

Castile United Church of Christ
2021 Constitution & By Laws
(Amended February 2021)



ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this church shall be the “Castile 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 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 III. POLITY

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 4th, 1961 relating to local churches.

The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, to laws of the State of New York relating to ecclesiastical corporations.

ARTICLE IV. FAITH and COVENANT

FAITH: This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of humanity. 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 this faith its own. In accordance with the teachings of the 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 the “Statement of Faith” of the United Church of Christ, which we make our own.

CHURCH COVENANT:

As members of this congregation, we make this covenant together: “We covenant and bind ourselves to strive to know the will of God, to walk in the ways of the Lord made known to us; to exalt the worship of the one true God, to proclaim the gospel to all humanity; to work and pray for progress and knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and one humanity that includes all. Amen.”

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

The members of this church shall be persons who have been baptized, and who make public acceptance of its covenant:

- (a) On presentation of letters of transfer from other churches;
- (b) If letters are not available, by reaffirmation of faith; or
- (c) On confession of faith and baptism; or
- (d) Act of confirmation at age **12** or over.

1. Reception of Members:

Persons applying for admission to the church fellowship in any manner shall be recommended by the Pastor and approved by a majority vote of the Board of Elders. They shall be received at a church service; if unable to attend they may be received in absentia.

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 benevolence; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

2. Termination of Membership:

All terminations or transfers of membership, except by death, shall be approved by the Board of Elders. Any member may, upon 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 termination. Upon the issuance of such letter or certificate, membership shall be terminated. If, because of change of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct, 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 appropriate letter of release shall be issued.

A member whose address has long been unknown or who for a period of two (2) years, in spite of spiritual care, has not attended the church's worship or contributed to its support, may be placed on an inactive list for one (1) year. Hereafter he/she may be removed from membership roll and letter of membership termination issued.

3. Restoration of Membership:

Any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored upon request and approval of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE VI. SERVICES and MEETINGS

The services and meetings of the church shall be as follows:

1. Worship Services:

Services of worship shall be held at regularly designated hours each Sunday and other times as the Board of Elders deem important.

(a) The Sacraments:

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated as such times as the Pastor in consultation with the Board of Elders may determine. Any member of the congregation may request of the Pastor, a private service of the Lord's Supper in cases of serious illness, invalidism, or special need.

(b) Baptism:

The baptism of adults and the baptism of children shall be recommended by the Pastor and approved by a majority vote of the Board of Elders.

(c) Other Services:

Worship, prayer services and other special services of worship may be held as determined by the Pastor or the Board of Elders in consultation.

2. Business Meetings:

(a) Annual Meeting:

The Annual Meeting shall be held in the church in January. The date to be set by the Moderator in conjunction with the Clerk, to approve the yearly reports of officers, organizations and committees, to elect officers, and transact any other business that may come before this meeting.

(b) Church Council:

The Church Council shall be the executive body of the church, and shall consist of the Pastor or Pastors, Moderator of the church, who shall be chairperson of the Council, officers of the Church, Elders, Trustees, and Chairpersons of all other boards, committees and all church fellowship groups. The Church Council shall meet quarterly and on call of the Pastor or Moderator. Ten (10) members shall constitute a quorum. The Officers of the church shall have voting privileges at the Church Council meetings. The clerk shall take formal attendance for voting privilege.

(c) Special Meetings:

Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, Chairperson of the Council, the Elders or the Trustees. The Clerk or Moderator of the Council will give appropriate notice of the nature of the business to be addressed.

(d) Rules and Regulations: ALL Meetings shall be guided by the Roberts Rules of Order.

Notices:

Notices for the Annual and Special meetings shall be read from the pulpit and/or printed in the church bulletin on two successive Sundays immediately preceding said meeting.

Quorum:

A quorum shall consist of twenty-five (25) voting members for the Annual meeting and ten (10) for a Council meeting.

Voting:

- Method of voting to be determined by the Moderator.
- All officers of the church as previously stated are

eligible to vote at Church Council meetings

- All active members shall be eligible to vote at the Annual and Congregational meetings.

Official Year:

The official church year shall correspond to the calendar year. All officers, boards and committees shall be approved at the Annual Meeting. They shall assume their duties immediately and continue until their successors are elected

Order of Business:

The order of business at the Annual Meeting shall be as follows:

Call to order by the Moderator
Opening Prayer
Minutes of the last called meeting

Reports:

Pastor
Clerk
Church Treasurer
Missions Treasurer
Financial Secretary
Auditor
Board of Elders
Worship Technology Group
Board of Trustees
Perpetual Fund Committee
Board of Christian Education
Board of Christian World Missions
Women's Fellowship Group
Music Committee
Stewardship Committee

Nominating Committee
Pastoral Relations & Evaluation Committee
Historian
Other Committees
Old Business
New Business
Adjournment with a Prayer

The above order of business may be altered as agreed upon by majority present at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

The officers of the church shall be members of the Church Council and they shall be the following:

1. Pastor:

The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite time by a two-thirds vote of the church as hereinafter provided. The Pastor shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Board of Elders. He/she shall seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, have under his/her care all services of public worship, and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with the various boards and committees. He/she shall be an advisory member of all boards and committees and publicly install the teachers and officers of the Church.

2. Pastor Emeritus:

The Pastor Emeritus is an honorary position that may be given to a retired Pastor. The Pastor Emeritus has no specific duties or responsibilities. He/she may be as involved in the life

of the church as he/she and the current Pastor deem appropriate.

This title may be bestowed upon a retiring Pastor after years of service to the church. The giving of the title, *Pastor Emeritus*, requires a 2/3 vote of a duly called congregational meeting with the proposal having been announced prior thereto.

3. Moderator:

The Moderator shall be the Chairperson of the Church Council and for all meetings of the congregation and shall be elected by the congregation at its annual meeting for a period of two (2) years.

4. Vice-Moderator:

The Vice-Moderator shall assume the duties of the Moderator in his/her absence. The Vice-Moderator shall be elected by the congregation at its annual meeting for a period of two (2) years.

5. Clerk:

A clerk shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one (1) year. It shall be the duty of the clerk to keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the church including the minutes of all business meetings, which shall be read and approved at the next meeting.

6. Historian:

A church historian shall be elected each year to keep an accurate record of church happenings and history that occur throughout the year. This report shall be read at the Annual meeting.

7. Church Treasurer:

A Treasurer shall be elected at each Annual meeting to serve for one (1) year, and until his/her successor shall be elected. The Treasurer shall receive all information regarding money from the Financial Secretary, and current deposits of the church. He/she shall deposit funds as the Trustees shall order. Under direction of the Trustees he/she shall have custody of all papers relating to the property of the church.

The Treasurer shall pay the bills of the church after approval by the Trustees. He/she shall keep accurate account of all receipts and disbursements. He/she shall be an advisory member of the Board of Trustees and shall assist in preparing the annual budget.

8. Mission Treasurer:

A Mission Treasurer shall disburse all Mission funds of the church through the Board of Christian World Missions. The Mission Treasurer shall be an advisory member of the Board of Christian World Missions and shall assist in preparing the annual Mission budget.

9. Financial Secretary:

A Financial Secretary shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one (1) year. The Financial Secretary shall collect all offerings and/or gifts given to the church on a weekly basis, take charge of all monies by recording accurately the weekly amounts given by stewards into the correct funds, and depositing said monies in the bank on a weekly basis. It shall also be the duty of the Financial Secretary to give a weekly account of the Operational monies deposited to the church treasurer and the Benevolence monies deposited to the Missions Treasurer. He/she shall close the

books as of December 31st of the present fiscal year and shall furnish stewards with financial statements of their accounts by the end of January.

10. Auditor:

A competent auditor shall be appointed by the Trustees each year. He/she shall examine all the financial accounts of the Treasurers and Financial Secretary and report thereon annually, and also as required by the church or the Trustees.

11. Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds:

The Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds shall be a person elected at each annual meeting to serve for one (1) year.

It shall be the duty of said person to work with the Board of Trustees to help in carrying out the maintenance of the church building and property. This Superintendent shall be an advisory member of the Board of Trustees.

12. Administrative Coordinator:

The Administrative Coordinator shall be employed to be a secretary to the Pastor and as coordinator of activities for the church calendar. He/she shall be in charge of communications to the congregation and community, such as newsletters and advertisements. He/she shall work with and endeavor to assist our Boards, Committees and groups in an on-going program of the church. He/she shall keep a register of addresses of the members of the church, with dates and modes of their reception and removal; also, a record of baptisms, marriages and deaths. He/she shall issue letters of transfer and certificates of termination of membership upon proper authority to do so: he/she shall preserve on file all

communications and written official reports, give legal notice of all meetings, and be responsible for communicating intake information to the Pastor.

ARTICLE VIII. BOARDS and COMMITTEES

1. The Board of Elders:

The Board of Elders shall consist of six (6) members, two (2) of whom shall be elected annually for a term of three (3) years.

The duties of the Elders shall be as follows:

To cooperate with the Pastor in ministering to the spiritual interests of the congregation; to assist the Pastor in the administration of the Sacraments of the Church; to consider all applications for membership in the fellowship of the congregation; to examine annually the entire church membership roll, and instruct the clerk as to subsequent revisions, to ascertain whether the vital statistical records of the church are properly kept. To maintain order and a proper physical atmosphere at all services of worship; and to provide for adequate ushering at all services; to visit sick and needy; call on new members; introduce new families to the church, have charge of greeters, engage organists, Director of church music and choral leaders, and to make an annual report to the congregation.

1 a. Worship Technology Team:

The purpose of the Worship Technology Team is to work in conjunction with the Pastor, Board of Elders, and Director of Music to “enhance” the overall worship service, other special services, and church events.

2. Board of Trustees:

The Board of Trustees shall consist of six (6) members, elected for terms of three (3) years, in such manner that the terms of two (2) members shall expire annually. Meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held monthly or upon call of the chairperson. The board shall elect its own chairperson, and three (3) shall constitute a quorum. The Church Treasurer and the Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds shall be advisory members of the board.

The duties of the Trustees shall be as follows:

The Trustees oversee the care and custody of the property and finances of the church. The Trustees shall recommend for approval of the Council the salaries of the support staff. They shall have the power only with congregational approval to; buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer property or to incur any debts beyond what is necessary for the current normal administration of the temporal affairs of the church. The Trustees will present an Operational budget to the Church Council.

The Board of Trustees shall oversee the Perpetual Fund:

1. The church treasurer shall be the fiscal officer responsible for the depositing, withdrawal and handling of the funds.
2. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the yield may be used annually. Income is to be divided between the Operations and Missions Funds of the church in the following percentages: 60% operational, 40% Missions.
3. The preferred investments for the trust are insured savings accounts and government instruments. Alternative investment vehicles must be approved by

the Board of Trustees, the Church Moderator and the Church Treasurer.

4. Income may be withdrawn within one (1) year of becoming accessible. Income not withdrawn within one (1) year becomes part of the corpus of the trust and cannot be withdrawn thereafter.
5. Funds may be borrowed from the corpus to cover shortfalls in other church funds. All borrowing must be approved by the Board of Trustees, the Church Moderator and the Church Treasurer. All funds borrowed must be repaid to the corpus within eighteen (18) months from the date borrowed.
6. All changes to this document must be approved by the church membership before enactment.

3. Board of Christian Education:

There shall be a Board of Christian Education consisting of six (6) members, two (2) of whom shall be elected annually to serve for a term of three (3) years. The board shall elect its own chairperson each year and a secretary to keep minutes. The board shall recommend a Church School budget to the Church Council each year and shall direct the expenditures from these funds. It shall be the duties of the board to select a Christian Education curriculum and to secure teachers.

4. Board of Christian World Missions:

There shall be a Board of Christian World Missions consisting of three (3) members, one of whom shall be elected annually to serve three (3) years. The Missions Treasurer shall be an ex-officio advisory member of the Board of Christian World Missions. A representative from the Women's Fellowship Group shall also be an ex-officio

member. This board shall prepare an annual Mission budget.

4 A. Women's Fellowship Group

There shall be a Women's Fellowship Group, accountable to the Board of Christian World Missions Committee. The group shall be open to women of all ages who desire to give their time and talents in service to the Lord. The ministries of this group will take place through a variety of venues selected by the group and will serve the church and the community. The mission statement of this group is; "Through belief in our Living God, our mission is to reach out and support families and individuals in need, by sharing ideas and creativity, using our time and talents to strengthen ties in the church and community."

5. Music Committee:

There shall be a Music Committee consisting of three (3) members, one (1) of whom shall be elected annually to serve for a term of three (3) years.

The Director of Church Music shall attend all meetings and will serve as an advisor to the committee in an ex-officio capacity. Each Choir director, organist, and accompanists may attend meetings as ex-officio members as they feel necessary.

The committee will work in collaboration with the Pastor. In collaboration with the Director of Church Music the committee shall recommend a music budget.

5 A. Director of Church Music

The Director of Church Music plans and implements all music activities for the church in conjunction with the pastor. This includes, but is not limited to, the direction, supervision, and integration of all church choirs as related to the various

church worship services. Responsibility is given for the acquisition and maintenance of all related supplies and equipment and coordination of music and accompanists for special services.

6. Stewardship Committee:

The Stewardship Committee shall consist of three (3) members, one (1) to be elected annually to serve a term of three (3) years.

It shall be the duty of the Stewardship Committee, in carrying out an effective year-round stewardship program including: stewardship education, and to secure the annual financial commitments to God from the congregation. In addition, they will provide a total of all financial pledges to the Board of Trustees.

7. Nominating Committee:

The chairperson of each of the following committees or boards shall constitute a Nominating Committee: Elders, Trustees, and Stewardship. The chairperson of the Stewardship Committee shall be the chairperson of the committee.

This committee shall prepare a ballot nominating one person for each office to be filled at the annual meeting, and such nominations shall be printed and available at the church no later than two (2) Sundays previous to the Annual Meeting. The ballot thus prepared shall be the official ballot at the annual meeting, provided always that any voter may write upon his/her ballot the name of any eligible person and that the right of a member to make a nomination from the floor shall always be recognized.

8. Personnel Relations and Evaluation Committee

The purpose of the Personnel Relations and Evaluation Committee is to be a sounding board for, and confidential sharing of, concerns or problems that need addressing. This committee is also responsible for the evaluation of all staff on a yearly basis. This committee shall consist of three (3) persons: The Moderator, the Chairperson of the Board of Elders, and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. (If the Moderator and the Chairperson of the Board of Elders or the Board of Trustees is also the moderator of the Church, then the Vice- Chairperson of that Board shall serve so that there are always three persons on this committee).

9. Pastoral Search Committee:

It shall be the responsibility of the Pastoral Search Committee, which shall consist of one (1) representative from all church groups, appointed by the Church Council, to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the Office of Pastor.

The Pastoral Search Committee shall notify the Conference Executive upon pastoral vacancy and may request the Conference to secure relevant information about any minister whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy. The Pastoral Search Committee shall present to the church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. The congregation will vote on the candidates at a specially called meeting of the members of the congregation.

After following the call process as set out by the denomination, the Pastoral Search Committee will present to the congregation the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy of the Office of Pastor. The congregation

will vote on the candidate at a specially called meeting of the members of the congregation.

10. Other Committees:

Other committees may be appointed by the Church Council as needed.

11. Annual Delegates:

At the annual meeting the church's quota of delegates shall be elected:

- To the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ,
- To the Genesee Valley Association of the New York Conferences of the United Church of Christ,
- And to any other conferences or meetings to the congregation is entitled to have official representation. The Church shall pay for all expenses incurred by delegates to officially called meetings.

ARTICLE IX. ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE

All persons to be eligible for office shall be persons in good standing in the church, and a person who has served as the member of the board or committee for a full term shall be ineligible for the same office until he or she has had one year of non-participation on that same board or committee.

If there is a change in the church leadership, the Chair of the Nominating Committee will have the option to ask the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Chair of Elders and Trustees to continue their positions for one additional year to ensure the continuity in the day to day operations of the church.

ARTICLE X. VACANCIES

Vacancies occurring in any of the offices, boards, and committees of this church, between the annual meetings except as herein before provided for in these By-Laws, shall be filled by appointment by the Pastor with the approval of the Church Council until the next annual meeting at which time the vacancy will be filled by election.

ARTICLE XI. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

All organizations connected with the church and using its equipment are regarded as integral parts of the church under general supervision of the church council. They shall make no constitution and by-laws, which are in opposition to those of the church, and shall adopt no policies that are in disharmony with the generally established policies of the church.

ARTICLE XII. CALL AND TERMINATION OF PASTOR

The Pastor of this church shall be called or removed only by a vote of two-thirds majority of the members duly qualified to vote, and present at a meeting especially called for that purpose, in the manner provided for the call of special meetings.

In the call, the terms of the relationship shall be stated, including the agreement of the church to participate in the Pension Fund of the United Church of Christ, the Ministers' Health Insurance Program and other terms agreed between the candidate and the Pastoral Search Committee. The minister, the church, the Association, and the Conference Executive shall each receive a copy of the call.

When a minister accepts a call to this church, the church and he/she shall join in requesting the Association to arrange

for a Service of Installation. While the tenure of the Pastor shall be indefinite, the congregation may, at any time, by a two-thirds vote at a meeting called for that purpose, request his/her resignation for causes which have been placed in writing and given to him/her at least two (2) weeks prior to the special meeting, with the expectation that it will be presented and take effect within thirty (30) days. A Pastor shall give thirty (30) days notice in the event he/she wishes to leave of his/her own volition, except in the case of loss of ministerial standing on the part of the Pastor, relations shall cease at once. Notice of Termination of the relationship shall be sent by the Clerk of the Conference Executive and to the Association for appropriate action.

ARTICLE XIII. FINANCES

1. Offerings:

The church shall be supported by contributions of individuals and /or from its organizations. The opportunity shall be offered to all members of this church and congregation to make written subscriptions, ordinarily under the stewardship program. The designation of monies for current and benevolences shall be in accordance with the budgets. Offerings for special purposes may be taken from time to time as designated by the Pastor, in consultation with the Trustees or the Church Council. Large expenditures beyond normal operation of the church shall be approved by a special meeting of the church members.

2. Apportionment:

The church shall cooperate with the churches of the Genesee Valley Association in what is known as the apportionment (or per capita) plan as best as they are able.

Likewise, the Church Council shall include in the Operational budget the amount needed to meet this figure.

ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote.

- Provided the vote includes at least twenty-five (25) of the resident church members present at a duly called meeting for that purpose.
- The proposed amendment or revision having been placed before the church in writing not less than two (2) months previously,
- Having been printed and/or read before the congregation on three (3) consecutive Sundays preceding such meeting, and
- Copies having been made available to the members of the church.