

BYLAWS  
OF  
THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NORTH STONINGTON  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
NORTH STONINGTON, CONNECTICUT

*Revision P, Dated December 1, 2014*

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## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

1. The name of this church is the Congregational Church of North Stonington (United Church of Christ). It was incorporated June 5, 1905, under section 220 of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut.

## **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

1. The acknowledged purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to strive for Christian fellowship within this church and unity within the Church Universal; to render loving service toward all humanity, and to work for promotion of justice, the realization of human kinship and the reign of peace.

## **ARTICLE III. POLITY**

1. This church shall be part of the United Church of Christ and it shall sustain that relationship to the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ adopted July 4, 1961, relating to local churches.
2. The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to Laws of the State of Connecticut relating to Section 220 of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut.

## **ARTICLE IV. FAITH AND COVENANT AND OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT**

### FAITH -

This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of all people. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and our practice as Christians, it celebrates two Sacraments: Baptism, and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. It is united in this common

### “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 own 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.

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.

COVENANT-- We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God as taught in the Holy Scripture and taught in the experiences of life. We seek to live the life of love and prayer and to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth. As did our forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and we look with favor toward the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

#### **OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT**

**“As an Open and Affirming Church: We respect the worth and dignity of all persons who come into our church family regardless of race, age, marital standing, gender, economic status, mental or physical challenges, nationality or sexual orientation. We promise to support one another in our personal struggles, to understand and accept differences in one another, and pray to strengthen our love and acceptance.”**

#### **ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

1. Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized and has either been confirmed or made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior. Application for church membership shall be made to the minister or the Board of Deacons. Applicants shall become members by a favorable vote of the Board of Deacons. This church shall be notified of such action and the names placed on the active church list.
2. Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and missions; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community.

3. Each member shall have a vote.
4. Any member may, upon request, be granted a letter of transfer to any other Christian Church. The church shall be notified of such action.
5. The Board of Deacons shall revise the membership list annually by transferring members to the inactive list. After due notice, a member whose address has long been unknown or who for a period of two years has not attended the church's worship or contributed to its support, may, by recommendation of the Board of Deacons, be removed from the membership roll and placed on the inactive list. The members of this list may be returned to active membership upon a favorable vote of the Board of Deacons whenever circumstances warrant.
6. Chairpersonship of all boards, councils, and committees within the church organization shall be vested only in members of legal age.
7. **Membership on all Boards shall be made up of church members.**

#### **ARTICLE VI. GOVERNING BODY**

1. The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in church meeting. The vote of the majority of members present at the meeting shall be the action of the church. A quorum shall consist of 10% of the active members.

#### **ARTICLE VII. CHURCH COUNCIL**

1. The Church Council in fulfilling the stated purpose of the Christian Church shall be the policy-making body and shall transact the business of the church. It shall be composed of the Chairperson of the Church Council, the Vice-chairperson of the Church Council, the Clerk of the Church, the Treasurer of the Church, **and Representatives to the Church Council from the :**  
~~the Chairperson of the~~
  - Board of Deacons,
  - ~~the Chairperson of the~~ Board of Trustees,
  - ~~the Chairperson of the~~ **Board of** Christian Education ~~Committee~~,
  - ~~the Chairperson of the~~ Mission Committee,
  - ~~the Chairperson of the~~ **Board of** Music ~~Committee~~,
  - ~~the Chairperson of the~~ **Board of** Finance ~~Committee~~,
  - ~~the Chairperson of the~~ Stewardship Committee,
  - ~~and the chairperson of the~~ Technology Committee.

All Church Council members shall be members of the church. Each Church Council member, **on behalf of one's committee or board**, shall submit an annual report to the Vice-Chairperson of the Church Council. A quorum shall consist of six members.

**2. The Church Council shall:**

- a. *Meet prior to the proposed Budget Meeting for an overview of the proposed budget and hear the recommendations of the Personnel Committee regarding salary and benefits for the employed staff of the church.*
- b. present a budget to the church, and provide for the raising of the budget voted by the church.
- c. be responsible for the proper disbursements of funds as established in the budget approved by the church, which shall include hearing and acting upon out-of-the-ordinary expenses in excess of five percent of any single line item;
- d. convene a church meeting prior to expenditure of any principal of invested funds or interest not authorized for expenditures in the current year's annual budget;
- e. provide for the proper auditing of the Treasurer's records;
- f. appoint the Search Committee and present recommendations to the church, which shall vote upon the calling of the minister;
- g. in addition to the stated boards or committees, appoint such other committees as it may deem necessary;
- h. hear and act upon the report of the Nominating Committee *two (2) Council meetings prior to the Annual Meeting*; ~~at the December Council Meeting.~~
- i. *hear and act upon the reports of the standing committees not stated above including: Cemetery, Fundraising, Memorial Gifts, Nominating, Pastoral Relations, and Personnel Committees.*
- j. fill vacancies occurring among those elected *in the interim between Annual Meetings by a vote of the Council on names presented*;
- k. have regularly stated meetings, preferably monthly, for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it, special meetings being subject to the chairperson's call;
- l. All acts and deliberations of the Church Council are subject to the will of and revision by the church.

**3. The Chairperson of the Church Council shall:**

- a. be responsible for overseeing the conduct of church business as designated by the Church Council;
- b. preside at all meetings of the Church Council;

- c. preside at all meetings of the church.

**4. The Vice-chairperson of the Church Council shall:**

- a. act in the absence of the Chairperson of the Church Council;
- b. be responsible for securing reports from the Church Council members, all committees, boards, and organizations, and assembling them in booklet form to be submitted to the church one week before at its annual meeting.
- c. Serve as a member of the Pastoral Relations Committee and as Chairperson of the Staff Relations (formerly Personnel) Committee.

**5. The Clerk of the Church shall:**

- a. record the minutes of all called meetings of the church and the meetings of the Church Council;
- b. prepare and list all authorized warnings and notices at least seven days previous to any proposed church meeting or election, and read or cause the same to be read to the congregation on the Sunday preceding said meeting or election;
- c. maintain ~~preserve~~ all documents of the church in a central location except those specifically assigned to others at the direction of the Church Council; and in addition, all legal documents are to be kept in the church's safe deposit box;
- d. maintain an accurate and permanent register of the roll of members, which shall include the manner and date of admissions and removals;
- e. maintain a record of all baptisms, marriages, and funerals of church members, and the dates thereof;
- f. maintain an up-to-date active membership list, and also record the inactive membership list as prepared by the Board of Deacons;
- g. submit a statistical report of the church entitled Report of the Church Clerk for the Annual Report.

**6. The Treasurer of the Church shall:**

- a. serve as a member of the Finance Committee and be bonded.
- b. record all monies;

- c. keep a record of all financial transactions and provide written monthly and year-end financial reports to the Church Council;
- d. disburse all monies approved by the Church Council as previously provided by the Church budget;
- e. disburse other monies as directed by the Church Council;
- f. at the direction of the Church Council, carefully care for the securities, financial documents, and insurance policies, keeping them in a place safe from fire and theft;
- g. serve not more than two three-year terms, consecutively;
- h. be aided by the Vice-chairperson of the Finance Committee of the church, who shall act in the absence of the Treasurer of the church and fulfill such duties as shall be assigned as a member of the Finance Committee.

**7. ALL BOARDS AND COMMITTEES of the church shall:**

- a. elect a chairperson and a council representative (and such other officers as may be needed ) at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the congregation.
- b. be represented at the Church Council meetings by the council representative. Exception: when the representative is elected at the Annual Meeting.
- c. submit budget requests to Church Council for the proposed church budget every September.

**8. ALL BOARDS, as needed, shall:**

- a. recommend to the Church Council a person, by name, to be hired as a staff member reporting to that Board;
- b. maintain up up-to-date Job Descriptions, and ensure they are in line with our Healthy Church policy;
- c. *and provide for timely annual review and recommendations in coordination with Personnel Committee.*

**9. The Board of Deacons shall:**

- a. be composed of 12 members; the term of office shall be three years, with *four members* ~~two men and two women~~ elected annually *with an intention of having a balance of men and women*;
- b. take heed to the high calling of their office, guarding faithfully all the spiritual interests of the church, maintaining order in the house of God, and ministering to the comfort of all.

- c. assist and support the minister in the spiritual affairs of the church;
- d. carry on a program of regular visitations in the homes of parishioners and potential members, and shall visit the sick of the parish;
- e. provide for the preparation and care of the Lord's Supper and assist the minister in the serving thereof;
- f. assist the minister in preparing and approving candidates for church membership;
- g. provide for the supply of the pulpit in the absence of the minister;
- h. appoint ushers and instruct them in their duties;
- i. be responsible for the revision of the church roll (see Article V,5);
- j. appoint a committee to provide flowers for the church services;
- k. be members of the church ~~elected by the church~~ and installed in their office;  
~~elect a chairperson and vice chairperson by the last meeting prior to the annual meeting;~~
- l. have regularly scheduled meetings, preferably monthly.

#### **10. The Board of Trustees shall:**

- a. have the care and custody of all property of the church as a sacred trust, whether real or personal, in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and under direction of the Church Council;  
  
~~be members of the church elected by the church;~~
- b. be composed of nine members, the term of office being three years with three members elected annually;  
  
~~elect a chairperson and vice chairperson by the last meeting prior to the annual meeting;~~
- c. have regularly scheduled meetings, preferably monthly.
- d. **Provide for an annual review of the Sexton, an make appropriate recommendations to the Personnel Committee for the purpose of planning the proposed church budget.**

- e. **Provide recommendations to the proposed Church Budget every September.**

**11. The Board of Christian Education Committee shall:**

- a. Establish and administer, **with the Christian Education Coordinator and the Minister,** Christian Education programs of the church. ~~through its Church School, Kinderkirk, Vacation Bible School, and youth and adult programs;~~
- b. Be composed of six members ~~elected by the church~~ (two **elected** each year for a term of three years;
- c. Have regularly scheduled meetings, preferably monthly;

~~Elect a chairperson and vice chairperson by the last meeting prior to the annual meeting;~~

- d. **Provide for an annual review of the Christian Education Coordinator, and make appropriate recommendations to the Personnel Committee for the purpose of planning the proposed church budget.** ~~The chairperson shall report on the educational programs of the church at the regular meeting of the Church Council;~~
- e. **Provide recommendations to the proposed Church Budget every September.**
- f. Recommend to the Church Council a person, by name, to be hired as Christian Education Coordinator, **as needed.**

**12. The Board of Finance Committee shall:**

- a. meet at least twice a year to review the financial investments of the church and to make recommendations for investment changes (if any) to the Church Council for their approval and action.
- b. **review and make recommendations to the Church Council regarding general financial matters of the church as are deemed necessary.**
- c. be composed of the following members (other members may be added at the discretion of this committee) to provide for individual terms of three years on a rotating basis:
  - (1) the **Chairperson of the Board of Finance Committee**, who shall make a report of the state of the finances of the church at the regular meeting of the Church Council and provide quarterly church investments performance reports and shall be bonded;
  - (2) the **Vice-chairperson** of the **Board of Finance Committee**, who shall:
    - (a) act in the absence of the Chairperson of the **Board of Finance Committee**;
    - (b) act in the absence of the Treasurer;
    - (c) act in the absence of the Financial Secretary;

- (d) be bonded;
- (e) The Vice-chairperson shall not act simultaneously as the Treasurer and Financial Secretary.  
If the need arises, the chairperson shall act in one of the positions.

- (3) The **Financial Secretary**, who shall be responsible for the accounting of all monies received and the depositing of all funds with the Treasurer, and who shall be responsible for the preparation of quarterly statements acknowledging pledged money received; shall not serve consecutively more than two terms; and who shall be bonded;
- (4) The **Treasurer** of the Church, who shall be bonded;
- (5) The **Stewardship Chairperson**, who shall be responsible for the annual pledge campaign to provide the money to meet the budget;
- (6) The **Budget Chairperson**, who shall be responsible for the submission of a proposed budget to the Church Council.

The Chairperson of Finance and Treasurer shall be elected in one year, the Stewardship Chairperson and Budget Chairperson the following year, and the Financial Secretary and Vice-chairperson of Finance the third year.

**13. The Mission Committee shall:**

- a. consist of six members, two of which will be elected annually and serve on a three-year rotating basis;
- b. coordinate and administer the mission program of this church;
- c. elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson after annual meeting.

**14. The Board of Music ~~Committee~~ shall:**

- a. consist of six members, two of which will be elected annually and serve on a three-year rotating basis;
- b. coordinate and administer the music program of this church;
- c. ~~elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson by the last meeting prior to the annual meeting;~~ **provide for an annual review of the Director of Music, and make appropriate recommendations to the Personnel Committee for the purpose of planning the proposed church budget.**
- d. provide recommendations to the proposed church budget every September.
- e. recommend to the Council a person or persons, by name, to be hired as professional music staff.

**15. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall:**

- a. consist of the Vice-chairperson of the Church Council, the Vice-chairperson of the Board of Deacons, two members chosen by the minister, and one member elected at large by the congregation;
- b. provide the liaison between the minister and congregation;
- c. provide support and advocacy for the minister and annual review, prior to budget submittal, of ministerial responsibilities, working conditions and compensation.

**16. The Staff Relations Personnel Committee shall:**

- a. **Consist of the Vice-Chairperson of Church Council (who will moderate this committee); one representative each from the Boards that oversee a staff member and Board of Finance.**
- b. **Work with the Pastoral Relations Committee and Pastor; Board of Music, Board of Trustees, Board of Christian Education and their employees; and the Board of finance to:**
  - i. review/update job descriptions and responsibilities, and/or contracts for the church's employees;**
  - ii. develop job descriptions for employees as needed;**
  - iii. develop annual employees performance criteria;**
  - iv. develop annual employee performance schedule;**
  - v. review salaries and benefits;**
  - vi. review market data for comparable positions.**
- c. **Make the following recommendations to Church Council:**
  - i. job descriptions and/or contracts for employees;**
  - ii. annual employee performance evaluation criteria;**
  - iii. annual employee performance evaluation schedule**
  - iv. salary and benefit recommendations for the proposed fiscal year budget.**
- d. **The Vice Chairperson of Council shall schedule and moderate meetings, at least annually, in preparation of budget recommendations.**

*This Committee was established by vote at Church Council meeting 6 May 2013.*

*The name of the committee was changed by a vote at Church Council 4 May 2014.*

**17. The Old Plains Cemetery Committee shall:**

- a. consist of six members, two of which will be elected annually and serve on a three-year rotating basis;
- b. oversee the Old Plains Cemetery and administer the Cemetery Fund.

**18. The Stewardship Committee shall:**

- a. consist of six members, two of which will be elected annually and serve on a three-year basis;
- b. coordinate and administer a year-round program of stewardship education;
- c. coordinate and administer the annual pledge campaign and follow-up;
- d. the Chairperson (who will be one of the six) will be nominated and elected at the annual meeting.

**19. The Fund Raising Committee shall:**

- a. consist of six members, elected by the Church (two **appointed from existing standing committees** each year for a term of three years);
- b. have quarterly scheduled meetings;
- c. work to meet the budget goal designated for fundraising;
- d. support and assist other committees in their fund raising projects, as needed.
- e. **Administer the Fundraising bank account fund.**

**20. The Memorial Gifts Committee shall:**

- a. consist of three members, elected by the church (one each year for a term of three years);
- b. have meetings as requested by the church Council or by the family of a deceased member to consider the purchase of gifts from the respective memorial fund;
- c. coordinate and oversee the memorial gifts to be established, and to record those gifts in the record book in a timely manner.

**21. The Technology Committee shall:**

- a. consist of three members, elected by the Church;
- b. have meetings as requested by the church council to plan for needed technological improvements, maintenance and recommendations;

- c. act on any technological matters as approved by the church council.

**ARTICLE VIII. MINISTER**

- 1. The Minister shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Board of Deacons. The minister shall seek to enlist all persons as followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, have under his/her care all services of public worship, and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with the various boards and committees. The minister shall be an ex-officio member of all boards, councils and committees of the church.

**ARTICLE IX. HISTORIAN**

- 1. The Historian shall keep a journal of all historical events pertaining to the church, and serve as a delegate to historical societies.

**ARTICLE X. DELEGATES**

- 1. Delegates shall represent the church at all meetings of the organizations to which they have been elected.

**ARTICLE XI. NOMINATION AND ELECTION**

- 1. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of six members; the terms of office shall be three years, with two members elected annually.
- 2. The Nominating Committee shall convene to prepare a slate of nominees for the following positions:

a.	Clerk of the church	n.	Nominating Committee Members (two)
b.	Treasurer of the church	o.	Delegates to New London Association of Churches (two)
c.	Chairperson of the Church Council	p.	Alternate Delegates to New London Association of Churches (two)
d.	Vice-chairperson of the Church Council	q.	Delegates to State Conference (two)
e.	Chairperson of the Finance Committee	r.	Alternate Delegates to State Conference (two)
f.	<b>Board of</b> Christian Education (two)	s.	Mission Committee (two)
g.	Vice-chairperson of <b>Board of Finance Committee</b>	t.	<b>Board of Music Committee</b> (two)
h.	Budget Chairperson	u.	Old Plains Cemetery Committee (two)
i.	Stewardship Chairperson	v.	Stewardship Committee (two)
j.	Financial Secretary	w.	<del><b>Auditor who shall complete the audit prior to Annual meeting</b></del>
k.	Trustees (three)	x.	Pastoral Relations Committee (one)

l.	Deacons (four- two women and two men)	y.	Fund Raising Committee (two <b>appointed from existing boards/committees</b> )
m.	Historian	z.	Technology Committee (three)
mm	Memorial Gifts Committee		

3. **The Nominating Committee’s report shall be presented to the Church Council at its December meeting.** (See ARTICLE VII, CHURCH COUNCIL, 2.h.)
4. Public notice of this slate of nominees shall be given on the Sunday previous to the annual election.
5. The slate of nominees shall be presented to the membership at the annual meeting; other nominations may be made from the floor.
6. All nominees shall be elected by a majority of those present and voting. Written ballots shall be used for such offices for which there are more than one nominee. The term of office of those elected shall be for one year unless otherwise designated, and they shall take office as of the Annual Meeting.

~~Elect a chairperson immediately after the annual election.~~

7. During the year the Nominating Committee shall act to fill vacancies occurring among those elected by presenting the name of a qualified nominee to the Church Council as soon as practicable after notification of the need.

**ARTICLE XII. CHURCH MEETINGS**

1. The Annual Meeting of the church shall be held during the **fourth** week in January, or at such other times as specified by the church Council, to elect officers, act on the annual report, and transact any other business proper to come before the church.
2. Special church meetings may be called by the Church Council, or the minister, or by a petition to the Church Council signed by not less than ten percent of the active members. The Church Council shall, **within three weeks of receiving the petition, or by the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Church Council, schedule a date for the Special Meeting.**
3. **Adequate notice of at least two Sundays prior to a congregational meeting shall be printed in the Sunday Bulletin and announced in worship to the congregation.**

### ARTICLE XIII. NON-DISCRIMINATION

1. The Church shall not discriminate against any person for membership, lay leadership or professional staff. All whose purpose is consistent with the statement of purpose of the Church are welcome to use the facilities.

### ARTICLE XIV. RULES OF ORDER

1. Robert's Rules of Order, Revised shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these Bylaws.

### ARTICLE XV. TERMINATION

1. In the event of the dissolution of the Church, its property shall become vested in, and its functions as trustee, if any, administered by the Missionary Society of Connecticut (United Church of Christ) or its successor.

### ARTICLE XVI. AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be made at any duly called church meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting. The proposed amendments, in written **or electronic** form, shall be ~~sent~~ **distributed** to the membership two weeks prior to the meeting.