

# **Bylaws of the First Congregational Church Of Stoughton (UCC)**

**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

**(Revised: May 2018)**

## **Welcome Statement**

Here at the First Congregational Church of Stoughton, United Church of Christ, we celebrate the diversity of God's creation and affirm the dignity and worth of every person as created in the image of God [Genesis 1:27].

Living in openness to the Voice of the Still Speaking God, and following the Greatest Commandment of Jesus Christ to love God and neighbor, we extend an extravagant welcome to all persons of every age, race, nationality, ethnicity, faith background, marital status, family structure, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, socio-economic status, physical or mental ability, affirming that we are all members of the family of God.

We invite all into the full life and ministry of our church, including worship, sacraments, rites, covenants, fellowship, leadership, employment, commitments, blessings, and joys.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

## **Our Vision**

We are called together to embrace God's transformation of our lives and our world by becoming and serving as Christ's disciples.

## **Our Mission**

Our mission is to form disciples of Christ and transform our lives, and the lives of others, through Christ.

We do this by nurturing our relationship with God.

through the spiritual practices of  
daily prayer, weekly worship, daily bible reading,  
serving within and beyond our church,  
developing spiritual relationships, and giving generously

## **Faith**

This church acknowledges as its sole head Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Savior. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic

Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

## **The United Church of Christ Statement of Faith**

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

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

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

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

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

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

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust 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.

### **Name**

The name of this church shall be the First Congregational Church of Stoughton, United Church of Christ (UCC) located in Stoughton, Massachusetts, organized under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

### **Polity**

The church is congregational in polity; its government being vested in the body of believers who compose it. But the congregation is a member of the United Church of Christ and, though subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation with the United Church of Christ and all its congregations, especially those of the Massachusetts Conference and the Pilgrim Association.

## **Basic Guidelines**

### **1. Membership**

- a. Membership in this church shall be open to any person that makes a public affirmation/reaffirmation of faith in Jesus Christ as teacher, guide and center of our faith.
- b. Prospective members shall meet with the Pastor for a series of Covenant Classes, the number and frequency to be determined by the Pastor. A representative of the Church Council shall be present at one of these sessions.
- c. Prospective members shall be received into membership by making covenantal vows before God during a public service of worship. Through these covenantal vows, the new members pledge themselves to nurturing their journeys of faith through, but not limited to, the following:

- (i) regularly attending worship;
- (ii) celebrating the sacrament of communion;
- (iii) living by the example of Christ's life;
- (iv) participating in the life and work of the church; **and**,
- (v) monetarily supporting the church, according to financial ability.

If circumstances prevent a prospective member from being received as a new member during worship, they may be received during a private service to be conducted at the discretion of the Pastor.

- d. All active congregants are eligible to serve on boards, ministry teams or committees with the exception that any individuals that have fiduciary responsibility and contract execution authority must be church members.
- e. An Active Member maintains this status by engaging in the following activities during a 12-month calendar year:
  - (i) Attending worship;
  - (ii) Financially supporting the church in a discernible way, **and**
  - (iii) Participating in the life of the church.

Active members who do not engage in these three activities in a 12-month calendar year will be moved to Affiliate Member status by a majority vote of the Church Council.

- f. Should an illness or other circumstance prevent an Active Member from attending worship, participating in the life of the church, or financially supporting the church, an exception to retain the individual as an Active Member may be made by vote of the Church Council.
  - g. Affiliate Members are not eligible to serve on boards, ministry teams or committees and may not vote at congregational meetings.
  - h. An Affiliate Member who demonstrates a renewed commitment to discipleship and to nurturing his/her journey of faith through resumed: (1) attendance at worship, (2) discernible financial support of the church, and (3) participation in the life of the church, may request in writing to the Church Council to be transferred to Active Member status. A simple majority vote of the Church Council will be required to transfer a member from Affiliate to Active membership status.
  - i. An Active or Affiliate Member may resign his/her membership with the church by:
    - i) Submitting a letter of resignation to the Church Council, or
    - ii) Requesting a letter of transfer from the First Congregational Church of Stoughton to the new church that he/she is joining.
  - j. Associate Membership: This status was discontinued in May 2005. All those who were Associate Members prior to this change and who wished to maintain their membership in another church were allowed to maintain the Associate status and shall be subject to all bylaws governing Active and Affiliate members.
2. **Definitions:** A **Board** or a **Ministry Team** are the primary units within the life of the Church with broad responsibilities. Therefore, they are entitled to hold one seat on the Church Council. A Committee has a more specific focus and often reports to a board or ministry team. A Sub-Committee is more directly tied to a board because at least one of its members is a member of the parent board

3. **Boards, Ministry Teams & Committees:** The Church is comprised of several main operational groups including but not limited to: The Music and Worship Ministry Team, The Board of Trustees, The Christian Education Ministry Team, The Mission and Outreach Ministry Team, Pastoral Relations Committee, Stewardship Committee, Investment Committee, Memorial Gifts Committee, Safety Committee, Nominating Committee, The Caring Ministry Team, and The Teaching Parish Ministry Team.
4. **Meetings:** All meetings of the church organizational groups will be organized under the parliamentary authority of Robert's Rules of Order. These meetings may go into Executive Session provided they conform to appropriate procedures as described in Robert's Rules of Order.
5. **Fiscal/Program Year:** The Fiscal Year of the Church will be January 1st to December 31st. The Program year will be from July 1st to June 30th.

**Congregational Meetings:** There will be two regular meetings of the congregation: The **Annual Program Meeting**, to be held in May, and an **Annual Budget Meeting**, to be held in January. Dates for these Annual Meetings shall be set by the Church Council and posted in the Sunday worship bulletin on the two preceding Sundays. The notice, date and agenda shall be posted at the church and sent to all members by US Mail, electronic mail, or through the church newsletter or other electronic communications at least 14 days prior to the meeting. In the event of a cancellation of a meeting due to weather conditions, the meeting will be held on the next Sunday the church is open without any further notification. A quorum for all annual and special meetings shall be 25 percent of the current Active Members and these people must be present in order to vote. Where more than one person is nominated for any position a written confidential ballot shall be used. A **special meeting** may be called by the Church Council, and shall be called upon written request of at least 25 percent of the current Active Members, for the consideration of urgent business. The notice, date and agenda of this special meeting shall be posted at the church and sent to all members by US Mail, electronic mail, or through the church newsletter or other electronic communications at least 7 days before the date of the special meeting. No action shall be taken at a regular or special meeting except that which is set forth in the agenda for the meeting. All meetings will be organized with the parliamentary authority of Robert's Rules of Order or a similar set of rules if so voted by a 3/4 majority of the Active Members of the congregation.

6. **Terms of Office:** The Moderator, Vice Moderator, Safety Officer, Board, Ministry Teams, and Committee members shall be elected by a majority vote for two-year terms at the Annual Program Meeting in May. It is suggested that after two consecutive terms, the Moderator, Vice Moderator and members of Boards, Ministry Teams, and Committees are ineligible to serve in that same position until one year has passed unless nominated and elected at the Program meeting in May. All positions that are appointed or hired shall be exempt from the two-year limit subject to review by the appointing authority. Although the incoming personnel won't officially take office until July 1st, the June meeting of each board and committee shall be a joint meeting of the outgoing and incoming personnel. At that June meeting a Chairperson and Secretary will be elected for the upcoming year and their duties will begin July 1st, the beginning of the Program Year. The joint meeting in June will be a transitional meeting to help the incoming board, ministry team, and committee members become familiar with their duties and responsibilities.
7. **Goals, Objectives, Budget Requests:** At the beginning of the Program Year each board, ministry team, and committee should determine its goals and objectives for the

upcoming year and anticipate its financial needs. Budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year are to be sent to the Board of Trustees by August 1st.

#### 8. Leadership, Meetings & Reports:

- a. At their first meeting, after the Annual Program Meeting in May, each board, ministry team, and committee shall elect a Chairperson and Secretary by majority vote. All members of the board, ministry team or committee are eligible for these positions and interested persons may place their own name in nomination.
- b. Each board, ministry team and committee shall decide when and where their meetings will take place, meeting frequently enough so that they are able to effectively discharge their responsibilities. All board, ministry team and committee meetings are open to all church members (except Pastor Relations Committee whose meetings are private) and each group must publish their meeting times in the church calendar.
- c. The Chairperson shall convene all meetings, prepare an agenda in consultation with the Pastor and have general oversight of the work of the board, ministry teams, or committee.
- d. Each board, ministry team, and committee shall communicate their activities when appropriate to the entire congregation via the church newsletter except Pastor Relations Committee whose meetings are private. Each board and ministry team shall prepare a report of their activities for the Program Year. This report shall be prepared for the Annual Program Meeting and is due by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

9. Worship Attendance: The members of all boards, ministry teams, and committees are encouraged to regularly attend worship services.

10. Job descriptions: The Church Council, boards, ministry teams, and committees shall prepare and maintain job descriptions for any paid employees under their jurisdiction and shall forward them to the Church Council for review.

11. Work of the Boards and Ministry Teams: There is a distinction to be made between the “work” of a board and ministry team and the “decisions” made by a board and ministry team. While decisions on various issues are made by majority vote of each board and ministry team, how that decision gets carried out is flexible. At its discretion a board or ministry team has a number of options available to it: a) It may do the work itself; b) it may establish a sub-committee, consisting of at least one member of the board or ministry team. The Sub-committee will carry out their decisions and provide the Board or Ministry Team with input; or c) it may assign the work to any person. When assigning tasks to persons outside of a board or ministry team it may be appropriate to gather data and advice from any of the following: The Pastor, The Worship and Music Ministry Team, and/or The Nominating Committee.

#### 13. Conflicts of Interest:

- a. Conflict of Interest Defined: A conflict of interest may exist when the interests or activities of any member of the Church Council, Board of Trustees, Worship and Music Ministry Team, Christian Education Ministry Team, Mission and Outreach Ministry Team, any Subcommittee or any appointed Task Force may be seen as competing with the interests of the Church or such person derives or may derive a financial or other material personal gain as a result of a direct or indirect connection to a transaction involving, or other action taken by, the Church.
- b. Disclosure Required: Any possible conflict of interest shall be disclosed to the Moderator and, if the transaction or action to be taken involves a member of a Board, Ministry Team,

Subcommittee or Task Force, it shall be reported by the Moderator to all members of that Board, Ministry Team, Subcommittee or Task Force.

- c. Voting: When any conflict of interest relates to a matter requiring action by the Church Council, Church Boards, Ministry Teams, Subcommittees or any Task Force, the interested person shall call it to the attention of the decision-making body and such person shall not vote on the matter. The interested party shall, nonetheless, be counted in determining the presence of a quorum.
- d. Absence from Discussion: Unless requested to remain present during the meeting, the person having the conflict shall retire from the room in which the decision-making body is meeting and shall not participate in the final deliberation or decision regarding the matter under consideration. However, the person having the conflict shall provide the decision-making body with any and all relevant information.
- e. Minutes: The minutes of the meeting shall reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and that the interested person was not present during the final discussion or vote and did not vote on the matter giving rise to the conflict. When there is doubt as to whether a conflict of interest exists, the matter will be resolved by a vote of the decision-making body, excluding the person concerning whose situation the doubt has arisen.
- f. Annual Review: A copy of this Article shall be furnished annually to, and reviewed with, each member of the Church Council, Board of Trustees, Worship and Music Ministry Team, Christian Education Ministry Team, Mission and Outreach Ministry Team, any Subcommittee or any appointed Task Force promptly following the commencement of his or her term of office.

## **Organization**

### **The Moderator**

1. Shall be an Active Member.
2. The Moderator is the Chairperson of the Church Council and shall preside at the Annual Program Meeting, Annual Budget Meeting and at all special meetings of the congregation.
3. The Moderator may not serve on the Board of Trustees and may not represent any other ministry team on which they serve at Church Council

### **The Vice Moderator**

1. Shall be an Active Member.
2. The Vice Moderator is the Vice Chairperson of the Church Council and shall perform all the duties of the Moderator whenever the Moderator is absent or unable to serve.
3. The Vice Moderator may not serve on the Board of Trustees and may not represent any other ministry team on which they serve at Church Council

### **The Clerk**

1. Shall be an Active congregant and is appointed by the Church Council.
2. Keep a faithful record of proceedings at church meetings, provide the Moderator with one copy and keep another on file in the church office.
3. Keep a register of the names of all members of the church and the dates and methods of their reception in the church and removal from the rolls.

4. Keep records of all baptisms, marriages and funerals performed in the church.
5. Cooperate with the Church Council to maintain an accurate list of all members and friends of the church, their names, addresses, phone numbers, current membership status, etc.
6. To insure that church records are not irretrievably lost or destroyed, the Clerk shall maintain two sets of church records. One set will be kept at the church and the second shall be kept at the Clerk's home or other location of the clerk's choosing.
7. Prepare a report of the clerk's activities to be included in the church's annual report.
8. Prepare the UCC Annual Yearbook Report. The report will be reviewed and approved by the Church Council before it is sent outside the church.

## **The Historian**

1. Shall be an Active Member and appointed by the Church Council.
2. Actively solicit information, historical objects, papers, photographs, videotapes, computer data and other memorabilia pertaining to our church heritage.
3. Preserve and display for the edification of all, such mementos as may be of interest.
4. Prepare and present, from time to time, such programs and publications that might give our church members a new awareness of the historical significance and influence of First Congregational Church in the community.
5. Issue a report of the Historian's activities to be included in the church's annual report.
6. To insure that records of our church history are not irretrievably lost or destroyed, the Historian, where practical, will maintain two sets of church historical records. One set will be kept at the church and the second shall be kept at the Historian's home or other location of their choosing.

## **The Safety Officer**

1. Shall be an active congregant and is appointed by the Church Council.
2. Shall act as chairperson of the Safety Committee.
3. Shall work with the boards, ministry teams, and committees and the Pastor relative to the safety of the church.
4. The Safety Officer must be a state trained and approved CORI administrator and shall conduct all CORI records checks in accordance with the Safe Church policy.

## **The Pastor**

1. The duties and responsibilities of the Pastor shall be detailed in the Pastor's job description, the details of which shall be negotiated before accepting a call.
2. The Pastor shall be a non-voting advisor to each board, ministry team, committee and sub-committee of the church.
3. Selection: As soon as possible after learning that the current Pastor is leaving, the Chairperson of the Church Council shall inform the Associate Conference Minister and call a meeting of the Church Council. The Church Council shall then determine an appropriate process for selecting the number and members of a Search Committee, which adequately reflects the diversity of people and opinions within the congregation.
4. The Search Committee shall secure the advice and council of the Associate Conference

Minister on matters of appropriate procedure and may request from him/her any relevant information about candidates it may wish to consider.

5. Any Pastor, including those from denominations with which the United Church of Christ is in full communion (The Disciples of Christ; The Presbyterian Church-USA; The Reformed Church in America and The Evangelical Lutheran Church) may confer with the Area Conference Minister about a pastoral vacancy and may be considered for the position. At the Pastor's request, his or her name and ministerial profile (other denominations may use different language for this profile) shall be forwarded to the Search Committee by the Associate Conference Minister or the candidate may submit his/her profile to the Search Committee directly.
6. The Search Committee shall establish a proposed compensation package with an acceptable range of figures that shall be approved by the Board of Trustees prior to negotiations with any candidate. Such package should try to reflect the current compensation guidelines as voted yearly at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Conference. Once a proposed compensation package has been established with a specific candidate, the package shall be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees before being formally offered to the candidate or presented to the Congregation.
7. Qualifications: A candidate for Pastor shall be a mature person who demonstrates a deep personal faith and is able to communicate effectively. He/she shall possess a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited institution of theological education and be ordained, approved for ordination pending a call or granted privilege of call by the Committee on Ministry of the Pilgrim Association. Exceptions may be made for non-ordained candidates who wish to pursue ordination through the Committee on Ministry of the Pilgrim Association as allowed for in the United Church of Christ's Manual on Ministry.
8. The Search Committee, after determining which candidate it wishes to recommend, shall arrange for the congregation to hear the candidate preach and lead worship at a regular Sunday morning worship service immediately followed by a special congregational meeting to vote on the Search Committee's recommendation. All details of the pastor's contract, job description and letter of call shall be negotiated first and communicated to the congregation before the recommended candidate appears before the congregation. Approval by an **80%** majority of those Active Members voting by written confidential ballot shall constitute a call. Immediately after an affirmative vote of the Congregation the Chairpersons of the Board of Trustees and the Search Committee and the newly called Pastor shall sign letters of call and all appropriate contracts.
9. Installation and Standing: Soon after assuming his or her duties, the Worship and Music Ministry Team and the Pastor shall jointly request the Committee on Ministry of the Pilgrim Association to install her/him as Pastor and Teacher of the church. The Pastor shall become a member of this congregation and shall maintain his/her ministerial standing in the Pilgrim Association. If, for any reason, the Committee on Ministry of the Pilgrim Association revokes the ministerial standing of the Pastor, his/her call shall be terminated immediately. The Pastor shall serve for an indefinite length of time.
10. Termination: At any time the Pastor or the Church may terminate the relationship with a 90-day written notice. The Pastor and the Church Council may mutually agree upon a shorter or longer time.
11. The call of the Pastor may be terminated by a simple majority of those voting at a special



congregational meeting to be held for that purpose. Since a vote of this magnitude, positive or negative, has long-term consequences for the congregation it shall not be entered into quickly or without due consideration and prayer. 25 percent of the active members may request the Church Council to call for a vote to rescind the call of the Pastor. Upon verifying that these petitioners are Active Church Members, the Church Council will enter into a period of time where they will request the counsel of the Associate Conference Minister and pursue options for reconciliation, mediation or arbitration. The maximum time allowed for such reconciliation, mediation or arbitration shall be set by the Church Council. Only after all these options have been exhausted shall the Church Council authorize a congregational vote to rescind the call of the Pastor.

## **The Church Council**

### **Membership**

The Church Council consists of the Pastor, Moderator, Vice Moderator, Safety Officer, Chairpersons of the Board of Trustees, the Music and Worship Ministry Team, the Christian Education Ministry Team, and the Missions and Outreach Ministry Team and three at-large members elected at the Annual Program Meeting. The Pastor shall not have a vote. If the Chairperson of a board, or ministry team is unable to attend Church Council, they shall appoint another member of that board or ministry team to serve as the representative to the Church Council.

### **Meetings**

The Church Council shall meet no less than bimonthly. The Moderator and Vice-Moderator shall serve as the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Church Council. At the first meeting of the Program Year a Secretary shall be elected. All members of the church council are eligible for the council secretary position. Any eligible members may place their own name in nomination. Any member of the Church Council or the Pastor may call meetings as deemed necessary.

### **Function**

It shall be the function of the Church Council to visualize the entire task of the church; to coordinate church activities through the designated boards, ministry teams and committees and to facilitate, with the Pastor, the formation of a well-rounded program.

### **Responsibilities**

The Church Council shall have the authority to decide all matters not otherwise assigned to the boards or ministry team or committees with an understanding that certain decisions belong to the congregation as a whole.

#### **Specifically, the Church Council shall:**

1. Be responsible for reviewing the bylaws and suggest changes and/or amendments that may be applicable for an ever-changing and growing church.
2. Appoint task forces for projects not otherwise assigned to a board or committee.
3. Review the budget submitted by the Trustees and recommend the budget to the congregation.
4. Approve special fund raising campaigns. Approval is not required for collections planned by the Missions and Outreach Ministry Team or the Christian Education

Ministry Team.

5. Have the sole power to call the Annual Program Meeting, the Annual Budget Meeting and any special meetings of the congregation and shall prepare the agenda for such meetings and facilitate mailing and posting the notice and the agenda.
6. In the event of a Pastoral vacancy the Church Council shall receive guidance and request a list of qualified Interim Ministers from the Area Conference Minister. The Church Council shall review all appropriate paperwork and credentials, interview selected candidate(s) and be empowered to hire an Interim Minister after obtaining approval of the proposed compensation package from the Board of Trustees. They shall also determine the process by which a Search Committee will be selected.
7. The Church Council shall inform the congregation about substantive decisions and topics of general discussion as needed through the church newsletter.
8. Based on the Pastor's job description, The Church Council and the Pastor, together, shall evaluate the Pastor's job performance yearly; negotiate the terms of the Pastor's compensation package to be budgeted for the coming year and the terms of his/her contract. Negotiations with the Pastor should be completed before the September Trustees meeting.
9. The Church Council shall appoint a Historian.
10. The Church Council shall appoint an Auditor. The Auditor shall report to Church Council. The Auditor will review the financial records maintained by the Treasurer and the Offerings Clerk preferably on an annual basis, but no less than every ten years.
11. Appoint the Church Clerk.
12. Administer the membership rolls, ensuring that the Clerk and Office Administrator are in possession of accurate membership data. The Council will be responsible for determining when members are to be moved to affiliate status.
13. The Office Administrator shall report to a designee from Church Council. The Council shall evaluate the Office Administrator's performance yearly and Council has the authority to employ and/or discharge the Office Administrator. Council shall be responsible for establishing the compensation package for the Office Administrator and forwarding to the Trustees for approval.
14. Should any out of budget expenditure of the Trustees be more than \$5,000 the Council shall vote to approve/disapprove. If the expenditure is not approved and Trustees want to proceed with the expenditure, Council must call a special meeting of the members of the church within thirty days to decide the matter. The written request of 25 percent of the Active and Associate members shall not be required to call this meeting.
15. The congregation must approve any out of budget expenditure exceeding \$10,000.

## **Other Committees and Ministry Teams**

**The Nominating Committee** shall:

1. Consist of three congregants appointed by the Church Council, for a two-year term, plus the Pastor as a non-voting member.
2. Be appointed soon after the beginning of the Program Year so as to allow time for proper research, deliberations and recruitment and be available to fill vacancies that may occur. Recommendations to fill vacancies shall be approved by the Church Council.
3. Seek candidates for all positions with an eye towards a specific area of responsibility (e.g. Building & Grounds, Visitation, Publicity, etc.) where each candidate may best use their particular talents. The committee shall receive recommendations from members, explain the duties and responsibilities of each position and secure their agreement to serve if elected.
4. In order for the Nominating Committee to fulfill its function, this committee will perform the nominating process only. However, at the Annual Program Meeting, nominations from the floor will gladly be accepted.
5. Seek delegates to the Pilgrim Association/Massachusetts Conference, and other organizations, as needed, who shall regularly report the activities of these organizations to the membership. All Active and Associate Members are eligible to be delegates.

**The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) shall:**

1. Consist of five congregants to include three “at large” members and two members selected by the Pastor. The purpose of the PRC is to nurture the relationship and promote the mutual ministry between the Pastor and the congregation, as well as to encourage, support, and make recommendations to the Church Council regarding the Pastor’s professional growth and well being.
2. The PRC will also address and, if necessary, mediate any concerns of the Pastor or any other person associated with the church. The PRC will not consider concerns brought forward anonymously, and all meetings are closed and strictly confidential.
3. The PRC is advisory only and holds no decision-making authority. The PRC may make recommendations toward the resolution of a problem or concern, or when advisable, it may refer the individual(s) or issue(s) to the appropriate board or committee.
4. The PRC is not involved in salary reviews or performance evaluations of the Pastor.
5. The PRC will meet quarterly or more often, as necessary, for the purpose of nurturing the pastor-parish relationship and to support its mutual ministry. Any member of the PRC may call meetings as deemed necessary.
6. When an “at large” vacancy occurs on the PRC due to the expiration of a term or other circumstance, the Pastor will work with the Nominating Committee to identify up to 15 appropriate candidates, from which the Nominating Committee will select the person(s) to fill the vacancy(ies).

**The Teaching Parish Ministry Team (TPC) shall:**

1. Consist of up to 6 congregants. One of the members will be designated as Chairperson. Ideally, the membership will be representative of various ministries (e.g., Christian

Education, Worship and Music, Missions and Outreach, Caring etc.) of the church as well as different age groups (e.g., youth, young adult, senior) within the church.

2. Participate in an initial introductory workshop offered by Andover Newton Theological School and attend, or send representation to, training events and workshops each year if required.
3. Support the student by:
  - a. introducing the student to the faith community;
  - b. helping the student to become familiar with our church; and
  - c. ensuring the student is welcomed and nurtured by our church community.
4. Meet with the student monthly to discuss an agenda prepared by the student and the Teaching Parish Chairperson.
5. Reflect with the student on the meaning of ministry in a faith community.
6. Participate in the formulation of the student's Learning Agreement, Mid-Year Progress Report, and Final Evaluation.

**The Caring Ministry Team** shall:

1. Work closely with, and have accountability to, the Pastor.
2. Arrange for altar flowers to be present for weekly services, as well as Easter lilies and Christmas poinsettias. The team shall also secure sponsors for these and notify the Office Administrator.
3. Arrange for the delivery of altar flowers, Easter lilies, and Christmas poinsettias.
4. Maintain a list of members and friends in need of caring and concern, including, but not limited to:
  - a. those sustaining the loss by death of a close family member,
  - b. those reside in nursing homes or assisted living facilities,
  - c. those who are chronically ill or physically challenged, and
  - d. those eighty-five years of age or older.
5. Notify the Office Administrator of any information to be included in Caring Ministry printings, such as the prayer request list, Newsletter printings, and All Saints Remembrance.
6. Send greeting cards on behalf of the church to members and friends to note occasions of sadness or joy. These include sickness, bereavements, graduations, weddings, baptisms, new baby, wedding, anniversary, birthday etc. Prayer cards shall also be sent to those added to the prayer request list when possible.
7. Make visitations to members and friends in need of caring such as those listed in (3) above and those in hospitals. When possible the team shall also represent the church at services for members and friends who have died.
8. Maintain a confidential record of caring work completed.
9. In the absence of the Pastor, serve as the point of contact for those in need of pastoral care.

10. If requested, assist the Pastor in establishing policies and procedures for distributing money from the Needy Persons Fund.
11. Prepare a yearly budget request and submit it to the Board of Trustees by August 1st of each year

## **The Worship and Music Ministry Team**

1. Shall consist of at least 5 congregants. The Director of Music shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Team.
2. Regularly schedule events and activities to enhance Spiritual renewal and formation.
3. Make arrangements for child care when Church School is not in session and for special services and events.
4. Determine the overall use and appearance of the sanctuary.
5. Prepare a yearly budget request and submit it to the Board of Trustees by August 1st of each year.
6. Arrange for supply of the pulpit, with the assistance of the Pastor, for when the Pastor is away or otherwise unable to lead worship. The Team shall make arrangements for the reception of visiting dignitaries, assist the guest Pastor in leading worship, and, in the event of an emergency, conduct the service of worship.
7. Set guidelines for weddings, baptisms, funerals and Communion, working together with the Pastor.
8. Organize and lead a Laity Sunday worship service at least once a year.
9. Assist the Pastor in the leadership, design and evaluation of all services of worship.
10. Determine the needs of the musical program of the church, such as instruments, music, equipment, copyright clearances. The Team is also responsible for the maintenance, cleaning, repair, and proper storage of all instruments, equipment, and supplies in the music program and the upkeep of the music room.
11. Be responsible for locating, interviewing, and hiring the Director of Music. The Board of Trustees must approve the proposed compensation package for the Director of Music before the Director of Music is hired.

*The duties of the Worship and Music Ministry Team shall include overseeing the Chancel Ministry Team, the Hospitality Ministry Team, and the Fellowship Ministry Team. Their duties and responsibilities are listed below.*

## **The Chancel Ministry Team shall:**

1. Provide for the Communion table and secure volunteers to assist in the serving of Communion.

2. Prepare the sanctuary, outdoor chapel, and other places as necessary for worship. This includes providing and changing adornments and decorations such as candles, banners, paraments, etc.
3. Arrange for ushers to be present for worship services.
4. Prepare a yearly budget request and submit it to the Board of Trustees by August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

**The Hospitality Ministry Team** shall:

1. Create and maintain all nametags.
2. Welcome newcomers and visitors to worship.
3. Arrange for greeters to be present at all worship services.

**The Fellowship Ministry Team** shall:

1. Arrange for Coffee Fellowship hosts to be present following Sunday morning worship.
2. Coordinate church suppers and other fellowship events.

### **The Board of Trustees**

1. The Board of Trustees shall consist of no more than eight Active Members and not less than six Active Members whose duties and responsibilities are:
2. Building and grounds: They shall be responsible for the maintenance and care of all the physical properties of the church. Specifically, they shall:
  - a. Employ the Custodian and supervise the Custodian's performance.
  - b. Properly maintain the church kitchen, its equipment and supplies.
  - c. Direct and supervise the periodic cleaning and maintenance of all floors, carpets, walls, drapes, windows, light fixtures and storage facilities of the church.
  - d. Periodically inspect the church and correct any condition(s) requiring repair or renovation.
  - e. Develop a plan for the long-term care and maintenance of the church.
  - f. Provide for the care and cultivation of all trees, shrubs, flowers and lawns on the church grounds.
  - g. Ensure that all audio-visual, sound, video, computer and other electrical equipment is in proper working order for all services of worship and provide for their maintenance and repair.
  - h. Maintain a book of rules, procedures and policies governing the use of the church building and all its properties and equipment by members, non-members and outside organizations and to be responsible for their enforcement and implementation.
3. Budget: They shall be responsible for preparing and administering the annual budget of the church.

- a. They shall make preparations for an Annual Budget Meeting of the congregation to be held on a date in January set by the Church Council. In preparation for this Annual Budget Meeting the Trustees shall make a first draft budget proposal to the Church Council by their September meeting. Meetings with the various boards, ministry teams, and committees shall be completed (if necessary) and preliminary budget requests received no later than August 1st of each year.
  - b. If at any time during the fiscal year income fails to meet budgeted expenses, the Board shall determine where necessary cuts in expenses shall be made or how additional funds shall be secured. However, the approval of the Church Council shall be required if any item in the budget is to be cut more than 20%.
4. Maintain appropriate levels of insurance for all church properties, functions, employees and volunteers;
  5. Have custody of all valuable papers relating to the property of the church and a copy of all employee contracts;
  6. Authorize and direct the Treasurer to make payments to ensure the timely fulfillment of the church's financial obligations and designate the depository for church funds.
  7. The Trustees may spend up to \$5,000 annually on any non-budgeted expenditures without prior approval. Any expenditure in excess of \$5,000 shall require the approval of the Church Council. If the Council does not approve the board's request, and the Trustees wish to proceed, a special meeting of the congregation shall be called to decide the matter. The written request of 25 percent of the Active and Associate Members shall not be necessary to call this special meeting of the congregation.
  8. The Chairperson is authorized to spend up to \$2,000 on matters that the Chairperson deems to be an emergency.
  9. The Trustees, with the approval of Council, may negotiate and enter into contracts for leases and rentals extending one year or more. Contracts or leases for less than a year will not require Council approval.
  10. Upon specific authorization by a 3/4-**majority** vote of the Active Members, at a meeting called for that purpose, they may borrow, buy, sell, mortgage, or transfer real property of the church. (removed lease)

*The duties of the Trustees shall include supervising The Stewardship Committee, The Investment Committee, The Safety Committee, The Memorial Gifts Committee, The Offerings Clerks, The Treasurer, and The Assistant Treasurer. Their duties and responsibilities are listed below.*

**The Stewardship Committee shall:**

1. Consist of four Active/Associate members elected at the Annual Program meeting and the Offerings Clerk.
2. Secure pledges to assist covering the operating budget of the church and Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM), organize and lead the stewardship campaign.
3. Contact new members to secure their pledges.
4. Create and maintain a year-round program of stewardship education, keeping the members of the church informed of the financial needs of all aspects of the Church's work and of our progress towards meeting the financial and human resource goals we have set.

5. Avail themselves of information provided by the appropriate conference and denominational resources on the ethics of Christian stewardship so as to educate and encourage the membership to contribute through proportional giving, tithing and planned giving.

**The Investment Committee shall:**

1. Consist of four Active/Associate members and the Church Treasurer as an ex-officio member. This committee reports to, and is responsible to the Board of Trustees. The Church Treasurer shall provide the continuity to the Board of Trustees.
2. Meet at least quarterly or more frequently if this is determined to be in the best interests of the church.
3. Have the power to buy, sell, hold, exchange, rent, lease, transfer, convert and, in all other respects, manage and control the assets of the church's investments, including, stocks, bonds, debentures, mortgages, notes, or other securities, as in their best judgment seem wise and prudent, subject to the guidelines and policies as may be adopted by the congregation.
4. Request other members of the congregation to serve as advisory members who may provide professional counseling on investment or legal matters and/or engage the services of a professional investment firm.
5. So as to provide The Board of Trustees with important data for the coming year's budget the Investment Committee shall provide the Board of Trustees with a report on the church's investments over the previous 12 months and a reasonable estimate (as far as possible considering the variable nature of investments) of the income projections for the coming year.
6. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be bonded with the church bearing the cost.

**The Safety Committee shall:**

1. Consist of at least 3 congregants who are elected at the Annual Program Meeting.
2. Periodically review measures taken to assure the safety of the church building and grounds. Develop and maintain disclosure forms, which record incidents of safety involving the church.
3. Develop and maintain, in concert with the safety officer, safe church policies and procedures and ensure compliance.

**The Memorial Gifts Committee shall:**

1. Consist of The Historian and two congregants elected at the Annual Program Meeting.
2. Administer the memorial funds and recommend expenditures to the Board of Trustees for approval. Approve all memorial gifts and determine, in conversation with the pastor if said gifts are suitable and appropriate to accept.
3. Maintain a "Wish List". A wish list is a listing of church improvement projects, equipment, resources, supplies, services or mission projects the church needs or supports.



4. Meet with any person who may wish to consider bequeathing money to the church.
5. All gifts shall be properly acknowledged by a member of the committee and recorded in the Book of Remembrances. Acknowledgment should be made to the donor and to a member of the family of the person in whose memory the gift is made.

**The Offerings Clerk shall:**

1. Be an Active/Associate member of the church and is appointed by the Trustees.
2. Keep a full and correct account between the church and each person contributing toward the current expenses, benevolence or other funds of the church.
3. Receive all contributions to the church, whether by mail, online or in the regular church offerings, record and deposit them in the proper financial institutions as promptly as possible, immediately notifying the Treasurer of the amounts and dates of such deposits.
4. Provide yearly statements of account to all persons who have pledged and/or provided identifiable gifts to the support of the church.
5. Provide the Stewardship Committee and the Board of Trustees with a quarterly report of pledges and giving.
6. Be bonded with the church bearing the cost.

**The Assistant Offerings Clerk shall:**

1. Be an Active/Associate **member** of the church and is appointed by the Trustees.
2. Assist the Offerings Clerk and perform all the duties whenever the Offerings Clerk is absent or unable to serve.
3. Be bonded with the church bearing the cost.

**The Treasurer shall:**

1. Be an Active/Associate member of the church and hired/appointed by the Board of Trustees.
2. Receive, record, hold and **disburse** all church money, under the direction of the Board of Trustees, and keep complete and accurate books of account.
3. Prepare regular **financial statements** and give reports at the direction of the Board of Trustees.
4. Keep the church funds in such financial institutions as shall be approved by the Board of Trustees.
5. Be bonded with the church bearing the cost.
6. Attend all meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Investment Committee and provide all boards, ministry teams and committees with a report on the status of their budget monthly and as requested.
7. To insure that church financial records are not irretrievably lost or destroyed, the Treasurer shall maintain two sets of exact duplicate church financial records. One will

be kept at the church and the second shall be kept at the Treasurer's home or other location of the Treasurer's choosing. This should be done on a quarterly basis.

**The Assistant Treasurer shall:**

1. Be an Active/Associate member of the church and appointed by the Board of Trustees.
2. Perform all the duties of the Treasurer whenever the Treasurer is absent or unable to serve.
3. Be bonded with the church bearing the cost.

**The Christian Education Ministry Team**

1. The Christian Education Ministry Team (CE Ministry Team) shall consist of at least five active congregants and shall:
2. Create and maintain a program of Christian Education for persons of all ages within the church, always working in close cooperation with the Pastor.
3. Define goals and objectives for Christian Education, specifically: the church school, adult education, confirmation and the youth program, and review/evaluate their implementation.
4. Submit a yearly budget request to the Board of Trustees by August 1st.
5. Recruit and arrange for the guidance, training, encouragement and appreciation of the necessary personnel to staff and operate effective Christian education programs for all ages. The CE Ministry Team has the authority to engage, supervise, and discharge professional assistance (**Church School Coordinator, Youth Director, and Nursery Aides**) as needed and as funded in the budget. The Church School Coordinator, Youth Director and Nursery Aides shall report to a designee of the CE Ministry Team who shall evaluate their performance on an annual basis. The CE Ministry Team shall be responsible for establishing the compensation package for these positions as funded in the budget.
6. Recruit adult teachers and youth group advisors and work closely with them and the Pastor to create well-balanced programs of religious, social, and recreational activities suited to the needs of elementary, middle school and senior high school youth.
7. Select curricula appropriate to each age group and keep up on trends in curriculum development.
8. Coordinate all church school activities and, at its discretion, shall designate certain responsibilities to the Church School Coordinator.
9. Be responsible for **childcare** while church school is in session and for following the Safe Church Policy regarding childcare.

**The Missions and Outreach Ministry Team**

1. The Mission and Outreach Ministry Team shall consist of no more than seven congregants.
2. Envision all options and manage all matters of local mission.

3. Make recommendations and budget requests concerning appropriate levels of mission support for all matters outside of our local area, i.e., **OCWM, UCC special offerings**, individual missionaries and ecumenical groups concerned with regional, national and world issues.
4. Be responsible for maintaining a program of social awareness and action, seeking to involve the people of the church in areas of Christian concern and effective action regarding the problems of the local community and society in general.
5. Prepare a budget request for the upcoming Program year to be delivered to the Board of Trustees no later than August 1st of each year.
6. Develop plans for church growth, evangelism and new member orientation with the pastor.
7. In consultation with the pastor, be responsible for all publicity, both written and electronic, and assist the Office Administrator with the publication of the church newsletter.
8. Organize fellowship, social activities and some fund raising activities that are related to sharing our faith and church with others in the community.
9. Maintain contact with the social organizations of the church.

### **Disposition**

In case of eventual dissolution of the Church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, may be transferred to another religious society by a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -majority vote of the Active Members of the congregation present and voting at a congregational meeting.

This disposition shall be accomplished in accordance with the then current Massachusetts General Laws.

### **Revisions**

These bylaws may be changed by a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -majority vote of the Active Members of the congregation present at any Annual Meeting or at a special meeting provided that the proposed amendment shall have been set forth in the agenda for the meeting.

Specific sections of these by-laws may be temporarily suspended by a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -majority vote of Active Members who vote during any duly called congregational meeting.”