation shall be the The UCC Statement of Faith in the Form of a Doxology as approved in 1981 (used in connection with the 25th anniversary of the UCC).

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

Paragraph 1. Becoming an Active Member

Membership in St. John's is open to any person who acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who is growing and maturing in the Christian faith and who indicates a genuine desire to exercise the privilege and responsibility of membership. There are two types of Active Memberships; Full and Associate. Only Full Active members are reported to the denomination for statistical membership purposes.

- a. Full Members may join this church by:
 - Letter of Transfer
 - Reaffirmation of faith
 - Confession of faith and baptism
 - Confirmation of Christian faith. It is the tradition of St. John's for baptized children of about 14 years of age to undergo a year of study. At the end of this year the student decides if they will or will not confirm the promises made in the faith at the time of baptism. If confirmed, the person becomes an Active member.
- b. Associate Members are persons who have cause to retain membership in churches in other communities but wish to be accepted as Associate Members of St. John's for the duration of their residence in the Chambersburg area.

Paragraph 2. Maintaining Active Membership

Active Membership is maintained by communing at least once a year at St. John's UCC, (OR by communing elsewhere and providing this information to St. John's UCC) and by participating in the St. John's community of faith.

Paragraph 3. Inactive Membership

The Spiritual Ministry Team (the Elders and the Pastor) shall regularly monitor reports of Active Members who have been unable to meet the requirements of membership within the last 12 months. It shall be the sole responsibility of the Spiritual Ministry Team to insure that members are contacted, to consider circumstances and to change a member’s status from Active to Inactive (or vice versa).

Paragraph 4. Removal from Membership

A member may be removed from membership only by:

- a. Death
- b. Letter of Transfer
- c. Request of the Member

Paragraph 5. Membership Rights and Responsibilities

All Active Members may vote at meetings of the Congregation, serve on the Consistory and exercise all other rights and responsibilities of Active Membership.

Only Full Members are counted in the annual report to the denomination.

All members are entitled to a full share in the fellowship and spiritual blessings of the Church, and to the services of its pastor(s) and other workers, and the Christian sympathy and support of all members.

Paragraph 6. Membership Meetings.

- a. Annual Meetings. The Active Members shall hold meetings as provided for in the By-Laws.
- b. Quorum. Ten percent (10%) of the Active Members shall constitute a quorum.

**ARTICLE III
ADMINISTRATION**

Paragraph 1. Government.

(A) Governing Body. The supreme legislative and administrative power of the congregation is vested in the Active Membership that has been assembled in a Congregational Meeting, duly and legally called as provided for in the By-Laws adopted pursuant to this Constitution. The vote of a majority of the Active Members present at the meeting shall be an action of St. John’s except where two-thirds vote is required by the Constitution.

(B) Congregational Prerogative. It shall be the prerogative of the congregational meeting to decide such questions as the buying and selling of real property, building projects, extensive repairs of church property, the call of a pastor, the direction of the work of the congregation, and such other powers and prerogatives as may be herein set forth. For the transaction of all other business the administration of the church is entrusted to the Consistory chosen and composed as provided for in the By-Laws. The Active Membership shall also have the right to nominate and elect members of the Consistory as provided in the By-laws.

(C) Stewardship Obligations. All Members are encouraged to give of their time, talent and treasury to support the ministries, missions and administration and operations of St. John's.

(D) Consistory, Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Etc. The Consistory shall be the working executive body of St. John's. The Consistory shall exercise the powers and duties set forth in the By-Laws and shall maintain general oversight of all the activities of the Church. The Consistory shall organize itself as provided in the By-laws. Further, elected Elders, Deacons and Trustees shall perform and carry out the duties and responsibilities as may be assigned to them from time to time by the membership as set forth in the By-laws.

ARTICLE IV PASTOR(S)

Paragraph 1. Duties. The Pastor(s) shall preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, and give pastoral care and council, lead services of public worship, and administer the activities of St. John's in cooperation with the Consistory, Elders, Deacons, Trustees and various committees, and ministries except the a Pastoral Search Committee formed to call the next pastor. As provided in the By-Laws, the Pastor may not serve on the Personnel Committee. The pastor(s) are members of the Consistory. As provided in the By-laws, the Pastor(s) shall hold office and be called or dismissed as provided for therein.

ARTICLE V ADOPTION OF BY-LAWS

Paragraph 1. By-Laws. Separate By-laws, not inconsistent with this Constitution, may be adopted by the Active Membership describing in detail the administration and operation of St. John's. The By-laws may be amended by a simple majority of those present and voting at any duly called Congregational Meeting at which a quorum is present, provided that notice of the proposed By-Law amendments is given in the notice of the meeting.

ARTICLE VI AMENDMENTS

Paragraph 1. Amendments. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Active Members present and voting at any duly called Congregational Meeting at which a quorum is present, provided that notice of the proposed Constitutional amendment is given in the meeting notice and issued at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE VII DATE OF ADOPTION

Paragraph 2. Date of Adoption. This Constitution was amended on November 19, 2000, and was amended as set forth herein by the membership at its Annual Meeting on November 17, 2002, June 4, 2006, June 7, 2015 and November 10, 2019.