

Barrington Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

BY-LAWS

2014

**WITH AMENDMENTS APPROVED
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ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this church is the Barrington Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

Gathered in 1717, and granted a charter by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations on December 20, 1797, this church is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Rhode Island, and is located in the Town of Barrington.

ARTICLE II. MISSION STATEMENT

The Barrington Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, is a Christian community that worships God, embraces all people, ministers to one another, works for justice and peace, and renders loving service to God's world.

ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. FAITH

1. Covenant

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.

2. United Church of Christ Statement of Faith

The church follows the UCC 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.

B. SACRAMENTS

In accordance with the practice prevailing among Reformed Christians, we celebrate two Sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.

ARTICLE IV. FORM OF ORGANIZATION

A. AUTONOMY

1. This church is amenable to no ecclesiastical authority except that of its Head, which is Christ.
2. Subject to the provisions of its Charter, it is an independent body, having within itself all necessary powers of government and discipline, yet recognizing the expediency and privileges of seeking the fellowship of other Christian churches.
3. On February 19, 1961, this church by its own action became a member of the United Church of Christ.

B. PROCESS OF GOVERNANCE

The membership of this church is committed to making decisions by consensus, which requires a spirit of trust and openness in communication. The intent is to achieve a resolution which all will support, even if not in total agreement. We are organized by Church Officers, Ministry Teams and a Church Council.

C. GOVERNING BODY

The governing body of this church is the membership assembled in church meeting, and the powers of the membership assembled includes, but are not limited to, the right to retain or adopt its own methods of organization, constitution and by-laws; to formulate its own covenants and confessions of faith; to admit members in its own way and to provide for their discipline or dismissal; to call or dismiss its ordained ministers by such procedure as it determines; to acquire, own, manage, and dispose of property and funds; to control its own benevolence; and to withdraw from the United Church of Christ or any Conference or other joint endeavor at any time without forfeiture of ownership or control of any real, intangible or personal property owned by this church.

D. VOTES OF UNITY, MERGER OR CHANGE OF DENOMINATION

1. A vote to change the denominational existence of this church or to merge with, become a member of, join or hold joint service with, any other church or churches of the same or other

denomination (hereinafter called a "Vote of Unity") is authorized in accordance with the procedure required to authorize the transfer of church real estate in Article XIII.A.

2. A Vote of Unity, regardless of the manner of its passage, is not construed as modifying or abandoning the autonomy of this church, as conveying any of this church's property, as amending Article IV of these By-Laws on the Organization of this church, or as in any way causing this church to cease to be a congregational church, unless the Vote of Unity not only complies with sub-section 1. of this Section D, but also expressly states that the Vote of Unity is intended to modify or abandon the autonomy of this church, describes the property to be conveyed or expressly amends Article IV on Organization, or expressly states that this church ceases to be a congregational church, as the case may be.
3. It is desirable that a Vote of Unity denies any such intent rather than rely on this By-Law provision or on any provisions in the constitution of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

A. 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, sexual orientation or expression.

1. All persons seeking membership are to comply with those procedures recommended by the Membership Ministry Team of this church and established by the congregation.
2. Classes of Members – the following classes of members are recognized:
 - a. Active Members: Those who have been accepted as members, regularly attend the services, share in the program, and/or support the work of this church.
 - b. Associate Members: Those who are members of other churches and who do not wish to transfer their membership from such other churches may, upon approval by the Deacons and by the procedure outlined in the by-laws, become Associate Members of this church. They have all the rights and obligations of members including the right to vote, but are not entitled to a letter of transfer or to serve as an officer of this church.
 - c. Inactive Members: All those who are not classified within a) or b) above. Inactive members are not eligible for participation as members as provided in these by-laws.

B. RECEPTION

1. 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.
2. If any person is unable to attend the public service of Reception of Members, the Senior Minister, assisted by a Deacon, may receive him or her on behalf of the congregation.
3. Upon reception, every new member is to promptly sign the Register of Members of this church.

C. DUTIES

Members pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of 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.

D. REMOVAL FROM ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

1. By Letter of Transfer

- a. A letter of transfer from active membership is granted any member of the church requesting it in writing.
- b. The Clerk issues and forwards such a letter to the church to which the member is transferring, and thereupon all membership connection with this church shall cease.

2. By Revision to Inactive Membership

A member may be moved to the inactive membership list by vote of the Membership Ministry Team if, for a period of more than one (1) year

- a. the member's address has been unknown, or
- b. the member has not attended the church's worship, contributed to its support, or exhibited interest in the church, despite efforts to stimulate that interest; barring medical or financial constraints.

3. By Termination

If a member in regular standing requests in writing to be released from their membership, the Clerk grants the request and terminates the person's membership.

E. DISCIPLINE

1. 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.
2. If any member of the congregation breaches the Covenant, the Church Council, upon recommendation of the Staff-Parish Relations Ministry Team (S.P.R.T.), 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 VI. MEETINGS

A. WORSHIP

1. Sunday Services

Services of worship are held at specified hours every Sunday, unless otherwise provided by a vote of the membership.

2. Holy Communion

Holy Communion is celebrated at such times as the Deacons may designate, after consultation with the Senior Minister.

3. Baptism

- a. Baptism is administered to adults who believe in the mission and faith of the church, or to children whose parents believe in the mission and faith of the church.
- b. The Clerk ensures that the full name and date of birth of all who receive the Sacrament of Baptism are entered into the records of the church.

4. Other Worship Services

Special services of worship may be scheduled by the Deacons or by the ministries of the church, but dates should be coordinated with the ordained ministers to avoid conflict.

B. BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. Notices

- a. Written notices for the Annual Meeting and other meetings of the membership are prepared by the Clerk and announced at the Sunday morning services and published in the church bulletin two (2) Sundays immediately preceding such meetings, except as otherwise required in this Article VI. In the absence of the Clerk, the Moderator appoints a Clerk *pro tempore* for the purpose thereof. Any postponed meeting is held on the next practicable Sunday.
- b. The nature of the business to be transacted is stated in a notice to be posted outside the church office.

2. Quorum

Forty-five (45) members shall constitute a quorum at all meetings of the membership.

3. Presiding Officer

The Moderator or designee presides at all meetings of the Membership.

4. Decision Making

- a. The goal of all decision making is to achieve consensus. In some cases voting may be necessary.
- b. Elections. Elections are determined by a majority of those members present, entitled to vote, and voting. Elections are by ballot if so voted by a majority of those members present.

- c. Other Business. Except for elections, an affirmative vote of two-thirds of those members present, entitled to vote, and voting at church meetings, is required for the transaction of business.
- d. Eligibility. All active and associate members of the church are entitled to vote at all meetings of the membership.

5. **Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Barrington Congregational Church is from January 1 through December 31 unless voted otherwise by the church membership.

6. **Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting is scheduled by the Church Council. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- a. receive the yearly reports of the ministers, selected officers, ministry teams, and organizations
- b. elect officers, ministry team members, and delegates. Vacancies occurring in elected positions after the annual meeting may be filled by the Church Council.
- c. consider plans for the upcoming year.

7. **Budget Meeting**

The Annual Budget meeting is scheduled to be held no later than the last Sunday in January. The meeting considers the budget as recommended by the Finance Ministry Team and endorsed by the Church Council for approval by the membership.

8. **Special Meetings**

- a. Special business meetings, the object of which is stated in the notice, may be called by the Senior Minister, the Church Council, or the Clerk upon written request of seven (7) members of the church.
- b. In case of emergency, and upon affirmative vote of a majority of the Church Council, the notice of any such special meeting may be sent by mail to the active membership five (5) business days prior to the date of the meeting.

ARTICLE VII. THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

A. **DESCRIPTION**

The Ordained Ministry consists of the following now serving or called by this church or who may hereafter be called by this church in accordance with the organization of the United Church of Christ, to any of the following offices: Senior Minister, Associate Minister, and Director or Minister of Christian Education, or such similarly, professionally trained persons as this church may from time to time call.

The Director or Minister of Christian Education may or may not be ordained.

B. SENIOR MINISTER

1. The Senior Minister is the spiritual leader of the church, and serves as preacher, teacher and counselor for the congregation in all aspects of the life of the church.
2. The Senior Minister enlists men, women, and youth as followers of Christ; preaches the Gospel; administers the Sacraments; provides for services of public worship and is responsible along with the church members, officers, and ministry teams for the administration of the programs and activities of the church.
3. The Senior Minister works with the Deacons in a consensus-guided partnership that is responsible for and has general oversight of the spiritual welfare of the church.
4. The Senior Minister is a member ex-officio of the Church Council and all ministry teams, with the right to vote, and is given notice of all said meetings.
5. The Senior Minister may designate other members of the Ordained Ministry to attend in like manner, the meetings of the ministry teams.
6. The Senior Minister, in conjunction with the Moderator, is responsible for all oversight of the staff, except as provided for elsewhere in these bylaws. This oversight includes but is not limited to maintaining a current job description, the hiring, supervision, evaluation, and termination of said employees, and making annual compensation recommendations. In addition, the Senior Minister will provide written copies of the job description, annual evaluation, and annual compensation recommendations to the S.P.R.T.
7. Other members of the ordained Ministry share in the responsibility and work of ministry, and are subject to the direction of the Senior Minister.

C. ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE MINISTER, DIRECTOR/MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. The methods of call, election, installation, discipline, and termination are the same as for the Senior Minister.

D. VACANCY

1. **Notification**

When a permanent vacancy occurs in the ordained ministry of the church, the Clerk reports such a vacancy to the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ.

2. **Search Committee**

a. **Formation**

When a vacancy in the ordained ministry of the church occurs, the Church Council proposes a Search Committee to a meeting of the membership. Members of this committee are selected for their knowledge of the areas of activity and concern of the church, as well as for their personal commitment and activity. Such a committee should be a broad representation of the membership.

The Senior Minister is a member of the Search Committee convened to call any other member of the ordained ministry.

b. Duty

The Search Committee, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with the assistance of appropriate denominational agencies and executives, makes a canvass and evaluation of available ministers.

c. Recommendation

The Search Committee presents to the church, at a meeting of the membership called for this purpose, the name of the person recommended to fill the vacancy on a permanent basis..

3. Interim Arrangements

The Deacons provide for pastoral care and preaching until a successor is called to fill a vacant position on a permanent basis.

E. CALL

1. Duration. The call to any office of ordained ministry is for an indefinite period of time.

2. Terms of Call

a. In the call, the terms of the relationship are fully stated, including salary, allowances, insurance, annuity, sabbatical, performance review, vacation, housing, and such other arrangements or duties as may be agreed upon by the minister and the Search Committee in accordance with these By-Laws, and subject to approval by the congregation at a meeting of the membership called for the purpose of presenting a candidate.

b. The call also specifies any particular duties for any minister that are not set forth in Article VII.

c. The minister, the church Clerk, and the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ each receive a signed copy of the call and the minister's letter of acceptance.

3. Church Membership

a. Persons accepting a call to the ministry of this congregation are, under normal circumstances, to become members of the church.

b. A minister who does not become a member of the church may participate in meetings of the church and of the Church Council but does not have the privilege of voting.

4. Installation

A Minister accepting a call, following reception into membership, may request the church to call upon the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ to convene an Ecclesiastical Council of Installation.

5. Discipline

Professional discipline of any minister is done in conformity with the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ.

F. TERMINATION

1. In order to terminate a ministerial relationship, a minimum of three (3) months prior written notice is required by either party.
2. The church may act to terminate the relationship, at a meeting called for this purpose, by a two-thirds vote of those members present, entitled to vote, and voting.
3. The Clerk then sends written notice of such action to the minister and to the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ.
4. In the event of substantive disagreement between the minister and the church, either party may, if an Ecclesiastical Council of Installation has been held, request an Ecclesiastical Council of Dismission.
5. Such a request, with the reasons for it, is submitted in writing to the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ
6. If for any reason a minister of this church should lose ministerial standing, contract obligations cease at once in their entirety.

ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS AND DELEGATES

A. DESCRIPTION

1. The officers of this church consist of the following: Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Auditor, and Historian and such other officers as the membership may elect from time to time.
2. The membership also elects delegates to the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ.

B. QUALIFICATIONS AND TERMS OF OFFICE

1. All officers and delegates are to be members of this church but may not be employees of the church.
2. Officers and delegates are elected annually, and hold office until their successors are elected.
3. Officers and delegates cannot serve in the same capacity for more than four (4) consecutive years, or in any combination of these capacities for more than eight (8) consecutive years.

C. DUTIES

1. **Moderator**

- a. The Moderator is the presiding officer of the church, and presides at meetings of the membership.
- b. If the Moderator is unable to serve at any such meeting, a Moderator *pro tempore* is elected to serve at that meeting only.

- c. The Moderator is a member of the Church Council and its presiding officer.
- d. The Moderator assists the Senior Minister in advancing the life and ministry of the church.
- e. The Moderator works with the Senior Minister to manage staff as outlined in Article VII.B.6.

2. **Clerk**

- a. The Clerk is a member of the Church Council, and serves as its secretary.
- b. The Clerk keeps a faithful permanent record of all meetings of the membership and of the Church Council.
- c. If the Clerk is unable to be present at any such meeting, a Clerk *pro tempore* is elected to record the proceedings of that meeting only.
- d. The Clerk posts necessary legal notices of all church meetings as provided in Article VI.
- e. The Clerk causes the minutes of all meetings of the membership and the Annual Reports to be made available to the membership through the church office.

3. **Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer (or Co-Treasurers)**

The Treasurer is responsible for the care of the funds and financial records of the church and reporting the church's financial activities and financial condition.

- a. Organization matters:
 - i. The Treasurer is a member of the Church Council.
 - ii. The Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer (or co-Treasurers) are members of the Finance Ministry Team.
 - iii. The Assistant Treasurer performs the duties delegated by the Treasurer and such duties as may be required in the absence of the Treasurer.
- b. The Treasurer receives, disburses, invests, and reinvests all monies of the church as directed by the Finance and/or Endowment Ministry teams with the exception of the monies in the Deacons' Fund. The Treasurer is responsible for the accounting of these activities under the direction of the Finance Team.
- c. The Treasurer reports the results of operations and the financial condition of the church at regular meetings of the Finance Ministry Team and the Church Council, and annually to the congregation.

4. **Auditor**

- a. The Auditor is a member of the church who is a qualified accountant, and does not hold any other elected office in the church. In the event no such accountant is available, the Finance Ministry Team selects an outside accountant with the approval of the Church Council.
- b. An annual audit of the financial records of the church is prepared by the Auditor. It should include validating the balance sheet, cash receipts, payments, and contribution reports and internal controls.

5. **Historian**

The Historian is responsible to the Church Council for the cataloging and reporting on all items of historical interest pertinent to the church, and reports at the Annual Meeting outstanding events of the preceding year.

6. **Delegates to the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ**

- a. Delegates are the Moderator, and one member each appointed by the chair of the Deacons, the Finance Ministry Team, the Christian Education and Youth Ministries Team, and the Justice and Witness Ministry Team.
- b. Additional delegates are elected from the church membership at the Annual Meeting in accordance with the quota system of the Conference. One of the additional delegates is a youth member of the church.
- c. Delegates attend all meetings duly called by the Conference, and seek to include the work of the Conference in the life of the church through attendance at periodic Church Council meetings by a delegate selected by the Moderator and by periodic updates to the congregation.
- d. A delegate who is unable to attend a meeting called by the Conference will secure an alternate who is a member of the church.

ARTICLE IX. CHURCH COUNCIL

A. PURPOSE

The Church Council is a representative body, acting as the agent for the membership, endeavoring to promote the ministry of the church as stated in its mission statement. It provides oversight and direction to the affairs of the church, its officers, and ministry teams within it. It takes such actions as it may deem wise and consistent with these by-laws concerning policy or administration.

B. ORGANIZATION

1. The Church Council consists of the Moderator, the Ordained Ministers, the Clerk, the Treasurer, the chairperson of the Deacons, the chairperson or a representative of each ministry team, two (2) members-at-large and an elected delegate to the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ.
2. The members-at-large are members of the church with one to be elected each year for a one or two year term and cannot serve in the same capacity for more than four (4) consecutive years.
3. The Moderator is the presiding officer of the Church Council and the Clerk is its Secretary.
4. The Church Council usually meets monthly at such times and places as the Council determines.
5. Special meetings of the Church Council may be called by the Moderator or any Minister. Notice of special meetings must be made by letter, telephone, or e-mail to each of the members of the Church Council.
6. A majority of the members of the Council constitutes a quorum.

7. The Church Council may appoint a task force, either independently or at the request of a ministry team, to assist in the execution of the Church's mission as well as to supplement the work of a ministry team. A task force acts in consultation with the appropriate ministry team and/or in conjunction with any procedures established by the Church Council. An individual or a group of individuals may be appointed to act as a task force to provide expertise and experience to any of the ministry teams.

C. DUTIES

1. It is responsible for the oversight of the execution and fulfillment of the planning and budget activities necessary to carry out the mission of the church.
2. Between Annual and Special Meetings of the membership, the Church Council makes decisions on behalf of the membership in all matters except those which, in accordance with these by-laws, should be determined by the church membership.
3. Between Annual Meetings the Church Council fills vacancies in elected offices and ministry teams upon recommendation of the Nominating Ministry Team and the appropriate ministry team.
4. It provides the support of the church officers and the chairs of the ministry teams, in such areas as leadership and organization.
5. Church Council members keep the ministry teams they represent informed of the actions and deliberations of the Church Council.
6. The Church Council discusses any matters affecting the Ordained Ministry, officers, ministry teams, and organizations of the church and suggests any necessary coordination or cooperation.
7. Members of the church may bring matters before the Church Council, preferably by letter to the Moderator or the Senior Minister.
8. The Church Council ensures the implementation of the church's Grievance Procedure, Safe Church Policy, Personnel Policies, and By-Laws, and that they are each reviewed and evaluated every five (5) years.

ARTICLE X. MINISTRY TEAM ORGANIZATION

A. PURPOSE

The membership of the church elects ministry team members, to advance the mission of the church by developing and implementing programs and activities guided by the church's mission statement.

B. DESCRIPTION

1. There are nine ministry teams with responsibilities for the fulfillment of the mission of the church:
 - Buildings and Grounds
 - Christian Education and Youth Ministries
 - Deacons
 - Endowment

Finance
Mission and Justice
Membership
Staff-Parish Relations
Stewardship

2. There is a Church Council that coordinates the activities of the ministry teams, and acts as an agent for the church membership.
3. When a new ministry team is created, half of its members are elected to fill one-year terms and half are to fill two-year terms.

C. QUALIFICATIONS AND TERMS OF OFFICE

1. Those who serve on Deacons, Finance, Endowment and Staff Parish Relations Team and all ministry team chairs are to be active or associate members of this church. Those who serve on Buildings and Grounds, Christian Education and Youth Ministries, Mission and Justice, Membership, and Stewardship ministry teams are to be active participants in the life of this church. Members from the ordained ministry shall be voting members of the ministry teams on which they sit.
2. Members serve one or two year staggered terms and cannot serve in the same capacity for more than four (4) consecutive years. Upon completion of four consecutive years, a person is for one year ineligible for election to the *same* ministry team.

D. ORGANIZATION

Ministry teams:

1. Organize in ways appropriate to fulfill their duties while seeking to utilize the gifts and talents of the church membership.
2. Elect their own chairperson and secretary.
3. Keep minutes of their meetings
4. Prepare an annual review of the work performance of the church professionals and staff with whom they work and provide them to the Moderator.

E. VACANCIES AND RESIGNATIONS

1. Additional memberships of ministry teams, prior to the next Annual Meeting, may be made upon the affirmative vote of the majority of the full Church Council.
2. A vacancy among officers, delegates, or ministry teams may be filled for the unexpired term thereof by an affirmative vote of the majority of the full Church Council, upon recommendation of the Membership Ministry Team.
3. Candidates to fill vacancies may be proposed to the Membership Ministry Team by the ministry team involved.
4. An officer, delegate, or ministry team member may resign only by submitting a letter of resignation to the Moderator or to their chairperson. In addition, the Moderator in the case of

an officer or delegate, or the chairperson of a ministry team may declare a vacancy if a member has four unexplained absences. The Moderator or chairperson informs the individual and the Membership Ministry Team.

ARTICLE XI. MINISTRY TEAMS

A. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS MINISTRY TEAM

1. Purpose

It is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and improvements to church properties including the parsonages.

2. Organization

The Buildings and Grounds Ministry Team consists of up to eight (8) elected members.

3. Duties

- a. It is responsible, in consultation with the Senior Minister, for all oversight of the custodian(s) including but not limited to maintaining a current job description, the hiring, supervision, evaluation, and termination of said employees, and making annual compensation recommendations. In addition, it will provide written copies of the job description, annual evaluation, and annual compensation recommendations to the S.P.R.T.
- b. It works with the Senior Minister in the supervision of the day-to-day business as well as the long term business relating to the church's buildings and grounds.
- c. It is responsible for preparing and managing its budget.
- d. It recommends and executes Capital Building Improvements.
- e. It may make contracts within the limits of the budget pertaining to this church's building and grounds annual service contracts.

B. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRIES TEAM (C.E.Y.M.)

1. Purpose

It is responsible, with the Ordained Ministry, for the Christian education programs and activities of the church.

2. Organization

It consists of a member of the ordained ministry, the Christian Education Coordinator, six (6) elected members, and a youth elected for a one-year term.

3. Duties

- a. It is responsible, in consultation with the ordained ministers for all oversight of the Christian Education Coordinator including but not limited to maintaining a current job description, the hiring, supervision, evaluation, and termination of said employees, and making annual compensation recommendations. In addition, it will provide written copies of the job description, annual evaluation, and annual compensation recommendations to the S.P.R.T.
- b. It is responsible for Christian education programs and activities of the church, including church school, confirmation, youth fellowship and acolytes.
- c. It appoints the Church School teachers, and advisors or leaders in youth groups to serve at its pleasure. It provides training and support for these persons engaged in children and youth ministries.
- d. It provides Safe Church training for all persons working with our children and youth.
- e. It is responsible for the development and implementation of a planned program for Christian education and faith fulfillment for the adult membership of the church.

C. DEACONS

1. Purpose

They have shared responsibility with the ordained Ministry for the worship of God and the total spiritual welfare of the church.

2. Organization.

The Deacons consist of ten (10) to twelve (12) elected members for a three year renewable term. Former Deacons may be requested to serve for such tasks as the Deacons may determine.

3. Duties

- a. They provide for the conduct of public worship when there is no ordained ministry, or in the absence of, or at the request of the Senior Minister.
- b. They provide for, prepare, and assist in the administration of the sacraments.
- c. They have sole administration of the Deacons' Fund including and not limited to receiving and distributing the Fund, and elect a treasurer of the Deacons' Fund from among their members, who serves at the pleasure of the Deacons.
- d. Newly elected Deacons are formally installed at a special ceremony.

DEACONS SUBGROUPS:

These are the Chancel, Music and Ushering Teams. They are responsible for regularly reporting back to the Deacons.

D. CHANCEL

1. **Purpose**

It is responsible for enhancing the worship experience.

2. **Organization**

There are four (4) members of Chancel.

3. **Duties**

- a. It is responsible for the provision, maintenance and care of all items in the chancel.
- b. It is responsible for the care and security of the Sacristy.
- c. It seeks the guidance and assistance of the Deacons as needed.

E. MUSIC

1. **Purpose**

It is responsible, with the Senior Minister and the Music Director, for the music programs of the church.

2. **Organization**

The Music Ministry Team shall consist of two (2) members.

3. **Duties**

- a. It is responsible, in consultation with the Senior Minister, for all oversight of the music staff of the church including but not limited to maintaining a current job description, the hiring, supervision, evaluation, and termination of said employees, and making annual compensation recommendations. In addition, it will provide written copies of the job description, annual evaluation, and annual compensation recommendations to the S.P.R.T.
- b. It is responsible for the care and security of all musical equipment, instruments, hymnals, and music belonging to the church.
- c. It consults with the Ordained Ministry and the Deacons regarding the selection of any hymnal for approval by the church membership.
- d. It may make contracts of not more than one year's duration within the limits of the budget pertaining to music.

F. USHERING

1. **Purpose**

It is responsible for providing ushers for all worship services in the sanctuary unless ushers have been otherwise provided (such as for weddings and funerals).

2. **Organization**

There are two (2) members of Ushering.

3. **Duties**

- a. It is responsible for the organization, assignment, and training of a corps of ushers.
- b. It seeks the guidance and assistance of the Deacons as needed.
- c. It is responsible for securing the sanctuary after church services.

G. ENDOWMENT

1. **Purpose**

Implement and manage a program of outreach to the membership to encourage and facilitate gifts to the Endowment Fund (the Fund) and effectively manage endowment funds in order to provide growing financial support to the church.

2. **Organization**

The Team shall consist of 4-6 members.

3. **Duties:**

- a. Develop and maintain an Endowment Policy Statement subject to Council approval which will include the purpose of the Fund, giving options, disbursement policy, reporting practices, and asset allocation.
- b. Promote and publicize the Fund frequently and consistently to members and friends, explaining the purpose and need for the church's endowment and ways to make contributions. Expenses for this activity may be charged to the Fund.
- c. Maintain a record of all gifts to the Fund: the value, the donor, the date and type of each gift, as well as any formal expression by the donor(s) as to its use.
- d. Invest and manage assets of the Fund. This starts with the creation of an asset allocation based on the goals and needs of the church. The team will: select appropriate money managers, subject to Council approval, to invest funds; evaluate managers' performance; and make changes as deemed necessary
- e. Report annually to the Church Council and membership the returns on investment compared to benchmarks, the contributions / withdrawals and the balance of the Fund for the year. A separate annual report will be made to Church Council on the status of the program to promote the Endowment Fund.

H. FINANCE MINISTRY TEAM

1. **Purpose**

Manage the financial affairs of the church (except as otherwise defined in these by-laws).

2. **Organization**

The Finance Ministry Team consists of the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and 4-6 other members.

3. **Duties**

- a. It is responsible, in consultation with the Senior Minister, for all oversight of the financial secretary including but not limited to maintaining a current job description, the hiring, supervision, evaluation, and termination of said employees, and making annual compensation recommendations. In addition, it will provide written copies of the job description, annual evaluation, and annual compensation recommendations to the S.P.R.T.
- b. Develop, implement and monitor policies relating to the overall structure of accounts and the accounting treatment of transactions.
- c. Prepare an annual budget based on expenditure requests from ministry teams, clergy and staff and projected income from pledges and other sources. After consultation with the Church Council present budget for approval by the membership at the Annual Budget Meeting.
- d. Analyze financial results and periodically prepare revised financial estimates for the fiscal year. If necessary take or recommend action to the Church Council or membership to achieve the budget goal.
- e. Provide direction to the Treasurer related to his or her responsibilities for funds management, accounting and reporting as stated in Article VIII.
- f. Identify and manage financial risks and purchase insurance as appropriate.
- g. Conduct special financial analysis as requested by teams, staff or clergy.

I. **MEMBERSHIP MINISTRY TEAM**

1. **Purpose**

It assists the Ordained Ministry in reaching out to persons who may be interested in attending or uniting with the church. It determines and presents to the Church Council a slate of nominees for officers, ministry teams, and delegates.

2. **Organization**

The Membership Ministry Team consists of the Senior Minister and eight (8) elected members.

3. **Duties**

- a. It seeks to make individuals welcome to the church, and to acquaint them with other members.
- b. It receives applications for church membership and meets with the candidates to establish interest and qualifications.
- c. It takes such action in cases of discipline as is provided in Article V.

- d. It attends to revisions of the membership roll as provided in Article V, and consults with the Clerk on the issuance of letters of transfer or dismissal as provided in Article V.
- e. It determines and presents to the Church Council a slate of nominees for officers, ministry teams, and delegates.
- f. It informs prospective candidates of the duties of the office and asks for their consent to be nominated.

J. MISSION AND JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM

1. Purpose

- a. It is responsible for administering the mission and benevolence program of the church.
- b. It promotes a Christian awareness and response to local, national, and world problems.

2. Organization

The Mission and Justice Team consists of four (4) elected members.

3. Duties

- a. It seeks to promote a more peaceful and just society by developing programs and activities on such issues as the environment, violence, hunger, and poverty.
- b. It seeks to promote outreach programs of the United Church of Christ and other organizations engaged in furthering peace, justice and human rights.
- c. It shall formulate and recommend to the membership matters of policy and program regarding
 - 1) the church's responsibility for missions, including support for mission programs, and
 - 2) the church's support for the programs and services of the United Church of Christ.

K. STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS MINISTRY TEAM (S.P.R.T.)

1. Purpose

It is responsible for facilitating communications, fostering relationships of trust and understanding, and overseeing the personnel policies of the church.

2. Organization

- a. It consists of five (5) persons, comprised of the Senior Minister and four (4) members selected by an ongoing consensus of the Moderator, Ministers, and Deacons.
- b. If at any time a member of the ministry team is unable to serve objectively that member is to be recused. In this event, a member of the church will be chosen to replace the recused individual temporarily by consensus of the Moderator, Ministers, and Deacons.
- c. Meetings of this ministry team may be called at any time as deemed appropriate by the Moderator, Ministers, the Deacons or a ministry team chair. It meets no less frequently than quarterly.

3. **Duties**

- a. Provide a forum for the church membership, ministers and staff to discuss all aspects relevant to staff-parish relationships.
- b. Develop, revise, and implement the church's Personnel Handbook and Grievance Procedure. Changes to these documents require approval of the Church Council.
- c. Maintain an archive of contracts and job descriptions for all staff members.
- d. Manage the church's evaluation process to be conducted by the relevant church bodies as established in these bylaws and maintain an archive of such reports. In the case of the Senior Minister, the S.P.R.T. will appoint an ad hoc team of 3-5 church leaders who will conduct the annual evaluation.
- e. Gather compensation recommendations annually for all staff from relevant church bodies as established in these bylaws and present a unified recommendation to the Finance Ministry Team for the preparing of the annual budget.
- f. Reports quarterly to the Church Council and to the congregation at its annual meeting while maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

L. **STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM**

1. **Purpose**

To encourage giving of one's self to God's work.

2. **Organization**

The Stewardship Ministry Team consists of five (5) one year terms..

3. **Duties**

- a. It plans, organizes, promotes and conducts an annual membership giving program based on the total fund-raising effort that is necessary to support the annual budget.
- b. It is responsible for a program of stewardship education throughout the year.

ARTICLE XII. FINANCES

A. **PLEDGES**

Contributions to meet current expenses and to support the wider mission of this church are sought periodically from the membership and other interested persons.

B. **DEACONS' FUND**

Contributions to the Deacons' Fund may be received at any time.

C. SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Requests to receive special offerings or to conduct financial drives for a specific purpose are presented to the Church Council for approval and action.

D. CHANCEL FUND

The Chancel Fund is used to beautify the sanctuary and enhance the worship experience. Contributions to the Chancel Fund are received prior to Christmas and Easter.

E. SUPPORT OF THE WIDER CHURCH

This church, as a member of the United Church of Christ, contributes to the support of the United Church of Christ and its instrumentalities taking into consideration the guidelines established by the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ.

F. DEPOSITS

All deposits to the credit of this church are made in such banks and depositories as the Finance Ministry Team may designate.

G. PROMISSORY NOTES

Unless otherwise authorized by the Finance Ministry Team, all promissory notes and other obligations of this church for the payment of money except checks and drafts, are signed by the (Co-)Treasurer and countersigned by the Clerk.

H. CHECKS AND DRAFTS

Unless otherwise authorized by the Finance Ministry Team, the (Co-)Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer signs all checks and drafts.

I. DISTRIBUTION

Distributions from the Endowment Fund's assets are to be made only under extraordinary circumstances subject to such distribution being approved by the church membership as provided in Section XIII Properties and Borrowings Paragraph A, Real Estate. However, no funds designated as permanent gifts to the Endowment Fund are subject to distribution.

J. GIFTS

Unless otherwise provided by the donor or family involved in memorial gifts, any funds or property gifted, bequeathed or devised to the church over \$5,000 are placed in the Endowment Fund for investment.

ARTICLE XIII. PROPERTY AND BORROWING

A. REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

Any sale, lease, mortgage, purchase or substantial improvement of any real estate, including buildings thereon, which is owned or is to be acquired by this church, is authorized in accordance with the following procedures:

1. The Moderator or the Clerk calls a joint meeting of the Church Council and the Finance Ministry Team by giving each member thereof at least seven (7) days prior written notice (either by post or e-mail) of such meeting and its purpose, and a majority of such members adopt a resolution at the joint meeting approving the transaction; and
2. The resolution approved in (1) above is submitted to the membership at two special meetings called for that purpose, and a resolution authorizing the transaction receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those members present, entitled to vote and voting at each of the meetings scheduled at a two-week interval.
3. The certification of the Clerk as to the vote at the meeting approving the transaction is conclusive of the due authorization thereof.

B. BORROWING

Any borrowing of funds that causes cumulative church indebtedness, not secured by a first mortgage, in excess of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) is authorized in accordance with the following procedure:

1. The Finance Team presents a recommendation to the Church Council, and the Church Council, after consultation with the Finance Ministry Team, at its discretion, presents the proposal for such borrowing at a meeting of the membership by means of a proposed resolution.
2. The resolution approved in B (1) above is effective upon adoption by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those members present, entitled to vote, and voting at such meeting of the membership.
3. The certification of the Clerk as to the vote at the meeting approving the transaction is conclusive of the due authorization thereof.

C. EXECUTION OF CONTRACTS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Unless otherwise authorized by the Finance Ministry Team, all contracts and mortgages, leases, deeds, transfers, and other conveyances of the real or personal property of the church, are executed by the (Co-)Treasurers unless otherwise provided in the operative resolution.

D. DISSOLUTION

1. Procedure

This church may be dissolved in accordance with the procedures required to authorize the transfer of church real estate in Article XIII.A.

2. **Transfer of Assets**

Upon dissolution of this church, its assets are to be transferred to a religious organization or organizations specified in or selected by a procedure approved by the membership in authorizing the dissolution, provided that no assets are to be transferred to any individual or individuals or to any organization which is not recognized as a charitable organization by the internal revenue laws then in effect.

ARTICLE XIV. BY-LAWS

A. **REVIEW OF BY-LAWS**

1. The Church Council causes these By-Laws to be reviewed every five (5) years to determine whether they are adequate to govern the conduct of the affairs of this church.
2. The recommendations resulting from such review is presented to a meeting of the church membership, either at the Annual Meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose in that calendar year.
3. The process to amend the By-Laws prior to the scheduled 5-year review is as follows:
 - The proposed revision and meeting is announced at morning services and published in the church bulletin for two consecutive Sundays prior to the scheduled meeting.
 - The meeting is called to order, the proposal is read and time allotted for discussion.
 - The proposed amendment is adopted if an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the qualified members present is attained.

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These 2014 By Laws were approved by the church membership on April 27th, 2014

2014 BY LAWS REVIEW TASK FORCE: Tom Strolla, Chair
 Barbara Wuth
 Mary Louise Gamache
 Pat Cordeiro
 Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Larsen
 Assisted by Christine Wallis

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The 2017 Amendments were approved by the church membership on June 11th, 2017

7/6/17

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The 2018 Amendments were approved by the church membership on January 28th, 2018

3/7/18