

# **CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW GOSHENHOPPEN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

## **Article I. Name**

1. The name of this church shall be the New Goshenhoppen United Church of Christ, located in East Greenville, Upper Hanover Township, Montgomery County, in the State of Pennsylvania.

## **Article II. History**

1. The heritage of this church is the former Evangelical and Reformed Church, which was the former Reformed Church of North America, which was the former German Reformed Church in the United States. (See original Charter and By-Laws of 1850 and the Amendments of 1916.)

## **Article III. 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 humankind; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

## **Article IV. Policy**

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, and as subsequently amended, 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 laws of the State of Pennsylvania relating to corporations not for profit or ecclesiastical corporations.

### **Article V. Faith**

1. This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of the World. 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, including the Heidelberg Catechism. 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 the evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.

### **Article VI. 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. In accordance with the gospel covenant which binds into a unity “faithful people of all ages, tongues and races,” membership is open to all without regard to human differences.
2. Members shall commit themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and benevolences; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.
3. Any member wishing to affiliate with another church may, on his/her own request, be granted a letter of transfer. If wishing to join a body not in fellowship with this church, he/she may be dismissed with a certificate of church membership. If, because of change of faith or for other reasons, a member requests in writing to be released from his/her membership obligations, the church shall patiently endeavor to secure his/her continuance in its fellowship; but failing in such effort, the church may grant the request and terminate his/her membership. Such a request shall be approved by the Pastors, who shall issue the appropriate letter of release.

### **Article VII. Governing Body**

1. The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in the church meeting. The vote of the majority of members present at the meeting shall be the action of the church. A quorum shall consist of five percent of the members.

### Article VIII. Consistory

1. The Consistory shall be the executive body of the church. It shall be composed of the Pastors (ex-officio), the Elders, the Deacons, and the Trustees. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.
2. The Consistory shall organize itself each year, electing a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The President shall appoint such committees as will serve to further the purpose of the church with the approval of Consistory. The following committees are suggested:

Christian Education	Health and Welfare
Church and Ministry	Property
Evangelism	Stewardship

3. The Consistory shall consist of six Elders, nine Deacons, and six Trustees, all of whom shall be elected by majority vote cast at a church meeting. They shall be elected to a three year term. In order to provide continuity, the offices of not more than two Elders, three Deacons, and two Trustees shall become vacant in any one year. Consistory members may not succeed themselves without a lapse of one year between terms.
4. The Consistory shall act as a nominating committee for the securing of replacements of those members whose terms have expired. Nominees for the office of Elder, who have previously served a term as Deacon or Trustee, should be given first consideration. An election of new members shall be held at the annual meeting of the congregation. The congregation shall be encouraged to submit names of prospective nominees to be approved by Consistory. Other nominations may be made from the floor of the congregational meeting at which the election is held.
5. When elected, the Elders and Deacons shall be publicly ordained and installed in their respective offices. Trustees shall be installed.
6. Vacancies on the Consistory shall be filled by the Consistory for the unexpired terms.
7. 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 Our Christian Wider Mission and benevolences, and provide for the reviewing of 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 church at its regular and special meetings. All acts and deliberations of the Consistory are subject to the will and revision of the governing body.
8. The Consistory shall instruct the proper officers on all fiscal matters with monthly review by the Consistory.

9. The Consistory may authorize any extraordinary expenses if funds are available. This includes authorizing withdrawals from investments to cover budget expenses. If borrowing from an outside entity is required, it must receive the approval of the congregation.
10. In addition to the stated boards of committees the Consistory President, with the approval of Consistory, shall appoint such other committees/task forces as he/she may deem necessary.
11. The Consistory shall meet at least once every month for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings are subject to the President's call, or the signatures of five Consistory members would require the calling of a special meeting.

### **Article IX. Senior Pastor**

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Search Committee, appointed by the Consistory, to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of Senior Pastor.
2. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, it shall be reported to the Conference.
3. In filling a vacancy or in securing supply ministers for the period of vacancy, the Search Committee may seek the counsel of the Conference.
4. The Search Committee may request the Conference to secure relevant information about any minister whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy.
5. Only such candidates having ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ, or privilege of call, shall be recommended to fill the vacancy. The Search Committee shall present to Consistory the name of the candidate it recommends. After due consideration and approval the Consistory shall then present the Search Committee's recommendation to the congregation. A majority vote of the congregation, deemed acceptable by the candidate, constitutes a call.
6. In the call, the terms of the relationship between the church and its Pastor shall be stated, including the agreement of the church to participate in the Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ, the Health Insurance Program, and other terms agreed between the candidate and the Committee. The minister, the church, the Association, and the Conference shall each receive a copy of the call.
7. When a minister accepts a call to New Goshenhoppen Church, the church and he/she shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation. A report of this service shall be signed by the proper officer of the Association and of the Conference, and copies shall be sent to the appropriate office of the United Church of Christ.

8. The pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, sixty (60) days' notice shall be given by either party. The procedure shall be in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.
9. When either party decides to terminate the relationship, the termination shall be by action of the Consistory and notice of such termination shall be sent by the President of the Consistory to the Conference and to the Association for appropriate action.
10. Discipline of the Senior Pastor shall be in conformity with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.
11. If there is a decision to choose an Associate Pastor or an Assistant Pastor, the Consistory, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, shall form a search committee.
12. When the Senior Pastor reaches age 70, the contract between the Senior Pastor and Consistory shall be reviewed each year at the October Consistory meeting.

#### **Article X. Associate/Assistant Pastor**

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Search Committee, appointed by the Consistory, to seek a candidate for the position of .Associate Pastor or Assistant Pastor.
2. The Search Committee may request the Conference Executive to secure relevant information about any minister whom it wishes to consider for the position.
3. Only such candidates having ministerial standing, or privilege of call, in the United Church of Christ shall be recommended to fill the position. The Search Committee shall present to Consistory the name of the candidate it recommends. After due consideration, the Consistory shall then approve or disapprove the Committee's recommendation. A favorable vote of the Consistory constitutes a call.
4. In the call, the terms of the relationship between the church and the Associate/Assistant shall be stated, including the agreement of the church to participate in the Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ, the Health Insurance Program, and other terms agreed between the candidate and the Committee. The minister, the church, the Association, and the Conference shall each receive a copy of the call.
5. When an Associate/Assistant accepts a call to New Goshenhoppen Church, he/she shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation. A report of this service shall be signed by the proper officer of the Association and by the Conference, and copies shall be sent to the appropriate office of the United Church of Christ.
6. The Associate/Assistant shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, sixty (60) days' notice shall be given to either party. The procedure shall be in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.

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

### **Article XI. 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 objectives and purposes of ministry.
2. 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 of otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Conference of the United Church of Christ, to which it currently belongs.
3. Prior to the purchase or sale of any church property, the consent of a majority of the governing body attending a public meeting called for that purpose will be required.

### **Article XII. Church Meetings**

1. An Annual Meeting of the church shall be held in the month of November for the purpose of the election of Consistory persons and adoption of the budget.
2. Special church meetings may be called by the Consistory or by a petition to the Consistory signed by not less than five percent of the members. 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 membership by the Secretary.

### **Article XIII. 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/or By-Laws.

### **Article XIV. Amendments**

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

**BY-LAWS OF THE  
NEW GOSHENHOPPEN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**Article I. Relation to the United Church of Christ**

1. New Goshenhoppen United Church of Christ shall be united in fellowship with other United Churches of Christ through the Ursinus Association and the .Conference to which it belongs.
2. Three delegates from the Consistory shall be appointed by the Consistory to attend the Spring and Fall meetings of the Association along with the Pastors. Three delegates from the congregation shall be appointed to attend the annual meeting of the Conference, along with the Pastors. The church shall assume responsibility for payment of expenses for such delegates.
3. .The Congregation shall contribute to the ministry and mission of the church universal.

**Article II. Privileges and Duties of Members**

1. All members are entitled to a full share of the fellowship and spiritual blessings of the church, and to the service of its Pastors, officials, and other workers, as well as to the Christian sympathy and support of all other members. All confirmed members are entitled to a voice, vote and office unless otherwise stated in the Constitution and By-Laws.
2. It is the duty of all members to live a godly life and to participate in the activities of the church for the glory of God and uplift of humankind; to contribute time, talents and funds to sustain and extend the work of the church.
3. If a member shall repeatedly abstain from exercising the privileges and duties of membership, he/she may be sent a letter of concern in order to determine his/her intent to retain membership or disassociate himself/herself from the church. If any member shall unite with another church, his/her membership shall be considered to be transferred.
4. Associate Member: If a person belongs to another church, he/she may become an associate member. Such a person becomes a participant in church life. An associate member has a voice but no vote at an annual or special congregational meeting and is unable to serve on Consistory.

### **Article III. Duties of the Senior Pastor**

1. It shall be the duty of the Senior Pastor to conduct the public worship, preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, conduct the rites, exercise pastoral guidance and administer Christian discipline. He/she shall keep a record of his/her activities and report to the Consistory monthly.
2. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all organizations and committees within the church. As long as he/she is Pastor, only he/she or his/her appointed representative shall perform a religious ceremony under the auspices of New Goshenhoppen United Church of Christ.

### **Article IV. Duties of the Associate/Assistant Pastor**

1. It shall be the duty of the Associate/Assistant to conduct the public worship in the place of the Senior Pastor, administer the sacraments, conduct the rites, exercise pastoral guidance and administer Christian discipline. He/she shall keep a record of his/her activities and report monthly to the Consistory.

### **Article V. Duties of Consistory Members**

1. President. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all Consistory committees. It shall be the duty of the President to see that all meetings of the Consistory and the congregation are regularly called, and to open and conduct such meetings. The President shall also execute the decisions of the church and its Consistory with utmost dispatch.
2. Vice-President. When the President is absent or unable to serve, the Vice-President shall function in the place of the President.
3. Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary, who need not be a member of Consistory, shall serve for all meetings of the Consistory and congregation. He/she shall preserve a copy of all proceedings of these meetings and, with the aid of the Pastor, keep a record of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages and deaths; he/she shall also maintain an accurate roster of membership.
4. Elder. An Elder is a confirmed member of the church, elected by the congregation and ordained to the office. He/she shall assist and support the Pastors in the spiritual affairs of the church. He/she shall be an example to others, watch faithfully over the spiritual interests of the congregation, aid in visiting the sick, and minister according to his/her ability, to the edification and comfort of all the members.



5. Deacon. A Deacon is a confirmed member of the church, elected by the congregation and ordained to office. He/She shall be a steward of ministry and mission, keep track of funds and see that they are distributed properly, care for the indigent of the congregation, and dispense the charity of the church.
6. Trustee. A Trustee is a confirmed member of the church, elected by the congregation and installed to the office. He/she shall be responsible for the care of the property of the congregation. He/she shall hold the property as a sacred trust for the congregation and keep the church edifice and other buildings including the park and cemeteries, and additional real estate in proper repair. A trustee shall represent the church in all legal transactions, in consultation with the Senior Pastor and the President or the Vice-President of the Consistory.

#### **Article VI. Duties of Financial Personnel**

1. Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary, who need not be a member of Consistory, shall be responsible for the receipt and deposit of all monies contributed to the church. He/she shall give a statement of these funds to the Treasurer and shall render an annual report in the yearbook. He/she shall maintain a record of all contributions and provide each member with a statement of contributions every year.
2. Treasurer. The Treasurer, who need not be a member of the Consistory, works with the Financial Secretary and Bookkeeper, to accurately report to the Finance Committee, the Consistory, and the Congregation, on the financial health of the church. The Treasurer shall render an annual report in the yearbook. .
3. Bookkeeper. The Bookkeeper, who need not be a member of Consistory, shall be responsible for the receipt and prompt payment of all expenses. He/she shall maintain an accurate record of all income and expenses of the church.

#### **Article VII. Cemetery Board**

1. The Cemetery Board shall consist of eight or more members including a President, Secretary, and six Trustees, along with the Church Treasurer and Sexton as ex-officio members.
2. The Cemetery Board shall maintain the church burial grounds and administer the cemetery funds.

**The New Goshenhoppen United Church of Christ Constitution and By-Laws are living documents subject to periodic review. Any changes are subject to approval by the governing body.**

**Adopted by the congregation on November 9, 2014**