

## **Bylaws of Monroe Congregational Church, Incorporated**

These BYLAWS are established for MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, INCORPORATED to describe and define the operational and process guidelines under the Constitution of the Monroe Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

*Articles and Sections correspond directly to the articles and sections in the Constitution.*

### **ARTICLE V. Membership**

#### ***Section 5. Termination of Membership***

Circumstances may arise that would require review of a member's continued membership by Deacons and Council.

### **ARTICLE VIII. Officers, Pastor(s), and Professional Staff**

#### ***Section 1. The Officers***

Each officer's duties, responsibilities, and authority are described in their job descriptions and in these Bylaws.

#### ***Section 2. The Pastor(s)***

Each pastor is engaged by a written covenant serving as a legal contract, approved by the congregation and the (Senior) Pastor and the pastoral candidate. Copies are given to the (Senior) Pastor and the pastoral candidate and retained in the church records by the Church Office Administrator. Such contracts cover financial relationships, housing, applicable arrangements for further education, position description and any other pertinent agreements. The contract may be of limited duration or subject to periodic review as indicated.

If the congregation and the Pastor(s) agrees, The Fairfield East Association may be invited by the congregation to meet as a council to install the newly hired Pastor or Senior, Assistant or Associate Pastor. Otherwise, the highest-ranking clergy of the Congregation installs the newly hired pastor.

When more than one ordained pastor serves the church, it is understood that any member of the church may call upon any of them for pastoral services such as counsel, a marriage or a funeral.

#### ***Section 4. Other Staff and Other Professional Personnel***

All staff personnel—hired, contracted, or volunteered—will be under the direction and management of the highest-ranking clergy as operations manager and as defined by the Church Council. All assignments not included in their job description, contract and/or established procedure(s) will be defined and so delegated by the highest-ranking clergy.

Salary, tenure, and responsibilities of all clergy and other ordained professionals will be established in writing before hiring.

**Section 5. Moderator**

The Moderator provides oversight to resolving constitutional and bylaw disputes and clarification as required.

The Moderator may call meetings of any board or committee which finds itself unable to organize or function. The Moderator may appoint a chairperson or may serve as temporary chairperson, if necessary.

**Section 6. Clerk**

The Clerk is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the Constitution to reflect any revisions or amendment(s) voted for inclusion during a congregational meeting and presenting them to the Council for review within thirty calendar days of the meeting. One hard copy as well as an electronic copy of the revised Constitution will be filed with the Church Office Administrator, and in addition, one hard copy will be given to the church Historian.

Under the auspices of the Clerk, the Church Office Administrator is responsible for the Church Register, which includes records of membership, baptisms, marriages, and deaths.

The Church Office Administrator issues letters of transfer of membership upon request and with approval of the (Senior) Pastor, preserves on file all communications, official reports, and contracts, and provides an annual report to the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

**Section 7. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer**

The Treasurer is responsible for:

1. The payment of all bills and disbursement of monies as directed by the Moderator, Board of Trustees, Board of Christian Outreach, or other organizations or persons responsible for designated funds.
2. Maintaining the records of the Congregation's financial assets and liabilities using accepted standard accounting practice, and the status of the annual budget established by the congregation assembled for such purpose.
3. Wage and salary payments in a timely fashion to the schedules defined in the individual job descriptions/contracts.

The Assistant Treasurer will carry out tasks as delegated by the Treasurer.

The Church Council may require the Treasurer to report to them on the financial status of the church as appropriate.

**Section 8. Receiver and Financial Secretary**

The Receiver oversees a Receiving Committee consisting of five members, appointed by the Board of Trustees. Each member of the committee will have been a member of the Congregation for a minimum of two years and will be unrelated to each other, to the Receiver, or to the Treasurer. They are not eligible for re-election to the Receiving Committee until one year has elapsed since the end of his or her prior term.

Under the direction of the Receiver, the Receiving Committee shall be responsible for counting church donations after a worship service or church function in accordance to established written procedures. At least two members of the committee, unrelated to each other, must be present for the counting of the money. The final deposit amount shall be agreed upon by the two counters, stored securely onsite.

The Financial Secretary, who may be the Church Office Administrator, is responsible for promptly recording the deposit in the accounting records, keeping accurate account of each pledge, and furnishing each person

pledging with periodic statements. The Financial Secretary deposits all monies received as pledged offerings or other donations to the church's bank accounts at the first available opportunity.

**Section 9. Historian**

The Historian functions as the custodian of the church's archives, ensuring that all its documents and physical artifacts are secured and maintained using current acceptable standards to prevent damage.

All requests for historical information received from internal and external source will be acknowledged, researched, and responded to as quickly as possible by the Historian. This may include providing copies of requested or supporting documents.

The Historian will publish periodic articles or briefs on subjects of the church's history or subjects of general historical interest during the year.

**Section 11. Manager of Information Systems**

The Manager of Information Systems and Technology:

1. Provides technical support for the information systems, cloud-based systems used by MCC, and computer devices use by entrusted staff or board members, elected or appointed, who may also have or been given shared responsibility for the systems and devices used.
2. Ensures the safety and integrity of computer devices, cloud-based systems software, and data files employing security measure to protect their confidentiality, including computer security, passwords, encryption, and file back-up protection.
3. Ensures worship services are videoed and available on the web.
4. Assists in running hybrid or all-electronic congregational meetings by designing and providing computer audio and visual services.
5. Assists in data reporting and maintenance as required.
6. Provides instruction and advice on computer programs proposed or used as required.
7. Assists in the establishment and maintenance of the computer networking equipment and infrastructure used.
8. Assists in engagement and is a liaison to external information technology support personnel.

**ARTICLE X. Boards and Committees**

**Section 1. General Requirements and Procedures of Boards**

1. Between Annual Meetings, the Church Council may approve a member to fill a board vacancy. If the remaining time to be filled is one year or less, the person filling the vacancy may be elected for the succeeding full term. Otherwise, the person filling the vacancy may serve on that board for one additional year following the expiration of the current term.
2. Unless otherwise stated, and except for the Nominating Committee, each standing board shall hold a minimum of ten (10) open monthly meetings each year.
3. At least three (3) months prior to the completion of each board chair's term, the members of a board select by formal vote, an incoming chair from its continuing membership. This vote is recorded in the Board's meeting minutes. Transition of responsibilities shall be made at a pace and time determined by the board members.

4. Each board also (unless otherwise stated), at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the church, elects from its membership a recording secretary, and other such heads of specific undertakings as the board deems necessary. A majority of the members of a board is required to conduct official business of the board.
5. Boards may form standing committees to work in specific areas and establish special committees to direct short-term projects. However, the Board of Deacons cannot establish committees to prepare and serve the Lord's Supper or assist at a Baptism. Chairpersons of the committees will be members of the board; however, the membership of the committees may include anyone from the congregation.

### **Section 2. Board of Deacons**

This board:

1. Schedules regular and special worship services in consultation with the Pastor(s).
2. Provides and prepares the elements of the Lord's Supper and assists the Pastor in their distribution.
3. Serves as or appoints ushers for the maintenance of an atmosphere conducive to worship.
4. Advises the Pastor(s) and congregation on faith and morals when such become subjects of issue in the church.
5. Reaches out to welcome and invite new members into the church, and demonstrates concern for the nurture, care and discipline of members.
6. Assists the Pastor(s) in the new member process for membership in the church as described in Article V, Section 3.
7. Is responsible for pulpit supply during the absence or disability of a Pastor.
8. Accepts or rejects gifts given as memorials and, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, directs the disbursement of monetary gifts, and the interest therefrom. The Board of Trustees will be the custodians of financial gifts, but the Board of Deacons alone will approve their expenditure.
9. Oversees a process to provide flowers for worship services.
10. Is responsible for the music ministry of the church, including selection and evaluation of appropriate personnel and the coordination of the music with the worship service.
11. Communicates with members of the congregation through flock letters sent out during key times of the church calendar.

### **Section 3. Board of Trustees**

This board:

1. Reviews and supervises all disbursements of authorized budget expenses, reviews all bills for supplies and services, and authorizes the Treasurer to make payments from funds under Trustees' control.
2. Organizes, prepares, and submits the church budget for the coming year, and makes it publicly available at least seven days before the Annual Meeting.
3. Is responsible for approving the use of the church property by any person and organization and for establishing rules, regulations, and fees for the use of all church property.
4. Receives and holds, invests and reinvests all permanent funds of the church and other special funds and properties received through gifts, other than memorials, from individuals or families. At its discretion, the board accepts or rejects such gifts of real or personal property offered to the church.
5. Establishes and maintains uniform personnel practices for all employees in general conformity with personnel policies of the church, and reviews and approves all personnel contracts and employment arrangements for all professional and salaried employees, full- and part-time.

6. Recommends to the congregation and requests authority to borrow funds, when required, to pay current obligations or to finance major purchases, repairs, renovations, improvements, or long-term projects.
7. Obtains specific authority from the congregation to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any real property.

#### Committees of the Board of Trustees

1. *Finance Committee*: The Finance Committee consists of at least three persons: a Trustee (other than the Chairperson), who serves as chairperson of this committee, the Treasurer, and the Receiver. The Committee handles all receipts and disbursements under the direction of the Board of Trustees, and:
  - a) Pays direct expenditures.
  - b) Controls savings and investments.
  - c) Submits a written report summarizing the previous year's financial transactions at the Annual Meeting.
  - d) Has the written annual financial report audited by a qualified person who is not a Trustee and is not related to a Trustee. The report shall be filed in the church's permanent record and shared with the Board of Trustees and Council within 180 days of the end of the fiscal year which is the subject of the audit.
  - e) Is responsible for the placement of fire, compensation, public liability, and other forms of insurance and other provisions as will safeguard the property and workers of the church.
2. *Stewardship Committee*: The Stewardship Committee consists of three Trustees, one of whom serves as chair of the Committee. The Stewardship Committee:
  - a) Is responsible for organizing the annual Stewardship Campaign to obtain pledges for the coming year, acts as a follow-up committee to the canvass during the remainder of the year, and contacts new members joining the church between canvasses and endeavors to obtain pledges from them.
  - b) Monitors special funding activities.
3. *Property Committee*: The Property Committee is responsible for the control, supervision, and maintenance of all church properties except objects used within services which are the responsibility of the Board of Deacons. This committee shall obtain competitive bids on all major projects and submit such bids to the Board of Trustees for approval.

#### **Section 4. Board of Christian Education**

The board:

1. Surveys the needs of all age groups.
2. Formulates the goals and objectives for the total program.
3. Appoints:
  - a) Annually the Church School lay leadership, the Church Librarian, and the Junior and Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Advisors.
  - b) For appropriate terms of service, all other educational personnel, such as teachers, leaders, and directors of educational programs.
4. Provides for the training and on-going support of personnel.
5. Makes decisions regarding the administration of educational programs.
6. Provides materials, resources, and equipment.
7. Evaluates the effectiveness of current programs.

8. Initiates needed changes in the educational programs.
9. Coordinates the work of the various educational groups.
10. Cooperates with responsible boards or committees in providing and maintaining adequate space for educational programs.
11. Determines and recommends financial needs and policies as related to Christian Education.
12. Keeps the entire congregation informed of the educational programs and needs.
13. Provides input into the annual evaluation of the ordained staff person who provides pastoral oversight for the Christian Education program as requested by the applicable PRC.

#### **Section 5. Board of Christian Outreach**

This board:

1. Develops and coordinates a comprehensive program of ministry beyond the church's membership. This includes, but is not limited to, doing service projects, and educating the church about opportunities for carrying out the mission of the church in the local area, state, nation, and world.
2. Researches social issues which the board deems to be pertinent to Christian social action, conscience, and responsibility and informs the church.
3. Prepares and recommends to the Board of Trustees annually a budget for giving beyond the general operating expenses of the local church.
4. Authorizes the disbursement of budgeted funds received for Outreach to carry out its mission.
5. Recommends, arranges, and conducts special offerings of the UCC and other agencies, such as One Great Hour of Sharing and Neighbors in Need.

#### **Section 6B. Board of Christian Fellowship**

This board:

1. Focuses on hospitality as a mission of the church, integrating and strengthening such events as coffee hour and fellowship activities in the life of the congregation.
2. Collects submissions of fellowship requests from all boards and groups. Consulting with the Pastor(s), Council, and other groups, the board reviews requests, assesses the variety and frequency of fellowship activities and maps out the fellowship calendar for the program year. As new requests are submitted to the board, they will be reviewed and placed on the calendar. This will be done to prevent overlapping or duplication of programming and/or gaps in the fellowship life of the church.
3. Evaluates the various fellowship opportunities offered by the church and provides periodic opportunities for each interest/age group that is not already addressed by other boards' events, e.g., intergenerational events, men's and women's activities, or small group offerings.
4. Monitors and evaluates fellowship activities on a continual basis.

#### **Section 7. Nominating Committee**

Before the Annual Meeting, this committee prepares a slate of officers, members of boards and committees (excluding the Nominating Committee), and delegates for election at the next Annual Meeting.

The committee gains the acceptance of each nominee for his or her proposed position.

No position will be restricted except as required in other sections of this Constitution, and except that all members of elected offices or bodies shall be members of the church.

No person shall hold two elected positions simultaneously, with the exception of church delegates, who may hold a second position.

**Section 8. Pastoral Relations Committee(s) (PRC)**

A PRC:

1. Establishes a continual dialogue between a pastor and members of the congregation to discuss non-board issues and to share general information.
2. Supports a pastor's total ministry, within and beyond the local church community, including continuing education, planning a sabbatical, retreat, prayer and other reflection times, etc. Also, supports a pastor's family life and encourage appropriate allocation of time for family activities within the pastor's schedule.
3. Annually, conducts a review of ministry covenants related to the specific responsibilities of the pastor, the various boards, and the congregation. The ministry covenants should be developed to reflect mutual growth, goals and responsibilities.
4. Each committee meets at least four times yearly, or at the request of any committee member.
5. If there are two committees, they meet jointly a minimum of one time annually. In addition, two representatives from each committee meet jointly at least once a year to work together regarding pastoral salary and other working condition recommendations. They advocate these recommendations to the Board of Trustees in time for the yearly budget formation.
6. Makes appropriate reports of committee activities if determined to be necessary to the Council. Makes a high level, brief report via the annual report.
7. The committee members for each PRC share leadership responsibilities and select a facilitator.
8. All information shared at meetings of the PRC is kept strictly confidential unless there is a serious possibility of harm.
9. In the event that conflict arises between pastors, the action to seek resolution will include the following steps in this order:
  - a) The pastors will attempt to work out their differences between themselves to their mutual satisfaction.
  - b) Should this action fail to resolve the difference, the next course of action is to meet with two representatives from each PRC to reach consensus.
  - c) If resolution is not reached through steps 1 and 2, the PRCs shall jointly seek involvement and resolution assistance from the Conference Minister.

**Section 9. Denominational Delegates**

Each delegate:

1. Attends all annual, semi-annual and special meetings or convocations of the organization to which he or she is a delegate.
2. Serves as liaison with church boards and the congregation as appropriate in order to keep the congregation informed of significant official action.
3. Gathers information throughout the year on the work and policy of the organization to which he or she is a delegate as well as the organization's actionable issues of concern.

**ARTICLE XIII. Amendments or Revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws of MCC**

The Bylaws of this Constitution may be amended in a special Council meeting if immediate action needs to be taken.