

CASCO VILLAGE CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CONSTITUTION

Adopted January 10, 1993

Amended January 18, 2015

Article I – NAME

This fellowship of Christians shall be called the Casco Village Church United Church of Christ. For the purpose of fellowship and benevolence emphasis it shall be a member of the Cumberland Association of the Maine Conference, United Church of Christ.

Article II – PURPOSE

The avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God; to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ; to celebrate the sacraments; to realize the Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward all of God's Creation; and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

Article III – POLITY

Section i. 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 subsequently amended, relating to local churches.

Section ii. The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject however, to the laws of the State of Maine relating to corporations not for profit.

Article IV – FAITH AND COVENANT

Faith – This church acknowledges as its sole head Jesus the Christ, Son of God, and 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 the faith its own. 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 or Holy Communion.

One expression of this faith is:

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 of 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 realm which has no end.
Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.
Amen.

**from the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith adapted by Robert V. Moss*

Covenant – We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the Work 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 forbears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the fulfillment of the Reign of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

Article V – MISSION STATEMENT

As the body of Christ gathered in the Casco Village Church United Church of Christ, affirming our Statement of Faith, we seek within the Church Universal to participate in God's mission and to follow the way of the crucified and risen Christ.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called and commit ourselves...

- To praise God in word and music; to confess our sin, and to joyfully but humbly accept God's forgiveness;
- To embody God's love for all people and call them to share in that love through fellowship, outreach, caring, compassion and prayer;
- To hear and give voice to Creation's cry for justice and peace;
- To repent our silence, identify and confront the powers of evil within us and among us;
- To preach, teach and live through the power of the Living Word, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our suffering world;
- To join oppressed and troubled people in the struggle for liberation;
- To work for justice, healing and wholeness of life;
- To embrace the unity of Christ's church;
- To discern and celebrate the present and coming reign of God.

Article VI – MEMBERSHIP

Section i. 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.

Section ii. Members shall pledge 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; to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

Section iii. Full members shall assent to the following covenant:

"By the aid of the Holy Spirit, we engage to walk together in Christian Love; to strive for the advancement of the Christian church at home and abroad by promoting its prosperity and spirituality, by sustaining its worship, ordinances, disciplines and doctrines, and such concerns we shall make manifest as we engage further to contribute cheerfully of ourselves and our resources for the relief of the poor, and for the spread of the gospel here and through all nations.

We covenant also to maintain family and sacred devotion; to educate both ourselves and our children; and by prayer, study, faith and good works to endeavor to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

We engage also to watch over one another in Christian Love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate compassion; to be slow to take offence and always ready for reconciliation, seeking the spirit of Jesus Christ to keep 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'. We covenant together as a family of faith to share the costs and the joys of discipleship; to celebrate, always and everywhere the presence of God, in our lives, in our homes, in our church and in our world."

Article VII – GOVERNING BODY

The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in church meeting. The vote of a majority of members present at the meeting shall be the action of the church. A quorum shall consist of 25% of the active members.

**Amended 1/20/08*

BY-LAWS

I. MEMBERSHIP

A. Persons desiring to become full or associate members of the Casco Village Church United Church of Christ by Confession of Faith are to be interviewed by the Pastor and representatives from the Membership Committee. Baptism shall be considered essential for membership. The covenant of membership shall be celebrated at a special service of worship.

B. Persons desiring to become members by Transfer shall present a letter or certificate of transfer.

C. If for any reason deemed valid by the Pastor and Membership Committee a letter or certificate may not be obtained, the prospective member may request membership by Reaffirmation of Faith, provided he or she has been a member in good standing of the Christian Faith.

D. Persons desiring to become members by Confirmation shall present themselves to the Pastor and the Christian Education Committee for a Confirmation course, and meeting all the criteria for said course shall be invited into membership by the Pastor and the Membership Committee.

E. Any member may, at their own request, be granted a letter of transfer. If wishing to join a body not in fellowship with the United Church of Christ, they may be dismissed with a certificate of church membership.

If, because of change of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct, a member requests in writing to be released from their membership obligations, this church shall patiently endeavor to secure their return to fellowship, but failing in such shall be approved by the Pastor, the Membership Committee and the Church Board. The Church Clerk shall issue the appropriate letter of release.

**Amended 1/20/08*

II. MEMBERSHIP – STANDING

A. Member in Full Standing is a person who has entered a covenantal membership with this congregation and holds such membership with no other Christian fellowship.

An *Active* member is a person who fulfills or makes a genuine attempt to fulfill the covenant promises made before the congregation at the service of membership. This fulfillment to include but not be limited to:

- a. regular participation in worship
- b. regular participation in the Life and Mission of the Church beyond worship
- c. participation in and commitment to the ongoing financial needs of the church

i. A person who consistently fails to meet two of the three criteria for a period of one year, for reasons other than health, infirmity or temporary relocation, shall be considered, while still a member, Inactive. At any meeting of the church, an Inactive member may have equal voice but no right to vote.

An *Inactive* member may become active once again simply by fulfilling two of the three criteria for active membership and making the Membership Committee aware of this. The Membership Committee will then inform the Church Board who will in turn note the member as Active. It should be the pleasure of all Active members to assist and encourage Inactive members to become active once again.

ii. If a member's address has long been unknown despite repeated attempts to locate them, or if for a period of two years, despite attempts at spiritual care, a member has not attended or supported the church, or if a member persistently breaches their covenant vows, the Pastor and Membership Committee, after due notice has been given to him or her, and efforts have been made to amend the situation in accordance with the law of Christ, may recommend to the Church Board that the person be removed from membership.

B. The standing of Associate member may be granted to any person who otherwise meets the criteria for membership but may hold full membership in another Christian Body where they participate regularly in, or contribute to the support of that other congregation. This is especially applicable to those members who spend only a portion of the year in the Casco area. An Associate member shall have the right to vote at meetings of the church, subject to the same guidelines outlined in Section II.A.i & ii of this document.

**Amended 1/20/08*

III – CHURCH BOARD

A. The Church Board shall be the executive body of this church. It 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 church mission and benevolence. The Board shall provide for the auditing of church financial accounts and for the adequate support of the Pastor and 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 social meetings. All acts and deliberations of the Church Board are subject to the will of, and revision by, the Governing Body.

i. The voting officers of the Church Board shall consist of its President and immediate past-President, its Vice-President, Secretary, Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary, as well as the Pastor and the chair or representative of each of the following committees: the Diaconate, Stewardship, Mission, Christian Education, Music, Trustees, Long Range Plan, Membership, Hospitality, Pastoral Relations and Flea Market & Auction. As well, the Church Board may request a report from the chair of any committee it has initiated to further the work of Christ and this congregation.

**Amended 1/13/13*

ii. The Pastor may hold office without limitation, but either the Church or the Pastor may terminate the relationship upon two (2) months written notice.

iii. The term of office for the twelve (12) Deacons and the six (6) Trustees shall be for three years; the terms being arranged for the election of one trustee and two or more deacons each year. In each case the retiring trustees and one of the retiring deacons shall act as chair of their respective boards. No deacon or trustee shall serve for more than two consecutive terms. After an interval of one year, they may have their name place in nomination once again.

**Amended 10/24/93, 1/14/96 & 1/23/11*

iv. All officers, except the Pastor, are subject to election by the Governing Body. All other officers, except the Pastor, the Board of Deacons, the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary are to be elected annually at the Annual Meeting of the Governing Body. The Church may elect other officers such as it deems advisable.

v. Nomination shall be made for the offices which open each year by a committee appointed each year by the Church Board. This Nomination Committee, consisting of no fewer than three members, shall make its report at a regular meeting of the Church Board and, subject to the approval of the Board, shall place this

slate up for election at the Annual Meeting of the Governing Body. Public notice of such nomination having been made at least two weeks prior to said meeting, from the pulpit, in the bulletin, by letter or by posted slate. Other nominations may be made from the floor of the meeting at which the election is held.

vi. When elected, officers shall be publicly installed in their respective offices at the regular worship service two weeks after the election.

vii. Vacancies on the Church Board shall be filled by the Board for the unexpired terms.

viii. The Church Board shall meet at least once each month for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings, such as those regarding the call or dismissal of a Pastor, or any matter greatly affecting the property or the doctrinal basis of the church, are subject to the President's call, and shall require at least one week's written notice and an announcement from the pulpit on the preceding Sunday.

ix. For the purposes of a vote of the Board, a quorum of the Board shall consist of one half the voting members.

IV. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

A. Deacons

1. The twelve (12) Deacons shall prepare the elements of the Lord's supper; shall assist the Pastor in the administration of the Lord's Supper; shall make ready the elements for Baptism; shall assist the Pastor in contacting and educating the parents of infants to be baptized; shall represent the church at Baptisms; and shall aid the Pastor in overseeing the spiritual affairs of the congregation.

2. This committee shall have greeters at all services of worship; arrange for the welcoming of worshippers; if possible, acknowledge the attendance of guests through subsequent correspondence; arrange for the entertainment of visiting speakers; arrange for worship services in the Pastor's absence; use all means to extend cordiality; and assist in personal calling on behalf of the Church.

**Amended 10/24/93 & 1/14/96*

B. Trustees

The six (6) Trustees shall have custody of the Church property but shall not sell, mortgage, make major alterations, nor encumber same except by a majority vote of the Church at a regularly called meeting. In all major matters pertaining to Church property the Trustees shall be subject to the authority of the Governing Body.

**Amended 10/24/93, 1/14/96, 1/20/08 & 1/23/11*

C. President

The President shall preside at all congregational meetings during his or her term of office; shall convene meetings in accordance with the by-laws of the Church; and shall appoint committees as authorized by the Church. The immediate past-President shall remain a member of the Board for one (1) year after fulfilling his or her term as President.

D. Vice-President(s)

The Vice-President(s) shall perform in the functions of and carry out the duties of the President in the absence of the President and shall perform such other duties as the President may delegate from time to time, including serving on the Long Range Plan Committee. There may be one or more Vice-Presidents at a time based on the needs of the church and the wishes of the membership.

E. Clerk

The Clerk shall keep records of all business meetings, an accurate roll of members, a list of admissions, dismissals, baptisms, marriages, transfers and confirmations. These shall be recorded on suitable medium, to be the property of the Church, and subject to the use of the Church Officers.

F. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall receive and disburse church money as instructed by the Church, shall render account of church finances at any church meeting when called to do so , and shall close the Church books in time to have them audited. The elected term of office for Treasurer will be two (2) years.

G. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall receive all collections, pledges and other gifts, and shall make a record of same and turn the money over to the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary shall send four statements annually to regular pledgers and once a year to other contributors. The elected term of office for Financial Secretary will be two (2) years.

**Amended 10/24/93 & 1/14/96*

H. Auditor

The Auditor shall examine the Church books and shall present his or her report to the Church Board.

I. Sunday School Superintendent

The Sunday School Superintendent shall work closely with the Christian Education Committee and the Pastor in promoting an efficient and regular Sunday Church School Program, and in maintaining a consistent and well-balanced course of Christian study.

J. Pastor

The Pastor is called to join the congregation in their worship and in the daily living of their faith; to be a presence in the congregation which will foster in the congregation a conducive environment for fellowship and spiritual growth, which will aid in the understanding of Scripture, and will bring to the membership an awareness of the local church as part of the Association, Conference and United Church of Christ; to be a visible and active participant in church-related affairs; to work cooperatively with the Church Board and to represent the Church in the community.

The Pastor has freedom of the pulpit in matters of faith and ethics according to the dictates of the Word of God, the work of the Holy Spirit and the tradition of the United Church of Christ.

V. DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEES

A. Church Board

The Church Board shall study the needs of the church; shall recommend to the Church any policies it deems advisable; shall take responsibility for the preparation and presentation of an Annual Church Budget; and shall have such powers as may enable them to carry on effectively the work of the Church, subject to the approval of the Governing Body.

B. Mission

This committee shall promote Mission efforts of the Church and its members, and shall oversee and make recommendations to the Board concerning the distribution of benevolences and the operation of special offerings, and shall plan and implement special events or projects of a mission nature. **Amended 10/24/93 & 1/14/96*

C. Music

The Music Committee shall take as its responsibility the provision of organist and music for each service of worship through the enlistment of choir, soloists or special music; shall procure appropriate music; shall maintain all musical equipment belonging to the Church; and shall work with the Church Board in planning and implementing special musical events as it deems appropriate.

D. Pastoral Relations

The Pastoral Relations Committee shall act as a liaison between the Pastor and any church member or group of members in the event of conflict or complaint; it shall maintain regular contact with the Pastor, report on a regular basis to the Church board, and report to the Governing Body at the Annual Meeting; it shall make provision for the regular assessment of Pastoral performance, and help the Pastor as needed in the setting of priorities and directions for Pastoral leadership.

E. Christian Education

The Christian Education Committee shall implement and oversee those programs and events which are primarily focused on Christian Education; they shall take the primary responsibility for the recruitment of instructors and teachers for these programs and events and, where appropriate, for the training of instructors and teachers; they shall assess and select appropriate curriculum and teaching materials for Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and confirmation classes; they shall consider, solicit and promote appropriate Christian education for adults.

F. Nominations

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for the recruitment of a slate of officers and committee members each year and shall present that slate both to the Church Board and to the Governing Body at the Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall have as one of its standing members the immediate past-President of the Board.

G. Search

In the event of a vacancy in the Office of Pastor, a committee of nine (9) members, approved by the Church Board and elected by the Governing Body, shall have the task of seeking a candidate to fill the vacancy. **Amended 1/16/00*

- a. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, it shall be reported to the Conference Executive. In filling a vacancy or in securing an interim pastor for the period of the vacancy, the Search Committee may seek the counsel of the Conference Placement Office.
- b. The Search Committee may request the Placement Office to secure any relevant information about ministers whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy, and may expect to receive from the Placement Office the Profiles of interested candidates.
- c. The Search Committee shall conduct the relevant survey(s) necessary for the creation of the Church's own profile, which will be sent to the Placement Office and to any candidates the Search Committee deems it appropriate to consider for the pastoral vacancy.
- d. When the Search Committee has selected a candidate, by unanimous vote, it shall present the name of the candidate to the Governing Body. A favorable vote of the Governing Body constitutes a call.

H. Stewardship

This committee shall promote Christian Stewardship of both personal and Church resources; it shall take responsibility for the annual Pledge Drive and shall undertake and promote special stewardship projects as needed. The Stewardship Committee shall have as one of its standing members the Vice President of the Board.

**Amended 10/24/93, 1/14/96 & 1/20/08*

I. Finance

This committee shall review and manage the financial affairs of the Church and recommend to the Board and membership suggestions beyond its authority. The committee will also prepare the annual inventory of church assets. The committee shall consist of the President, Treasurer, Past Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Past Financial Secretary, and at least one Vice-President.

J. Membership

This committee shall work closely with the Diaconate and the Pastor in following up contacts made by prospective new members; initiating welcoming activities, encouraging and acting upon any interest in becoming an active participant in the life of the Casco Village Church, either as a full member, associate member or friend of the church.

**Amended 1/18/98*

K. Hospitality

This committee will be responsible for post-worship fellowship coffee hour and hosting other events as directed by the Pastor or Church Board.

**Amended 1/20/08*

L. Long Range Plan

This committee shall be charged with continuing the work begun by the ad hoc Long Range Strategic Plan committee; i.e. to consider future needs, to advise the church membership of those needs and to recommend solutions for the final direction and decision of the Church Board and membership.

**Amended 1/18/98*

M. Flea Market & Auction

This committee shall organize and plan the annual Flea Market & Auction fundraiser, and shall recruit church members and other volunteers to ensure the success of the event.

**Amended 1/23/11*

N. Technology

This committee shall maintain hardware and software to facilitate administration of church business, web access, and web presence.

VI. ORGANIZATIONS

All organizations affiliated with the Church shall be under the control of the Church and their work shall be counted as part of the work of the Church.

VII. CHURCH PROPERTY

1. The Church Board, in the Church's name, may sue or be sued, acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise and own, hold, invest, re-invest 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; they may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property and invest and re-invest 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 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 Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ.

(To comply with...IRS code Sec. 501 (c) (3) etc. for a Tax Exempt Organization)

VIII. CHURCH MEETINGS

1. The Annual Meeting of the Church's Governing Body shall be held in the month of January, a day and hour to be established by the Church Board and suitable notice having been given by the Church Clerk, two weeks prior to said meeting. At this meeting, the Church Board, the Officers of the Church, the Pastor, and all church organizations shall submit their annual reports in writing. The Annual Budget shall be established, and any other pertinent business shall be conducted at this meeting.

2. Special Meetings of the Governing Body may be called or established by the Church Board, or called by a petition to the Church Board signed by no less than 10% of the members. The Church Board shall call such meetings within three weeks from the receipt of the petition, and adequate notice of such meeting shall be given to the Governing Body by the Clerk.

IX. RULES OF ORDER

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with good sense allowing each participant to be heard without allowing any participant to dominate said meeting. The presiding official may at his or her sole discretion invoke Robert's Rules of Order for the meeting or any part thereof. If such is the case then Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution and By-Laws.

**Amended 1/20/08*

X. AMENDMENTS

Any and all amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any duly called meeting of the Governing Body 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.

As amended 1/18/15