

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS  
OF THE  
RICHVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**ARTICLE I – Name**

The name of this church shall be the Richville 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 and to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian Fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward humankind; and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

**ARTICLE 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 4, 1961, relating to the Living Water Association of the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ.

**ARTICLE IV – Faith and Covenant**

FAITH – This church acknowledges as its sole head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of all. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Holy Spirit for 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. Each member shall have the right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teachings of our Lord and the practice prevailing among Evangelical Christians it recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion.

FAITH AND CONVENANT - One expression of this faith is:

**“STATEMENT OF FAITH”**

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ, and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, 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.

You promise to all who trust your forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

**COVENANT** - We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. We propose 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 worshiping God and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our Father, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of God and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

### **ARTICLE V – Membership**

1. Membership in this church shall be either:

- (a) Baptism and Profession of Faith
- (b) Reproofession of Faith
- (c) Confirmation, or
- (d) By Letter of Transfer of Membership.

The age of Confirmation shall be not less than the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) grade of public school. Confirmation shall be by instruction of the Pastor with consent of the Consistory or by persons designated by the Consistory.

2. Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebrations of the Lord's Supper, to live the Christian life as it is defined in the Scriptures, to share in the life and work of the church, to contribute to its support and benevolences, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

3. A member wishing to join another congregation shall be granted a Letter of Transfer to another church upon request.

4. Membership in this church shall be further defined as:

- (a) Active Member. An active member shall:
  - (i) Attend the regular services of the Church, or
  - (ii) Partake in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or
  - (iii) Contribute to church support.

- (b) Inactive Member. An inactive member is not an active member but is maintained in the records of this church.

### **ARTICLE VI – Governing Body**

The Governing Body of this church shall be the membership assembled in a congregational meeting. The vote of a majority of members present at the meeting shall be an action of the church. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members present.

## ARTICLE VII – Consistory

1. The Consistory shall be the executive body of this church. It shall be composed of the Pastor as an ex-officio member as well as twelve (12) members elected by the Governing Body to serve as President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Memorial & Gifts Secretary, and the six (6) chairpersons of the respective Standing Committees as described in Article IX of this Constitution. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members present at a duly called meeting..
2. No person shall be eligible for election as a member of the Consistory or any committee who is not an active member of this church.
3. Consistory members shall be elected by a majority vote cast at a congregational meeting. A term of service shall consist of two years not including any portion of un-expired terms. The Consistory shall fill any un-expired position vacated until the next annual meeting of the Governing Body; at which time, the membership shall fill the position for the remainder of the un-expired term.
4. Consistory and Nominating Committee candidates shall be elected by the Governing Body at a special Congregational Meeting in September each year. These elected persons may observe all functions of their elected office from September to January at which time they will assume responsibility for their elected positions. The Nominating Committee shall be representative of the membership and shall consist of three (3) members not including the Pastor and will be chaired by the Consistory Vice President. A term of office on the Nominating Committee for all members other than Pastor and the Consistory Vice President shall be two (2) years – not including un-expired terms. A person shall not serve on Consistory and the Nominating Committee at the same time, except for the Consistory Vice-President. The Nominating Committee shall endeavor to nominate at least two (2) persons for each elected office. Public notice of nominations shall be given by the Nominating Committee to the active members prior to the election. Other nominations for specific positions to be filled may be made from the floor during the meeting at which the election is held. All nominations shall be subject to the nominee’s consent. The names of those nominated to the Standing Committees shall be subject to approval by the Consistory.
5. The Consistory and Committee members shall be commissioned to their respective positions at a date to be determined by Consistory.
6. The Consistory shall be the legal trustees and shall transact the business of the church in the interim between congregational meetings. The Consistory shall stimulate, ordinate, and review the making and execution of plans for a comprehensive church program and to that end the Consistory shall have authority to:
  - (a) Call upon standing committees, officers, task groups, and other persons for reports, services, and recommendations.
  - (b) Hold standing committees, officers, task groups, and other persons accountable for the performance of their respective duties and responsibilities.
  - (c) Call conferences of church leaders and other groups to consider, discuss, and exchange views with respect to any phase of the operations or concerns of this church.
  - (d) Cooperate with other churches in matters of mutual interest and concern.
  - (e) Exercise control over church publicity and communications.
  - (f) Fix the time for the filing of the Annual Reports and designate the officers and groups, in addition to those designated in this Constitution, and determine which should make reports to the members of this church at the Annual Meeting.
  - (g) Authorize any expense of an amount not to exceed 5% of the current year’s operating budget without consent of the Governing Body.

- (h) Borrow funds after receiving the approval of the Governing Body at a regular or special meeting.
  - (i) Manage other affairs of this church which are not committed by this Constitution to the Governing Body.
  - (j) Regulate and control the use of real and personal properties of this church.
  - (k) Keep a complete, accurate, and permanent record of its proceedings and be the custodian of all church records.
  - (l) Supervise the maintenance of the membership role.
  - (m) Act upon termination of membership and changes in membership status (subject to article V – section 4).
  - (n) Appoint delegates to represent the church at church related meetings and conferences.
7. The Consistory shall meet at least once every month for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Meetings should open with prayer seeking God’s guidance and close with a prayer of dedication and blessing. All Consistory meetings shall be open to all active members.
8. Consistory has the responsibility to hire and/or terminate staff. New positions must be approved by the Governing Body.

### **ARTICLE VIII – Officers**

#### **1. PRESIDENT OF THE CONSISTORY**

The President has these specific responsibilities:

- (a) Formulate an agenda, after conferring with the Pastor, to be distributed to the members of the Consistory along with a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting and the reports of each Standing Committee prior to each Consistory meeting.
- (b) Preside at all meetings of the Consistory.
- (c) Arrange for all regularly scheduled and special Consistory meetings.
- (d) Ensure that the Consistory is provided with the information it needs to make informed and effective decisions and that all options are clearly stated before action is taken.
- (e) Conduct Consistory meetings so that full participation of all members is encouraged, opinions heard, ideas exchanged, resources utilized, feelings expressed and an open accepting atmosphere created.
- (f) Assign appropriate responsibilities to board members and other lay persons and then supervise to ensure adequate follow through.
- (g) Provide counsel for the Pastor so that the Pastor is an active participant.
- (h) Consult regularly with committee chairpersons to receive their counsel to ensure that committees are functioning well and that communication lines are open.
- (i) Work with other Consistory officers in the execution of their duties.
- (j) Serve as an ex-officio member of committees and task forces.
- (k) Sign legal documents on behalf of this church and as authorized by Consistory.

The President shall delegate to the Vice President any of these responsibilities, on a temporary basis, that the President is not able to perform.

## 2. VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CONSISTORY

The Vice President will preside in the absence of the President of the Consistory and shall assume all the responsibilities of the President.

The Vice President shall serve as Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

## 3. RECORDING SECRETARY

The Recording Secretary shall take all minutes of Consistory meetings and record the minutes of all congregational meetings. The Recording Secretary shall:

- (a) Upon request of the President make copies of an agenda so that each Consistory member has a copy.
- (b) Aid the Consistory President in all matters dealing with communication or in any other capacity the President may delegate.
- (c) Be responsible for delivering minutes to the church office secretary.

The Recording Secretary may call upon the church office secretary for assistance.

## 4. TREASURER

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to record the receipts from the Financial Secretary and to maintain a proper journal of expenditures and receipts of the church. It is the Treasurer's responsibility to pay the approved bills when due. The Treasurer must submit a monthly report to the Consistory of all receipts and disbursements. The Treasurer also must reconcile and verify monthly bank statements and present the books each year for audit.

## 5. FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Financial Secretary shall keep a record of and deposit all funds given to the church. All records of individual giving shall be kept confidential. The Financial Secretary is responsible for the ordering and distribution of yearly offering envelopes. The Financial Secretary shall issue periodic financial statements to each giving unit.

## 6. MEMORIAL & GIFTS SECRETARY

The Memorial & Gifts Secretary records memorial gifts and other special gifts to this church and maintains records of receipts and disbursements. The Memorial & Gifts Secretary will maintain an up-to-date list of suggested memorials in consultation with Consistory and the Pastor. The Memorial & Gifts Secretary will submit all receipts to the Financial Secretary for deposit to the Memorial account as maintained by the Treasurer of this church.

## ARTICLE IX – Standing Committees

Members of the Standing Committees, other than the Nominating Committee, shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee no later than November 30<sup>th</sup> of each year and subject to approval of the Consistory. A term of service shall consist of three years. Approximately 1/3 of the members of each Standing Committee shall be replaced or reappointed each year. Un-expired terms shall be filled by the Consistory. If a chairperson for a standing committee cannot be nominated by the Nominating Committee, Consistory may appoint the Vice President to the committee chair position for a time until the second Congregational meeting occurs. If after that time, no chairperson is appointed, Consistory will present the option of a paid chairperson to the Congregation at the second Congregational meeting. A paid chairperson would be supervised by Consistory. If the Congregation does not approve a paid chair position, the committee will be dissolved and if applicable, staff person(s) reassigned to another committee. Certain tasks of the dissolved committee may be absorbed by other committees as decided by Consistory. At the end of the 2-year term without the dissolved committee, the Nominating Committee may endeavor to fill the chair position. The Chairperson of each Standing Committee shall be responsible for enabling that committee to organize itself, conduct the business at hand and submit to the church secretary a monthly report of that committee's actions for distribution with the Consistory Report. All Standing Committee meetings shall be open to all active members and youth representatives.

1. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE – shall be composed of a least five members. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members present. The Christian Education Committee shall:
  - (a) Supervise Director of Youth and Family Ministries.
    1. The Director of Youth & Family Ministries will plan and have charge of the work and programs of the Church School and related youth and adult organizations.
  - (b) Annually review performance of Director of Youth and Family Ministries and give recommendations on salary increases.
  - (c) Annually Submit detailed budget recommendations to the Finance and Stewardship Committee.
  - (d) Submit all bills to the Treasurer with proper signature and budget category identified.
  - (e) Submit all unbudgeted items to Consistory for approval.
  
2. THE FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE – shall be composed of at least five members. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members present. No more than three Consistory members, which shall include the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, shall serve on this committee. The Finance and Stewardship Committee shall:
  - (a) Manage the financial affairs of this church.
  - (b) Prepare an annual recommended budget for the fiscal year after consideration of the recommendations of the Pastor and other Standing Committees and of the Treasurer of this church.
  - (c) Supervise the work of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary of this church.
  - (d) Be responsible for the offerings of this church.
  - (e) Be responsible for planning and executing a Finance Campaign to provide the necessary revenue to carry on the work of this church.
  - (f) Arrange for annual and special audits by a competent auditor of the books and records of the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Memorial committee of this church.
  - (g) Accept or reject, on behalf of the church, gifts, bequests, and trusts.

3. THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE – shall be composed of at least three members. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members present. The Outreach Committee shall:
  - (a) Inspire, enlist, and coordinate concerns for service, both personal and financial.
  - (b) Study needs for benevolence funds within and beyond the Richville area served by this church.
  - (c) Consider requests for benevolences.
  - (d) Direct the disbursement of funds appropriated for benevolence purposes and conduct programs to educate the members of this church with respect to its benevolence work.
  - (e) Keep informed of benevolences by other committees or groups in this church.
  - (f) Submit detailed budget recommendations to the finance and stewardship committee.
  - (g) Submit all bills to the treasurer with proper signature and budget category identified.
  - (h) Submit all unbudgeted items to Consistory for approval.
  
4. THE PARISH/PASTOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE – shall be composed of at least three members. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members present. The Parish/Pastor Relations Committee shall:
  - (a) Concern itself with the general feelings and thoughts of the active members and the Pastor regarding how and what is taking place in the life and programs of the congregation.
  - (b) Establish the feasible short- and long-term goals for the life of our congregation which are to be proposed to the Consistory and Governing Body for its consideration.
  - (c) Have responsibility for equipment for the church office.
  - (d) Arrange for the supply of the pulpit when temporarily vacant and in emergencies.
  - (e) Assist in parish visitations.
  - (f) Annually submit detailed budget recommendations to the Finance and Stewardship Committee.
  - (g) Submit all bills to the Treasurer with proper signature and budget category identified.
  - (h) Submit all unbudgeted items to Consistory for approval.
  - (i) Supervise the Church Office Secretary.
  - (j) Annually review the church secretary's performance and give recommendation on salary increases.
  
5. THE PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE – shall be composed of at least three members. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members present. The Property and Maintenance Committee shall:
  - (a) Perform or oversee maintenance work of church properties as shall be necessary to maintain and keep them in good condition.
  - (b) Supervise custodial services.
  - (c) Annually review performance of custodial services and give recommendations on salary increases.
  - (d) Submit detailed budget recommendations to the Finance and Stewardship Committee.
  - (e) Submit all bills to the Treasurer with proper signature and budget category identified.
  - (f) Submit all unbudgeted items to the Consistory for approval.

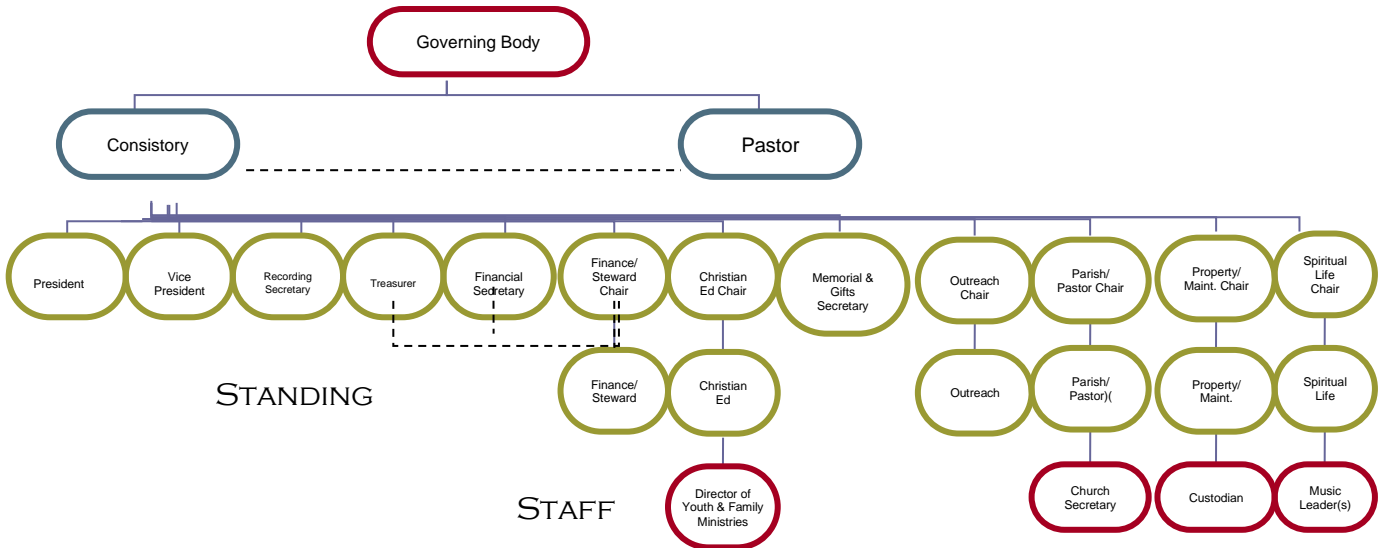
6. THE SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMITTEE – shall be composed of at least five members. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members present. All music leaders shall be ex-officio members of this committee. This Spiritual Life Committee shall:
- (a) Assist, support, advise, and counsel with the Pastor in the spiritual life of this church.
  - (b) Create appropriate polices concerning the sacraments, rituals, and rites of this church.
  - (c) Be responsible for the preparation of the sacraments.
  - (d) Work in conjunction with the Pastor and all music leaders in promoting the worship and music programs of this church.
  - (e) Supervise music leader(s).
  - (f) Review performance of music leader(s) and give recommendations on salary increases.
  - (g) Organize and maintain the ushers at the service of worship and keep accurate attendance figures.
  - (h) Work with the Pastor in recruiting, orientation, reception, and welcoming of prospective new members.
  - (i) Study and promote the participation of the members of this church in its activities as well as their participation and attendance at its services of worship.
  - (j) Provide musical support for the Christian Education events.
  - (k) Be responsible for the continuing orientation and utilization of talents of the members.
  - (l) Plan and execute special events, including musical events, in the life of the church.
  - (m) Submit detailed budget recommendations to the Finance and Stewardship Committee.
  - (n) Submit all bills to the Treasurer with proper signature and budget category identified.
  - (o) Submit all unbudgeted items to the Consistory for approval.



7. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR THE RICHVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST:

# RICHVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## ARTICLE X – Pastoral Call

1. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs it shall be reported to the Association Minister by the President of Consistory.
2. A Pastoral Search Chairperson and Committee with no less than 5 nor more than 9 members, representing the diversity of the active members, shall be selected by Consistory. It shall have the responsibility for conducting a Pastoral Search. This committee is to recommend the call of one candidate to Consistory for approval.
3. In filling a vacancy the Pastoral Search Committee may seek the council of the Association Minister. The Pastoral Search Committee may appoint an Interim Pastor with approval of Consistory.
4. The Pastoral Search Committee may request the Association Minister to secure relevant information about any Pastor whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy.
5. Any Prospective Pastor shall confer with the Association Minister concerning a pastoral vacancy. At the Pastor's request his or her name may be submitted by the Association Minister for consideration by the Pastoral Search Committee.
6. Consistory, upon recommendation of the Pastoral Search Committee and at least 75% approval of Consistory, shall nominate one candidate to be voted upon by the Governing Body. If a candidate receives at least 75% affirmative vote of the active members present at a meeting specifically called for that purpose, a Call will be issued. A week prior to the Candidacy Service, the complete terms of the Call shall be made known to the active members.
7. In the Call, the terms agreed upon between the candidate and the church shall be clearly stated. The Pastor, the church, the Association and the Association Minister shall receive a copy of the Call.
8. When a Pastor accepts a Call to this church, the church and he or she shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a Service of Installation.
9. Termination shall be by action of the Governing Body and notice of such termination shall be sent by the President of the Consistory to the Association Minister and to the Conference Office.

## ARTICLE XI - DUTIES OF THE PASTOR

1. It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach the Word, to care for the stated service of public worship in consultation with the Spiritual Life Committee, to administer the sacraments and ordinances, and in general to promote the spiritual welfare of this church and those persons served by it. The Pastor shall cooperate with the Consistory and the other Standing Committees in the supervision of all affairs of the church and shall make a report of each year's work at the Annual Meeting of the Governing Body.
2. Discipline of the Pastor shall be in conformity with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.

## ARTICLE XII – Property

The Governing Body may, in its corporate name, acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest, or otherwise and own, hold, invest, reinvest, or dispose of property both real and personal for such work as the church may undertake and may rent, lease, mortgage, or otherwise encumber, sell, assign, transfer, and convey such property and invest and reinvest the same and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purpose of the church.

## ARTICLE XIII – Church Meetings

1. The Annual Meeting of the Governing Body shall be held in the month of January each year. At this meeting the Consistory, the officers of the church, the Pastor, and all church organizations shall submit their Annual Reports in writing. A meeting of the Governing Body shall be held in September each year for the purpose of election of officers.
2. Special church meetings may be called by the Consistory or by a petition to the Consistory signed by not less than 8 percent of the active membership. The Consistory shall call such meetings within three weeks from the receipt of the petition. Notice of special church meetings called by the Consistory shall be given to the membership.

## ARTICLE XIV

All other actions of any kind or description, not otherwise inconsistent with this Constitution, are reserved to the Governing Body upon affirmative vote of at least 75% of the active members present at a special meeting called for such action.

## ARTICLE XV – Rules of Order

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER shall be parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution.

This document allows for Consistory and Standing Committees to hold electronic meetings, including for the purpose of voting. Rules regarding establishing a quorum must in accordance with Robert's Rules. Copies of electronic correspondence must be retained.

## ARTICLE XVI – Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any duly called meeting of the Governing Body, by a 75% affirmative vote of the active members present. Public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment shall be made in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

## ARTICLE XVII - DISPLAY OF FLAGS (As adopted at Congregational Meeting on 1/29/2023)

Richville United Church of Christ displays both the Christian flag and the flag of the United States of America as a reminder of our belief that God is central to everything in our lives. “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” can only be achieved by “loving our God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength” and likewise “loving our neighbors as we love ourselves”.

NOTES: “God is central to everything” see book titled “Lies We Believe About God” by Wm. Paul Young Chapter 8 – God Wants To Be A Priority.

The meaning of “Central” is “that which all things depend on”.