

1 CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE
2 SAYVILLE CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
3 131 MIDDLE ROAD, SAYVILLE, NEW YORK 11782
4 (PROPOSED November 30, 2018)
5

6 ARTICLE I: NAME AND LOCATION

7 The name of this church shall be the Sayville Congregational United Church
8 of Christ, and the corporate name shall be the Religious and Congregational
9 Society of Sayville.
10

11 ARTICLE II: MISSION

12 To live together in the community of God’s love and to commit to a covenant
13 that calls us to be faithful to the challenges and inspiration of the Eternal Spirit
14 as revealed in the event of Jesus Christ. We believe we are called to accept
15 and respect each other with love and concern in our worship and witness. We
16 accept responsibility to reach out with the courage of our convictions to others
17 in the cause of justice, liberation and equality for all. In these things and more,
18 we covenant to keep God’s ultimate promise for one another “I Care, I Am
19 With You.”
20

21 ARTICLE III: GOVERNMENT

22 The government of this church is vested in its members who exercise the right
23 of control in all its affairs, subject to legal matters to the Articles of
24 Incorporation granted by the State of New York. A copy of these Articles of
25 Incorporation are available in the church office.
26

27 This church is part of the United Church of Christ without any break in its
28 Congregational historical tradition of autonomy and self government. It
29 maintains its standing as a local church of the United Church of Christ by
30 membership in the Suffolk Association of the New York Conference of the
31 United Church of Christ.
32

33 This Constitution shall serve as the governing document of the Church; its
34 provisions, unless they conflict with the Articles of Incorporation, shall be
35 understood to represent the will and authority of the whole Church
36 membership.

37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72

ARTCILE IV: DOCTRINE

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and finds guidance in matters of faith and discipline in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted with the help of the Holy Spirit through reason, faith and conscience.

This Church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice and holds that living in accordance with the teaching of Jesus Christ is a goal we share. All members shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own consciences, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The United Church of Christ Statement of Faith will be used as an expression of the spirit in which the Church interprets the word of God.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

This Church will welcome into its membership any person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ and whose purpose is to live according to his laws of love. The Covenant Members of this Church shall be persons who present satisfactory letters of transfer, or reaffirm their faith, or confess their faith and assent to baptism, if not previously baptized.

Covenant Members:

Covenant Members of the Church have ultimate responsibility for determining the actual practices, programs and other aspects of the Church's identity.

Covenant Members understand that their responsibility is influenced by ongoing study and application of scriptural truths learned through Baptism and Confirmation as well as commitment to the Church's Covenant.

Covenant Members' responsibilities shall include attending services of worship; receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion; contributing to the needs of the Church by discerning and employing one's gifts of talent, time and treasure; attending Congregational Meetings; and voting on issues at hand.

73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107

Upon personal request, a Covenant Member’s name may be removed from the Church rolls. A letter of transfer will be granted upon request. A representative of the Board of the Church, after consulting with the members in question, may recommend removal from Covenant Membership those who have failed to meet responsibilities of membership for a period of one year or more, including at minimum attending one worship service and making a financial contribution of record. Vulnerable adults, including homebound, elderly and those receiving care outside of the immediate area are exempt from the responsibilities of membership, and may not be removed from the rolls.

If a former member wishes to be reinstated as a Covenant Member they may request such reinstatement in writing addressed to the Pastor. Such requests will be promptly addressed.

Upon recommendation of the deacons for extreme cause, an active Covenant Member’s name may be removed from the church rolls by a two-thirds vote of the Congregation at a duly called Congregational Meeting.

Friends of the Church:

Such membership includes those individuals who are unready to make a full membership commitment but who attend worship and give regularly. Friends of the Church can serve in non-governance leadership ministry roles. Such members are eligible for the rites and ceremonies of the Christian Covenant Community, as appropriate. Friends of the church are not eligible to vote.

Affiliate Membership:

Affiliate Membership includes former members, including children and surviving spouses of former members who may no longer live in the area. Affiliate Members are not eligible to vote or hold a position in a leadership ministry. Affiliate Members are eligible for the rites and ceremonies of the Christian Covenant Community, as appropriate.

Non-members:

108 Non-members are eligible for pastoral services, rites and ceremonies,
109 including funerals and memorial services of the Christian Covenant on a case-
110 by-case basis.

111 ARTICLE VI: ELECTED OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

112

113 Section I: Officers

114

115 The officers of this Church shall be:

116

117 Minister:

118 The Minister shall be called by a vote of at least two-thirds of the members
119 present at an official Congregational Meeting. He or she, as pastor and
120 teacher, shall minister to the spiritual welfare of the congregation, being
121 receptive to the Board of Deacons for advice, guidance and assistance. The
122 Minister shall seek to enlist individuals as followers of Christ, preach the
123 gospel, administer the sacraments, and have responsibility for all services of
124 public worship. The Minister's duties shall include administration of the
125 activities of the Church in cooperation with the Board of Deacons and related
126 Committees. The Minister shall be an *ex officio* member of the all boards and
127 committees of the Church.

128

129 Moderator:

130 The Moderator shall preside at all official meetings of the Church and of the
131 Board of Deacons, working with the minister and Board to set the agenda. The
132 Moderator acts as the liaison between members of the Congregation, the
133 Board of Deacons and all committees. The Moderator shall serve as the
134 President of the Corporation.

135

136 Clerk:

137 The Clerk shall record the proceedings of the Congregational Meetings and
138 the Board of Deacons of which he or she shall be a member and secretary. The
139 Clerk shall be responsible for giving official notice of all Congregational
140 Meetings. The Clerk shall keep a register with addresses of the members of
141 the Church, dates and modes of their reception and departure. The Clerk will
142 record and maintain a record of all births, baptisms and marriages. Further, the

143 Clerk shall be responsible for preserving and keeping on file all
144 communications and written official reports including letters of transfer.
145
146
147
148

149 Treasurer:

150 The Treasurer shall receive an accounting of all receipts and disbursements
151 and shall direct management of all Church funds in accordance with the
152 policies of the Board of Deacons and the budget approved by the Covenant
153 Members. He or she shall make a full report at the Annual Meeting and other
154 such other reports, as may be requested by the Church. The Treasurer shall
155 serve as the Chairperson of the Finance Committee as well as the Treasurer of
156 the Corporation.
157

158 Section II: Boards

159 Board of Deacons:

160 The Board of Deacons is a representative body comprised of all currently
161 serving Deacons. The Board of Deacons is the final decision-making body
162 between Congregational Meetings, working closely with the Minister in the
163 spiritual and institutional affairs of the Church. Specifically, the Board of
164 Deacons is charged with insuring the resources of the church are utilized in a
165 manner consistent with Christ’s mission for the church and in accordance with
166 this Constitution and By-Laws. The Board of Deacons shall consist of three to
167 five Deacon Elders, three to five Deacon Trustees, and the three elected
168 officers of the Church. The Board of Deacons shall meet regularly as needed,
169 not to be less frequent than once a quarter. The Minister shall serve as an *ex*
170 *officio* member of the Board of Deacons.
171

172 Deacon Elders:

173 Three to Five Deacon Elders shall be elected from the Covenant membership
174 of the Church. The Deacon Elders shall be ordained into the deaconate and
175 shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to Christ’s mission for the
176 Church to include, but not be limited to, worship, faith development, pastoral
177 care, mission, outreach, evangelism, and prophetic witness. Deacon Elders, in
178 conjunction with Deacon Trustees, shall approve the hire of all staff serving in
179 mission-related positions, including Worship Musicians and Christian
180 Educators. Deacon Elders shall also approve all mission partnerships with

181 outside organizations. Two Deacon Elders and the Minister shall receive
182 requests for and approve disbursements of funds from the Deacon's Fund, in
183 accordance with the policies set down by the Board of Deacons. Deacon
184 Elders shall divide their responsibilities among themselves and shall form
185 such teams and *ad hoc* committees as needed to fulfill their duties. The Clerk
186 shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the deacon Elders.

187 Deacon Trustees:

188 Three to five Deacon Trustees shall be elected from the Covenant
189 Membership of the Church. The Deacon Trustees shall be ordained into the
190 deaconate and shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to corporate
191 management of the Church and its resources to include, but not be limited to,
192 stewardship, physical property oversight, personnel management and, in
193 conjunction with the treasurer, the management of Church funds. Deacon
194 Trustees, in conjunction with Deacon Elders, shall approve the hire of all staff
195 serving in mission-related positions, including Worship Musicians and
196 Christian Educators. Deacon Trustees shall approve the hire of all personnel in
197 non-mission functions, to include but not be limited to those responsible for
198 care and maintenance of physical properties. Deacon Trustees shall divide
199 these responsibilities among themselves and shall form such teams and *ad hoc*
200 committees as needed to fulfill their duties. The treasurer shall serve as an *ex*
201 *officio* member of the deacon trustees.

202
203 Section III: Special Committees

204
205 Nominating Committee:

206 The Nominating Committee shall prepare and present to the Congregation a
207 slate of candidates, nominating one person for each Church office to be filled.
208 Candidates for the Nominating Committee, itself, shall be recommended by
209 the Board of Deacons. The entire slate of candidates should represent the
210 diversity of the Congregation with respect to race, age, gender, sexual
211 orientation, and duration of Church membership. The Nominating Committee
212 shall keep the Congregation informed as to which positions are vacant, and
213 the responsibilities thereof. If a vacancy in any Church office or Board occurs
214 in the period between Congregational Meetings, the Nominating Committee
215 shall recommend candidates to the Board of Deacons for appointment. At all
216 times, the Nominating Committee and the Board of Deacons shall make every

217 effort to consider the spiritual gifts of particular individuals in filling
218 positions.

219
220
221
222
223

224 **ARTICLE VII: ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMPOSITION OF BOARDS**

225

226 Section I: Length of Election

227

228 **A. Officers**

- 229 1. The Minister shall be called for an indefinite period of time at a
230 Congregational Meeting called for this purpose.
231 2. Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer shall be elected for a one-year term at the
232 Annual Meeting and are eligible for reelection to office.
233 3. Deacon Elders and Deacon Trustees shall be elected to a two-year term and
234 may be reelected.

235

236 **B. Members of the Nominating Committee**

- 237 1. Members of the Nominating Committee serve for one-year and may be
238 reappointed.

239

240 **C. Members of the Pastoral Relations Committee**

- 241 1. Members of the Pastoral Relations Committee may serve for two years and
242 may be reelected until there is a change in ministerial staff.

243

244 Section II: Eligibility for Election

245 Only Covenant Members in good standing of this Church may hold elective
246 positions.

247

248 Section III: Removal from Service

249 Any elected official may be removed from their position by a two-thirds vote
250 of the members present, constituting a quorum of the membership, at a
251 Congregational Meeting called for that purpose.

252

253
254
255
256
257
258
259
260
261
262
263
264
265
266
267
268
269
270
271
272
273
274
275
276
277
278
279
280
281
282
283
284
285
286
287

ARTICLE VIII: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Section I: All Congregational Meetings

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the Church membership shall represent a quorum.

All official business requiring attention of the Church membership shall be conducted at a duly called meeting where a quorum is present.

The Board of Deacons may postpone a Congregational Meeting because of extreme conditions.

Any member may request the Minister or the Moderator to call a Congregational Meeting. The Moderator will convene the Board of Deacons which may accept or reject the request. If the Board of Deacons approves the request to call a Congregational Meeting, the Moderator will do so and be responsible for preparing the agenda. In addition, notice must be given on two consecutive Sundays preceding each Congregational Meeting, including announcements in Sunday bulletins, eChimes, and the church's website.

Section II: Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held on or about the second Sunday in November for the purpose of electing officers and conducting other business including approval of the annual fiscal plan. An alternate or second session may be held, if necessary, on or about the second Sunday of December.

288 The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for selecting the specific dates and
289 providing notice thereof on two consecutive Sundays preceding each session.

290
291 Officers, Deacons and Members of the Nominating Committee shall assume
292 their offices at midnight on December 31st. The Annual Church Budget shall
293 come into effect at that time.

294
295
296
297

298 ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

299 This Constitution may be amended by a two-third vote of a quorum of
300 covenant members present at any Congregational Meeting, provided a two-
301 week notice of suggested changes are provided, according to the procedure for
302 notice of Congregational Meetings. Special meetings, duly called, may be
303 scheduled for this purpose.

304
305 ARTICLE X: EFFECT

306 This Constitution is in effect upon approval by the Congregation at a duly-
307 formed Congregational Meeting and replaces all previous documents until
308 such time future changes are made through the due process noted in this
309 Constitution.

310
311
312
313
314
315
316
317
318
319
320
321
322
323

324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341
342
343
344
345
346
347
348
349
350
351
352
353
354
355
356
357
358
359
360
361

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Amendment I: Endowment Fund Creation

Creation of an Endowment Fund of the Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ (March 22, 1992)

A. Resolution for Amendment to the Constitution

An Endowment Fund shall be established. The purpose, governance, and operational procedures of this fund shall be defined by special resolution adopted by the Congregation.

B. Resolution to Implement the Endowment Fund

Whereas, Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given us including accumulated, inherited, and appreciated resources:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, at a meeting assembled on March 22, 1992, that this Congregation approve and establish a new separate fund to be known as THE ENDOWMENT FUND OF THE SAYVILLE CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Sayville, New York (hereafter called “the Fund”)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that unless otherwise specified by the grantor, the principal amount of the gifts to this FUND, will be retained and preserved, and that only the income earnings from the managed investments of the principal may be expended.

362
363
364
365
366
367
368
369
370
371
372
373
374
375
376
377
378
379
380
381
382
383
384
385
386
387
388
389
390
391
392
393
394
395
396
397

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an Endowment Fund Committee (hereafter called the COMMITTEE) shall be established to be the custodian of the FUND.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following Plan of Operation be set forth for the administration and management of the FUND.

C. Plan of Operation

1. The COMMITTEE shall consist of no less than three (3) and no more than five (5) duly elected members, all of whom shall be active members of the Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ. (The term of each member shall be three (3) years. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive three-year terms. After a lapse of one year, a former member of the COMMITTEE may be reelected.) The COMMITTEE shall have its books audited annually by a qualified person (who is not a member of the COMMITTEE) at the expense of the FUND income, for presentation to the Congregation.

The COMMITTEE may request other members of the Congregation to serve as advisory members and, at the expense of the FUND income, may provide for such professional counseling on investments, accounting, or legal matters as it deems to be in the best interest of the FUND.

All assets are to be held in the name of THE ENDOWMENT FUND OF THE SAYVILLE CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

The COMMITTEE will appoint a corporate fiduciary as its agent, and no member of the COMMITTEE shall be empowered to hold, sell,

398 invest, transfer, convert, or in all other aspects manage and control the
399 assets of the FUND. The appointed agent shall have custody of all
400 assets of the FUND and shall make all investment decisions pursuant to
401 such policies as may be prescribed by the donor or otherwise
402 determined by the COMMITTEE. The COMMITTEE, with approval of
403 the Board of Deacons, may at any time remove its agent and appoint a
404 successor.

405
406
407
408
409
410 In the event that real property is donated to the FUND, the
411 COMMITTEE shall be empowered to oversee the management of said
412 real property until such time that it is deemed beneficial by the
413 COMMITTEE to liquidate the property. Upon liquidation of the real
414 property, the proceeds become part of the FUND principal and must be
415 placed into the FUND at the first available opportunity.

416
417 Members of the COMMITTEE shall not be held liable for any losses
418 which may be incurred upon the investments of the FUND except to the
419 extent that such losses shall have been caused by bad faith or gross
420 negligence. Members shall not be liable for acts or omissions of any
421 other member. No member shall engage in any self-dealing or
422 transactions with the FUND in which the member has direct or indirect
423 financial interest and shall at all times refrain from any conduct in
424 which his/her personal interests would conflict with the interests of the
425 FUND.

426 427 2. Accumulation and Distribution

428
429 In order to assure growth of the FUND and to protect against inflation,
430 10% of earned income must be returned to the principal each year until
431 the principal balance reaches \$250,000. Thereafter, 5% of the earned
432 income must be returned to the principal each year. The COMMITTEE
433 may also recommend to the full Board of Deacons that no distribution

434 be made in a given year so that accumulated interest may compound.
435 Not more than one year consecutively may pass without at least a
436 partial distribution of income, provided there is application for support
437 from the FUND.

438
439 The COMMITTEE shall determine what is principal and what is
440 income according to generally accepted accounting principals.

441
442
443
444
445
446 Borrowing against the FUND principal balance is to be strongly
447 discouraged, unless catastrophic events threaten the very existence of
448 the Church. In such catastrophic circumstances, borrowing against the
449 FUND principal may be approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the
450 members present at a duly called Congregational Meeting for the
451 specific purpose herein stated.

452 Income generated by the FUND principal may be expended annually
453 and at such other times deemed necessary and/or feasible to accomplish
454 benefit the following purposes:

455
456 a. One-quarter (1/4) for capital improvements of a building
457 program of the Sayville Congregational United Church of
458 Christ, Sayville, New York; and/or for scholarships or grants
459 to members of the Sayville Congregational United Church of
460 Christ for the purpose of such education or training which
461 enables this Congregation to grow in Christian faith and
462 service to God's people; and/or for the enhancement of the
463 special programs of the Church, including but not limited to
464 Christian Education, Evangelism, Music, and Student
465 Internship programs.

466
467 b. One-quarter (1/4) for outreach into the community, including
468 but not limited to, social service agencies, institutions and
469 agencies to which this Congregation relates, and special

470 programs designed for those persons in our local area who are
471 in spiritual and/or economic need.

472
473 c. One-quarter (1/4) for the wider mission of the United Church
474 of Christ at home and overseas, including but not limited to
475 UCC Colleges and seminaries, grants for UCC new Church
476 development, professional leadership, educational ministries,
477 world mission, and capital financing.

478
479 d. One-quarter (1/4) for any purpose listed under A, B, or C
480 above.

481
482 The COMMITTEE shall evaluate all requests for program support.
483 Those requests deemed to be consistent with the purpose of the FUND
484 and in the best interest of this Congregation, shall be recommended to
485 the Board of Deacons for approval for funding. The level of financial
486 support shall also be recommended by the COMMITTEE and approved
487 by the Board of Deacons.

488
489
490 3. Amending this resolution: BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any
491 amendment to this Plan of Operation will require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of
492 the members present at a duly called Congregational Meeting for the
493 specific purpose of amending this Plan.

494
495 4. Disposition or Transfer of the FUND: BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that
496 in the event the Sayville Congregational Church ceases to exist either
497 through merger or dissolution, disposition or transfer of the FUND shall be
498 at the discretion of the governing body in conformity with the approved
499 Congregational Constitution and in consultation with the denominational
500 staff to which this Congregation belongs at such time. Consultation with
501 the denomination may be desirable for continuation of Endowment Fund
502 obligations.

503

504 5. Adoption of resolution: this resolution, recommended by the Church
505 Council and accepted by the Congregation at a duly called Congregational
506 Meeting, is hereby adopted.

507
508
509
510
511
512
513
514
515
516
517
518

519 Amendment II:

520

521 Establishment of a Pastoral Relations Committee (October 18, 1998)

522

523 There shall be established a Pastoral Relations Committee which shall provide
524 an arena for helpful and honest dialogue between the Minister(s) and the
525 people of the Congregation and among the members of the pastoral staff,
526 through the fostering and maintenance of good, open and healthful relations.

527

528 The following skills and attributes are generally looked for in members of the
529 Pastoral Relations Committee: Christian character that commands the respect
530 and admiration of the Congregation and Minister(s); maturity; patience and
531 flexibility; a vital interest in the life of the Church; an ability to maintain
532 confidentiality; an ability to appreciate different points of view; an ability to
533 negotiate and reconcile differences; availability for listening to Church
534 members; trustworthiness; and a willingness to learn to be effective in this
535 ministry.

536

537 Candidates for election to this Committee will be chosen according to the
538 following procedure. The Minister(s), with agreement among themselves, will
539 submit names of candidates to the Nominating Committee. Likewise, the

540 Congregation and Board of Deacons will submit separate lists of names to the
541 Nominating Committee. Using the list of criteria given in the previous
542 paragraph, the Nominating Committee will select candidates whose names
543 appear on all three lists and arrange the election or appointment of these
544 candidates to the Pastoral Relations Committee in the ordinary manner. If
545 there are not enough qualified candidates whose names appear on all three
546 lists, the Nominating Committee shall request the names of additional
547 candidates be submitted by all three parties (Minister(s), Congregation, and
548 Board of Deacons) and shall repeat this process until all open positions on the
549 Pastoral Relations Committee are filled.

550
551 Members of the Pastoral Relations Committee may serve on any other Board
552 or Committee, except the Board of Deacons.

553 The Pastoral Relations Committee is accountable only to the Congregation,
554 and shall make an Annual Report to the Congregation. Other reports may be
555 made at the Committee's discretion.

556
557 The Pastoral Relations Committee shall not be directly involved in the
558 negotiation or execution of contractual matters between the Church and
559 Pastoral staff, including the Minister(s).

560

561

End of Document – November 30, 2018