

CONSTITUTION
UNITED CHURCHES OF LYCOMING COUNTY

PREAMBLE

We, the constituent members of United Churches of Lycoming County, recognize God as Creator of us all and affirm, within the diversity of our faith traditions, our oneness in Jesus Christ as Divine Lord and Savior.

STATEMENT OF MISSION

Connected through Faith, United in Service.

STATEMENT OF VISION

As a Lycoming County Faith Community

- We are persons and congregations who **care** about our neighbors.
- We celebrate our unity through **faith in action**.
- We **respect** people and communities in their faith journeys.
- We **believe** the broader mandate of Jesus to care in tangible ways: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to welcome the stranger, to clothe the naked, and to visit the sick and imprisoned.
- We facilitate **cooperation and understanding** on faith, life, and justice issues.
- We **energize** people by mobilizing congregations and communities in response to **emerging needs**.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The overarching purpose of United Churches of Lycoming County shall be to provide the organizational structure necessary to manifest the spirit expressed in the Statement of Mission.

Its specific purposes shall be:

1. To foster a deeper awareness of God's presence and action through the ministries and activities of United Churches of Lycoming County.
2. To promote the unity we find in Jesus Christ while recognizing and appreciating the diversity of our different faith traditions and to provide opportunities for understanding and education while always striving toward the unity for which Christ prayed.
3. To assist member congregations in fulfilling their individual and cooperative mission in our county.
4. To exhibit the redemptive nature of our service as we address the total needs of people. The love of Christ calls us to serve others and care for one another.
5. To witness ecumenically by providing a vehicle through which we can understand and appreciate each other in our different faith traditions.
6. To prophetically recognize the issues of the day, viewing these issues in light of Biblical witness, and accepting our duty to call our member congregations to live in light of that Biblical witness.
7. To worship God through gathering both in services of worship and in sharing the work of Christ.

This statement of purpose shall be interpreted so as to limit the activities of United Churches of Lycoming County to those charitable, religious, and educational purposes permitted of tax exempt organizations under S501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. (Revised November 10, 1983). This statement of purpose shall not be interpreted to conflict with or supersede standards and loyalties of our various faith traditions.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be United Churches of Lycoming County (UCLC), hereafter referred to as United Churches.

ARTICLE II - GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The geographical region served by United Churches shall be Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, and contiguous areas desiring to share in our ministry.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Any congregation is eligible for full membership in United Churches, provided that such congregation is in agreement with the Preamble and Statement of Mission, Vision, and Purpose of this Constitution and agrees to share in the prayerful support, activities, and/or financial support of United Churches.

Any organization or individual willing to cooperate with United Churches and to share in planning for mission with us may become a member with voice, but no vote.

ARTICLE IV - THE ASSEMBLY

The highest governing authority of United Churches shall be the Assembly, which shall transact the business of United Churches and carry out its purpose by ratifying cooperative Christian missions planned by the Board of Directors and suggesting new areas of ministry.

Three representatives from each member congregation shall be the Assembly delegates. The Assembly shall meet annually during the fall, rotating throughout Lycoming County, as determined by the Board of Directors. Delegates attending shall constitute a quorum.

Visitors shall have voice, but no vote.

ARTICLE V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There shall be a Board of Directors comprised of persons representing a diversity of denominations; plus, the third vice president who is the president of Church Women United of Lycoming County; the chairpersons of staff ministries, and the treasurer. All Board members have voice and vote except staff, who have no vote.

Five members will be elected as officers and twelve will be elected as members at large by the Assembly. Other members will be elected as chairpersons of each department and standing committee.

The term of office shall be for one year, beginning in January, following the annual election at the Assembly. This is further explained in Section III of the Bylaws.

All area ministeriums shall be offered representation on the Board. The Board shall reflect the diversity of race, gender, and age that makes up our county. Pastoral church leaders and laity shall be represented equally. All Directors shall be members in good and regular standing in a congregation.

No officer may serve more than two terms as an officer in the same position, except the treasurer. An officer who has completed his/her terms as officer may serve as a member-at-large or committee chairperson. The president of Church Women United and the chairpersons of staff ministries shall serve

as Directors as long as they are in office.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

Any nominee for office must have served on the Board. The officers of United Churches shall consist of a president, a first vice president, a second vice president, a third vice president, and a treasurer, who shall perform the usual duties and responsibilities of their respective offices and such additional duties as may be assigned. Officers shall be elected annually at the Assembly.

The president, first vice president, and second vice president shall serve one year and are subject to reelection for another year, or until the election of their successor, and may serve four consecutive terms (for a total of six years) on the Board. The past president will serve as an ex-officio member of the Board for one year when his/her term of office has expired with voice, but no vote.

ARTICLE VII - MINISTRIES

SECTION ONE: VOLUNTEER MINISTRIES

Volunteer ministries are programs of United Churches which are predominately initiated, planned, implemented, and administered by volunteers.

Each volunteer ministry shall have a coordinator who shall be approved by and accountable to the Assembly or the Board to carry out the ministry of United Churches. In turn, United Churches administrative staff and its member congregations will undertake to support and sustain each ministry with financial, human, and spiritual resources.

SECTION TWO: STAFF MINISTRIES

Staff Ministries are programs of United Churches that are coordinated by staff, supervised by respective governing boards, and assisted by volunteers. All staff are evaluated and confirmed by the Personnel Committee and a report provided to each Annual Assembly.

Staff Ministries shall be created by a 2/3 majority vote of the Assembly or by the Board, and are subject to ratification by the Assembly.

All policies, procedures, budgets, staff, and members of governing boards must be approved by the Board of Directors of United Churches. No staff shall be hired until a budget has been approved by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VIII - FUNDING

Congregations and individuals are asked to make a prayerful financial contribution toward the annual unified budget of United Churches.

Contributions will also be sought from interested community individuals and groups. Fundraisers for United Churches will also help raise contributions.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended in any meeting of the Assembly by a 2/3 majority vote of the delegates present, provided that written notice of the proposed amendments is available to all congregations at least thirty days prior to the meeting on the United Churches website.

ARTICLE X - DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of this organization, the remaining assets, after the payment of all debts and liabilities, shall be distributed to member congregations in proportion to their contributions to United Churches during its last full calendar year of existence. If any member congregation does not qualify under

Internal Revenue Service regulations as a tax-exempt organization, by law it will not receive its share of assets.

BYLAWS

SECTION I - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- A. In preparation for the annual meeting of the Assembly, the Nominating Committee Chairperson appoints three to five persons, each representing a different denomination, to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of one candidate for each vacant board position having previously secured the nominee's consent. Additional nominations will be accepted at the Assembly from delegates who have secured their nominee's consent. The composition of the Board shall include a combination of both pastoral church leaders and laity. It should also represent a variety of community, legal, business and social interests, all ministeriums, and reflect the diversity of the congregations that make up United Churches.
- C. The Nominating Committee shall annually nominate persons for each position available on the Board and for positions of appointment. The president and first and second vice presidents will be chosen from the current or previous Board of Directors and recommended by this Committee. All nominations shall be presented to the Board of Directors for approval at their regular meeting before the Assembly.
- D. All elections to the Board shall be by a majority of the delegates present at the Assembly. Each delegate present is to have one vote.
- E. Vacancies between Assemblies shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee Chairperson and approved by the Board of Directors.

SECTION II - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- A. The president shall preside at all Assembly and Board meetings and shall perform such other duties as ordinarily pertain to this office or that may be assigned to the president by the Assembly or the Board. On behalf of the Board, the president shall advise the Executive Director. In the absence of the president, one of the vice presidents shall perform the duties of the president.
- B. The treasurer shall assist the president and have prime responsibility for all financial procedures and shall serve with the Finance Committee to review and prepare the unified budget.
- C. The secretary shall be the Executive Director, who will keep minutes of all meetings of the Assembly and the Board, and shall perform such other functions as pertain to that office.

SECTION III - TERM OF OFFICE

- A. Committee chairpersons and members at large serve one term of one year. Committee chairpersons and members at large may be reelected for a total of six years. If a member-at-large or Committee chairperson is elected to complete the unexpired term of a departing member, a one year term follows the completion of the unexpired term. Members-at-large who are elected to the chairpersonship of a committee during their term of office will begin a new one-year-term starting at the January meeting of the new year.

In case of necessity, the Executive Board may authorize a reelection, extend terms, or make temporary appointments. The term of office for officers is described in Article VI of the Constitution.

- B. All persons elected to officer positions shall begin their terms at the January meeting of the new year. Their term of office is defined in Article VI and VII of the Constitution of United Churches.

SECTION IV - ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

- A. At the Assembly, the delegates shall elect Board members, approve a unified budget for the following fiscal year, receive fiscal reports as well as the reports of the ministries, and consider such other business as may be brought before it. Official notice of the Assembly shall be provided at least thirty days in advance.
- B. Special meetings of the Assembly may be called by the Board of Directors for the transaction of any business which may properly come before the meeting. Notice of such special meetings shall be provided thirty days in advance. Only business listed in such notice may come before that special meeting.
- C. Delegates to the Assembly from each congregation shall be chosen in such manner and for such term as the respective member congregation shall choose. Congregations shall register their delegates and other representatives with United Churches prior to the Assembly.
- D. Delegates will be expected to speak for their congregations to United Churches and to their congregations for United Churches. Representatives will be expected to participate as fully as possible in the work of United Churches.

SECTION V - BOARD

The Board shall meet at least eight times a year, unless otherwise determined by the Board. Special meetings may be called by the president, the Executive Committee, or any five Board members. Members attending shall constitute a quorum. The duties of the Board shall be:

- A. To implement, through United Churches' ministries and actions, the intent of the mission, vision, and purpose statements.
- B. To promote involvement in United Churches.
- C. To establish the time and place of Assembly meetings, prepare an agenda, and give notice thereof.
- D. To review new program proposals for consideration by the Assembly.
- E. To evaluate all current ministries, propose changes when necessary and report to the Assembly.
- F. To implement all actions of the Assembly.
- G. To approve an annual unified budget which, when adopted by the Assembly, will represent authorization for the Executive Director to spend within its limits.
- H. To approve the fiscal year annual report of the organization's finances to be reported to the Assembly.
- I. To approve the receipt, transfer, or disposition of such assets and properties as United Churches may own, and allocate and define authority with respect to the establishment of bank accounts and the signing of checks and other legal documents as may be necessary in the course of business.
- J. To plan, organize, and promote fund-raising efforts and donation requests throughout the year.

- K. To approve all Board vacancies occurring between meetings of the Assembly.
- L. To employ and supervise the Executive Director and all staff.
- M. To set the time and amount of fidelity bonds for officers and staff and the type and amount of insurance coverage for the organization.
- N. To appoint, elect, or confirm members of standing committees. To appoint such *ad hoc* advisory committees as deemed necessary for the functioning of the Board.
- O. To perform such other functions as are necessary for the welfare of United Churches.

SECTION VI - STANDING COMMITTEES

- 1. The chairperson of each standing committee shall be elected at the Assembly. He/she will be a member of the Board of Directors and shall recruit interested persons for that committee.
- 2. There shall be two standing committees:
 - a. A Nominating Committee to function in accordance with bylaws section one.
 - b. A Personnel Committee to oversee hiring, supervision, evaluation, and care of employees.

SECTION VII - PROGRAM COMMITTEES

- 1. The chairperson of each program committee shall be elected at the Assembly. The remaining members of each program committee will either be members of the Board of Directors or persons recruited by the committee chair.
- 2. The program committees are as follows:
 - a. **Ecumenism, Evangelism, and Education Committee:** It shall explore ways which will encourage and enable the various traditions to develop a deeper mutual understanding and appreciation for one another's heritage and unique contribution, as well as ways which will enable them to express their oneness of purpose and mission through common experiences of study and worship. It shall seek to discover the greatest educational needs of the community and provide ways by which those needs can be most effectively met for persons of every age and station, through ecumenical cooperation.
 - b. **Social Concerns Committee:** It shall seek to determine those social issues in the life of the community to which the conscience must respond and to recommend ways by which we can fulfill our responsibilities more adequately through cooperative efforts. This program committee shall also be responsible for finding cooperative ways for the community to minister more adequately to persons in special need of physical, mental, social, and spiritual guidance and sustenance.
 - c. **Media Committee:** It shall use all available media in order to present to the public our faith values and the work of our congregations. This committee shall encourage those who participate to make use of the Holy Scriptures to keep this ministry interesting and vital.
 - d. **Institutional Care Ministries:** It shall provide religious services to those in our homes for elderly citizens, prisons, and others with special need.
 - e. **Church Women United of Lycoming County:** It shall seek to enlist the fullest possible

participation of the women of the churches in expressing their Christian commitment through ecumenical experiences of worship and service projects to meet critical human needs.

- f. **Interfaith Dialogue Commission:** It shall seek ways to develop stronger relationships with neighbors of different faith traditions and to build bridges of understanding within the community.

SECTION VII - STAFF MINISTRIES

1. A Staff Ministry may be created in the following manner:
 - a. All proposals must be presented to the Board for validation at least two months prior to a meeting of the Assembly. Each proposal shall include a statement of need, a rationale consistent with the purpose of United Churches, program goals and objectives, paid and volunteer staff needs, and estimated program costs.
 - b. Any proposed staff ministry which expresses the purpose of United Churches meets constitutional requirements.
2. Renewal shall be based on a continued manifestation of need, effectiveness in achieving goals, and the availability of financial and human resources.

SECTION IX - STAFF

There shall be an Executive Director employed by the Board whose responsibility it will be to oversee the work of United Churches, coordinate its activities, and expedite its ministry. The Executive Director shall be an ex-officio member of the Board, serve as its secretary, and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and ministries.

SECTION X - RULES OF ORDER

Unless otherwise specified by the bylaws or the constitution, the latest revision of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the official rules of order.

SECTION XI - FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year for United Churches shall be the calendar year.

SECTION XII - AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended in any meeting of the Assembly by a majority of the delegates present, provided that written notice of the proposed amendments is provided to member congregations at least thirty days prior to the meeting on the United Churches of Lycoming County's website. Bylaws will be reviewed bi-annually, prior to Assembly.

- Board approved xx/xx/xx and approved at Annual Assembly xx/xx/xx.