

Bylaws Revised March 27, 2011

**BYLAWS**  
**The Haydenville Congregational Church**  
**United Church of Christ**  
Incorporated 1952

**Article I      Church Services**

Section 1. Sunday worship shall be held at designated hours and at any other time designated by the Minister and the Diaconate.

Section 2. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at any time designated by the Minister and the Diaconate.

Section 3. The Sacrament of Baptism may be administered to those taken into the church as members (if they have not previously been baptized) and to children, one of whose parents stands in covenant with the church. Others may be baptized at the discretion of the Minister.

**Article II      Congregational Meetings**

Section 1: Church Service: Public Services for worship shall be held on Sundays and on weekdays as the Diaconate may determine. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at such times as the Minister and the Diaconate may determine.

Section 2: Annual Meeting: The Trustees shall call for the Annual Meeting of the Church which shall be in February or such near date as the Church Council may approve, at which reports shall be presented, and officers for the ensuing year elected.

Section 3: Special meetings of the Church shall be called by the Trustees on request of the Minister, or Clerk, or on petition of any five members of the Church within fifteen days of request, notice thereof being given by warrant signed by three Trustees.

Section 4: Notice of meetings shall be given from the pulpit, printed in the Sunday worship bulletin and mailed, or emailed to all members no later than two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting. The call shall include a written agenda of all items to be discussed.

Section 5: At their first meeting each committee shall elect, and each Board shall recognize in accordance with its rules of succession, a presiding chairperson. Each body will also elect a recording secretary. The recording secretary, in accordance with the simplified version of Robert's Rules of Order, will keep accurate minutes of the deliberations and actions of each body, and send them to all committee members within one (1) week of the meeting and then to the Clerk after the committee has approved the minutes.

Section 6: Thirty-five (35) active members shall constitute a quorum at the Annual Meeting and at any special meeting.

Section 7: The fiscal year for the Church shall be January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Article III Leadership**

All officers and Board members of the Church shall be covenant members. The officers of the Church shall be Minister (Minister), Deacons, the Trustees, Clerk, Treasurer and Moderator. The boards of the Church shall be the Diaconate, and the Board of Trustees

#### Section 1 Minister

A. The Minister shall be called or dismissed at a congregational meeting called for that purpose, by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of active members, with voting to be done by secret ballot. In order to terminate this relationship, three (3) months' notice shall be given by either party. When the relationship is terminated, notice of such termination shall be sent to The Hampshire Association of the United Church of Christ.

B. The Minister shall have charge of the spiritual affairs and welfare of the church and responsibility for the conduct of the services of public worship. The Minister shall seek to enlist people as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, have care of services of worship, and oversee the Christian education of the congregation. The Minister shall be a voting ex-officio member of all boards and committees and shall have a seat and vote on the Church Council, except in personnel matters regarding the Minister.

- C. The Minister shall become a member of the church and shall have standing in the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.
- D. The Minister shall give a monthly update of her/his activities, concerning Ministerial care to the Diaconate.
- E. The Minister, on an *ad hoc* basis, may select, appoint and supervise individuals and groups to assist with her/his Ministerial duties, such as the Shepherds.
- F. The Minister will maintain an active association with local clergy and keep the congregation informed of religious activities and events in the greater community.

### **Section 2 Moderator and Vice Moderator**

- A. The moderator and the vice moderator shall be elected for terms of one year.
- B. The moderator, and in her/his absence the vice moderator, shall preside over all congregational meetings and chair meetings of the Church Council.
- C. In addition, the moderator shall guide the Church Council in developing and implementing long-range planning. All resignations by officers and board members shall be submitted to the Moderator.
- D. Should an incumbent Moderator or Vice Moderator seek to resign from the position, such resignation shall be in writing to the Church Council.
- E. The Vice Moderator shall chair the Nominating Committee

### **Section 3 Clerk**

The Clerk shall be elected for a term of one year, and shall:

- A. Retain and maintain records of all Congregational Meetings, minutes of the Church Council meetings and all written policies adopted by the Church Council. Such records shall be retained and maintained in a manner that makes the documents readily available to Church members.
- B. Maintain records of all Baptisms, marriages and funerals conducted by the Church and shall report of these events once a year at the Annual Meeting.

- C. Prepare, as directed by the Minister, a duly authorized officer and/or by any Board, all correspondence pertaining to the official actions of the Church.
- D. Notify the Diaconate of all changes in membership status and shall notify members of their election or appointment to any official position within the Church. In addition, the Clerk shall notify any individual, or all individuals who were the subjects of any actions taken at a congregational meeting.
- E. Accept and file all reports presented at the Annual Meeting and note any corrections made thereto.
- F. Prepare an annual report to the Church Council, and forward all records to the Church Council once a year, for inspection and verification.
- G. Upon request issue members letters of transfer and recommendations to another church
- H. Issue the call to congregational meetings
- I. Perform other duties as required by the Church Council

#### **Section 4 Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be elected to serve for a three (3)] year term and shall:

- A. Receive all monies belonging to the Church and keep accurate records of all operating, endowment and special funds, securities, receipts and disbursements of the Church.
- B. As an agent of the Board of Trustees and, as directed by the Trustees, maintain the investment accounts of the Church.
- C. Deposit or cause to be credited to the Church, all investment income in such manner as the Board of Trustees shall direct.
- D. Promptly pay all bills and salaries as directed by the Board of Trustees.
- E. Disburse the monies received from special funds and outreach funds in accordance with the orders of the board or committee which is charged with the collection and disbursement of such funds.
- F. Disburse funds from the Minister's Discretionary Fund at the sole direction of the Minister.

- G. Keep separate, accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements for each fund handled.
- H. Render at the Annual Meeting, and at other times as requested, an accounting of the financial condition of the Church.
- I. Shall be bonded by the Church at the expense of the Church.
- J. Prepare the annual budget for the Trustees.
- K. Perform other duties as required.

#### **Article IV     Rules Governing Boards and Committees**

Section 1: All boards and committees shall schedule regular meetings, at any interval which supports and facilitates their work. Meetings shall be called by the Chair of each body who shall give at least one (1) week's notice, and who shall provide a written agenda with the call to the meeting.

Section 2: A quorum for any board or committee shall be at least one-half (1/2) of the body's total number of voting members. All decisions shall be by majority affirmative vote.

Section 3: All boards and committees shall hold their first meetings during the first month after the Annual Meeting where members of the boards and committees are elected. The outgoing chair of each committee shall chair this first meeting to oversee the selection of the new chairperson, and offer guidance to the incoming members.

Section 4: Boards and committees that administer their own budgets shall prepare a projected budget for the upcoming program year. They will submit this proposed budget for deliberation by the Board of Trustees no later than one (1) month prior to the Budget Meeting.

Section 5: At their first meeting each committee shall elect, and each Board shall recognize in accordance with its rules of succession, a presiding chairperson. Each body will also elect a recording secretary. The recording secretary, in accordance with the simplified version of Robert's Rules of Order, will keep accurate minutes of the deliberations and actions of each body, and provide a copy thereof to each member of the respective board or committee within one (1) week of the meeting. Once the minutes have been approved by the respective board or committee the recording secretary shall send a copy thereof to the Clerk.

Section 6: Any vacancy among the elected positions of the church shall be filled by a member selected by the Vice Moderator after deliberation with the relevant Board or Committee and with the Minister, and approved by the Church Council.

Section 7: Should a member of any body of the church fail to attend at least 60% of that body's regular meetings during any six-month period, that member shall be deemed to have resigned. The vacancy must be reported at the next meeting of the Church Council.

Section 8: No later than one (1) month prior to the Annual Meeting, the chair of all boards, committees and auxiliary organizations of the church shall submit to the Clerk an annual written report summarizing the activities of their group for the past year.

Section 9: Any questions which may arise with respect to the execution or interpretation of this Constitution and Bylaws shall be resolved by a two thirds (2/3) majority of the Church Council.

Section 10: All meetings of the church, boards and committees shall be conducted in compliance with parliamentary procedure as specified in the simplified version of *Roberts' Rules of Order*.

## **Article V      Church Council**

The Church Council shall be the overall policy and planning body of the church. It shall have complete power to supervise and coordinate the plans and activities of the boards, committees, and organizations of the church, and to plan prayerfully for its future. The Church Council shall:

Section 1: Be composed of the Moderator, who shall act as chair; the Clerk, who shall act as secretary; the Treasurer; the Minister; and the chairs of all boards and committees. The Vice Moderator shall be a nonvoting member of the Church Council, but shall be able to vote when acting as Chair.

Section 2: Establish regular meeting times at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting. Notice of regular meetings shall be printed in the worship bulletin on the Sunday preceding the meeting and shall be provided to all members of the Church Council by the Clerk.

Section 3: No person may represent more than one (1) group on the Church Council. Members, excluding the Minister, shall appoint alternates to represent them on the Church Council in the event they cannot be present at any meeting

Section 4: At least three (3) months prior to the Annual Meeting, the Church Council shall appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of at least three (3) members of the

Church, including the Vice Moderator, who shall act as Chair of the committee. The Minister shall be an advisor to the Nominating Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to bring to the Annual Meeting nominations for all elected positions.

Section 5: The Council shall have the authority to establish *ad hoc* task forces and committees, as needed

## **Article VI Diaconate**

The Diaconate shall be a board of up to twelve (12) Deacons. Four (4) Deacons shall be elected each year for a three-year term. With the Minister, the Diaconate shall have the general oversight of the spiritual activities of the church. The Diaconate shall:

Section 1 : assist the Minister in promoting the spiritual interests of the church, the work of parish visitation and the administration of relief within the Church community.

Section 2: receive applications for church membership and verify that the requirements of membership have been met. Each new member shall be sponsored by a Deacon and will be formally received into membership during a worship service.

Section 3: conduct, with the Minister, an annual review of the membership list of the church and present a list of active members to the Clerk at a meeting of the Church Council no later than two months prior to the Annual Meeting. If a member is fully separated from the fellowship, worship, service and support of the church for a period of one year, the Diaconate shall instruct the Clerk to inquire into the reason(s) for such separation. If such a member remains inactive for an additional year, the Diaconate may, with permission of the Minister, remove the member's name from active membership.

Section 5: Provide for the supply of the pulpit in the absence of, or upon request from, the Minister. The Diaconate shall provide elements for the Sacrament of Communion and aid in its celebration and distribution.

## **Article VII Board of Trustees**

Section 1: The Board of Trustees shall consist of four Trustees, the Treasurer and the Chair of the House Committee of Ladies Aid, or her designee.

One (1) Trustee shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Church for a four-year term. A Trustee shall be eligible for re-election after one year has elapsed. The Trustees shall have responsibility for the care and custody of the property of the Church, as prescribed by law. The Board of Trustees shall elect its own Chair and Recording Secretary. A quorum of the Board of Trustees shall consist of the Chair or his/her designee and at least three other members of the Board. The Board of Trustees shall:

- A. be responsible for generating income for the Church and, within the provisions of the budget, be responsible for all expenditures.
- B. make provision for the audit of all financial accounts of the Church.
- C. call the meetings of the Church, including the annual meeting and special meetings

Section 2: There shall be a Building Sub-committee that reports to the Trustees. The sub-committee shall find and report to the Trustees all necessary maintenance and up-keep of the Church building, and shall oversee any projects that are recommended and approved by the Trustees. All authorizations and financial matters related to such projects must be approved by the Trustees.

Section 3: There shall be a Grounds Sub-committee that reports to the Trustees. The sub-committee shall find and report to the Trustees all necessary maintenance and up-keep of the Church grounds, and shall oversee any projects that are recommended and approved by the Trustees. All authorizations and financial matters related to such projects must be approved by the Trustees.

Section 4: Shall be responsible for the hiring and oversight of all church employees. Where such employees will work with Ministerial staff, the Board will strongly weigh the views of Ministerial staff when performing this oversight function.

## **Article VIII Stewardship Committee**

The Stewardship Committee shall:

Section 1: consist of at least three (3) members who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting to serve a term of one (1) year, and who shall be regular members of the church.

Section 2: be responsible for encouraging the principles of Christian stewardship in the church.

Section 3: plan and carry out a stewardship drive and perform other duties relevant to the stewardship program of the church. Stewardship, education and enlistment shall be a continuing responsibility of the committee.

### **Article IX Youth and Family Ministries Committee**

The Youth and Family Ministries Committee shall determine the curriculum for the Church School Program and:

Section 1: it shall be comprised of a total of three (3) members, two (2) of whom shall be elected at the Church's annual meeting and shall serve one (1) year terms. The third member shall be the Director of Youth and Family Ministries, who shall be a permanent member.

Section 2: there shall be a Youth and Family Ministries Advisory Sub-committee, comprised of one member of the Diaconate who shall be appointed by the Diaconate; one Trustee who shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees; and one safe church liaison who shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees. In addition the Director of Youth and Family Ministries shall appoint one (1) rotating minister of music, Children's Church coordinators and as many teachers as are required.

### **Article X The Music Committee**

Section 1: The Music Committee shall consist of the Choir Director, who shall be a permanent member, and three (3) members who shall be members-at-large. One at-large member shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Church and shall serve for a period of three (3) years, or until a successor is elected.

Section 2: within the provisions of the budget, the Music Committee shall arrange for the vocal and instrumental music and materials appropriate for the services of the Church.

### **Article ~~XII~~XI Peace and Justice Steering Committee**

Section 1: The primary function of the Peace and Justice Committee shall be to engage in projects, programs and actions that bear witness to our understanding of the radical commitment to peace and justice embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. It shall pursue its objectives through whatever peaceful means appear to be appropriate in a given circumstance with the gifts, talents and consciences of its members.

Section 2: It shall be comprised of at least three (3) members, one elected each year for a three (3) year term.

