

ARTICLE I

The church shall be known as The First Congregational Church of Cheshire, United Church of Christ.

The church:

- Was chartered on May 14, 1724 by the General Assembly in the Colony of Connecticut.
- Was organized on December 9, 1724.
- Was incorporated in February 1887 by the General Assembly and incorporated again, after merger with the First Ecclesiastical Society of Cheshire, in March 1951.
- Voted to join the United Church of Christ at the annual meeting in 1961.

ARTICLE II

Purpose, Faith, Covenant, and Polity

A. Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God; to preach and teach children, youth and adults the good news of Jesus Christ; to celebrate the sacraments; to encourage individual growth in Christian fellowship; to continue the church's rich heritage in this community; to render loving service toward all people; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

B. Faith

The Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ shall be used to witness to the faith of this church, provided that its use not be construed as a test of, or a limitation upon, the individual conscience of any member.

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 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.

Article II (Statement of Faith) continued

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.

C. Covenant

1. The Covenant of this church is:

We bind ourselves in the presence of God, to be the people of God's covenant, to live and grow together in God's ways as revealed in the Bible, to serve and support this church, and to love one another after the example of Jesus Christ.

D. Polity

1. The government of this church is vested exclusively in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject in legal matters to the Certificate of Organization and the statutes of the State of Connecticut. It recognizes no other ecclesiastical authority except Jesus Christ as the Head of the church. As a member congregation of the United Church of Christ, it accepts unique obligations of fellowship to the United Church of Christ and pledges to share in its common work, especially as represented by the New Haven Association, the Connecticut Conference, and the General Synod. It seeks to encourage and participate in ecumenical activities at the local level and beyond.
2. The following decisions shall be reserved exclusively to the membership assembled in congregational meetings:
 - a. The calling and dismissal of a minister as described in Article IV, Section A.

~~b. The calling and dismissal of the Director of Christian Education as described in Article IV, Section B.~~

Article II.D.2 (Polity) continued

- c. Electing the Members-at-Large of the Executive Board, officers, and members of boards and committees as may be provided for in the By-Laws of the church. See Article V.
- d. Approving the annual church budget.
- e. Repealing any action taken by the Executive Board.
- f. Buying, selling, mortgaging, leasing, or transferring any or all of the real property of the church.
- g. Approving requests or recommendations from the Board of Trustees to borrow funds in the name of the church.
- h. Amending the By-Laws of the church according to Article X of these By-Laws.
- i. Removing an officer, board or committee member: Any officer, board or committee member may be removed from office during a term for cause upon a majority vote of the church membership at any regular or special meeting.
- j. Authorizing the creation and election of additional officers as needed per Article V, section J.
- k. Utilizing funds from the endowments of the church for purposes other than those already allowed by these By-Laws or specifically stated by the donor(s). See Article VI, section H.2.H, for the vote required for this decision.

ARTICLE III

Membership

A. This church recognizes three membership tiers in our body.

- Active Membership
- Associate Membership
- Inactive Membership

B. Active Membership

a.1. Active membership in this church shall be achieved by any of the following means:

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Article III.B.1 (Active Membership) Continued

- a. Confirmation or profession of Christian faith, and upon receiving baptism if not previously baptized.
- b. Upon the presentation of a letter of transfer from another established church.
- c. By reaffirmation of faith

~~b.~~2. Active, able-bodied members share the responsibility to covenant with fellow members by:

- ~~d.~~a. Regularly sharing in the worship life of the congregation.
- ~~e.~~b. Regularly supporting various needs and ministries of the church through prayer, participation, fellowship, and freely giving of their talents and abilities.
- ~~f.~~c. Regularly providing financial sustenance to the church based upon their individual ability to do so. Pledging is strongly encouraged.

~~e.~~3. Active members enjoy the privilege of serving as church officers or delegates and may serve on church boards or committees. Active members have the right to vote at church meetings.

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C. Associate Membership

- ~~1.~~1. Persons who are active members of another church may become an Associate member of this church through the presentation of a letter from their own church indicating that they are in good standing. They shall retain their active status in their home church.
- ~~2.~~2. Associate members share the same responsibilities as Active Members (Section B.2).
- ~~3.~~3. Associate members may serve on church committees, if permitted by these By-Laws, and have a right to vote at church meetings.

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D. Inactive Membership

- 1. Active members who are no longer willing or able to meet the responsibilities of Active Membership (see Section B.2) may be deemed Inactive. An individual may become Inactive through:
 - a. A personal request to be inactive.
 - b. Congregational inactivity.
- 2. An Inactive membership may be reactivated by an individual's recommitment to Active Membership responsibilities.
- 3. Inactive members may not vote at church meetings but may be granted letters of transfer.

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Article III.E (Education and Reception)

E. Education and Reception

Individuals shall be received into church membership after having been duly prepared by the ministers and the Membership committee. Other boards and committees shall support new members and reinforce their new church covenant.

F. Termination of Membership

Membership in this congregation may be terminated in the following ways:

1. A member may terminate membership in this congregation by giving written notification of such intention to the Board of Deacons or the Clerk.
2. By letter of transfer to another Christian congregation. Such letters shall be given for members by the Clerk upon request, and shall be sent to the new congregation. When notice of acceptance has been received, membership in this congregation shall end. Such letters may be made for both Active and Inactive Members; the latter, however, shall be noted on the transfer.
3. If a person unites with another congregation without securing a letter of transfer, his or her membership in this church shall be terminated.

G. Membership Roll Review

The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for reviewing the membership rolls annually to identify members who have seemingly become inactive in the life of the church. With dignity and respect, the Deacons shall tactfully determine what can be done to reestablish one's covenant with the church. If these actions fail, the Deacons shall transfer the former Active Member to Inactive status or shall terminate the individual's membership.

ARTICLE IV

Program Staff

A. ORDAINED MINISTERS

These ministers shall be the spiritual leaders of the church and shall become members of this church as soon as practical after acceptance of a Call. The number of ministers may vary according to the needs of the church. One shall be designated Senior Minister; the other(s) shall be Associate Minister(s).

Article IV.A (Ordained Ministers) continued

The ministers, with the assistance and advice of the Board of Deacons and in cooperation with other staff, officers, boards, and committees, shall seek to enlist others as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, have under their care all services of public worship, exercise pastoral care and leadership, exercise the privilege of religious teacher and counselor in public and private, and administer the religious activities of the church.

All full-time ministers shall be voting members of the Executive Board. These ministers shall also be ex-officio members of the Board of Deacons, and advisors to other boards and committees. They shall be accountable to the Board of Deacons.

A minister shall be called to serve this church according to the procedure outlined in IV.E.1 below.

A minister may be removed by a majority vote of the members present at a congregational meeting duly called for that purpose.

A minister may voluntarily terminate his or her position with this church by giving three months' notice of resignation to the Board of Deacons, or other such notice as may be mutually agreed upon. Such resignation shall then be submitted to the church membership at a meeting duly called for that purpose. A majority vote is required for recognizing the resignation.

B. DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Director of Christian Education shall administer the children's Christian education program of the church, with the assistance of the Board of Christian Education and the ministers. The children's Christian Education program consists of the nursery, grades PS-8, and youth group for 5th and 6th grade. The Director of Christian Education shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Christian Education and its committees, without right of vote, and shall not be counted in determining a quorum at meetings.

A Director of Christian Education shall be ~~hire~~called, in consultation with the ministers, by the Board of Christian Education to serve this church according to the procedure outlined in IV.E.~~32~~ below. The Director of Christian Education may voluntarily be removed by the Board of Christian Education, in consultation with the ministers. The Director of Christian Education may voluntarily terminate his or her position with this church by giving three months notice to the Board of Christian Education, or such other notice as may be mutually agreed upon.

~~A Director of Christian Education may be removed by a majority vote of the members present at a congregational meeting duly called for that purpose.~~

~~A Director of Christian Education may voluntarily terminate his or her position with this church by giving three months notice of resignation to the Board of Christian Education, or other such notice as may be mutually agreed upon. Such resignation shall then be submitted to the church membership at a meeting duly called for that purpose. A majority vote is required for recognizing the resignation.~~

Article IV.C (Director of Youth Ministry)

C. DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY

The Director of Youth Ministry shall coordinate all aspects of youth group and youth ministries for 7th grade through high school with assistance of the Board of Christian Education, the Director of Christian Education, and the ministers.

The Director of Youth Ministry shall be a member of the Board of Christian Education, without right of vote, and shall not be counted in determining a quorum at meetings.

The Director of Youth Ministry shall be ~~hired~~, in consultation with the ministers, by the Board of Christian Education according to the procedure outlined in IV.E.23 below.

The Director of Youth Ministry may be removed by the Board of Christian Education, in consultation with the ministers. A Director of Youth Ministry may voluntarily terminate his or her position with this church by giving three months notice to the Board of Christian Education, or such other notice as may be mutually agreed upon. ~~Acceptance by the church membership is not required unless the individual is ordained.~~

D. MUSIC DIRECTOR

The Music Director shall have charge of the music program of the church, with the assistance of the Board of Music and subject to the advice of the ministers. The Music Director shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Music, without right of vote, and shall not be counted in determining a quorum at meetings.

A Music Director shall be ~~hired~~, in consultation with the ministers, by the Board of Music according to the procedure outlined in IV.E.23 below.

A Music Director may be removed by the Board of Music, in consultation with the ministers. A Music Director may voluntarily terminate his or her position with this church by giving three months' notice to the Board of Music, or such other notice as may be mutually agreed upon. ~~Acceptance by the church membership is not required unless the individual is ordained.~~

E. Calling Program Staff Members

1. Calling Ministers

~~b.a.~~ To call an ordained minister, or an in-care candidate approved for ordination, the Board of Deacons shall call a meeting of the congregation at which time it shall in writing:

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Article IV.E (Calling Program Staff Members)

- ~~i.)~~ Justify the continuing need for the position, or
- ~~ii.)~~ Justify the need for a revised position, or
- ~~iii.)~~ Justify the need for a new position in the life of the church.

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~~e.b.~~ A job description of the position to be filled will be presented and explained in detail, especially how it deviates from a present position if one currently exists. For a new position, a complete new job description shall be written and presented. Budgetary requirements will be addressed with regard to the current church budget and the impact on the following year's budget will be clearly delineated. The Personnel Committee shall be consulted in preparation of the job description; likewise, the Board of Trustees for the budgetary concerns.

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~~d.c.~~ Approval of the job description and budgetary changes, if any, will be voted upon by the congregation.

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~~e.d.~~ A detailed charge to the proposed search committee will be presented to the meeting, as well as the proposed size of and actual members nominated for the search committee.

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~~f.e.~~ The items in item (d) shall then be discussed and voted upon.

~~g.f.~~ Once approved, the search committee is an independent group of the church with a clear written charge to find the best candidate to meet the church's needs, and recommend that candidate to the congregation at a church meeting in a reasonable period of time, as spelled out in general terms in item (d) above.

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~~h.g.~~ When the committee has completed its search and has identified a candidate, they will work with the Treasurer and Personnel Committee to ensure that the salary/benefits and another other agreements are consistent with church programs and budget. The offer shall be made only after the conference between the Treasurer, Personnel and the search committee. ~~and The search committee will then make has made~~ plans to introduce the candidate to the congregation; ~~at a~~ meeting of church members shall be called by the Board of Deacons. The search committee chair shall introduce the recommended candidate and respond to questions from the floor. At the end of discussion, a vote shall be taken on the candidate. Approval shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present at the meeting. The minister will be called for an unspecified period of time.

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~~2. Calling a Director of Christian Education~~

~~The above procedure also applies to the calling of a Christian Education Director, regardless of whether that person is a minister, either ordained or commissioned. The Board of Christian~~

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~~Education would initiate the process and assume the same relative role to the search committee as the Board of Deacons assume in the above process.~~

Article IV.E. ~~23 (Calling a Director of Youth Ministry)~~

~~3.2. Hiring~~ Calling a Director of Christian Education, a Director of Youth Ministry, a Music Director, or other non-ordained program staff.

~~b.a.~~ To hire ~~a~~ a full-time or part-time Director of Christian Education, a Director of Youth Ministry or Music Director or other staff position, the board responsible shall:

- ~~i.)~~ Write the purpose of the position to be searched for,
- ~~ii.)~~ Update the current job description, or create a description for the revised or new position,
- ~~iii.)~~ Calculate and document the break-out of the hours worked, the payroll and benefits package costs for the current budget year,
- ~~iv.)~~ Estimate the hours, and payroll and benefit costs for the next full budget year, and
- ~~v.)~~ Present the material to the Executive Board.

If the position is new to the church or not fully budgeted, information required in items (i) through (iv) above must be presented to a church meeting with all above pertinent data provided by the responsible board or committee at the time of the call to such meeting. The Personnel Committee shall be consulted in preparation of the job description.

- b. Once the Executive Board has approved the search, a search committee can be appointed by the appropriate board to carry out a search for candidates. The church body shall be fully informed that a search for the position is about to begin, who is on the search committee, and how much more or less this action will cost this budget year, whether it is planned for in the budget, and the projected salary and benefits cost for the first full budget year.
- c. The relationship of the search committee and the supervising board shall be spelled out in a letter of charge to the search committee, so it is clearly understood what is expected from the search committee.
- d. When the committee and supervising board have agreed on a candidate, the committee will work with the Treasurer and Personnel Committee to ensure that the salary/benefits and another other agreements are consistent with church programs and budget. The offer shall be made only after the conference between the Treasurer, Personnel, the Senior Minister and the search committee. - and the candidate has accepted the job within the financial numbers proposed, the candidate can be hired. If the offer is greater than projected, approval from the Executive Board and the Board of Trustees shall be obtained before hiring can be completed.

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Article V (Officers)

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS

All officers listed below must be Active Members of the church as defined in Article III, paragraph B, and must be of legal age, as defined by the statutes of the State of Connecticut. All shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church at the Annual Meeting. The President-elect shall be elected for a term of three years – the first as President-elect, the second as President, and the third as immediate past President. It is recommended that a President-elect nominee have six prior years of experience on a major church board and/or committee. The Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretaries shall be elected for a three-year term and upon completion of a three-year term, they may be re-elected. Assistant Financial Secretaries shall be elected in accordance with Article VI, section A.3. The remaining officers shall be elected to serve one year terms and may be re-elected annually. Handbooks for officers may be developed as needed.

CHURCH OFFICERS

A. PRESIDENT

The President shall be the executive lay officer of the church, and shall represent the church in matters not appropriately the domain of other officers, staff, boards, or committees. The President shall preside at Executive Board meetings, and he or she shall vote only in the case of a tie. The President shall also appoint, with the approval of the Executive Board, a Strategic Planning Committee. The size, makeup, and purpose of the Strategic Planning Committee may vary as dictated by circumstances at the time of appointment.

B. PRESIDENT - ELECT

The President-elect shall learn all aspects of the President's duties and shall serve as a member of the Nominating Committee. If the President is unavailable, the President - elect shall assume his or her powers and responsibilities. If the President is unable to serve a full term, the President – elect shall serve as President until the next Annual Meeting.

C. IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

The Immediate Past President shall serve as the chair of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Article V.D Officers – Treasurer

D. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the church and shall be responsible for the receipt and disbursement of all monies belonging to the church, except as elsewhere provided in these By-Laws. He or she shall be bonded as the Board of Trustees shall require, with the cost of such bond to be borne by the church.

D.1. ASSISTANT TREASURER

The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer. This individual shall be responsible for day-to-day activities and will coordinate with the office staff as needed. In the absence or unavailability of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer shall fully assume the Treasurer's authority and responsibility. This position shall be bonded.

D.2. ASSOCIATE TREASURER

The Associate Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer as needed. This individual shall be responsible for matters regarding budgeting, payroll, and financial and legal documents. In the absence or unavailability of the Treasurer and Associate Treasurer, the Associate Treasurer shall fully assume the Treasurer's authority and responsibility. This position shall be bonded.

D.3 FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Financial Secretary shall receive, record, and deposit all offerings and pledges to the church and shall notify the Treasurer of such deposits. The Financial Secretary shall be bonded as may be required by the Board of Trustees, with the cost of such bond to be borne by the church.

D.3.1 ASSISTANT FINANCIAL SECRETARIES

A minimum of three Assistant Financial Secretaries shall be elected to assist the Financial Secretary as needed. They shall be bonded in the same manner as the Financial Secretary. In the absence or unavailability of the Financial Secretary, they shall be vested with all the powers and responsibilities of that position, and shall allocate those powers and responsibilities among themselves.

Article V.E (Clerk)

E. CLERK

The Clerk shall be the official recorder of all business conducted at congregational and Executive Board meetings. The Clerk shall work with the church office to maintain a record of baptisms, marriages, methods of admission, dismissal, transfers, and death by updating the Church Membership Book of Record which is the primary source of all church membership. The Clerk shall issue and post the Call to Congregational Meetings, as requested by a qualified person or group, as described in Article VII, B.1 and B.2. The clerk shall be responsible for counting and recording the results of all secret and non-secret ballot elections at the church's congregational meetings – see Article VII, B.5.

F. MODERATOR

The Moderator shall help to prepare for, and shall preside at, meetings of the church. The Moderator shall conduct the meetings in an unbiased manner and according to Robert's Rules of Order.

G. ASSISTANT MODERATOR

The Assistant Moderator shall conduct congregational meetings if the Moderator is unavailable. If both the Moderator and Assistant Moderator are absent, the members present shall elect a temporary Moderator from among their number.

H. AUDITORS

The church shall have up to two qualified Auditors. They shall audit the accounts of the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary, and report the results in writing to the Board of Trustees at least annually. At least every three years, an audit will be performed by an outside professional retained by the Board of Trustees.

I. HISTORIAN

The Historian shall be elected annually and preside as chairperson of the History Committee, providing leadership to preserve and organize the historical records of the church.

J. Other Officers

Other officers may be elected from time to time as may be determined by the church.

Article V.K (Vacancies)

K. Vacancies

A vacancy among annually elected officers of the church shall be filled at a special meeting of the church. The Nominating Committee shall prepare nominations for such vacancies.

ARTICLE VI

Boards and Committees

A. Membership and organizational procedures for Boards and Committees:

1. Active membership, as defined in Article III, shall be a requirement for all who are elected, or appointed on an interim basis, to church boards, to the Personnel Committee, the Endowment Committee, the Budget Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Membership Committee, the Safe Church Committee, or as a delegate.
2. Unless otherwise specified, after serving one full term of three years, no elected member of a board or committee shall be eligible for re-election to that board or committee until after the lapse of one year.
3. When any board or committee has its membership placed on a staggered or rotating basis, it shall, if the rotation is on a three-year basis, initially elect one-third of its total membership to serve for one year, one-third for two years, and one-third for three years. At each annual meeting thereafter, the successors to the members whose terms expire in that year shall be elected for terms of three years. If the rotation is on other than a three-year basis, the formula shall be adjusted in like manner.
4. The number of members of any board or committee, as set forth in these By-Laws, shall be the minimum number. At any annual meeting of the church, the number of members of any board or committee may be increased by action of the church, through normal election procedures. This may include the addition of youth members for terms of one year.
5. Each board and committee shall hold an organizational meeting not later than the end of February. The Church Administrator shall be immediately notified of the names of the chairperson and secretary. The Deacons' Treasurer shall also be identified.
6. A majority of the elected members of each board or committee shall be the minimum number to constitute a quorum for purposes of taking official action on the business of such board or committee.

Article VI.A (Membership for Boards and Committees) continued

7. Each board and committee shall hold such meetings of its members as it determines are necessary for the proper conduct of its business to ensure complete fulfillment of its responsibility and function. It shall elect a secretary to keep written records of meetings.
8. Each board and committee shall write and maintain a handbook of its duties under guidelines established by the Executive Board. Changes/additions to handbooks by boards and committees require only Executive Board notification and review. A current set of handbooks shall be kept in the church office.
9. Repetitive failure to attend duly scheduled board or committee meetings may be deemed as voluntarily vacating one's position on a board or committee. A vacancy in the membership of any board or committee shall be filled by an interim appointment by the board or committee concerned to serve until the next annual meeting of the church.

B. BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Board of Christian Education is to work with the Director of Christian Education, the Director of Youth Ministry, and the ministers to nurture the faith formation of all the members of the church, to oversee the Church's entire educational program, and to create a welcoming, safe, and nurturing atmosphere for the Christian education of all children, youth, and adults in the church.

2. To meet these responsibilities, the Board of Christian Education shall:

- a. Evaluate and give direction to the Christian Education program in consultation with the Director of Christian Education and the ministers.
- b. Evaluate and approve the curricula, the methods of instruction, and programs for all areas of Christian Education.
- c. Oversee, advise and support regarding the recruitment, training, and supervision of teachers and leaders for all areas of Christian Education.
- d. Coordinate programs with the ministers, the Deacons, and other Church groups to jointly meet the Christian Education needs of all age groups, including adults and confirmands.
- e. Evaluate the performance of the Director of Christian Education and the Director of Youth Ministry ~~Christian Education Director's performance~~ annually and provide results to the Personnel Committee.

- f. Initiate and recommend a Director of Christian Education search committee for church approval as described in Article ~~IV, E. 2, IV-B.~~

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Article VI.B.2 (Board of Christian Education) continued

- g. Initiate and recommend a Director of Youth Ministry search committee, if needed, as described in Article IV. ~~E. 2C~~. After consultation with the Director of Christian Education and ministers, vote on the recommended candidate.
- h. Implement, revise, and administer the Safe and Nurturing Christian Education Policy and select a member to serve on the Safe Church Committee.

3. Membership:

The Board of Christian Education shall consist of twelve active members, four to be elected annually to serve three year terms. Two youth members may be elected for one year terms.

C. BOARD OF DEACONS

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Board of Deacons is to share with the ministers the initiation, implementation, and evaluation of all activities and programs affecting the religious and spiritual life of the church.

2. To meet this responsibility, the Board of Deacons shall:

- a. Assist the ministers in preparing and administering the sacraments of Baptism and Communion.
- b. Assure and approve interim pastoral coverage.
- c. Determine the extent to which the church participates in the Parish Associate Program and oversee the selection process.
- d. Initiate and recommend a pastoral search committee for church approval when required as described in Article IV, A.
- e. Evaluate the ministers' performance annually and provide results to the Personnel Committee.
- f. In conjunction with the Board of Trustees and a minister, approve the use of the sanctuary and chapel.
- g. Assist individuals preparing for church membership.

- h. Annually review rolls for membership status and take appropriate action as described in Article III.

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Article VI.C.3 (Board of Deacons) continued

- i. Elect one member to act as Treasurer of the Deacons' Funds.
- j. Select an individual to serve as a Parish Care member at-large.
- k. Maintain oversight of the Pastoral Relations Committee, a sub-committee of the Deacons, as set forth in Article VI.C.5.

3. Membership:

The Board of Deacons shall consist of twelve active members, four to be elected annually to serve three year terms. Two youth members may be elected for one year terms.

4. Parish Care Committee

a. Purpose:

The purpose of the Parish Care Committee is to provide Christian care and assistance to members of our congregation and the surrounding community.

b. To meet this responsibility, the Parish Care Committee shall:

- i) Create ministries to address identified needs in the congregation.
- ii) Recruit, select, and train volunteers to empower these ministries.
- iii) Manage the administration of these ministries and determine the appropriate length of service commitments for the volunteers.
- iv) Provide a periodic accounting of funds expended from the Parish Care budgetary line item.

c. Membership:

The Parish Care Committee shall consist of a representative from each of the active parish care ministries and four at-large members. One of the at-large members shall be the Deacons' representative as selected by the Board of Deacons (see Sec C.2.j.) An individual may represent multiple ministries.

The remaining three at-large members shall be selected by the committee with the approval of the Board of Deacons. The committee shall be responsible for ensuring that all four terms do not expire in the same year. At-large members may be re-appointed to serve additional terms.

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Article VI.C.5 (Pastoral Relations Committee)
5. Pastoral Relations Committee

a. Purpose:

The purpose of the Pastoral Relations Committee is to act as a confidential advocate, support, and advisory group for the staff ministers to foster professional growth and well being of the staff, and to promote the mutual ministry of the pastors and the congregation.

b. To meet this responsibility, the Pastoral Relations Committee shall:

- i) Be familiar with the job descriptions, Employee Handbook, Personnel Policies of the First Congregational Church of Cheshire, Pastor's Compensation Guidelines published by the Connecticut Conference of the UCC, the Pastoral Relations Committee pamphlet published by the UCC, and the UCC Manual on Ministry.
- ii) Advocate for a fair compensation package and the performance appraisal done in a timely and fair manner.
- iii) Meet at least quarterly with each minister.

c. Membership

- i) The Pastoral Relations Committee shall consist of a six active members, two to be appointed annually to serve three year terms. One elected by the committee to serve as chair.
- ii) The Board of Deacons will select the members. Each minister and the president of the church shall submit names for consideration, as shall the Deacons. The list of potential members suggested will be shared with each minister to determine any conflicts. The Board of Deacons will select the final list, attempting to include a member from each staff member's suggested list. In the event of a mid-term vacancy, the Deacons will fill the position.
- iii) The committee shall makes itself accessible to the congregation.
- iv) The Senior Deacon shall serve as liaison for the Committee, but is not a member of the committee.

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Article VI.D (Executive Board)

D. EXECUTIVE BOARD

b.1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Executive Board is to coordinate, promote, and evaluate the program and welfare of the church.

2. To meet this responsibility, the Executive Board shall:

- a. Appoint a budget committee annually to develop an annual budget for church approval. See Item 7 below.
- b. Facilitate the strategic planning process.
- c. Review and coordinate all changes to board and committee handbooks.
- d. Provide guidelines and coordination among church staff, boards, committees, and organizations.
- e. Review and coordinate all new and revised job descriptions.
- f. Receive and coordinate for approval the recommendations of the Personnel Committee.
- g. Assume responsibility for the affairs of the church which are not assigned to another church individual or group.
- h. Approve special offerings and fund raisers.
- i. Interpret the policies of the church as needed in intervals between church meetings.

3. Membership:

The Executive Board shall consist of the following, all of whom shall be Active Members of the church:

- a. President
- b. President –Elect
- c. Immediate Past President

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d. Senior Minister and full time Associate Minister(s).

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Article VI.D.3 (Executive Board)

- e. Treasurer.
 - f. One representative of each of: Board of Christian Education, Board of Deacons, Board of Music, Board of Outreach, Board of Stewardship, Board of Trustees.
 - g. One representative from the Personnel Committee.
 - h. Three members-at-large representing other committees not otherwise represented.
 - i. Clerk, ex-officio member without vote.
4. Members-at-large shall serve staggered three-year-terms, election as prescribed in Article VI A 3.
5. Representatives of the Board of Christian Education, Board of Deacons, Board of Music, Board of Outreach, Board of Stewardship, Board of Trustees, and the Personnel Committee, shall serve terms of at least one year, but not to exceed three consecutive years. Selection of these representatives shall be in the manner prescribed by their respective Boards or Committees.
6. The Clerk shall serve as secretary to the Executive Board and shall keep appropriate records and take care of all board correspondence.
7. Budget Committee:
- a. Purpose
The Budget Committee shall prepare an annual budget for approval by the Executive Board.
 - b. Membership
The committee's membership shall be appointed by the Executive Board in consultation with the Treasurer. The term of appointment shall be for one year with an option for re-appointment.
 - i) The Treasurer, Associate Treasurer, and the Assistant Treasurer shall be permanent members with one collective vote.
 - ii) In addition to the Treasurers the following members shall be appointed.
 - One from the Board of Trustees
 - One from the Board of Stewardship
 - One from the Personnel Committee
 - One from the Board of Outreach
 - One from the Board of Deacons
 - President – elect

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Notice re the Proposed Budget:

The Budget Committee will submit an initial budget to the Executive Board in September which will be shared with the Church membership. The Executive Board will post the final budget for review by the Church membership five (5) days before the vote on the budget.

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Article VI.D.8 (Safe Church Committee)

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8. Safe Church Committee

a. Purpose:

The purpose of the Safe Church Committee is to provide oversight for all aspects of the safety of the church to include, but not limited to, safety of the physical buildings and grounds, safety of the church members, friends and visitors, and safety of any church related activity whether on or off the church's premises.

b. To meet this responsibility, the committee shall:

- i) Verify that all church staff members, employees, boards, and committees are trained to comply with existing safety-related laws, manuals, and other governing documents.
- ii) Report any conditions that could jeopardize any aspect of church safety to the Executive Board and investigate as directed by the board.

c. Membership

This committee shall consist of five active members including one from the Board of Christian Education, one from the Board of Trustees, and three members from the church at large. The at-large members shall be recommended by the Committee and approved by the Executive Board and shall serve staggered three year terms.

Article VI.E (Board of Music)

E. BOARD OF MUSIC

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Board of Music is to provide a music program for the enhancement of worship in consultation with the Music Director.

2. To meet this responsibility, the Board of Music shall:

- a. Call, in consultation with the ministers, a Director of Music, in accordance with employment guidelines established by the Personnel Committee and in accordance with Article IV.E.3
- b. Evaluate the Music Director's performance annually and provide results to the Personnel Committee.
- c. Evaluate and give direction to the music program, in consultation with the Music Director and the ministers.
- d. Provide for the upkeep of instruments, robes, music, and other materials associated with the music program.

3. Membership:

The Board of Music shall consist of nine active members, three to be elected annually to serve three year terms. A youth member may be elected to serve a one year term.

F. BOARD OF OUTREACH

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Board of Outreach is to coordinate and administer the church's giving to charities, nonprofit agencies, and other worthy causes outside of our own church family.

2. To meet this responsibility, the Board of Outreach shall:

- a. Decide which local, regional, national, or worldwide causes the church will support.
- b. Determine the level of support to be given.
- c. Maintain records to ensure all proper guidelines for giving have been followed.

Article VI.F (Board of Outreach) continued

- d. Inform the congregation about the expenditure of funds and the causes supported by the church.
- e. Involve and inspire all members and friends of the church to engage in their own outreach as well as the church's outreach program.

3. Membership:

The Board of Outreach shall consist of twelve active members, four to be elected annually to serve three year terms. Two youth members may be elected for one year terms.

G. BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

1. Purpose:

Advocate throughout the year for stewardship as an on-going response to Jesus Christ and his church, including giving by members and non-members of money, time, and talents to our church.

2. To meet these responsibilities, the Board of Stewardship shall:

- ~~g-d.~~ Plan and conduct the annual pledge and covenant drive for current financial needs of the church.
- ~~h-b.~~ Participate in the new member orientation process to discuss the roles and responsibilities of active membership as described in Article III.
- ~~i-c.~~ Collect and record all pledges and make follow-up contact to those who fail to make a pledge.
- ~~j-d.~~ Submit all monetary pledges to the Financial Secretary. Assist the Financial Secretary in regard to other records and procedures when requested.
- ~~k-e.~~ Promote the church's Planned Giving program to the entire church family.
- ~~l-f.~~ Submit to the church office any information about members and friends that may affect their connection with the church, for recording in the church database.

3. Membership:

The Board of Stewardship shall consist of nine active members, three to be elected annually to serve three year terms.

Article VI.H. (Board of Trustees)

H. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Board of Trustees is to maintain the church's financial stability. It shall also be responsible for the use, maintenance, and development of all the physical and real properties of the church, including the church's grounds.

2. To meet this responsibility, the Board of Trustees shall:

- a. Oversee the efficient use of all church funds, current income, endowment, capital improvement, and reserve funds, excepting the Deacons' Funds, and other specialized funds. Review flow of income and approve the disbursement of funds for budgeted expenses
- b. Pay all obligations possible by year end, and move all remaining funds from current year income to the Reserve Fund. Expenditures from the Reserve Fund require church membership approval.
- c. Recommend changes in support staff positions and hire, dismiss, or replace such support staff persons as required to operate the church office and maintain church properties.
- d. Safeguard church property through proper maintenance and insurance.
- e. Select a member to serve on the Safe Church Committee.
- f. Through the Endowment Committee (see Item 4 below) receive, hold, invest, and reinvest all endowment funds, gifts, gifts in trust, other special funds and all properties except as provided in the instrument of the gift. The actual management, investment, and reinvestments of any funds shall be delegated to a bank, trust company, or financial entity having due authority.
- g. Keep a record of its actions and provide an audited report to the church membership at the annual meeting, and report to such special church meetings as appropriate.
- h. Call a church meeting for the purpose of voting on any request to use the unrestricted Endowment Fund, to borrow from the restricted Endowment Fund, or to use any of the restricted Endowment Fund as collateral for a loan. To approve any use of the Endowment Fund not previously authorized by these By-Laws, or not specifically authorized by the donor or donor's authority, will require approval of a special church meeting called as required in Article VII, B. 2-3. A two-thirds majority vote at a duly called meeting of qualified voting members shall be required to approve such a request.

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Article VI.H.3 (Board of Trustees) continued

3. Membership:

The Board of Trustees shall consist of thirteen active church members, one to be the church Treasurer. Four of the twelve other members shall be elected annually for three year terms.

4. Endowment Committee

a. Purpose:

Serving under the guidance of the Board of Trustees, the Endowment Committee shall administer, manage, and serve as advocate for the endowment funds of the church. The objective of the endowment funds is to provide a viable financial foundation for the church as well as a sustainable source of income for the Church's annual operating budget.

b. To meet this responsibility, the Endowment Committee shall:

- i) Recommend annually to the Board of Trustees a formula to determine a reasonable and sustainable contribution amount to be paid from the Endowment Fund into the Church's operating budget. This amount shall remain within acceptable fiduciary guidelines. Such contributions will be made on a regular schedule through the year.
- ii) Recommend to the Board of Trustees the hiring of a corporate investment management entity to provide investment advice, to invest funds prudently, and to maintain investment information in accordance with legal and accounting requirements.
- iii) Ensure that all monetary gifts to the church not otherwise specified go to the Endowment Fund. This includes specified gifts to the Endowment Fund, all bequests from estates and trusts, all regular income from endowment principal held outside the church, and monetary gifts and donations not otherwise specified for another fund or purpose.
- iv) Recommend to the Board of Trustees a schedule of payouts from specific use restricted endowment funds according to donor instructions.
- v) Ensure that the church's membership receives an annual report of the endowment financials as well as an annual reporting on the uses of the Endowment Fund
- vi) Ensure that an audit of the Endowment Fund and procedures is conducted as described in Article V, section H.

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Article VI.H.4 (Endowment Committee)

c. Membership

The Endowment Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees and shall consist of seven active members. Membership shall include the Church Treasurer, at least one member from the Board of Trustees, and the remainder shall be from the church's membership at large. The Trustee and at-large members shall serve for two year renewable terms – up to a maximum of six consecutive years. Trustee and at-large members shall be selected based upon their collective investment, administrative, legal, and public relations skills.

I. DELEGATES

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Delegates is to participate in national, state, regional, community, and specialized functions that relate to the church's interests.

2. To meet this responsibility the Delegates shall:

- a. Determine at the beginning of each year, in consultation with the Executive Board, all the organizations of which the church is a member.
- b. Review requirements for delegate preparation to attend the meetings of such organizations, and provide for proper representation.
- c. Report to the Executive Board following each meeting attended.

3. Membership:

The Delegates shall consist of twelve active members, four to be elected annually to serve three year terms. Outside board representation may be specified at nomination

J. FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

a.1. Purpose:

The Purpose of the Fellowship Committee is to promote social interactions in the church.

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Article VI.J (Fellowship Committee)

2. To meet this responsibility, the Fellowship Committee shall:

- a. Coordinate the hosting of the coffee hours.
- b. Coordinate social receptions when requested.
- c. Encourage and implement other fellowship activities.

3. Membership:

The Fellowship Committee shall consist of six members, two elected annually for three year terms.

K. FLOWER COMMITTEE

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Flower Committee is to coordinate the donation of memorial and celebratory flowers and to arrange for the presence of flowers for weekly services. The flower committee facilitates the Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies as well as the special arrangements for Palm Sunday. The flower committee is also responsible for the Hanging of the Greens for Advent.

2. Membership:

The Flower Committee shall consist of nine members, three to be elected annually for three year terms.

L. HISTORY COMMITTEE

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the History Committee is to preserve the historical records of the church, to assure their continuing availability, and to respond to those requesting genealogical help.

2. Membership:

The History Committee shall consist of three members plus the Church Historian as chair. One member shall be elected annually to serve a three year term.

Article VI.M (Library Committee)

M. LIBRARY COMMITTEE

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Library Committee is to oversee the contents and maintenance of the church library and to promote its use.

2. To meet this responsibility, the Library Committee shall:

- a. Acquire additional books and materials to the extent that funds are available.
- b. Establish rules for effective use.
- c. Approve and catalogue all materials.

3. Membership:

The Library Committee shall consist of six members, two to be elected annually for three year terms.

N. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

1. Purpose:

The Membership Committee shall lead the church in inviting, sustaining, and nurturing active and faithful membership.

2. To meet these responsibilities, the Membership Committee shall:

- a. Provide opportunities for church attendees to commit to full membership.
- b. Facilitate a welcoming, supportive, and participatory community.
- c. Participate in the new member orientation process to discuss the roles and responsibilities of active membership as described in Article III.
- d. Encourage and foster connections to the larger vision of the congregation.

3. Membership:

The Membership Committee shall consist of nine active members, three to be elected annually to serve three year terms.

Article VI.O (Nominating Committee)

O. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to prepare a slate of qualified and willing nominees for the ensuing church year for open positions among the church's officers, boards, and committees.

2. To meet this responsibility, the Nominating Committee shall:

- a. Inquire from each standing board and committee a detailed description of responsibilities, dates and times of scheduled meetings, and a general assessment of required time commitments.
- b. Identify the board and committee vacancies that currently exist.
- c. Select qualified candidates and apprise each one of his or her duties and responsibilities.
- d. Generate a list of nominees that shall be read to the church at the December meeting and voted upon at the annual meeting in January.
- e. Post this list of nominees on a parish bulletin board and in the Parish Post not less than thirty but no more than sixty days prior to the annual meeting.
- f. At the January meeting additional nominations may be accepted from the floor with the nominee's consent.
- g. Fill interim officer vacancies as described in Article V, K.

3. Membership:

The Nominating Committee shall consist of ten active members, nine to be selected to serve one year terms. The tenth member shall be the President-elect.

It is preferred that members have prior experience on standing boards or committees in this church.

P. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Personnel Committee is to develop and administer uniform personnel policies for the staff of the church.

Article VI.P (Personnel Committee)

2. To meet this responsibility, the Personnel Committee shall:

- a. Develop, in coordination with the supervisory board, and maintain a comprehensive set of written personnel policies, personnel procedures, and job descriptions for staff and present them for approval to the Executive Board.
- b. Review and update salary and benefit programs annually each fall, and report to the Executive Board.
- c. Maintain the official personnel records of the church in an appropriately confidential manner.
- d. Participate with appropriate boards or committees in contract negotiation, changes in personnel assignments, and exit interviews.

3. Membership:

The Personnel Committee shall be composed of six active members, two to be elected annually to serve three-year terms. The senior minister shall be an ex-officio member.

Q. USHERING COMMITTEE

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Ushering Committee is to provide ushers at all services of the church.

2. To meet this responsibility, the Ushering Committee shall secure and train a staff of ushers, who may or may not be members of the committee.

3. Membership:

The Ushering Committee shall consist of three members, one to be elected annually to serve three year terms.

Article VI.R (Auxiliary Organizations)

R. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

1. The church recognizes that many benefits emanate from various auxiliary groups or organizations not provided for in the By-Laws. No restriction, or limitation, or control is therefore intended or imposed for those whose purpose and dedication is in carrying out the work of Christ and his church.
2. In order that the best interests of all church members and all organizations be served, representation of an organization on the Executive Board is hereby provided for if such representation is requested by that organization and is approved by the church membership.
Article VII (Services and Meetings)

ARTICLE VII

Services and Meetings

The services and meetings of the church shall be as follows:

A. Worship

1. Service(s) of worship shall be held each Sunday morning, except when temporarily suspended by vote of the Board of Deacons.
2. Other services of worship, inspiration, prayer, and study may be held as determined by the Board of Deacons or by the ministers.
3. The Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be celebrated at least once a month at a church service. It may also be celebrated for groups or individuals at the discretion of a minister.
4. The Sacrament of Baptism shall be administered to those who have not been previously baptized. Children of members of the church or whose parents are not members but promise to bring up their children in the nurture of the church shall be baptized.
5. Special offerings may be received during a worship service only for such purposes as the Executive Board may approve.

B. Business Meetings

1. Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting shall be held by the end of January at the call of the Church Clerk to elect officers, board and committee members; to hear annual reports; and transact any other proper business.

Article VII B (Business Meetings)

2. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by a minister, the Board of Deacons, the Executive Board, the Board of Trustees, or by the Clerk on written request of ten members qualified to vote, the purpose of the meeting being stated in the call.

3. Notices

Notice of an annual or special meeting, signed by the Clerk, shall be read at any public religious meeting of the church at least twenty-four hours before the meeting. A copy of such notice shall be posted on a church bulletin board and published in an organ of the church at least seven days in advance of the meeting.

4. Quorum

A quorum for any congregational meeting shall consist of fifty active and associate members, but a smaller number may adjourn to a fixed date.

5. Voting

Elections or actions shall be by voice vote, unless otherwise determined by the meeting. Unless otherwise provided, a majority vote is decisive. Active and associate members are entitled to vote. When using secret ballots, the Clerk, with assistance from the Moderator as necessary, shall have the responsibility for counting and recording the vote.

6. Official Year

The official year of the church shall begin on January 1. All officers, boards and committees shall continue their duties until the annual meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

Contracts and Funds

No officer, board, committee or other church organization shall enter into any contract or make any commitment to spend church funds until or unless such action is approved by the Board of Trustees or is provided for in the annual budget. This restriction shall not affect the right of any board, committee or

other church organization to expend funds that may have been raised by its own efforts and which have not been given or pledged to the church proper, or funds which under the terms of the gift are not subject to the control of the Board of Trustees.

Article IX (Use of Church Properties)

ARTICLE IX

Use of Church Properties

The Board of Trustees can grant permission to any individual or group for use of the physical properties of the church in accordance with the rules and regulations stated below and guidelines they establish. The Board of Trustees may permit such use to promote religious ends, to fill civic or charitable needs, or to advance the welfare of the church or the general public. Neither the church sanctuary nor the chapel shall be used for secular purposes unless approved by the Trustees, Board of Deacons, and a minister.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

Amendments to these By-Laws may be proposed by any member and shall be submitted in writing to the Clerk for inclusion in the call to a regular or special meeting. The proposed amendments may be discussed at such meeting but no action may be taken. They shall be voted on at a regular subsequent meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose. A copy of the amendments shall be in the call for such a meeting, and may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the active and associate members in attendance.

ARTICLE XI

Dissolution of the Church

- A. In the event of dissolution of the church, no officer, member, or employee thereof shall receive any pecuniary profit from the church or its assets except reasonable compensation for services effecting one or more of its purposes. The church's real property can be sold for other than religious purposes, but the monetary assets derived from such sale will forever be used for religious purposes.
- B. In the event of dissolution of the church, its property shall become vested in, and its function, if any, administered by any church with which the church may be formally affiliated at the time of such dissolution. If no such affiliation exists, the church's property shall become vested in and its function, if any, administered by the Missionary Society of Connecticut (also known as the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ) or its successor. If this is impossible, the membership of the First Congregational Church of Cheshire shall designate, at a congregational meeting before the

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dissolution, another church or other organization, which is organized and operated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes, to receive the church's property. In the absence of such a determination by the congregation, the Superior Court of the County of New Haven shall determine the use of the church's property.

Article XI (Dissolution of the Church)

- C. Dissolution of the church may be enacted at a special meeting of the active members provided that the proposed dissolution has been recommended by the Executive Board, has been posted at the church, announced from the pulpit for two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting, and postal mailed to members of the church at least 10 days prior to the meeting. A minimum of 50% of active members of the church shall be present when the matter is presented for a vote; and 75% of those present must vote to dissolve the church.

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