

1 **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

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3 **KEENE VALLEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,**  
4 **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
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6 **KEENE VALLEY, NEW YORK**  
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8 **ADOPTED BY THE CONGREGATION FEBRUARY 23, 2003**  
9 **REVISED FEBRUARY 24, 2013**

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11 **ARTICLE I - NAME**

12 The name of this Church is the Keene Valley Congregational Church,  
13 United Church of Christ

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15 **ARTICLE II – MISSION**

16 The avowed mission of this Church shall be to worship God, to preach  
17 the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the sacraments; to realize  
18 Christian fellowship and unity within this Church and the Church  
19 Universal; to render loving service toward all people, and to strive for  
20 righteousness, justice, and peace in all matters.

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22 **ARTICLE III - POLITY**

23 This Church shall be a part of the United Church of Christ and it shall  
24 sustain the covenantal relationship with the Essex Association of the  
25 New York Conference of the United Church of Christ. The  
26 governance of this Church is vested in its members, who exercise the  
27 right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to laws of the State  
28 of New York relating to religious corporations.

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30 **ARTICLE IV - FAITH**

31 This Church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and  
32 practice and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus  
33 Christ is the true test of fellowship. We believe in the freedom and  
34 responsibility of the individual soul, and the right to private judgment.  
35 The following statement of faith, therefore, is not a test but an  
36 expression of the spirit in which the Church interprets the Word of  
37 God.

38  
39 **Statement of Faith**

40 We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior, Jesus  
41 Christ, and our God, and to your deeds we testify: You call the  
42 worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before  
43 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 to resist the power of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, and 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.

## **ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP**

This Church will welcome into its membership any person who recognizes Jesus Christ as head of the Church, and who endeavors to fulfill this Church's Statement of Faith.

### **Membership shall consist of:**

Those who present satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches and/or; those who confess their Christian faith and receive baptism (where not previously baptized) and/or; those who reaffirm their faith.

### **Shared Membership**

Recognizing that KVCC ministers to persons who are in residence seasonally, the Church welcomes those who live in the community for part of the year to affiliate through Shared Membership. Those desiring Shared Membership shall first meet with the Pastor. The Pastor shall present the candidate's name and data about current church membership to the Council. Upon favorable action by the Council, the person shall be affirmed as a Shared Member at a regular service of worship and have all rights and responsibilities of membership.

### **Membership Responsibilities**

Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the Church, celebrate the Lord's Supper, live the Christian life, share in the life and work of the Church, contribute to its support and benevolences, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the

membership and the community.

**Membership in the Church may be terminated by:**

Letter of Transfer: Any member who desires a letter of transfer to another Christian Church, shall, upon request, be provided one from the Clerk. Written request by the member. Vote of the Council after it has been determined that the Member has not participated in the life of the Church for a period of two years and whose whereabouts is unknown, or if the member has been contacted by a member of the Council or Pastor and has indicated a desire not to be a member of the Church.

**ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS**

**Services of Worship**

Public services of worship shall be held each Sunday and at any other time as determined by the Council. The Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be observed at the discretion of the Congregation. The Sacrament of Baptism shall be administered at such times as the Pastor designates.

**The Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held during the first quarter of the calendar year. The purposes of the Annual Meeting are: to celebrate the faith community, receive the annual reports, to elect Officers and delegates to the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ and their alternates, to adopt the Annual Budget, and to transact any other business that may come before the Meeting. Notice of the Annual Meeting, shall be given from the pulpit and in the Sunday Bulletin, on the two successive Sundays immediately preceding the Annual Meeting. The agenda for the Annual Meeting shall be prepared by the Church Council.

**Meetings of the Congregation**

Meetings of the Congregation may be called by the Pastor, Moderator at the request of the Church Council, or upon the written request of any five members. Notice of a Meeting shall be given from the pulpit and in the Sunday Bulletin on the two successive Sundays immediately preceding a Meeting.

**Quorum and Voting Rights**

A quorum at any Congregational meeting shall consist of ten members. Unless otherwise stated, a majority vote shall be decisive.

## **Leadership**

The Moderator of the Church shall preside over all meetings of the Congregation. The Vice Moderator will fill in for the Moderator when necessary. Should the Moderator or Vice Moderator be unable to preside at a meeting of the Congregation, a person shall be appointed by the Council or the Congregation.

## **ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES**

All officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting by a majority vote. Terms begin and end with the Annual Meeting with the exception of the Pastor whose term shall be without limitation. The officers shall be:

### **Pastor**

The Pastor of this Church shall be called by a vote of three-fourths of the voting members present at a meeting of the Congregation called for this purpose. The Pastor chosen shall have full standing as a clergy person in the United Church of Christ. The Pastor shall hold this office without limitation of time. The pastoral relationship may be dissolved by: The Pastor by a written notice of such intention given three months in advance to the Council. The Council may waive the three months notice by majority vote. The Congregation with three-fourths majority vote at a duly called meeting of the Congregation. The Congregation shall continue to provide salary and all benefits to the Pastor for a period of six months following this vote. It shall be at the discretion of the Congregation that the Pastor continues to serve the duties of this office during this six month period. This six month provision may be waived by mutual consent of the Pastor and Congregation. The vote to waive this provision shall be a majority vote. Pastoral duties and responsibilities shall be detailed in the Pastor's contract. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member, with voice but not vote, of the Council, Committees, Task Forces and all other organizations of the Church. It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach the Gospel, to care for the stated services of public worship, to administer the Sacraments and to promote the spiritual welfare of the Church and those whom it serves.

### **Moderator**

The Moderator shall be elected for a term of one year and ineligible for reelection after serving six consecutive one year terms until the lapse of one year. The Moderator shall plan and preside at Council meetings, the Annual Meeting and Special Church Meetings. In the absence of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator shall preside. The Moderator shall actively participate in the life and mission of the

Church. The Moderator, in cooperation with the Pastor and Council, shall have the responsibility of advocating a sense of direction for this Church and Congregation. The Moderator shall insure that conflicts within the Congregation are resolved. The Moderator shall represent the Church or insure representation at Association and Conference meetings, installations and other ecclesiastical activities.

#### **Vice Moderator**

The Vice Moderator shall be elected for a term of one year and ineligible for reelection after serving six consecutive one year terms until the lapse of one year. The Vice Moderator shall preside at meetings in the absence of the Moderator and shall have other duties as assigned by the Moderator.

#### **Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall: See that the financial reports of the Church are properly kept and shall prepare and present to the Annual Meeting a written report of the receipts and disbursements of the Church for the preceding fiscal year showing the condition of the finances of the Church. Receive and give receipts for money and other property given or due to the Church. The Treasurer, under the direction of the Finance Committee, shall be empowered to pay all bills. Shall convene and chair regular meetings of the Finance Committee, shall provide them financial reports and participate in the budget process. The Treasurer shall be ineligible for reelection after serving for six consecutive one year terms until the lapse of one year. In the event of an emergency absence of the Treasurer, the Finance Committee shall temporarily provide for the duties of the Treasurer.

#### **Clerk**

The Clerk shall: Be responsible for maintaining the records of the Church including baptisms, confirmations, marriages, deaths and memberships. These statistics shall be presented yearly in the Annual Report. Take minutes at all meetings of the Council and Congregation, and distribute them in a timely manner.

### **ARTICLE VIII - COUNCIL AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

#### **Council**

Responsibility:

Recognizing that the Congregation is the governing body of the Church,

216 the Council's role is to insure that the will of the Congregation is  
217 carried out. The Council oversees the general programs of the Church,  
218 including worship, education, fellowship, mission and social action,  
219 buildings and grounds, stewardship and finance.

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#### 221 **Membership:**

222 The Council shall consist of the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer,  
223 Clerk, a representative from each Committee and at least one Member-  
224 at-Large.

225

226 The Moderator is the chair of the Council. Should a vacancy occur  
227 among the officers, the Council shall present a name to the  
228 Congregation for approval at the next Congregational meeting.

229

230 Members-at-Large may serve no more than three consecutive one year  
231 terms until a year elapses.

232

#### 233 **Finance Committee**

234 The Finance Committee shall be a Standing Committee appointed by  
235 and responsible to the Council. The Finance Committee chairperson  
236 shall be the Treasurer.

237

238 The Finance Committee shall consist of at least two additional members  
239 of the Congregation to be appointed to this committee by the  
240 Moderator with consultation.

241

242 The Committee shall:

243

244 Put in place policies and procedures that are intended to provide for the  
245 short term financial viability of the Church and for its long term  
246 financial stability. Among these shall be the development of an annual  
247 budget, recommendations of personnel salary and benefit packages,  
248 stewardship of endowment funds and memorials, and a review and/or  
249 audit of all the Church's financial records kept by the treasurer,  
250 bookkeeper, pastor, and financial institutions.

251

252 Appoint a Stewardship Task Force of not less than three people to plan  
253 and carry out a stewardship campaign in the Fall.

254 Upon approval of the Council, recommend to the Congregation  
255 additional capital fund drives as deemed necessary.

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#### 257 **ARTICLE IX - COUNCILS & TASK FORCES**

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259 **Committees**

260 Committees shall be formed to accomplish the operation of this faith  
261 community including, but not limited to the following areas: Worship  
262 and Arts, Education, Mission and Social Action, Buildings, Finance,  
263 Grounds, and Fellowship.

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265 Committees shall be formed and dissolved at the direction of the  
266 Congregation or the Church Council. All Committee meetings are to be  
267 open to anyone and should be announced through the communication  
268 lines of the Church. Committees are open for any individual to serve.

269  
270 Each committee shall elect or appoint an individual to facilitate its  
271 meetings and communicate its work to the Church staff, Council and  
272 Congregation. This person or their designee will serve as the  
273 Committee's voting representative on the Church Council.

274  
275 Each Committee shall keep a record of its meetings and provide the  
276 Church office a copy of these records in a timely fashion.

277  
278 Each Committee shall provide an annual report of its operation and  
279 expenditures to be included in the Church's Annual Report.

280  
281 **Task Forces**

282 Task Forces may be formed by the Congregation, Council or Committee  
283 to perform a task to be completed in a specific amount of time. Each  
284 Task Force shall designate a facilitator who will maintain  
285 communication with the body that formed it.

286  
287 **Nominating Task Force**

288 Three months prior to the Annual Meeting, the Council shall appoint a  
289 Nominating Task Force of not less than three people to prepare a list of  
290 nominations for Church officers and delegates and alternates to the  
291 New York Conference of the United Church of Christ. Following the  
292 Annual Meeting, any position not filled by this Task Force becomes the  
293 responsibility of the Council to fill.

294  
295 **Evaluation Task Force**

296 The Council shall appoint an Evaluation Task Force to carry out yearly  
297 evaluations of the Pastor and other staff members. This Task Force  
298 shall also be responsible for recommending revisions in job descriptions  
299 and goals. A full Congregational evaluation of the staff shall take place  
300 every five years from the inception of their contracts.

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302 **ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS**

303 This Constitution and By-laws may be amended at any Annual Meeting  
304 by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present, notice of the  
305 proposed changes having been given in writing to all members 30 days  
306 prior to the Annual Meeting.

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308 **ARTICLE XI – DISSOLUTION**

309 Upon dissolution of the Church, its assets and all property and interests  
310 of which it shall then be possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift,  
311 or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or  
312 otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to  
313 the New York Conference, United Church of Christ.

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