

Changes to the BCC 2009 By-Laws Proposed by Membership Team

On January 29, 2012 at a congregational meeting the congregation will vote on changes to three articles in the BCCUCC By-Laws proposed by the Membership Ministry Team. These proposed changes are the result of discussions the past year within the Membership Team, Deacons and Church Council concerning eligibility and reception of members.

United Church of Christ (UCC) Thoughts on Joining the Church

“When you join, you make a connection, you join a community. The Bible’s word for that is “covenant.” When you join, you make a covenant.In making a covenant we promise to serve God together. So it’s not just new members who join the church. Rather, everyone-new members and existing members-join one another. As we make our promises to one another we remember God’s promises to us and promise to serve God as best as we are able...Since we believe that God is still speaking, we still believe that the holy promises we make to each other matter.” (“So You're Thinking About Joining the Church” a UCC publication)

Why a BCCUCC Covenant

BCC is a covenanted Congregational/UCC faith community. As we welcome persons who are interested in joining the church into conversations about who we are, the Membership Team believes discussing a covenant with prospective members would allow us to better define our faith community and the promises we make to God and each other when we join the church. Committing to the covenant - making promises to walk together in faith – as members join seems in keeping with BCCUCC spiritual traditions.

A Brief History of BCCUCC Covenants

Our founding covenant from the 17th century is lost to floods and missing records. Church member Van Edwards found two 19th Century covenants, 1819 and 1874. A third 20th Century covenant was used here until May 2000. In May 2000 it was decided by the Deacons that in the future the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith be used. Our 20th Century covenant still appears in the Faith section of 2001 By-Laws. These By-Laws also introduce a Mission Statement. More changes followed in 2009. We now propose a Covenant which combines language from our latest covenant, language from one of the earliest covenants in America from the First Church of Cambridge, MA, and the richness and inclusiveness of our current Mission Statement.

ARTICLE III FAITH

Add 2012 Covenant before the UCC Statement of Faith

Before God and these witnesses present, we covenant with God and each other. We dedicate our faith, thought, and actions to love God with all that we are and our neighbors as ourselves. Relying on the help of God, the unfolding and reconciling Word, and the Holy Spirit, we join ourselves to this church to take part in its worship and activities, and to strive earnestly for its peace and enlightenment. We covenant and agree to devote ourselves to this faith community that worships God, embraces all people, ministers to one another, works for justice and peace, and renders loving service to God’s world.

Words in italics

Words in red

Words in Blue

BCC Covenant through 2000.

First Church of Cambridge MA

BCC Mission Statement

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

Proposed changes in bold type

Eligibility

Membership in this church is open to any person who has been baptized, and who *either* has been confirmed or *has affirmed a belief in the mission and faith of this church and the United Church of Christ*, without any restriction as to age, race, gender, class, ethnic background or sexual orientation.

Reception

New members are received at a Sunday Communion Service, or at some other time as ordered by the Membership Ministry Team, *by committing to the Covenant* of this congregation.

Duties

Members pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Holy Communion; to live a Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and benevolence; and with trust and compassion for one another, to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community as guided by the *Covenant and* Mission Statement.

DISCIPLINE

It is the duty of all members of this *congregation* to foster the peace and prosperity of the Church, to be faithful to their *Covenant*, and in all things to be mindful of the high obligations of church membership.

If any member of the *congregation* breaches the *Covenant*, the Church Council, upon recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Ministry Team, may censure such person, or suspend or terminate that person's membership, provided that the Grievance Procedure has been followed and that due notice has been offered, and faithful efforts have been made to bring about a change of behavior in accordance with the law of Christ (as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17).

ARTICLE XI MINISTRY TEAMS

Section H MEMBERSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

2. Organization

The Membership Ministry Team consists of the Senior Minister, and eight (8) elected members. (Removed phrase and a Deacon selected by the Deacons,)

Membership Team Members: Kristin Anderson, Sue Black, Beth Buckley, Moyne Cabbage, Carolyn Faulhaber, Fred MacDonald, and Jane Tonn (chair)