

By-Laws
of
St. Mary's
United Church of Christ

Silver Run, Maryland

As presented for adoption to the Annual Meeting, September 17,
2017

Article I. Name

1. The name of this church formerly known as St. Mary's Reformed Church, then St. Mary's Evangelical and Reformed Church, shall be St. Mary's United Church of Christ of Silver Run, State of Maryland.

Article II. Purpose

1. 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 all people and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

Article III. Polity

1. 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 2, 2015, relating to local churches. (Art. V Local Churches)
2. The government of this church is vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however to Laws of the State of Maryland relating to religious organization

Article IV. Faith and Covenant

Faith- This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ the Son of God and the Savior of all people, it acknowledges as brother 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 teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians. It recognizes two Sacraments; Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

One expression of faith is:

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 you 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 Will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God and striving for truth, justice and peace. As did our ancestors, 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. All baptized persons are members of the Body of Christ.
2. Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized and has been confirmed or has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Persons who have been duly received into its communion by confirmation, by letter of transfer, or by profession of faith and have not been excluded by the process of Christian discipline shall be communicant members of this congregation and shall be entitled to all its rights and privileges.
3. 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; and pray for its welfare; to contribute to its support and benevolences; to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community; to endeavor to bring the unchurched under its influence.
4. Members may at their own request be granted a letter of transfer if wishing to join a body not in fellowship with this church. They may be dismissed with a certificate of church membership. If because of change of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct

a member requests in writing to be released from membership obligations the church shall patiently endeavor to secure the member continuing in its fellowship but failing in such effort the church may grant the request and terminate membership. Such a request shall be approved by the Spiritual Council and an appropriate letter of release shall be issued.

5. A member who has not participated in worship, has not partaken of the Holy Communion and/or has not contributed to the church (financially or otherwise) for a period of two years, and without just cause, shall be contacted by letter or visited as circumstances permit to determine the individual's membership intentions. Contact with the individual will be made to encourage his or her continued fellowship with the congregation. Following contact, the individual may remain an active member, be designated as an inactive member or may be removed from the church membership roll. This action shall be implemented by vote of the consistory upon the recommendation of the Spiritual Council.
 - a. A member for whom there is no valid contact information will be designated as an inactive member.
 - b. An inactive member shall be described as an individual who is not currently active in the life of the church. An inactive member is not a voting member of the congregation. An inactive member, upon request to the Spiritual Council, may be reinstated as an active, fully participating, member by meeting one or more of the participation criteria.
6. The Spiritual Council has the power to discipline. If a member persistently or egregiously breaches the covenant vows, the Spiritual Council may notify the member of such breaches, offer a hearing before the Consistory and faithfully seek to bring the member into

accordance with the Law of Christ. These measures may result in censure, suspension or termination of membership.

Article VI. Governing Body

1. The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in church meeting. The vote of a majority of members present at the meeting shall be the action of the church. A quorum shall consist of 10% of the voting members.
2. It is the prerogative of the congregational meeting to decide such questions as the buying and selling of property, building projects, extensive repairs of church property, the call and rejection of a pastor and questions of the policy of the congregation as well as changes in the constitution. For the transaction of all other business, the administration of the church is entrusted to the Consistory, chosen and composed as provided for in Article VII.

Article VII. Consistory

1. The Consistory shall be the executive body of this church. It shall be composed of the pastor, four Elders, and four Deacons. One-half of its members shall constitute a quorum. Elders and Deacons shall be elected by a ballot vote of members present at a congregational meeting during the month of December. Four Elders and four Deacons shall be elected for a term of office of two years or until their successors are elected and installed, but it shall be so arranged that two Elders and two Deacons are elected each year. To be eligible for the office of Elder or Deacon the candidate shall have been a member of St. Mary's United Church of Christ for at least one year. It is desirable that a member serve as a Deacon before being eligible for

the office of Elder. Elders and Deacons may not be re-elected to the Consistory until a lapse of one year

2. The Consistory shall organize itself annually, electing a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Chairman of Elders, Chairman of Deacons and delegates as required. It shall appoint such committees as it may find necessary to accomplish its work (See Article X).
3. A Nominating Committee shall be elected each year to serve the following year. This Committee shall be composed of five members elected from a slate of eight nominees. The Nominating Committee shall nominate two persons for the office of Elder, two persons for the office of Deacon and present a slate of eight nominees for Nominating Committee. Public notice of such nominations shall be given from the pulpit or by bulletin or letter at least two weeks before the election. Other nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting at which the election is held. Persons so nominated shall, prior to balloting, have consented to serve if elected.
4. When elected, the Elders and Deacons shall be publicly ordained to and installed in their respective offices.
5. Elders are members of the church chosen by the congregation and ordained to their office. Biblically and historically, elders serve as “overseers” of the church. They do this with the pastor by serving as an example to others, leading the spiritual life of the church, overseeing the Church’s work, aid in visiting the sick, help in serving the elements of the Lord’s Supper, and using their individual and collective gifts to nurture and build up the body of Christ.

6. Deacons are members of the church chosen by the congregation and ordained to their office. Biblically and historically, deacons are the Church's social ministers. Deacons assist the elders and pastor in overseeing and conducting the work of the Church. Deacons are specifically charged with the ministries of charity, hospitality, service to others, and stewardship.
7. Vacancies on the Consistory shall be filled by the Consistory for the unexpired terms.
8. The Consistory shall be the policy-making body and shall transact the business of the church, make provision for the determining and raising of the current expense budget as well as for Our Church's Wider Mission and other Benevolences, and provide for the auditing of financial accounts and for the adequate support of the staff. It shall keep a complete and accurate record of its proceedings, be the custodian of all church records, and report to the church at its regular and special meetings. All acts and deliberations of the Consistory are subject to the will of and revision of the governing body.
9. The Consistory shall instruct the proper officers on all fiscal matters, including the payment of bills; with monthly review by the Consistory. It shall direct the pastor to keep a complete record of baptisms, confirmations, communicants, reception of new members, transfers, erasures of names, suspensions, marriages, and deaths. In the absence of the pastor, the senior officer of the Consistory shall make provisions for maintaining these records. All records shall be the property of the congregation.

10. The Consistory may authorize any extraordinary expenses but if it should exceed \$10,000 it must receive the approval of the congregation.
11. The Consistory should meet at least ten times during the year for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. (Meetings normally should include prayer and scripture.) Special meetings are subject to the call of the President, Vice-President or Pastor.
12. The Consistory shall constitute the Board of Trustees. The Board shall have the care and control of the property of the congregation as a sacred trust, whether real or personal, in accordance with the provision of the Articles of Incorporation and of these By-Laws. All monies and legacies shall be under the care of the trustees.
13. The purchasing or selling of property of the church and the remodeling and erection of buildings shall conform to the state laws and be determined only by a majority vote of the members assembled at duly-convened congregational or corporate meetings and entitled to vote thereon, or as provided elsewhere.

Article VIII. Spiritual Council

1. The Spiritual Council shall consist of the pastor and the elders of the congregation. It shall have original jurisdiction in matters of discipline except in the case of the pastor. It shall provide the elements for the Lord's Supper and aid in their distribution. It shall admit members into full communion and upon request issue letters of transfer to members in good and regular standing.

2. Discipline in case of unchristian conduct or other actions for discipline lies in the hands of the Spiritual Council except in the case of the pastor.
3. The pastor shall be appointed to serve as Chairperson of the Spiritual Council, or in his absence the Chairperson of the Elders shall serve in this capacity. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.
4. Stated meetings shall be held to consider and act upon applicants for membership, requests for letters of transfer and to discuss and to devise plans looking towards quickening of the spiritual life of the congregation. A letter of transfer shall specify the congregation to which the person is dismissed. Special meetings shall be held at the call of the Chairperson or at the request of two elders.
5. The Spiritual Council may exercise discipline in the congregation.

Article IX. Pastor

1. It shall be the responsibility of the Search Committee, appointed by the Consistory, to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of Pastor.
2. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, it shall be reported to the Area Conference Minister.
3. In filling a vacancy or in securing supply ministers for a period of vacancy, the Search Committee shall seek the counsel of the Area Conference Minister.

4. The Search Committee shall request the Area Conference Minister to secure relevant information about any minister whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy.
5. Any minister may confer with the Area Conference Minister concerning a pastoral vacancy. At the minister's request, his or her name shall be submitted by the Area Conference Minister for consideration by the Search Committee.
6. The Search Committee shall present to the church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. A favorable vote of the church constitutes a call. (The percentage of votes needed to elect shall be determined by the discretion of the Consistory. Voting shall be by ballot.)
7. 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 Committee. The minister, the church, and the Area Conference Minister shall each receive a copy of the call.
8. The Church and the minister who accepts the call to this church shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation. A report of this service shall be signed by the proper officers of the Association and by the Area Conference Minister, and copies shall be sent to the Secretary of the United Church of Christ and to the Office of Local Church Ministries.

9. The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, three months' notice shall be given by either party. The procedure shall be in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.
10. When either party decides to terminate the relationship, the termination shall be by action of the Consistory and notice of such termination shall be sent by the President of the Consistory to the Area Conference Minister and to the Association for appropriated action.
11. Discipline of the Pastor shall be in conformity with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.
12. It shall be the duty of the pastor to set a good example to the congregation and to conduct all services on Sundays, holidays, and such other days as the congregation may desire, to direct the work of religious education, administer the Holy Sacraments, visit the sick, comfort the distressed, and to perform all such duties as belong to the pastor's office. A Record shall be kept of all services performed and an annual report made of pastor's work to the congregation.
13. The pastor is ex officio a member of the Consistory, and all organizations within the church. No other minister shall perform any religious ceremony in the church without the resident pastor's consent. To invite a speaker either during a temporary absence of the pastor or for special occasions, the consent of both pastor and consistory is necessary. The pastor's salary shall be paid promptly in semi-monthly installments and shall be sufficient to relieve the pastor

of temporal cares as far as possible and preserve the dignity of the calling, subject, however, to the provisions of the contract between the pastor and congregation. The moving expenses, when the charge is assumed, shall be borne in full by the congregation.

Article X. Committees

1. The Standing Committees of the Congregation shall be as follows: Church and Ministry, Congregational Life Ministry, Outreach Ministry, Spiritual Formation Ministry, Worship Ministry, Financial Ministry and Property Ministry.
2. The Consistory may establish special committees as may be deemed necessary to carry on the work of the Congregation.
3. All members of the Congregation are eligible for appointment to standing and special committees.

Article XI. Duties of Officers

1. It is the duty of the President to see that all meetings of the consistory are regularly called by the Secretary, to open and conduct such meetings, and to see to the execution of all resolutions. The President shall remind the pastor to announce all regular meetings of the congregation on two successive Sundays, or in case it is so decided by the consistory, instruct the Secretary to send a call to such meeting to every member by mail. The President is empowered, with the Secretary, to sign all contracts, loans, vouchers, and deeds in the name of the Congregation. The President shall, with the approval of the Consistory, appoint all Standing Committees of the Congregation.

2. The Vice-President shall preside at all meetings where the President is not present and also when business pertaining to the President's administration is before the Congregation. The Vice-President shall assist the President with administrative matters that may arise.
3. The Secretary shall keep a record of all transactions at the meetings of the congregation and of the consistory and with the President. Sign all contracts, loans and deeds.
4. The Treasurer shall have charge of all monies for congregational support and Benevolence Funds received. A monthly report to the consistory and an annual report to the congregation shall be made.
5. The Financial Secretary shall keep a weekly record of all contributions made by members of the congregation, and when requested, issue receipts for money so given.
6. The President and the Pastor are ex-officio members of all committees of the Congregation and consistory.
7. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be covered by a surety bond.

Article XII. Property

1. The church may in its corporate name sue or be sued, 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 purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for an transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell, assign, transfer, and convey such property for the

general purpose of the church; it may receive and hold instruct both real and personal property and invest and reinvest eh same and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the church.

2. Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any diverse, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before on after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ. In case of division, in the membership of the congregation, both parties shall submit the question of the right to the property to the Conference and the decision of said judiciary shall be binding on all members of the congregation.

Article XIII. Congregational Meetings

1. The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held in the month of January. At this meeting the Pastor, Treasurer, and church organizations shall submit their annual reports in writing. Regular business shall be transacted at this meeting. Matters of a special nature may be transacted at this meeting only when previous notification has been made in accordance with Paragraph 2 of this article. Two weeks' notice shall be given to the membership by the Secretary of the time and place of the Annual Meeting.
2. Special church meetings may be called by the Consistory or by a petition to the Consistory signed by not less than five percent of the members. The Consistory shall call such meetings within three weeks from receipt of the petition. One week's notice shall be given to the

membership by the Secretary of the time, place and purpose of the special meeting. Only such business as has been mentioned in the call may be transacted at such special meetings.

3. The Official year of the congregation shall be from January 1 through December 31.

Article XIV. Rules of Order

1. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these By-Laws.

Article XV. Amendments

Amendments to these By-Laws may be made at any duly called church meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present, public announcement of the text of the proposed amendments having been made one week prior to the meeting.