

**THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
OF PLAINVILLE,  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**



**CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

**As Approved FEBRUARY 2, 2014**

The Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC

Church Constitution and Bylaws

As approved at the February 2, 2014 Annual Meeting

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## **Article I Name and Location**

The name of the Church shall be The Congregational Church of Plainville, United Church of Christ (hereinafter “the Church”). The Church was founded in 1840, and is located in the Town of Plainville, the State of Connecticut. The Church was incorporated within the limitations of the Articles of Incorporation granted it by the Legislature of the State of Connecticut, dated May 18, 1894

## **Article II Purpose and Vision**

The avowed purpose of the Church shall be to create a community of faith; to share in the worship of God and in making God's will dominant in the lives of people, individually, and collectively; to realize Christian community and unity within this Church and the Church Universal; to render loving service to the whole of creation; to educate seekers, through Scripture and witness; and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace, as set forth in the life, teachings, death, and living presence of Jesus.

### **Our Mission**

The Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC:

Where the transformative power of the Holy Spirit changes lives.

Where, as a Christian family, we learn and grow, deepening our faith, to become more fully a people of God. Where together as disciples we answer the call to mission and ministry, in an ever changing world. We are a church of extravagant welcome.

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

### **ONA Covenant**

We, the members of the Congregational Church of Plainville, United Church of Christ, looking into the eyes of the members of our church family, see in each one a uniquely created child of God. We welcome and celebrate all the different gifts each one brings to our community of faith. We recognize and affirm the many ways in which we differ from one another – age, race, cultural background, economic status, family structure, religious tradition, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical, intellectual, and developmental differences. Our desire is to welcome and affirm all those who come together to live out God's vision for us, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit at work in our midst: to create a community of faith; to share in the worship of God and in making God's will dominant in the lives of all people, indi-vidually and collectively; to realize Christian community and unity within this Church and the Church Universal; to render loving service to the whole of creation; to educate seekers, through Scripture and witness; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace, as set forth in the life, teachings, death and living presence of Jesus. Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

### **Article III Polity**

The Church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its sole head, and finds its guidance in matters of faith and discipline in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Divine Spirit through reason, faith, and discipline.

The Government of the Church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs,

While this Church is not subject to the authority of any Church body, it accepts the obligation of mutual counsel, courtesy, and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ, including the Connecticut Conference and the Farmington Valley Association. The Church freely associates with interdenominational bodies at the local, state, national, and international levels, and pledges to share their common aims and work.

### **Article IV Doctrine**

The Church recognizes the Holy Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship. It acknowledges, as brothers and sisters in Christ, all who share in this confession. 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. Each member shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The following Statement of Faith, therefore, is not a test, but an expression of the Spirit in which this Church interprets the Word of God.

#### **Statement of Faith**

United Church of Christ Statement of Faith—adapted by Robert V. Moss

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify:

God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

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

God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, 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.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.

Amen.

## **Church Covenant**

We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the 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 generations before us, 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**

Membership in the Church shall be open to any baptized person who has either been confirmed or made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Membership is open to all who desire Christian fellowship. Church members are called to be persons who invite others to personal faith, to active membership in our community of faith, and to a life of faith as a disciple of Jesus Christ in the world.

#### **Section 1- Admission**

Admission to membership shall be by one of the following procedures:

- On presentation of a letter of transfer from another church;
- By reaffirmation of faith;
- By confession of faith;
- By confirmation.

#### **Section 2- Preparation**

Every candidate for initial membership shall meet with the Senior Minister and members

of the Evangelism and Church Growth Committee in orientation sessions. At least one of these sessions shall provide the opportunity for the candidates to meet members of the Diaconate and the Church Council. At the conclusion of these orientation sessions, each prospective member shall be familiar with the Church's history, programming, purpose, mission in the local and worldwide communities, and his/her obligations and duties as active members of the Church.

The Senior Minister, Diaconate, and Evangelism and Church Growth Committee shall guide, support, and familiarize prospective members in the life of the Church so that each candidate shall be effectively assimilated into Church life and fellowship activities.

### **Section 3 – Reception**

The name of each candidate shall be presented to the Diaconate and that person shall be introduced to the Church Council and shall be received before the congregation at a service of worship, as established by the Senior Minister and the Diaconate. However, any candidate unable through illness or other causes to appear before the congregation may be received at some other time and place with the approval of and by appointment of the Senior Minister and the Diaconate.

Candidates shall be accepted into the Church by owning the Covenant in the presence of the congregation, and by the congregation reaffirming the Covenant in mutual acceptance of each other.

Candidates shall be accepted into the Church by owning the Covenant in the presence of the congregation, and by the congregation reaffirming the Covenant in mutual acceptance of each other.

### **Section 4 – Obligations and Duties of Membership**

Upon reception, a candidate shall become a member of the Church, having pledged to attend the regular worship of the Church and the service of Holy Communion, as he/she is able, to give systematically to its support for current expenses and benevolences, to share in its organized work, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and community.

In like manner, the existing Church membership shall provide a receptive atmosphere in which each new member may effectively contribute his or her own talents to the enrichment of the Church community. It is the responsibility of each Church member to stimulate and encourage each other in the ways of active Church life, and to celebrate the unique talents each member brings to the life of the Church.

### **Section 5 - Classifications of Membership**

There shall be three (3) classifications of membership: active, inactive, and associate. These three classifications shall be under the care of the Diaconate and the Church Council.

a. Active members:

All members of the Church shall be considered active members unless otherwise recognized by the Diaconate. The aged and infirmed who are shut-in shall remain on the active membership list. Active Church membership may be retained by non-residents who have not pursued a new Church affiliation.

b. Inactive members:

Inactive members shall be those members recognized by the Diaconate and the Church Council, who for two (2) consecutive years has not attended worship, not communicated with the Church, and not made any known contribution to its support. Inactive members shall also include those whose addresses become unknown to the Minister(s), the Clerk, and the Diaconate. Inactive members shall not be considered in the count of Church membership and shall not vote on matters before the Church. Inactive members desiring reinstatement to active membership shall make known their desire to the minister and/or the Diaconate. The Diaconate will bring their name to the Church Council for reinstatement.

Associate Members are those individuals who, having established membership in another United Church of Christ or other Christian Church and wishing to retain that membership (for reasons of sentiment or legacy) also wish to affiliate with the Congregational Church of Plainville as an active member. Such members shall have full voting rights as long as they maintain active membership status in the Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC. Associate Members are invited to attend New Member classes.

### **Section 6 - Termination of Membership**

Membership in this Church may be terminated in either of the following ways:

- a. Any member who desires a letter of transfer to another Church shall be entitled to receive it. The Minister(s) and Diaconate shall bring the name of the member to the Church Council for approval, and the Clerk or the Senior Minister shall then issue the letter. Where there is insufficient time, the Senior Minister and the Clerk, upon consultation with each other and with the Chairperson of the Diaconate, may issue such a letter and report their action and reasons at the next meeting of the Church Council.
- b. If a member requests of the Diaconate to be released from owning the Covenant and to resign from membership, he or she may do so by requesting termination in writing to the Diaconate. The Senior Minister shall give written acknowledgement of the termination to the member.

### **Article VI Rights of Members**

All active members shall have the right to vote at every duly called All-Church Meeting for business and are eligible for membership on all committees of the Church.

Members must be at least eighteen (18) years of age to be eligible to election as officers of the Church or to serve as chairpersons of committees.

## **Article VII Meetings**

### **Section 1 - Meetings for Worship**

The services of worship shall be held at stated hours each Sunday, except when temporarily suspended by vote of the Diaconate. Services of worship may also be held at other times as determined by the Diaconate.

### **Section 2 - Meetings for Business**

The meetings for business of the Church shall be as follows:

a. Annual Meeting:

1. The Annual Meeting shall be held on or before the thirty-first (31<sup>st</sup>) day of January of each year, as the Church Council shall direct.
2. Notice: Written notice of the time, place, and purpose of each Annual Meeting shall be mailed by the Clerk to members of the Church at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting date. Notice of said meeting shall be posted on all entries to the Church at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting, and said notice shall be read from the pulpit on the two Sundays preceding.
3. Business: The business transacted shall include the yearly reports of the Minister(s), officers, committees, organizations, and groups; the election of officers, committee members, delegates and representatives; the adoption of the Annual Budget; the setting up of plans and programs for the new year; and the transaction of any other business.

b. Special Meetings: Special All-Church Meetings may be called by the Church Council or shall be called by the Church Council upon the written request of ten (10) or more active members of the church. Written notice of the time, place, and purpose of each Special Meeting shall be mailed by the Clerk to members of the Church at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting date. Notice of said meeting shall be posted on all entries to the Church at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting, and said notice shall be read from the pulpit on the Sunday preceding the meeting.

c. Budget Meetings: Prior to the Annual Giving Campaign, the time and period of the Campaign determined by the Council, all committees shall submit to the Finance Committee their tentative budgets for the coming year. The Finance Committee, with the cooperation and assistance of the committees, shall develop a Proposed Budget for the ensuing year, and shall present it to the Council for approval. The Council shall call a meeting of the Church and the Finance Committee shall present the Proposed Budget at the meeting. Upon adoption by a Church vote, the Stewardship Committee shall be charged and instructed to raise the necessary pledges.

- d. Official Year: The fiscal year of the Church shall begin January First, and all officers and committees shall assume their duties after the Annual Meeting and continue in office until their term is complete.
- e. Prayer: All business meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.
- f. Quorum: Fifteen (15) percent of active members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting for business, based on the Church membership as of the previous year's Annual Report of the Clerk as approved at the Annual Meeting.
- g. Voting: Method of voting (voice, hand or paper ballot) shall be determined by the Moderator. Unless otherwise required, a majority vote is decisive.

**Article VIII**  
**Sacraments and Ordinances**  
**Section 1 – Baptisms**

Baptism of children and adults shall be administered at such time and place and in such form as the Minister(s) shall direct.

**Section 2 – Holy Communion**

The service of Holy Communion shall be administered at such time and place as the Minister(s) and Diaconate shall direct, but customarily on the first (1st) Sunday of each month, on Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday Evening, and Pentecost Sunday.

**Section 3 – Marriages**

The ordinance of Holy Matrimony shall be conducted in such manner and for such persons as the Minister(s) shall direct.

**Section 4 – Deaths**

Services related to a death shall be conducted in such manner and for such persons as the Minister(s) shall direct.

**Article IX**  
**Administration**

The governing body of the Church shall be the membership assembled in a Church Meeting for Business. The vote of the majority of members present shall be the action of the Church. A quorum shall consist of fifteen (15) percent of the active membership of the Church as defined in Article VII, Section 2a.

The executive body of the Church shall be the Church Council, and it shall be its function to consider and supervise the entire program of the Church. It may act for the Church in minor matters; however, all major matters must have confirmation at an All-Church Meeting.

## **Article X Officers**

The officers of this Church shall be as indicated herein; these officers shall with the exception of the Minister(s), be elected at each Annual Meeting upon the nomination of the Nominating Committee; this does not exclude nominations from the floor. All of the officers shall be active members of the Church, eighteen (18) years of age or older. Vacancies during the year, except in the case of the Minister(s), shall be filled by the Church Council. All officers shall prepare a written annual report for the preceding year which will be included in the Annual Report of the Church and presented at the Annual Meeting.

### **Section 1 - Senior Minister**

The Senior Minister shall be called for an indefinite time as provided in Article XIV. The Senior Minister is the chief administrative officer of the Church and has the direction and supervision of the Associate Minister(s), Director of the Chancel Choir, Director of Handbell Choirs, Organist/Accompanist, and Director of Youth Choirs, Church Secretary, and Licensed Minister(s). With the assistance of the Diaconate, the Senior Minister shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the congregation, seek to enlist people as followers of Christ, preach and teach the gospel, administer the Sacraments, conduct the Ordinances of the church, be responsible for the services of public worship. The Senior Minister shall administer all activities of the church in cooperation with all committees, and groups, and with the Associate Minister as agreed upon between them. The Senior Minister shall transmit to the Clerk, Church Secretary and Historian data concerning all baptisms, marriages, membership transfers and terminations, and deaths.

The Senior Minister is a member of the Church Council and an ex-officio member of all permanent committees. The Senior Minister shall have a seat and vote on the Church Council, except for personnel matters regarding the Senior Minister.

The Personnel Committee shall coordinate the annual review of the Senior Minister.

### **Section 2 - Associate Minister(s)**

Associate Ministers may be called for an indefinite term and in the same manner as the Senior Minister. Associate Ministers, supervised by the Senior Minister, shall assist and aid in all duties and endeavors as agreed to by the Minister, and, in the absence of the Senior Minister, shall perform the duties and obligations of the Senior Minister as directed by the Diaconate. Associate Ministers may be members of the Church Council and, if so, shall have a seat and vote on the Church Council except for personnel matters regarding the Associate Ministers. Associate Ministers may be ex-officio members of all permanent committees.

The Personnel Committee shall coordinate the annual review of the Associate Minister(s).

### **Section 3 – Moderator**

The Moderator shall be the Chairperson of the Church Council, and shall preside at all

business meetings of the Church and all meetings of the Council.

#### **Section 4 - Vice-Moderator**

A Vice-Moderator shall assume the Moderator's duties in the absence of the Moderator. In the absence of the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, a Moderator pro-tem shall be elected. The Vice Moderator shall serve as the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

#### **Section 5 – Clerk**

The Clerk shall give appropriate notice for meetings of business, shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings for business and meetings of the Church Council, and shall keep an accurate record of the membership of the Church and of baptisms, marriages, membership transfers and terminations, and deaths.

#### **Section 6 - Financial Secretary**

The Financial Secretary shall receive all payments on current accounts and benevolence pledges, shall take charge of all offerings and collections, shall issue a monthly report to the Finance Committee and the Church Council, and shall keep an accurate account with each pledger and furnish each pledger with a quarterly statement. The Financial Secretary shall receive all monies of the Church and shall deposit the funds wherever the Finance Committee shall order. The Financial Secretary shall keep separate accounts of all benevolence, trust, and special funds, and shall maintain separate accounts of all committee funds, and shall be entrusted with the care of the safe box. The Financial Secretary shall be bonded and shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee shall conduct an annual review of the Financial Secretary.

#### **Section 7 – Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall pay all expenses of the Church as directed by the Finance Committee and shall report monthly to the Church Council the status of the budget as related to the actual expenditures. The Treasurer shall keep a separate account of the Social Security and Federal Withholding Tax payments of all employees of the Church. The Treasurer shall be bonded and shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee shall conduct an annual review of the Treasurer.

#### **Section 8 – Superintendent(s) of Church School**

The Superintendent(s) of the Church School shall organize and supervise the Church School in cooperation with and under the direction of the Christian Education Committee. The Superintendent(s) shall be ex-officio member(s) of the Christian Education Committee.

## **Section 9 – Historian**

The Historian shall preserve and maintain the Church's heritage by keeping historical records, annual reports, important documents, news stories, and memorabilia.

## **Section 10 - Other Officers**

Other officers, as required, may be elected at a Business Meeting of the Church, in order to sustain the programs of the Church.

## **Article XI Church Council**

As the executive body of the Church, the Church Council has the duty and function to consider and supervise the entire program of the Church.

### **Section 1 – Membership**

The membership of the Council shall consist of the Moderator who shall act as the Chairperson, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Minister(s), the Chairpersons of these Permanent Committees: Christian Education, Stewardship, Diaconate, Evangelism and Church Growth, Finance, Mission-Social Action, Music, Personnel, and Trustees; Licensed Minister(s), Superintendent(s) of the Church School, Historian, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and the Director of the Thrift Shop. A Permanent Committee may select a member to represent them on the Church Council in lieu of the committee's chairperson for a term of one year. All members of the Church Council must be active members of the Church.

### **Section 2 - Church Program**

It shall be the responsibility of the Church Council to visualize the entire Church program, to advise the Minister(s) on the general direction of the Church's activities, and to assist in the formation of a well-rounded program. The Church Council shall submit a comprehensive program to the Church Membership at the Annual Meeting, listing the objectives of the Church for the coming year. All officers, committees, and organizations shall present their plans and programs to the Church Council for its information. It shall fill all vacancies that occur in elective Church Offices.

### **Section 3 – Meetings**

The Church Council shall meet once a month to transact the business of the Church. Special Meetings of the Church Council may be called by the Moderator, as required, with five (5) days notification to the members. The nature of the business to be transacted must be stated in the notification. The Moderator shall determine the method of voting (voice, hand or paper ballot) and a majority vote is decisive.

### **Section 4 – Quorum**

Ten (10) members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## **Article XII Permanent Committees**

All members of permanent committees must be active members of the Church. Membership on permanent committees shall be for a two year term, and shall not be held for longer than three consecutive terms. After six years, members shall not be eligible for reelection to the same permanent committee until one year has elapsed.

In the event of a committee vacancy that is filled by the Church Council, the vacancy shall not be considered an elected term of office. That term shall last only until the next Annual Meeting.

No member of the church shall serve on more than one permanent committee, either as a voting or an `ex-officio' member, and an officer is eligible to serve on a permanent committee only as an `ex-officio' member, with these exceptions: the minister(s) may serve as an ex-officio member of more than one committee, the historian may serve as a voting member of one committee, and the members of the personnel committee may serve as voting members of another committee.

Permanent committees shall elect a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a Church Council representative (if not the chairperson) and a secretary in their first meeting after the Annual Meeting. No person shall serve as chairperson for more than two (2) consecutive years. As an officer of the church and a voting member of the church council, the historian may not also represent a committee on the church council.

### **Section 1 - Christian Education**

The Christian Education Committee shall consist of twelve (12) members. This Committee shall formulate policies and delegate the responsibilities for carrying them out for the entire educational program of the Church. This program includes the Church School, Vacation Bible School, the Youth Fellowships, Confirmation Class, and Adult Classes.

The Committee shall adopt a system of Christian Education covering all ages and classes, develop standards for the Church School, supervise materials used, institute teacher training programs, recommend equipment to be used, and in every way seek to meet the needs of the Church in Christian Education. The Committee shall appoint or approve advisors for the Youth Fellowships. The Superintendent(s) of the Church School shall organize and supervise the Church School in cooperation with and under the direction of the Christian Education Committee. The Superintendent(s) of the Church School and the Senior Minister shall be ex-officio members of the Committee.

### **Section 2 - Diaconate**

The Diaconate shall consist of no more than twelve (12) members. In the tradition of the Church, this membership has consisted of six (6) men and six (6) women. Ex-officio members shall be the Minister(s) and the Licensed Minister(s).

The Diaconate shall assist in the administration of the Sacraments and Ordinances, and shall be in charge of preparing Holy Communion. The Diaconate shall: assist the Minister(s) in promoting the spiritual interest of the Church; visit the sick, care for the poor, the sorrowing, and the stranger; and participate in the work of the ministry. They shall meet and welcome prospective members, keep in touch with absent members, ensure that the pulpit is supplied during the Senior Minister's absence, see that services are observed with regularity and reverence, and also appoint and train ushers.

The Diaconate shall conduct an annual review of the membership list of the church. If a member is fully separated from the fellowship, worship, service and support of the church for a period of one year, the Diaconate, acting for the church, shall make a kindly inquiry to discover the reason for such separation. If such a member remains inactive for an additional year, the Diaconate may, after proper inquiry, move a member's name from the active membership role to the inactive membership role.

The Diaconate shall provide for the supply of the pulpit in the absence of, or upon request from, the Minister. The Diaconate shall provide elements for the Sacrament of Holy Communion and aid in its celebration and distribution. They shall provide for and recruit lay participation in worship, such as the following: acolytes, ushers, and Scripture readers. The Diaconate may distribute all flowers remaining after regular or special services to the sick or shut in,

The Diaconate shall appoint a search committee to secure the services of an Interim Minister when necessary. This committee shall contact the Regional Minister of the North Central Region of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ to request an interim minister. After consultation with the Finance Committee and the Personnel Committee, a contract shall be drawn, specifying the Interim Minister's duties and hours of service required per week, and offering compensation in accordance with the then-current guidelines of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Interim Minister Search Committee will reach accord with, and select, the candidate of their choice.

### **Section 3 - Evangelism and Church Growth**

The Evangelism and Church Growth Committee shall consist of nine (9) members. The Senior Minister shall be an ex-officio member of the committee. The duty of this Committee shall be the stimulation of interest in the Church to bring people into fellowship and service. The Committee shall assist the Minister(s) in the identification and cultivation of potential members, in calling on prospective members, and in planning for the prompt assimilation of new members into active Church life. The Committee shall provide hospitality to prospective and new members, and shall encourage the Church family to receive new members with warmth and enthusiasm.

Every candidate for initial membership shall meet with one of the Ministers and members of the Evangelism and Church Growth Committee in orientation sessions. At least one of these sessions shall provide the opportunity for the candidates to meet members of the Diaconate and the Church Council. At the conclusion of these orientation sessions, each prospective member shall be familiar with the Church's history, programming, purpose, mission in the local and worldwide communities, and their obligations and duties as active members of the Church.

The Senior Minister, Diaconate, and Evangelism and Church Growth Committee shall guide, support, and familiarize prospective members in the life of the Church so that each candidate shall be effectively assimilated into Church life and fellowship activities.

#### **Section 4 – Finance**

The Finance Committee shall consist of six (6) members. Ex-officio members shall be the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Senior Minister.

The Committee shall oversee the budgetary process and the financial structure of the Church. The Committee shall receive budgetary requests from other committees, formulate the annual budget, submit it to the Church Council for review and approval, and propose it to the Church for adoption. When the annual giving campaign is completed, the Finance Committee shall examine the anticipated expenses and income, submit an annual budget to the Church Council for approval, and propose it to the Church at the Annual Meeting for final adoption. The Committee shall monitor the budget during the year.

The Committee shall be responsible for evaluating all Church funds, financing, and record keeping, consult with the Trustees about all bids and bid responses concerning Church property. The committee shall review payment of all bills and purchases of supplies and services. The Committee shall review the financial aspects of all personnel contracts, service contracts, rental agreements, fee schedules and the use of emergency appropriations.

The Committee shall be responsible for reviewing and monitoring the Financial Secretary's and Treasurer's financial documents and reports to ensure accuracy and adherence to standard accounting principles. The Committee shall recommend to the Church Council how and when the annual financial review shall be conducted. If deemed necessary, an independent auditor shall be consulted. Results shall be published and presented to the Church Council, and printed in the next Annual Report.

The Committee shall conduct annual reviews of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer.

#### **Section 5 - Mission-Social Action**

The Mission-Social Action Committee shall consist of nine (9) members. The Senior Minister shall be an ex-officio member of the committee. It shall have supervision and correlation of the missionary plans and activities of the Church and its organizations. It shall stimulate an intelligent missionary spirit in the membership of the Church, in order to bring the teachings of the Christian faith to bear on the economic, cultural, social and political problems at home and abroad, and to give the Church direction and inspiration for individual and authorized corporate action.

#### **Section 6 – Music**

The Music Committee shall consist of nine (9) members. The Director of the Chancel Choirs, Director of Youth Choirs, Organist/Accompanist, Director of Handbell Choirs, and the Senior Minister shall be ex-officio members of the committee.

The Committee, in cooperation with the Senior Minister and the Organist/Accompanist, shall assist in the procurement of soloists and substitute organists. The Committee shall have general supervision of the Director of the Chancel Choir, Director of Youth Choirs, Organist/Accompanist, and Director of Handbell Choirs and the musical activities of the Church for the enhancement of worship, education and fellowship in service to the Church, church family and community and shall initiate and supervise such activities in cooperation with the appropriate staff person(s). The Music Committee shall conduct annual reviews of the Director of the Chancel Choir, Director of Youth Choirs, Organist/Accompanist, and Director of Handbell Choirs.

### **Section 7 - Stewardship**

The Stewardship Committee shall consist of nine (9) members. The Senior Minister shall be an ex-officio member of the committee. The mission of this committee shall be to help God's people grow and deepen their spiritual lives through prayerful consideration and practice of the Five Ts of Stewardship. It shall conduct a continuing program of stewardship education focusing on the Five Ts of Stewardship ministry, which are: time, talent, treasure, trash prevention/recycling, and tissue. This committee shall be responsible for planning and conducting the annual financial commitment giving campaign for the support of the mission plan of the church.

### **Section 8 – Trustees**

The Trustees Committee shall consist of nine (9) members. The Senior Minister shall be an ex-officio member of the committee. The Trustees shall have the care and custody of all property of the Church, subject to the authority of the Church as expressed in its votes, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any real property unless specially authorized by a vote of the Church. They may borrow money, outside of the church budget, for, and, in the name of, and, on behalf of, the Church, if recommended by the Finance Committee and the Church Council, and authorized by a vote of the Church at a meeting, in the notice of which it shall be stated such a matter is to be considered. In the event of an emergency situation requiring immediate action to prevent further property damage and/or a hazardous environment, the Trustees may encumber the necessary funds to maintain temporarily the structural integrity of property and/or a safe environment, provided that the Finance Committee is consulted. All bids and bid responses shall be approved by the Trustees in consultation with the Finance Committee.

All deeds, mortgages, leases or other documents having to do with the real property of the Church when duly authorized by its vote shall be executed, acknowledged, and delivered by the Trustees, and any notes in connection with such documents shall be signed by them. The Trustees shall hire and oversee the work of all custodial staff and services and shall ensure that the Church property meets all state and local codes and regulations. The Trustees shall conduct an annual review of the Sexton(s).

### **Section 9 – Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee shall consist of three (3) members. Members shall be elected for a two year term. The Personnel Committee shall develop personnel policies in consultation with those responsible for supervision of Church employees and to

assist in assuring that all policies are being followed. This shall include development, review and revision of policies for the employment, evaluation and termination of staff, for grievance procedures, and for dispute resolution processes. Job descriptions shall be developed by the Personnel Committee, in consultation with those responsible for supervision of Church employees, and the descriptions shall be approved by the Church Council. The committee shall review employment contracts and agreements. The committee shall coordinate the annual review of the Ministers by gathering evaluations from all of the permanent committees and input from other sources. The committee shall ensure that annual reviews are conducted for all paid church officers and paid staff.

### **Article XIII Non-permanent Committees**

#### **Section 1 - Nominating Committee**

The Church Council shall annually appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of the Vice Moderator, who will serve as Chairperson of the committee, the Minister(s), and a minimum of three (3) other members. The Nominating Committee shall develop a list of church members to fill vacant officer, committee and delegate positions. The list shall be included in the Annual Report of the Church and presented for approval at the Annual Meeting.

#### **Section 2 - Other Committees Which Are Not Permanent**

The Church Council shall have the authority to create and define committees as may be required to continue and fulfill the complete program of the Church, subject to condition that final approval shall not become effective at the meeting at which the committee was proposed. Approval is to be voted at the next meeting of the Church Council.

### **Article XIV Delegates and Representatives**

The delegates and representatives shall be appointed by the Nominating Committee to the conferences, associations, and organizations with which the Church is affiliated and shall serve for one year. They have the duty to encourage and foster a true value of Christian fellowship. They shall make a report to the Church at the Annual Meeting.

### **Article XV The Ministry**

We recognize the Christian ministry as God's gift for the spiritual and moral strengthening of the Church, the Body of Jesus Christ. Ministers are called of God and exercise leadership of the Church, as servants of Christ, by virtue of the free consent of the members who call them. Ministers shall comply with the provisions and policies of Ordained Ministry in The United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry.

Ministers shall be called by vote of the Church at a duly called meeting for the said purpose of calling a Minister. In selecting a Minister whenever a vacancy occurs, a Ministerial Search Committee shall be appointed by the Church Council to select and

recommend a candidate to the Church. Before recommending any candidate, the Committee shall be satisfied that the candidate has examined and is prepared to accept the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church and is prepared to fulfill the obligations and expectations set forth in the minister(s) job description. The Committee shall confirm the validity of the candidate's ministerial standing.

In the event of a Senior Minister vacancy, the Diaconate shall seek and nominate an Interim Minister. In this search, they shall consult with the Connecticut Conference office and submit their selection to the Church Council for approval. If there is an Associate Minister, that person may be a candidate for the position of Senior Minister, but shall not serve as an Interim Minister.

All attempts, moves or motions to dismiss the Minister(s) shall be referred to a temporary Special Inquiry Committee consisting of the Moderator, and at least one, and no more than two, voting member(s) of each permanent committee of the Church. The Minister(s) cannot serve on this committee. Candidates for this committee may recuse themselves if they feel compelled not to serve.

This Special Inquiry Committee shall be approved by the Church Council. This committee shall make a complete investigation and consideration of the reason and report its findings and recommendations to the Church Council. The Council, if, and, when it deems necessary, may make recommendations to the Church at an All-Church Meeting as to the continuance or termination of the Senior Minister's or Associate Minister's term of office.

The services of a Minister shall be terminated upon receipt of the resignation of the Minister and notification to the Personnel Committee, or by formal dismissal by the Church as a result of a vote passed by the Church at a Special Meeting called for that purpose. In any case, three (3) months' notice shall be required by both the Church and the Minister before termination of the ministry, except in the situation where the Minister loses his/her ministerial standing in the Farmington Valley Association, when termination shall be immediate.

## **Article XVI The Staff**

### **Section 1 - Director of the Chancel Choir**

The Director of the Chancel Choir shall be called for an indefinite term. The Director of the Chancel Choir works under the direction of the Senior Minister and the Music Committee and in cooperation with the Organist/Accompanist, Director of Youth Choirs, and Director of Handbell Choirs. The Music Committee, Minister(s), Director of the Chancel Choir, Director of Youth Choirs and Organist/Accompanist, and Director of Handbell Choirs shall work cooperatively to develop a comprehensive program of the music ministry for the Church. The Director of the Chancel Choir is an ex-officio member of the Music Committee.

In selecting a Director of the Chancel Choir, the Council shall appoint an ad hoc Director of the Chancel Choir Search Committee consisting of seven (7) members; the Senior Minister, three (3) members from the Music Committee, one (1) member from the Finance Committee, one (1) member from the Personnel Committee, and one (1)

member at large from the Church membership. The person selected should meet the basic requirements of the latest job description for the position. The committee shall report its findings in a written proposal incorporating all matters discussed and agreed upon between the candidate and the committee. This proposal shall be presented to the Council for approval.

The Music Committee shall conduct an annual review of the Director of the Chancel Choir.

All moves or motions for the dismissal of the Director of the Chancel Choirs shall be referred to the Personnel Committee for complete investigation and discussion. The Council shall vote as to the continuance or termination of the Director of the Chancel Choir.

## **Section 2 – Director of Youth Choirs**

The Director of Youth Choirs shall be called for an indefinite term. The Director of Youth Choirs works under the direction of the Senior Minister and the Music Committee and in cooperation with the Director of the Chancel Choir, Organist/Accompanist, and the Director of the Handbell Choirs. The Music Committee, Minister(s), Director of the Chancel Choir, Director of Youth Choirs, Organist/Accompanist, and Director of Handbell Choirs shall work cooperatively to develop a comprehensive program of music ministry for the Church. The Director of Youth Choirs is an ex-officio member of the Music Committee.

In selecting a Director of Youth Choirs, the Council shall appoint an ad hoc Director of Youth Choirs Search Committee consisting of seven (7) members; the Senior Minister, three (3) members from the Music Committee, one (1) member from the Finance Committee, one (1) member from the Personnel Committee, and one (1) member at large from the Church membership. The person selected should meet the basic requirements of the latest job description for the position. The committee shall report its findings in a written proposal incorporating all matters discussed and agreed upon between the candidate and the committee. This proposal shall be presented to the Council for approval.

The Music Committee shall conduct an annual review of the Director of Youth Choirs.

All moves or motions for the dismissal of the Director of Youth Choirs shall be referred to the Personnel Committee for complete investigation and discussion. The Council shall vote as to the continuance or termination of the Director of Youth Choirs.

## **Section 3 – Organist/Accompanist**

The Organist/Accompanist shall be called for an indefinite term. The Organist/Accompanist works under the direction of the Senior Minister and the Music Committee and in cooperation with the Director of the Chancel Choir, and Director of Youth Choirs. The Music Committee, Minister(s), Director of the Chancel Choir, Director of Youth Choirs, Organist/Accompanist and Director of Handbell Choirs shall work cooperatively to develop a comprehensive program of music ministry for the Church. The Organist/Accompanist is an ex-officio member of the Music Committee.

In selecting an Organist/Accompanist, the Council shall appoint an ad hoc Organist/Accompanist Search Committee consisting of seven (7) members; the Senior Minister, three (3) members from the Music Committee, one (1) member from the Finance Committee, one (1) member from the Personnel Committee, and one (1) member at large from the Church membership. The person selected should meet the basic requirements of the latest job description for the position. The committee shall report its findings in a written proposal incorporating all matters discussed and agreed upon between the candidate and the committee. This proposal shall be presented to the Council for approval.

The Music Committee shall conduct an annual review of the Organist/Accompanist.

All moves or motions for the dismissal of the Organist/Accompanist shall be referred to the Personnel Committee for complete investigation and discussion. The Council shall vote as to the continuance or termination of the Organist/Accompanist.

#### **Section 4 – Director of Handbell Choirs**

The Director of Handbell Choirs shall be called for an indefinite term. The Director of Handbell Choirs works under the direction of the Senior Minister and the Music Committee and in cooperation with the Director of the Chancel Choir, Organist/Accompanist, and the Director of the Youth Choirs. The Music Committee, Minister(s), Director of the Chancel Choir, Director of Youth Choirs, Organist/Accompanist and Director of Handbell Choirs shall work cooperatively to develop a comprehensive program of music ministry for the Church. The Director of Handbell Choirs is an ex-officio member of the Music Committee.

In selecting a Director of Handbell Choirs, the Council shall appoint an ad hoc Director of Handbell Choirs Search Committee consisting of seven (7) members; the Senior Minister, three (3) members from the Music Committee, one (1) member from the Finance Committee, one (1) member from the Personnel Committee, and one (1) member at large from the Church membership. The person selected should meet the basic requirements of the latest job description for the position. The committee shall report its findings in a written proposal incorporating all matters discussed and agreed upon between the candidate and the committee. This proposal shall be presented to the Council for approval.

The Music Committee shall conduct an annual review of the Director of Handbell Choirs.

All moves or motions for the dismissal of the Director of Handbell Choirs shall be referred to the Personnel Committee for complete investigation and discussion. The Council shall vote as to the continuance or termination of the Director of Handbell Choirs.

#### **Section 5 – Licensed Minister(s)**

Licensed Ministers are recognized by the Church as having appropriate training and skills for ministry and are licensed and granted authorization by the United Church of Christ through the Farmington Valley Association to perform duties relating to the needs of the Church. They are granted a license for no more than one year at a time, and our Church

would request license renewal at its discretion. Licensed ministers are members of the Church, are approved by the Diaconate and the Church Council, and are under the direction and supervision of the Senior Minister.

Licensed Ministers shall comply with the provisions and policies of Licensed Ministry in The United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry. The responsibilities of a Licensed Minister may include: preaching, assisting in worship, visitation, and serving Holy Communion during visitation, which is consecrated in a worship service.

Annually, the Senior Minister and Diaconate shall evaluate the ministry of the Licensed Minister(s).

### **Section 6 - Church Secretary**

The Church Secretary is under the direct supervision of the Senior Minister for all duties as outlined in the job description for this position. In selecting a Church Secretary, the Council shall appoint an ad hoc Church Secretary Search Committee consisting of five (5) members; the Senior Minister, the Moderator, one (1) member from the Diaconate, one (1) member from the Finance Committee, and one (1) member from the Personnel Committee. The committee shall report its findings in a written proposal incorporating all matters discussed and agreed upon between the candidate and the committee. This proposal shall be presented to the Council for approval.

The Senior Minister shall conduct an annual review of the Church Secretary.

All moves or motions for the dismissal of the Church Secretary shall be referred to the Personnel Committee for complete investigation and discussion. The Council shall vote as to the continuance or termination of the Church Secretary.

### **Section 7 - Sexton(s)**

The Sexton(s) is directed and supervised by the Trustees. The Sexton is responsible for all the duties as outlined in the job description for this position. The Trustees shall conduct an annual review of the Sexton(s).

## **ARTICLE XVII Fellowship Groups**

Other organizations or temporary committees, not recognized previously, may be formed from time to time under the auspices of this Church, subject to the approval of the Church Council.

They shall make reports to the Annual Meeting of the Church.

## **ARTICLE XVIII Property**

The Church may, in its corporate name, sue or be sued; acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise; 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 and transfer, rent, leave, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell, assign, transfer, and convey such property for the general purposes of the Church; the Church may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property and invest and reinvest the same, and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the Church.

Upon dissolution of this Church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall be possessed, including any devise, bequests, gift or grant contained in any will or other instruments, in trust or otherwise, made before or after dissolution of this Church, shall be transferred to the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ.

#### **ARTICLE XIX Rules of Order**

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedures not specifically covered by this Constitution and Bylaws. "Ex-officio" as used in this document shall mean "without vote".

#### **ARTICLE XX Amendments**

Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any duly called All-Church Meeting by a two-thirds' affirmative vote of the members present with public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) having been made two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.