

The COVENANT and BYLAWS

of

**The First Congregational Church of Vernon
Vernon, Connecticut**

a member Church of

The United Church of Christ

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ARTICLE I NAME

This organization, which first gathered in 1762, incorporated March 8, 1910 in accordance with the provisions of Title 33; Chapter 598 of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, is named **The First Congregational Church of Vernon.**

ARTICLE II OBJECTIVE

Our church seeks to unite members of Christ's Body in a sacred covenant to walk together in God's ways, watching over and assisting each other in love and faithfulness, and proclaiming to the world, in word and deed, the love and sovereignty of the crucified and risen Christ.

ARTICLE III POLITY

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and finds in the Holy Scriptures its guidance in matters of faith and discipline as interpreted by the Divine Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience.

The government of this church is vested in its active and associate members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs.

ARTICLE IV COVENANT

We believe in God and hold a deep and abiding love for Our Savior, Jesus Christ. We are willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit as it is revealed to us in Scripture and through prayerful discernment.

We are a faith community. As members of this Body of Christ, we

- proclaim the good news of Christ's resurrection and the freedom of new life for all who follow in his ways;
- share God's love with others by reaching out to those in need; and
- continue to deepen our knowledge and understanding of God's call in our lives.

With the help of God and this Body of Christ, we covenant to do our best to follow Christ's example and embrace the Great Commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself," and his new Commandment, "Love one another." As we journey together, we promise to care and pray for one another, ever mindful that we are to lift up one another with dignity and Christian love.

We will support this Body of Christ to the best of our ability, through participation in worship, sacraments, work, programs and events, financial commitment, mission and fellowship. We promise to work together to strengthen the ministries of First Congregational Church of Vernon, United Church of Christ, and deepen our commitment as a faith community that is welcoming and accessible to all.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

A. QUALIFICATIONS

Any person is qualified to be received as an active member or associate member of this church by:

1. Confession of faith and baptism;
2. Presentation of a satisfactory letter of transfer from another Church; or
3. Reaffirmation of faith if a letter of transfer is not available; and satisfactory completion of an orientation program by the Pastor(s) with participation of the Board of Deacons

B. RECEPTION

Qualified persons shall affirm acceptance of the Church covenant and be received as active members or associate members of this Church during any service of worship or at such other time or place as approved by the Pastor(s).

An Associate member is one who meets the qualifications for membership in section A of this Article and:

1. Is an active member of another church; and
2. Desires to retain active membership in that church.

C. DUTIES

It is the duty of each active member and associate member to uphold and practice the covenant of this Church as expressed in Article IV of these bylaws. Such duties include but are not limited to:

1. Be faithful to all duties essential to the Christian life;
2. Attend, regularly, the services of this Church;
3. Give systematically for its support and for its benevolences;
4. Share in its organized work;
5. Seek, diligently, the spiritual welfare of the Church and the winning of others to Christ; and
6. Live and work together in Christian love.

D. RIGHTS

1. Active Members

Active members have the right to:

- a. Participate in and vote on all matters brought before a duly called meeting of the Church;
- b. Attend Church Council meetings without the right to vote unless serving as a member of the Council;
- c. Bring matters before the Church Council for discussion by communicating to the Moderator or Acting Moderator at least three (3) days prior to a Church Council meeting for inclusion of any such matter in the agenda; and
- d. Attend board or committee meetings with the permission of the chairperson.

2. Associate Members

Associate members have all the rights of active members as set forth in this Article except that:

- a. An associate member shall not serve as a delegate to an association, state, or national conference; and
- b. An associate member shall not be entitled to vote on the matter of the call of the Pastor(s) or on a motion requesting the resignation or dismissal of the Pastor(s).

3. Inactive Members

Inactive members do not enjoy any of the rights of active or associate membership until restored to active or associate membership in accordance with section G. of this Article.

E. TERMINATION

The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles and usage of the United Church of Christ and may be terminated as follows:

1. Upon written request to the Clerk, any active or inactive member who desires a letter of transfer and recommendation to another church may receive it upon approval by the Pastor, and subsequently the Board of Deacons shall be notified.
 - a. Letters of transfer must be addressed to a particular church.
 - b. Associate members, by virtue of prior active membership, shall not be issued letters of transfer but may be given a letter of recommendation by vote of the Board of Deacons.
2. Membership shall immediately terminate on:
 - a. Written request to the Church/or release from the Covenant obligations;
 - b. Rejection of the Covenant; or
 - c. Becoming an active member of another church, except that membership in this church may be continued as an associate member.

F. TRANSFER TO AN INACTIVE STATUS

Active or associate members who have not communicated with this Church or contributed to its support for a period of two (2) years or more, may be transferred to an inactive status by vote of the Board of Deacons.

From the date of such transfer, such members shall cease to be reported on the active membership roll.

G. RESTORATION OF MEMBERSHIP

1. **Terminated Members**
Any person whose membership has been terminated may, upon written request to the Church, be restored to active or associate membership upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons.
2. **Inactive Status Members**
Any active or associate member whose membership has been transferred to an inactive status may be restored to active or associate membership upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons.

H. REPORTING

The Board of Deacons shall report any action taken under section B, E, F or G of this Article to the Clerk of this Church.

The Clerk shall publish a summary of said reports in the Clerk's Annual Report to the Church.

ARTICLE VI BUSINESS MEETINGS

A. TYPES OF BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. **Annual Organizational Meeting**
The Annual Organizational Meeting shall be held within the first fifteen (15) days of June on a day and at a time and place determined by Church Council. The purpose of this meeting is to:
 - a. Receive and act upon the annual reports of the Pastor(s), officers, boards, committees and auxiliary organizations;
 - b. Hear and act upon proposed objectives for the ensuing year;
 - c. Elect officers and members of boards and committees; and

- d. Transact any other business as may properly come before a business meeting
- 2. **Annual Fiscal Meeting**
The Annual Fiscal Meeting shall be held within the month of January on a day and at a time and place determined by the Church Council. The purpose of this meeting is to:
 - a. Receive and act upon the report of the Auditing Committee;
 - b. Receive and review prior year financial report.
 - c. Receive and act upon the budget for the fiscal year as presented by the Board of Finance;
 - d. Elect members of the Auditing Committee, the Stewardship Committee and the Safe Church Committee; and
 - e. Transact any other business as may properly come before a business meeting.
- 3. **Special Business Meetings**
Special Business Meetings may be called by the Church Council, Board of Deacons, Trustees, Board of Finance or the Pastor(s).

Special Business Meetings shall be called within thirty (30) days by the Clerk at the written request of at least fifteen (15) active or associate members provided the nature of business to be transacted is clearly stated in the written request.

The purpose of a Special Business Meeting is to:

- a. Hear and act upon the business stated in the call and notice of the Special Business Meeting; and
- b. Discuss but not act upon any other matters to come before the meeting.

B. PLACE OF BUSINESS MEETINGS

Business meetings shall be held on the Church premises except when the Church premises are untenable for this purpose.

C. NOTICE OF BUSINESS MEETINGS

All business meetings require legal notice. Legal notice shall consist of:

- 1. At least one (1) reading of the call and nature of business to be transacted. The reading shall be given from the pulpit during a regular worship service at least one (1) full week prior to the meeting;
- 2. At least three (3) written notices of the call and nature of the business to be transacted. Written notice shall be posted in the narthex, fellowship hall and in an area near the Church office normally used for posting information. Written notice shall be posted at least one (1) full week prior to the meeting; and
- 3. The use of Church publications and bulletins to inform members of the time, place and nature of business to be transacted. Printing or publication dates which are not timely shall not be considered lack of legal notice for a business meeting.

D. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. Conducting Business Meetings

Business meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, as revised.

2. Quorum

A Quorum shall consist of at least fifty (50) active and/or associate members entitled to vote on the business to be transacted.

3. **Acting Moderator**
If the Moderator and Vice Moderator are absent, the Clerk or other officer shall call the meeting to order for the purpose of electing an Acting Moderator for the duration of the meeting.

4. **Voting**

a. **Who May Vote**

All active and associate members of the Church present are entitled to vote as specified in Article V section D of these bylaws.

b. **Majority**

The majority of the legal votes cast is decisive except where otherwise specified in these bylaws.

c. **Special Votes Required**

The following motions require a two thirds (2/3) vote of the qualified voters present:

- 1) A motion to call a Pastor or Associate Pastor-which must be by written ballot; and
- 2) A motion to amend the bylaws.

A motion to dismiss or request resignation of a Pastor or Associate Pastor requires a majority vote by written ballot of the qualified members present.

d. **Tie Vote**

A tie vote is a vote in the negative except that, in the case of a tie vote, the presiding officer may cast the deciding vote if:

- 1) The presiding officer has not yet voted on the motion; and
- 2) The presiding officer is entitled to vote on the motion.

e. **Proxy and Absentee Ballot Voting**

Proxy voting and absentee ballot voting are not permitted

ARTICLE VII

THE CHURCH STAFF

A. **GENERAL**

The Church Staff shall consist of those persons who work for a wage or salary in the service of the Church as employer.

The Pastoral staff shall become active members of this church.

Other Church Staff may be active or associate members of this Church and, if so, enjoy all the rights of membership set forth in Article V of these bylaws.

B. **STAFF MEMBERS**

1. **Pastorate**

The Pastor(s) shall be ordained with full Pastoral standing in the association to which this Church belongs. The Senior Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church and the administrative leader of the Church staff. Should there be a personage in the position of Associate Pastor, he/she shall work under the tutelage of the Senior Pastor in providing for the spiritual welfare of the Church.

a. **Call and Term of Position:** See Article XII N: Formation of Search Committee
The Pastor(s) shall be called by and is responsible to the congregation of this Church.

- 1) The term of the Pastor(s) shall be indefinite.

- 2) The call of the Pastor(s) shall require a two thirds (2/3) written ballot vote of the qualified voters present at a special meeting called for that purpose.

b. **Duties**

The duties of the Pastor(s) include but are not limited to:

- 1) With the assistance and guidance of the Board of Deacons:
 - a) Seek to enlist followers of Christ, principally as members of this Church.
 - b) Preach the Gospel in regular and special worship services.
 - c) Administer the Sacraments.
 - d) Have under his/her care all services of public worship.
- 2) Carry on a ministry of preaching, pastoral care and leadership.
- 3) Perform pastoral visitation in conjunction with any other staff Pastor(s) and the Board of Deacons.
- 4) Provide Pastoral care to meet the needs of the Church family.
- 5) Supervise the activities of the other Church staff.
- 6) Coordinate the activities of the Church in cooperation with the various officers, boards, committees and auxiliary organizations.
- 7) Be an ex-officio member without vote of all boards and committees (exception: Sr Pastor on Human Resources Committee, Article XII J).
- 8) The Senior Pastor shall perform an annual performance review on each staff member in conjunction with others as appropriate.
- 9) Submit an annual budget for the Church office to the Board of Finance.
- 10) But in all cases above, the Associate Pastor shall work in concert with or under the direction of the Senior Pastor.

c. **Performance**

An assessment of the Pastor(s)' performance shall take place on an annual basis or more frequently if deemed necessary. The assessment of performance shall be completed by the Board of Deacons (and the Senior Pastor as respects the Associate Pastor).

The Pastor(s) shall be apprised of this assessment by the parties performing the assessment prior to June 1st.

The Board of Deacons has the discretion to take action as a result of the assessment of the Pastor(s)' performance per paragraph B1.d Resignation or Dismissal.

d. **Resignation or Dismissal**

- 1) The Pastor(s) may decide to leave the Church Staff of his/her own volition. If so, he/she shall give sixty (60) days written notice of this decision.
- 2) The Church may request the Pastor(s)' resignation. Such a request requires a majority vote, by written ballot, of the qualified voters present at a special business meeting for that purpose.
 - a) Resignation shall be presented and effected within sixty (60) days following the meeting.
 - b) If resignation is not presented, dismissal shall take place sixty (60) days following the meeting.
 - c) Dismissal may take place immediately following the meeting in the event of moral or ethical impropriety.

- 3) Should the Pastor(s) lose full pastoral standing as set forth in Article VII B. 1., he/she will be dismissed immediately without vote from the Church Membership.
- 4) Upon the recommendation of the Board of Deacons, the Pastor(s) may be dismissed immediately for moral and ethical impropriety.

2. **Director of Christian Education**

This Church may, from time to time, deem it necessary to have a Director of Christian Education. This personage may be ordained with full Pastoral standing in the Association to which this church belongs. In the absence of such personage, the Pastoral Staff shall assume the duties of Director of Christian Education.

a. **Selection and Term of Position**

The Board of Christian Education shall seek, interview and recommend to the Church Council its choice for appointment to the position of Director of Christian Education.

- 1) The term of the Director of Christian Education shall be indefinite.
- 2) The appointment to the position of Director of Christian Education shall require a two thirds (2/3) vote by written ballot of the qualified voters present at a regular or special Church Council meeting called for that purpose

b. **Duties**

Under the direction of the Pastor(s) and guidance of the Board of Christian Education the duties of the Director of Christian Education may include, but are not limited to the following religious education activities of the Church:

- 1) Sunday School
- 2) Vacation Bible School
- 3) Youth Fellowship Groups
- 4) Confirmation Class
- 5) Occasional lectures and Bible study classes
- 6) Assist and advise the Board of Christian Education and the Church School Superintendent in selecting Sunday School curriculum.
- 7) Encourage and participate in Sunday School teacher recruitment and education.
- 8) Be a member of the Board of Christian Education (without vote).
- 9) Assist the Board of Christian Education in preparation of an annual budget

c. **Performance**

An assessment of the Director's performance shall take place on an annual basis or more frequently if deemed necessary. The assessment of performance shall be completed by the Pastor or Associate Pastor and the Board of Christian Education.

The Director shall be apprised of this assessment by the Board of Christian Education prior to June 1st.

The Board of Christian Education has the discretion to make recommendations to the Church Council for any action to be taken as a result of the assessment of the Director's performance.

d. **Resignation or Dismissal**

- 1) The Director of Christian Education may decide to leave the Church Staff of his/her own volition. If so, he/she shall give thirty (30) days written notice of this decision.

- 2) The Church Council may dismiss the Director of Christian Education. Such dismissal requires a recommendation from the Board of Christian Education or the Human Resources Committee and a majority vote by written ballot of the qualified voters present at a regular or special meeting of the Church Council called for that purpose. Dismissal shall take place thirty (30) days following the meeting. However, in the event of moral or ethical impropriety, dismissal may take place immediately.
- 3) Should the Director of Christian Education be ordained with full pastoral standing in the Association to which the Church belongs and should he/she lose said standing, he/she will be dismissed immediately without vote from the Church Council.

3. **Choir Director**

This Church may deem it necessary to have a Choir Director.

a. **Selection and Term of Position**

The Board of Music shall seek, interview and recommend to the Church Council its choice for appointment to the position of Choir Director.

- 1) The term of the Choir Director shall be indefinite.
- 2) The appointment to the position of Choir Director shall require a two thirds (2/3) vote by written ballot of the qualified voters present at a regular or special Church Council meeting called for that purpose

b. **Duties**

The duties of the Choir Director include but are not limited to:

- 1) Direct and lead the choir for all worship services of this Church in which the choir participates.
- 2) Schedule and conduct all choir rehearsals.
- 3) Coordinate with the Pastor and Organist the appropriate music selected for worship services.
- 4) Select, with the aid of the Board of Music and Organist, and purchase the music needed for choral performances, within the limitations of the current budget.
- 5) Cooperate with the Board of Music to provide music for special and summer worship services.
- 6) Cooperate with the Board of Music to encourage participation in the various music programs of the Church.
- 7) Cooperate with other churches in the community for participation by this Church's Choir at special services or performances.
- 8) Arrange, with the help of the Senior Choir and Board of Music, for soloists to perform at the services of worship when Choir does not perform.

c. **Performance**

An assessment of the Choir Director's performance shall take place on an annual basis or more frequently if deemed necessary. The assessment of performance shall be completed by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Music.

The Choir Director shall be apprised of this assessment by the Board of Music prior to June 1st.

The Board of Music has the discretion to make recommendations to the Church Council for any action to be taken as a result of the assessment of the Choir Director's performance.

- d. **Resignation or Dismissal**
 - 1) The Choir Director may decide to leave the Church Staff of his/her own volition. If so, he/she shall give thirty (30) days written notice of this decision.
 - 2) The Church Council may dismiss the Choir Director. Such dismissal requires a recommendation from the Board of Music or the Human Resources Committee and a majority vote by written ballot of the qualified voters present at a regular or special meeting of the Church Council called for that purpose. Dismissal shall take place thirty (30) days following the meeting. However, in the event of moral or ethical impropriety, dismissal may take place immediately

4. **Organist**

This Church may deem it necessary to have an Organist.

a. **Selection and Term of Position**

The Board of Music shall seek, interview and recommend to the Church Council its choice for appointment to the position of Organist.

- 1) The term of the Organist shall be indefinite.
- 2) The appointment to the position of Organist shall require a two thirds (2/3) vote by written ballot of the qualified voters present at a regular or special Church Council meeting called for that purpose.

b. **Duties**

The duties of the Organist include but are not limited to:

- 1) Work with the Pastor and Choir Director in the selection of appropriate music for worship services.
- 2) Play at all services of worship except during regular planned vacations.
- 3) Arrange for replacement during regular scheduled absences.
- 4) Accompany all choir rehearsals.
- 5) Provide rehearsals for soloists.
- 6) Participation in the selection of music for choral performances.
- 7) Cooperate with the Board of Music to encourage participation in the various music programs of the Church
- 8) Cooperate with other churches in the community for accompaniment for this church's choir at special services or performances.

c. **Performance**

An assessment of the Organist's performance shall take place on an annual basis or more frequently if deemed necessary. The assessment of performance shall be completed by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Music.

The Organist shall be apprised of this assessment by the Board of Music prior to June 1st.

The Board of Music has the discretion to make recommendations to the Church Council for any action to be taken as a result of the assessment of the Organist's performance.

d. **Resignation or Dismissal**

- 1) The Organist may decide to leave the Church Staff of his/her own volition. If so, he/she shall give thirty (30) days written notice of this decision.
- 2) The Church Council may dismiss the Organist. Such dismissal requires a recommendation from the Board of Music or the Human Resources Committee and a majority vote by written ballot of the qualified voters

present at a regular or special meeting of the Church Council called for that purpose. Dismissal shall take place thirty (30) days following the meeting. However, in the event of moral or ethical impropriety, dismissal may take place immediately.

5. **Choir Director/Organist**

The Church may deem it necessary to have a personage in the position of Choir Director/Organist.

- a. Sub paragraphs a,c & d of paragraphs 3 & 4 above apply.
- b. Duties include but are not limited to the duties of the separate positions of Choir Director and Organist or as amended by the Board of Music.

6. **Custodian**

This Church may find it necessary to have a custodian. The Custodian shall be under the general supervision of the Board of Trustees and the direct supervision of the Pastor.

a. **Selection and Term of Position**

The Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the Senior Pastor, shall seek, interview and hire the Custodian.

The term of the Custodian shall be indefinite.

b. **Duties**

The duties of the Custodian shall be established in writing by the Board of Trustees.

c. **Performance**

An assessment of the Custodian's performance shall take place on an annual basis or more frequently if deemed necessary. The assessment of performance shall be completed by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Trustees.

The Custodian shall be apprised of this assessment by the Board of Trustees prior to June 1st.

The Board of Trustees has the discretion to take any action as a result of the assessment of the Custodian's performance.

d. **Resignation or Dismissal**

1) The Custodian may decide to leave the Church Staff of his/her own volition. If so, he/she shall give two (2) weeks notice of this decision.

2) The Board of Trustees may dismiss the Custodian. Such dismissal requires a majority vote of the qualified voters present at a regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees called for that purpose. Dismissal shall take place no more than two (2) weeks following the meeting. However, in the event of moral or ethical impropriety, dismissal may take place immediately.

7. **Office Secretary**

This Church may find it necessary to have an Office Secretary. The Office Secretary shall be under the direct supervision of the Senior Pastor.

a. **Selection and Term of Position**

The Senior Pastor, or in the absence of a Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastor, shall seek, interview and hire the Office Secretary.

The term of the Office Secretary shall be indefinite.

b. **Duties**

The duties of the Office Secretary shall be established in writing by the Senior Pastor and the Church Council.

c. **Performance**

An assessment of the Office Secretary's performance shall take place on an annual basis or more frequently if deemed necessary. The assessment of performance shall be completed by the Pastor(s).

The Office Secretary shall be apprised of this assessment by the Senior Pastor prior to June 1.

The Senior Pastor has the discretion to take any action as a result of the assessment of the Office Secretary's performance.

d. **Resignation or Dismissal**

- 1) The Office Secretary may decide to leave the Church Staff of his/her own volition. If so, he/she shall give two (2) weeks notice of this decision.
- 2) The Senior Pastor, or in the absence of a Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastor, may dismiss the Office Secretary. Dismissal shall take place no more than two (2) weeks following the Pastor's decision to dismiss the Office Secretary. However, in the event of moral or ethical impropriety, dismissal may take place immediately.

ARTICLE VIII **THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**

Officers shall be active members of the Church.

A. **MODERATOR**

The Moderator of the Church is the presiding officer of all business meetings and meetings of the Church Council.

The Moderator shall not, except as set forth in his/her duties, serve as a member of any board or standing committee and if so serving shall resign such board or standing committee membership upon election to the office of Moderator.

1. **Election and Term of Office**

The Moderator shall be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected for three (3) additional terms. He/she shall then be ineligible for election to the office of Moderator or Vice Moderator for a period of one (1) year.

2. **Duties**

The duties of the Moderator include but are not limited to:

- a. Preside over all business meetings and meetings of the Church Council or provide for the Vice Moderator to act in his/her absence.
- b. Appoint an acting Clerk in the absence of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk at any meeting over which he/she presides.
- c. Follow the rules of parliamentary procedure adopted in these bylaws in presiding over meetings. The Moderator may appoint a Parliamentarian to advise him/her during the meeting.
- d. Although not mandatory, the Moderator should refrain from voting on any motion made during a meeting over which he/she presides, except as set forth in Article VI, Section D. 4. d. of these bylaws.
- e. Serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee.
- f. Serve as a member, ex officio without vote, on all other boards and standing committees

B. VICE MODERATOR

The Vice Moderator of the Church is the presiding officer of all business meetings and meetings of the Church Council in the absence of the Moderator.

1. Election and Term of Office

The Vice Moderator shall be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected for three (3) additional terms. He/she shall then be ineligible for a period of one (1) year.

2. Duties

- a. Assume the office and duties of the Moderator in his/her absence.
- b. Attend business meetings and Church Council meetings during his/her term of office to familiarize himself/herself with actions taken and programs initiated.
- c. Serve as a member of the Nominating Committee.
- d. Serve as a member, ex officio without vote, on all other boards and standing committees.
- e. Assist the Moderator in the carrying out of his/her duties.

C. CLERK

The Clerk is responsible for the maintenance of the official membership records of the Church and for the maintenance of minutes of all business meetings.

1. Election and Term of Office

The Clerk shall be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected.

2. Duties

The duties of the Clerk include but are not limited to:

- a. Maintain an accurate and up-to-date register of the members, past and present, of the Church.
- b. Maintain an accurate and chronological register of all baptisms, weddings and funerals as reported by the Pastor(s).
- c. Insure the safety of the Church Registers by keeping them in the Church vault.
- d. Make a survey of the Church rolls effective on May 31 of each year to be included in the Annual Organizational Report to the Church.
- e. Prepare and post legal notices for each business meeting of the Church.
- f. Provide the Church Secretary with notice of each business meeting in a form lending itself to reproduction in Church publications.
- g. Attend all Church business meetings for the purpose of recording minutes or provide for the Assistant Clerk to act in his/her absence.
- h. In the absence of the Moderator and Vice Moderator, at any business meeting call the meeting to order for the purpose of electing an Acting Moderator for the duration of the meeting.
- i. Prepare and keep record of persons elected to office.
- j. Prepare letters of transfer when requested, after approval by the Pastor, and notify the Board of Deacons of all such actions.
- k. Provide letters attesting to baptisms, marriage or membership as requested.
- l. Forward, monthly, to the Board of Deacons requests by members for a change in membership status or recommend same if circumstances warrant

D. ASSISTANT CLERK

The Assistant Clerk is an aide to the Clerk and specifically acts in the capacity of Clerk at all meetings of the Church Council. In the absence of the Clerk, the Assistant Clerk shall act as Clerk at any business meeting of the Church.

1. **Election and Term of Office**
The Assistant Clerk shall be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected.
2. **Duties**
The duties of the Assistant Clerk include but are not limited to: aid in all matters delegated by the clerk.

E. TREASURER

The Treasurer is responsible for safeguarding, disbursing, accounting and reporting on activity within, and status of, the funds of the Church including, but not limited to, the General Fund, Restricted Funds and Endowment Funds.

1. **Election and Term of Office**
The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and may be re-elected.
2. **Duties**
The duties of the Treasurer include but are not limited to:
 - a. In conjunction with the Board of Finance plan, organize, coordinate and control the method and procedure for handling and processing the receipts and disbursements of the various financial assets of the Church including but not limited to offerings, special gifts, bequests and investments.
 - b. Maintain the financial records of the Church, both business and individual contributions, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.
 - c. Prepare meaningful and accurate financial reports for the annual fiscal meeting.
 - d. Prepare summary statements of receipts and disbursements for all funds and present them to the Church Council and Board of Finance on a monthly basis.
 - e. Anticipate problems and report financial status to the Board of Finance.
 - f. Prepare the Church staff payroll in accordance with local, state and federal laws.
 - g. Prepare, sign and submit any and all Federal and State required tax returns or reports for payroll withholding or other returns or reports on a timely basis and in accordance with current federal and state government regulations.
 - h. Retain all financial records and documents as required by law, but not less than five (5) years.
 - i. Establish written procedures, in conjunction with the Board of Finance, for the maintenance and safeguarding of both active and inactive financial records.
 - j. Make the books of record available to the Audit Committee, Board of Finance, Church Council or the Church membership upon request for review or audit purposes.
 - k. Serve as an ex officio member with vote, on the Board of Finance.
 - l. Be bonded in such amount as the Church Council may require. The Church shall bear the cost of the bond.

F. ASSISTANT TREASURER(S)

There shall be one (1) or more Assistant Treasurers who shall aid the Treasurer in his/her responsibilities and duties.

1. **Election and Term of Office**
The Assistant Treasurer(s) shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and may be re-elected.
2. **Duties**
The duties of the Assistant Treasurer(s) include but are not limited to:
 - a. Verify the accuracy of Church Service receipts as reported by the Board of Finance and ensure the timely deposit of funds to the Church account.
 - b. Post contributions to individual accounts.
 - c. Perform the duties of the Treasurer in the absence of the Treasurer.

- d. Be bonded in such amount as the Church Council may require. The Church shall bear the cost of the bond.
- e. One assistant treasurer shall serve as an ex officio member with vote on the Board of Finance.

G. SUPERINTENDENT(S) OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL

The Superintendent(s) of the Church School shall, under the direction of the the Board of Christian Education, administer the Church School.

- 1. **Election and Term of Office**
The Superintendent(s) of the Church School shall be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected.
- 2. **Duties**
The duties of the Superintendent(s) of the Church School include but are not limited to:
 - a. Assist the Board of Christian Education in providing teachers for the Church School and substitute teachers when necessary.
 - b. Keep Church School attendance records.
 - c. Support the Board of Christian Education in Church School training sessions.
 - d. One superintendent shall serve as an ex officio member with vote on the Board of Christian Education.

H. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT(S) OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL

The Assistant Superintendent(s) of the Church School shall be responsible for aiding the Superintendent(s) in his/her responsibilities and duties.

- 1. **Election and Term of Office**
The Assistant Superintendent(s) of the Church School shall be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected.
- 2. **Duties**
The duties of the Assistant Superintendent(s) of the Church School include but are not limited to:
 - a. Aid in all matters delegated by the Superintendent(s).
 - b. In the absence of the Superintendent(s), be prepared to assume all his/her duties.

ARTICLE IX OTHER POSITIONS

Holders of Other Positions shall be active or associate members of the Church.

A. HISTORIAN

The Historian shall be the custodian of the historical records of the Church.

- 1. **Election and Term of Office**
 - a. The Historian shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and may be re-elected.
 - b. From time to time an Assistant Historian may be elected under the same terms and under the direction of the Historian.
- 2. **Duties**
The duties of the Historian include but are not limited to:
 - a. Secure and provide for the safekeeping of old documents, records and pictures of historical interest and value to the Church.
 - b. Maintain an up-to-date record of historical Church events.

B. LIBRARIAN

The Librarian is the administrator of the Church Library.

- 1. **Election and Term of Office**
 - a. The Librarian shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and may be re-elected.

- b. From time to time an Assistant Librarian may be elected under the same terms and under the direction of the Librarian.
2. **Duties**
The duties of the Librarian include but are not limited to:
- a. Serve as Chair of the Library Committee.
 - b. Ensure that the Library is maintained.

ARTICLE X THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council shall keep before itself and the Church Body the Church's Mission Statement and, guided by its precepts, shall provide guidance to the Pastor(s), various Boards, Committees and others so as to achieve in a coordinated and effective manner the goals of the Church.

In conjunction with this, the Church Council shall submit to the Church, at the annual organizational meeting, the objectives of the Church for the ensuing year.

A. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council shall have as its members the Pastor(s), the Moderator who shall be the presiding officer, the Vice Moderator, the Assistant Clerk who shall be the secretary, the Director of Christian Education (member without vote), the Treasurer and the chair or a duly appointed representative from each of the boards, committees and auxiliary organizations of the Church.

Representatives to the Church Council shall be active or associate members of the church

B. MEETINGS

The Church Council shall ordinarily meet regularly and monthly.

Special meetings may be called by the Moderator or Pastor(s) by phone, letter, written request or other means.

1. **Meeting Rules and Regulations**

a. **Conducting of Meetings**

Meetings of the Church Council shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, as revised.

b. **Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of at least nine (9) members of the Church Council.

c. **Majority**

The majority of the legal votes cast is decisive.

d. **Tie Vote**

A tie vote is a vote in the negative except that in the case of a tie vote the presiding officer may cast the deciding vote if he/she has not yet voted on the motion.

e. **Proxy Voting**

Proxy and absentee ballot voting are not permitted.

f. **Appointment of Acting Clerk**

If the Assistant Clerk is absent from any meeting of the Council, the presiding officer shall, prior to conducting any other business, appoint an acting clerk for the duration of the meeting.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

The responsibilities of the Church Council members include but are not limited to:

- 1. As a whole, act as the governing body of the Church with full authority to make decisions for the Church membership, except as limited elsewhere in these bylaws.

2. Present to the Church Council, on a need to know basis, plans and programs for their respective position, board, committee or auxiliary organization for consideration by the Church Council and inclusion in the annual organizational report to the Church.
3. Present to the Church Council all plans for fund raising activities for consideration by the Church Council.
4. From time to time, conduct a “How Is It Going?” survey of the church membership.
5. Apprise their board, committee or auxiliary organization of action taken by the Church Council.

D. OTHER MEMBERS DESIRING TO ATTEND CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Active or associate members of the Church who are not members of the Church Council may attend meetings of the Church Council without voice or vote. Any Church member may bring matters before the Church Council for discussion by communicating with the Moderator or Acting Moderator at least three (3) days prior to a council meeting for inclusion of any such matter in the agenda.

ARTICLE XI THE BOARDS OF THE CHURCH

A. THE BOARD OF DEACONS

The Board of Deacons is made up of active members chosen by the Church whose duties are to assist the Pastor(s) in administering the ordinances of the Church and to set a worthy example of Christian service.

Before the congregation, Deacons are charged to remember the admonition of the Apostle Paul, that a Deacon must aim to be blameless and be of good standing so that in the exercise of his/her office he/she may gain great boldness in the faith which is in Jesus Christ.

1. Membership of the Board of Deacons

The total number of Deacons should be based upon the needs of the congregation. As a guide the Board should strive to have a membership of 18. Deacons must be active members of the Church..

2. Election and Term of Office

A term of office for the Board of Deacons is three (3) years. Deacons may be re-elected for one additional term. After serving two (2) consecutive terms, a Deacon will be ineligible for election to the Board for a period of one(1) year. The Board should stagger membership so that there is always a mix of new and experienced deacons.

3. Duties

The duties of the Board include but are not limited to:

- a. Cooperate with the Pastor(s) in caring for the spiritual needs and welfare of the Church.
- b. Assist the Pastor(s) in visitations to and caring for the home-bound, the sick, the bereaved and the troubled.
- c. Aid in welcoming and assimilating new members into the life of the Church.
- d. Prepare communion and assist the Pastor(s) in administering the sacraments.
- e. Provide for the supply of the pulpit in case of vacancy and in the absence of the Pastor(s).
- f. With the Pastor(s), evaluate the spiritual life of the Church.
- g. Ensure that the pastoral needs of the congregation are met.
 - 1) Meet with the Pastor(s) periodically to evaluate the administration of the Pastor(s) duties and provide an annual written review to the Human Resources Committee by June 1.
 - 2) Make recommendations to the Human Resources Committee for the salaries and benefits of the Pastor(s) by June 1.

- 3) Attend to the personal and professional needs of the Pastor(s).
- h. Take action on membership by:
 - 1) Reviewing with Pastor(s), Church membership on an annual basis and acting on any changes to member status.
 - 2) Reporting any changes in membership to the Church Secretary, Clerk, Treasurer and Stewardship and Evangelism Committees.
 - 3) Reviewing and acting on the annual survey of the Church rolls as prepared by the Clerk.
- i. Provide a liaison to the Board of Christian Education, Stewardship and Evangelism Committee, the Communication Committee, Pastoral Relations Committee, Human Resources Committee, Safe Church Committee and communicate with other boards and committees as needed.

4. **Deacons Fund**

There will be a fund known as the Deacons Fund. This fund will be sustained by the loose offerings received at the February, April, June, August, October and December Communion services and Maundy Thursday.

- a. The Administrators of this confidential fund will be the Senior Pastor, or the Associate Pastor acting on behalf of the Senior Pastor, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Deacons.
- b. The Deacon's Fund will be for the congregation and the community as determined by the decision of at least two (2) of the administrators of the fund.
- c. The Treasurer of the Deacon's Fund will be the Senior Pastor. In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastor shall assume the duties of Treasurer.
- d. On an annual basis the Board of Deacon's Chair will audit the Deacon's Fund account

5. **Deacons Donation Fund**

There will be a fund known as the Deacons Donation Fund. This fund will be sustained by donations the Deacons receive throughout the year.

- a. The administrators of this restricted fund are the Board of Deacon Chair and Vice-Chair
- b. The Deacons Donation Fund will be used to cover costs of funeral receptions special programs, articles for the sanctuary, or any other items or services acceptable to the Deacons.

B. THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the acceptance, management, maintenance and use of all church buildings, grounds and furnishings; and for the personnel and supplies to do with the maintenance and upkeep of the Church.

The Board shall not sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property of the Church; either real or personal, or buy property without the specific authority by vote of the Church, or when such property has minimal value by vote of the Church Council.

1. **Membership of the Board of Trustees**

The total number of Trustees shall be based upon the needs of the Church. As a guide the Board should strive to have a membership of at least 6. The number to be determined by the Board of Trustees for each organizational year.

2. **Election and Term of Service**

At least two (2) Trustees shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. Trustees may be re-elected for one (1) additional term. After serving two (2) consecutive terms a

Trustee shall then be ineligible for election to the Board of Trustees for a period of one (1) year.

3. **Duties**

The duties of the Board include but are not limited to:

- a. Define and oversee the duties and actions of the Custodian and recommend, to the Human Resources Committee, the salary and benefits of the Custodian.
- b. Establish guidelines relative to the use of the Church properties and approve such use by outside organizations or groups.
- c. Organize and maintain an inventory of the real and personal properties of the Church.
- d. Develop appropriate contractual agreements for Church property leased to any outside organizations.
- e. Develop and oversee all programs necessary to insure the adequate preservation and security of all Church properties.
- f. Provide an ex officio member with vote to sit on the Board of Finance and the Furnishings and Memorials Committee.

C. **THE BOARD OF FINANCE**

The Board of Finance shall be responsible for the management of all the Church's funds and investments with the exception of the Deacons Fund.

1. **Membership of the Board of Finance:**

The Board of Finance shall consist of at least four elected members, the Treasurer, one Assistant Treasurer, and a voting representative from the Board of Trustees.

2. **Election and Term of Service**

The term of service is three years. At least one of the elected members shall be elected each year and may be re-elected for one additional term. After serving two consecutive terms all elected members shall then be ineligible for election to the Board for a period of one year.

3. **Duties**

- a. Provide safe and prudent management of the Church's investments and endowments by:
 - 1) Establishing an investment policy for the Church's financial assets. This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as needed.
 - 2) Maintaining an auditable paper trail of all decisions and transactions.
 - 3) Presenting an overview of the prior year's performance of all church investments and the current investment outlook to the membership of the church at the Annual Fiscal Meeting held in January.
- b. Develop the Church's budget based on submissions from the officers, staff members, and boards and committees by:
 - 1) Establishing the budget process guidelines and schedule.
 - 2) Reviewing and evaluating the submitted budgets to ensure both individually, and in aggregate that they are consistent with the goals, priorities and established budget guidelines of the Church.
 - 3) Compiling a composite budget and presenting it to the Church membership concurrent with the annual drive for financial support.

- 4) Preparing and presenting a revised budget to the membership of the Church based on the results of the annual drive for financial support.
- 5) Incorporating appropriate suggestions and comments from membership into the final budget.
- c. Monitor adherence to the approved annual budget by:
 - 1) Reviewing, at least on a quarterly basis, receipts and expenditures and recommending appropriate actions should there be unacceptable variances from budget.
 - 2) Acting on requests for unbudgeted items or changes in budgeted items that do not, in total, increase planned line item disbursements by more than 5%. Requests exceeding this amount shall be forwarded to the Church Council with a recommended plan of action.
- d. Maintain archival records of Annual Fiscal Reports presented at the Annual Fiscal Meeting and all documentation pertaining to church endowments.
- e. In conjunction with the Treasurer establish and maintain policies and procedures to be used in accounting for the receipts and disbursements of Church funds.
- f. Count the offering for all worship services of the Church.

4. **Voting**

All decisions regarding the finances of the Church require an affirmative vote of the majority of the members of the Board of Finance. Should there be more than one Assistant Treasurer only one is permitted a vote.

D. THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Board of Christian Education shall be responsible for the policies and programs in Christian education of the Church.

1. **Membership of the Board of Christian Education**

The Board shall consist of the Pastor(s), Director of Christian Education, one (1) Superintendent of the Church School, a Deacon liaison and at least nine (9) elected members.

2. **Election and Term of Office**

At least three (3) of the members shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. Members may be re-elected for one (1) additional term. After serving two (2) consecutive terms a member shall then be ineligible for election to the Board for a period of one (1) year.

3. **Duties**

The duties of the Board include but are not limited to:

- a. Oversee Christian education programs for persons of all ages.
- b. Oversee Church-centered youth groups.
- c. Select curriculum material for Sunday School.
- d. Enlist and train Sunday School teachers.
- e. Ensure the proper use of equipment, facilities and furnishings pertinent to the Christian education program.
- f. Provide the Nominating Committee with recommendations for candidates for the office of Superintendent(s) and Assistant Superintendent(s) of the Sunday School.

- g. In collaboration with the Sr Pastor, oversee the duties and actions of the Director of Christian Education, perform the annual performance review and recommend to the Human Resources Committee the salary and benefits of the Director by June 1.
- h. Provide a representative to the Human Resources Committee and the Safe Church Committee
- i. Provide a representative to Church Council for monthly reporting to and from that body as well as act on Church business on the behalf of the Board
- j. Oversee duties and responsibilities of the Superintendent(s) of the Church School

E. THE BOARD OF MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

The Board of Missions and Outreach shall be responsible for furthering the spirit of and commitment to Christian Missions and shall develop local and global outreach opportunities for the congregation.

1. Membership of the Board of Missions and Outreach

The Board shall consist of at least nine (9) elected members. Ad hoc members may be recruited by the Board as needed.

2. Election and Term of Service

At least three (3) members shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. Members may be re-elected for one (1) additional term. After serving two (2) consecutive terms an elected member shall then be ineligible for election to the Board for a period of one (1) year.

3. Duties

The duties of the Board include but are not limited to:

- a. Foster and initiate programs for the Church to deepen concern and responsibility for the Christian Mission of the Church.
- b. Encourage Church members to participate in local and global community affairs, applying their Christian faith in doing so.
- c. Inform the Church on current social issues and enlist the aid of the congregation to provide time and talent in the effective handling of these issues.

F. THE BOARD OF MUSIC

The Board of Music shall be responsible for the supervision of the music program of the Church.

1. Membership of the Board of Music

The Board of Music shall consist of at least six (6) members. At least two (2) and no more than four(4) shall be members of the choirs.

2. Election and Term of Service

At least two (2) members shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. Members may be re-elected for one (1) additional term. After serving two (2) consecutive terms a member shall be ineligible for election to the Board of Music for a period of one (1) year.

3. Duties

The duties of the Board of Music include but are not limited to:

- a. Approve all expenditures involved in the music programs.
- b. Oversee the maintenance of all physical property used in conjunction with the music program such as the organ, pianos and choir robes in conjunction with other boards and committees.
- c. Seek, interview and recommend to the Church Council replacements for the Choir Director or Organist should a vacancy occur.
- d. Oversee the Choir Director and Organist in the selection of music.

- e. Oversee the arrangements for soloists for worship services in which the choir does not perform. For the summer months this should be done by the end of May.
- f. Oversee the arrangements for alternative music in the absence of the Organist.
- g. Aid the staff in seeking instrumentalists to perform at worship services.
- h. Encourage the participation in the choirs of the Church.
- i. Support and cooperate with other churches in the community when our choir or staff participates.
- j. In conjunction with the Senior Pastor, perform an annual performance review on the Choir Director and Organist.
- k. Recommend to the Human Resources Committee the salary and benefits for the Organist and the Choir Director and other anticipated expenditures relating to the musical programs of the Church.

G. Board Member Emeritus/Emerita

Any active or associate Church member who has served as a Board Member and in other capacities has provided faithful service to the church over an extended number of years, may be recommended by that Board for election, by Church Council, to Board Member Emeritus/a status on that Board. Upon such election he or she will be entitled to serve (except as noted below) as an additional member (without vote) of that Board for life. Such membership shall not count toward any maximum number of that Board's members and shall not prevent said member Emeritus/a from participating in the activities of any other Board provided, as stated in Article XVI C, they may not actively serve on two boards at the same time.

ARTICLE XII THE COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCH

A. THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for presenting at the annual organizational meeting of the Church and at other times as may be necessary, a slate of officers, board members, committee members and delegates and alternate delegates to the conferences and associations to which the Church belongs.

1. Membership of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Moderator who shall be the presiding officer, the Vice Moderator, the Pastor(s), the Clerk, one (1) representative from each board of the Church and one (1) representative from the Stewardship and Evangelism committee.

With the exception of the officers and Pastor(s) of the Church, members of the Nominating Committee shall be selected by their respective board. The term of service shall correspond to the organizational year for which selected to serve.

2. Duties

The duty of the Nominating Committee is to present names of qualified persons who will serve the Church faithfully in the various positions to be filled.

B. FURNISHINGS AND MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The Furnishings and Memorials Committee shall serve as a study, planning and coordinating group so that whatever is done within the Church shall be in harmony with the present decor and shall serve the needs of the Church in the most efficient and becoming manner.

1. Membership of the Furnishings and Memorials Committee

The Committee shall consist of at least six (6) elected members and one (1) representative from the Board of Trustees.

2. Election and Term of Service

At least two (2) members shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. Members may be re-elected.

3. **Duties**

The duties of the Furnishings and Memorials Committee include but are not limited to:

- a. Review all proposed gifts and purchases having to do with the furnishings of the Church. The Committee may reject any such gift or purchase or may recommend acceptance to the Board of Trustees.
- b. Determine, subject to approval of Church Council, the use of gifts "as memorials to" unless specifically designated by the donor. Names of all donors shall be promptly inscribed in the Book of Remembrance and the family shall be notified of the gift.
- c. Review and make recommendations on proposals involving furnishings which shall be submitted to the Committee by boards, committees or individuals within the church.
- d. Maintain accurate records of the Memorial Fund account and acknowledge all donations and approve allocations of such funds.

C. **THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

The Ways and Means Committee shall plan and implement activities for earning money to help defray the operating expenses of the Church.

1. **Membership of the Ways and Means Committee**

The Ways and Means Committee shall consist of at least twelve (12) members.

2. **Election and Term of Service**

At least six (6) members shall be elected each year for a term of two (2) years. Members may be re-elected.

D. **THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE**

The Library Committee shall be responsible for developing and maintaining a Church library.

1. **Membership of the Library Committee**

The Library Committee shall consist of at least four (4) elected members and the Librarian.

2. **Election and Term of Service**

At least two (2) members shall be elected each year for a term of two (2) years. Members may be re-elected.

3. **Duties**

The duties of the Library Committee include but are not limited to:

- a. Encourage the use of the Church Library by the whole Church.
- b. Approve all items purchased for or donated to the Church Library.
- c. With the cooperation of the church office, maintain a file of the Carillon and Sunday bulletins.
- d. Maintain a liaison with the Board of Christian Education.
- e. Maintain files of periodicals in cooperation with Church staff and Council

E. **THE STEWARDSHIP AND EVANGELISM COMMITTEE**

The Stewardship and Evangelism Committee is responsible for promoting and identifying personal commitment of time, talent and treasure among the members and friends of the First Congregational Church of Vernon. It is also responsible for stimulating interest and growth in the church through community outreach.

1. **Membership of the Stewardship and Evangelism Committee**

Membership shall consist of at least six (6) members.

2. **Election and Term of Office**

At least two (2) members shall be elected each year for a term of two (2) years. Members may be re-elected. Chairman or Co-Chairman to be elected every two (2) years. Chairman or Co-Chairman may be re-elected.

3. **Duties**

The duties of the Stewardship and Evangelism Committee include but are not limited to:

- a. In cooperation with the Board of Finance and the Treasurer, organize and conduct an annual giving campaign to:
 - 1) Ascertain the financial stewardship or pledge of each member and friend of the Church for the ensuing fiscal year and forward the information received to the to the Treasurer.
 - 2) Issue giving cards or giving kits to members and friends on an annual basis.
- b. Gather talent and interest information from members and friends of the Church. Distribute this information to various boards and committees in order to enrich their programs.
 - 1) Contact those received into membership during the current fiscal year to ascertain their commitment to give.
 - 2) Treat all financial and giving information in a confidential manner.
 - 3) Assist with opportunities for outreach to the community to attract visitors who are seeking connections with God through our programs of faith.
 - 4) Encourage a hospitable atmosphere to ensure that visitors feel welcome and at home when attending worship services at our Church.
 - 5) Promote a culture of welcoming visitors and new members by learning of their interests and desires and making them aware of similar interests and desires within the church family.
 - 6) Assist the Deacons with assimilating new members into the life of the church through information, assistance and encouragement.
 - 7) Provide a liaison member to the Nominating Committee.

F. **THE AUDITING COMMITTEE**

The Auditing Committee shall be responsible for performing, at least annually, an internal audit of all funds and accounts of the Church supervised by the Board of Finance and the books of record supervised and maintained by the Treasurer.

1. **Membership of the Auditing Committee**

The Auditing Committee shall consist of three (3) members.

2. **Election and Term of Service**

One (1) member shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. Members may be re-elected.

3. **Duties**

The duties of the Auditing Committee are to:

- a. Ascertain that the Church financial records have been kept according to generally accepted accounting principles.
- b. Prepare a report upon the completion of an audit for inclusion in the annual fiscal report to the Church.

G. **THE FLOWER COMMITTEE**

The Flower Committee shall be responsible for securing floral arrangements for the worship services of the Church.

1. **Membership of the Flower Committee**

The Flower Committee shall consist of at least six (6) members.

2. **Election and Term of Service**
At least two (2) members shall be elected each year for a term of two (2) years. Members may be re-elected.
3. **Duties**
The duties of the Flower Committee are to:
 - a. Ensure that floral arrangements are provided for the worship services of the Church.
 - b. Provide and maintain planting and floral arrangements in the foyers of the Church.
 - c. Arrange special decorations for Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving and other times as desired by the Church.
 - d. Maintain the Memorial Garden in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

H. **THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Communications Committee is responsible for how the Church appears to its membership and to the broader community it is part of, in other words FCCV public relations via any media.

1. **Membership of the Communications Committee**
The Communications Committee will consist of at least six (6) elected members and one (1) representative from the Board of Deacons.
2. **Election and Term of Service**
At least three (3) members will be elected each year for a term of one (1) year. Members may be re-elected.
3. **Duties**
The duties include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Sunday church service TV broadcast videos. Byproducts of this process include video recordings for the homebound and the Church Library and video clips for use on our Website
 - b. Maintenance and expansion of the FCCV Website.
 - c. Maintenance and expansion of the FCCV Facebook page and related postings.
 - d. Maintenance and expansion of the FCCV Patch page and related postings.
 - e. Maintenance of the FCCV email server.
 - f. All other media activity such as press releases or advertising.
 - g. Official Church photographs.
 - h. Participating in decisions affecting:
 - 1) The Carillon.
 - 2) The monthly Calendar
 - 3) The weekly Bulletin.
 - 4) The Sanctuary sound reenforcement system.
 - 5) Signs and signage.
 - 6) Acquisition of computer hardware and software.
 - 7) Management and maintenance of the equipment and software needed to accomplish the above and related tasks.

I. **THE USHERING COMMITTEE**

The Ushering Committee shall provide, for each Church service, ushers who shall perform their duties as appropriate for that particular service.

1. **Membership of the Ushering Committee**
The Ushering Committee shall consist of at least six (6) members with a minimum of two (2) ad hoc members.

2. **Election and Term of Service**

At least three (3) members shall be elected each year for a term of two (2) years. Members may be re-elected.

3. **Duties**

The duties of the Ushering Committee include but are not limited to:

- a. Provide one committee member to serve as head usher for each service of worship to be held.
- b. Schedule ushers from the congregation at large to serve with the committee.
- c. Suitably prepare the Sanctuary prior to and after the worship service in compliance with written procedures.
- d. Assist in seating all late comers at the appropriate times.
- e. Collect the offering and turn it over to the representative of the Board of Finance.
- f. Respond effectively to any disturbance or emergency that may arise during the worship service.
- g. Maintain an accurate attendance record of each worship service and report such attendance to the church office.
- h. Establish and maintain written procedures outlining ushering responsibilities at the worship services of this Church.

J HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Human Resources Committee has the responsibility of administering the personnel policies, contracts and calls of the church. They will also assist boards and committees with matters regarding paid professional staff.

1. **Membership of the Human Resources Committee**

Membership of the Human Resources Committee will be composed of one (1) representative from each board or committee who has responsibility for a paid professional staff member and a member from the Board of Finance. The Senior Pastor will be a voting member due to supervisory responsibility for the Church Secretary. In addition, one (1) at-large member of the congregation will be nominated and elected by the congregation to be the de-facto chair of the committee.

2. **Term of Service**

Members will be chosen by their board. The at-large member will be elected each year for a term of one (1) year. This member may be re-elected for a limit of two (2) consecutive terms.

3. **Duties**

Duties of the Human Resources Committee will include, but are not limited to:

- a. Salaries: Recommend compensation actions based upon input from performance reviews, achievement of church objectives, other relevant information, and budget input from the Board of Finance.
- b. Reviews: Receive performance reviews and salary or wage recommendations from cognizant boards (i.e. including Deacons' review of the pastors, Music Board's review of organist and choir director, etc.)
- c. Continuing Education: Review continuing education and training plans and recommend actions to the Board of Finance.
- d. Calls and Contracts: Review all terms and conditions, including salary or wages, before recommending candidate's hire to Church Council.
- e. Policies: Annual review and update, if necessary, of all existing personnel policies, records and any other information relevant to professional staff.
- f. Should circumstances, as specified by the church's Policy on Sexual Exploitation, warrant, convene the Intervention Committee on Sexual Exploitation. The members of the Human Resources Committee are standing

members, with the addition of the Moderator and Vice Moderator. The Moderator of the Church would serve as chair, with the Vice Moderator as alternate chair.

- g. Interpret and advise boards and committees on current contracts and conditions of employment at the church.
- h. Review initial offers (starting salaries) before an offer is negotiated as part of a call or contract, or before an offer is extended to exempt employees.

K THE TEACHING PARISH COMMITTEE

The Teaching Parish Committee shall be responsible for all aspects of the Teaching Parish program of this church.

1. Membership of the Teaching Parish Committee

The Teaching Parish Committee shall consist of no less than five (5), but not more than seven (7) members, one (1) of whom comes from the Board of Deacons.

2. Election and Term of Service

Members shall be elected each year for a term of one (1) year. Members may be re-elected.

3. Duties

The duties of the Teaching Parish Committee include, but are not limited to:

- a. Overseeing the Teaching Parish Program.
- b. Meeting with representatives of Andover Newton Theological School, as needed.
- c. Developing a current church profile, as required by Andover Newton Theological School.
- d. Finding a Field Education Supervisor (either on-site or off-site).
- e. Interviewing Field Education Student Candidates.
- f. Developing a Learning Agreement.
- g. Meeting with the Church Council, Board of Finance and other groups, as needed, to continue appropriate funding for the program.

L THE SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE

The Safe Church Committee shall be responsible for assuring the safety of all 'at risk' (children, youth, disabled and elderly) participants in FCCV's activities and programs. The responsibilities and execution of best practices fall among the staff as well as the volunteers participating in the activities of the various Boards and Committees and the congregation at large.

1. Membership of the Safe Church Committee

The Safe Church Committee shall consist of at least five (5) members

Membership of the Safe Church Committee will be composed of three (3) lay members and one (1) representative from the Board of Deacons and one (1) representative from the Board of Christian Education. The chair of the committee will be one of the lay members.

2. Term of Service

The Board representatives will be chosen by their board and serve one (1) year. The lay members will be elected for a term of two (2) years. The members may be re-elected for a limit of two (2) consecutive terms.

3. Duties

- a. Develop, disseminate to the staff, volunteers and congregation, and maintain the Safe Church policies and procedures
- b. Assure that the staff, volunteers and members of FCCV are aware of their respective responsibilities.
- c. Educate the staff, program volunteers and FCCV membership in policies and best practices.

M **THE PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

1. **Membership of the Pastoral Relations Committee**

The Pastoral Relations Committee will consist of no less than seven (7) members: the Senior and Associate Pastors and five (5) lay members. One of the lay members shall be an active member of the Board of Deacons.

2. **Election and Term of Service**

Two (2) lay members will be elected each year for a term of two (2) years. An active Deacon will be elected each year for a term of one (1) year. After serving one (1) term, a lay member or Deacon will then be ineligible to seek re-election to the Committee for a period of one (1) year.

The lay members presented to Church Council shall be nominated in the following manner:

- a. The pastoral staff shall nominate two (2) members.
- b. The Nominating Committee of the Church Council shall nominate two (2) members and
- c. The Board of Deacons shall nominate one (1) member.

Nominations for lay members shall not exclude active members who are currently serving on another church board or committee. After the Nominating Committee and Board of Deacons have nominated their members, the pastoral staff shall approve the names. Finally, the Church Council shall approve, by majority vote, all Committee members.

The following serves as an example of committee formation.

For the initial formation of the committee for the year 2002, the Nominating Committee of the Church Council shall present a slate of five (5) names that includes one (1) name from each of the pastor's lists, a Deacon representative, and two (2) additional lay members. The Pastors will approve the slate of nominees prior to approval by a majority vote of the Church Council. In the event that one or both Pastors do not approve a name on the Committee slate, the Nominating Committee will revise the slate until both Pastors approve. In order to establish the revolving two (2) year terms, the two (2) lay members nominated by the Pastors shall serve until June 2003, while the remaining two (2) lay members shall serve until June 2002.

In the event that a new Senior or Associate Pastor has been hired, a Search Committee member shall be one of those nominated by that Pastor.

3. **Duties**

The Committee is accountable to the congregation via Church Council and is charged with performing the following duties.

- a. To establish and help maintain communication between each of the Pastors, the Pastors and the members of the congregation, and the Pastors and the church staff.
- a. To act as a "sounding board" for the Pastors.
- b. To advocate on behalf of the Pastors.
- c. To establish and support a process for conflict resolution.
- d. To assist the pastoral staff with setting meaningful and measurable goals and objectives in support of goals and objectives established by the Church and the Board of Deacons.
- e. To assist the Pastors with the self-assessment process on, at least, an annual basis.
- f. To attend to the personal and professional needs of the Pastors.

The Committee shall select a Chairperson among the five non-pastor members on an annual basis.

N THE PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastoral Search Committee shall be formed when a vacancy occurs on the Pastoral Staff. The Committee shall be nominated and approved by the Church Council and commissioned by the Congregation.

1. **Membership of the Pastoral Search Committee**
The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of at least eight (8) members, but no more than twelve (12) members. Membership of the Pastoral Search Committee shall include a member of each of the six Boards of this Church, plus two (2) to six (6) at-large members representing a cross-section of the Church membership.
2. **Duties**
 - a. The Pastoral Search Committee shall counsel with the Connecticut Conference Minister in seeking and interviewing candidates.
 - b. The Committee shall counsel with the Human Resources Committee to determine starting salary range.
 - c. The Committee shall present their final candidate to the Church, that the Church members may have the opportunity to meet, hear and talk with the candidate before voting.

A special Congregational Meeting shall be called by the Church Council for voting on the Call of the Candidate. Written notice of such meeting shall be mailed to the entire church mailing list at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting.

O THE MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE

1. **Membership of the Memorial Garden Committee**
Minimum membership of five (5) elected by the congregation.
2. **Election and Term of Service**
Term of office, two (2) years. Terms shall be staggered. (For the first election only, a minimum of three (3) members shall be elected for a two (2) year term, and a minimum of two (2) members shall be elected for a one (1) year term.)
3. **Duties**
 - a. Responsible for the ongoing stewardship and maintenance of the Memorial Garden.
 - b. Exercises sole and complete control over all plantings and design alterations to the Memorial Garden.
 - c. Determines policies and regulations governing the usage of the Memorial Garden, including any suggested donations for usage.
 - d. Receives memorial donations and usage “fees” and turns them over to the Church Treasurer for deposit into the Memorial Garden Fund.
 - e. Approves disbursements from the Memorial Garden Fund.

ARTICLE XIII DELEGATES AND REPRESENTATIVES

A. DELEGATES TO THE STATE CONFERENCE

The Church shall be represented at the State Conference of which it is a member by the number of delegates prescribed in the bylaws of the conference. Delegates shall be active members of the Church.

1. **Election and Term of Office**
Delegates shall be appointed after serving one (1) year as an alternate delegate. However, if the appropriate number of alternate delegates is not available, a delegate(s)

may be elected from the Church membership at large. The term of service shall be one (1) year. Delegates may be elected for an additional term in the absence of a qualified alternate.

2. **Duties of Delegates**

The duties of the delegates include but are not limited to:

- a. Review the agenda and proposed resolutions prior to the annual state conference.
- b. Attend the conference and other state meetings as scheduled.
- c. Represent, to the best of their ability, the Church membership at the conference and to vote on the budget, resolutions and other matters that may come before the conference.
- d. Submit a report to the Church Council of the proceedings of the conference.

B. **ALTERNATE DELEGATES TO THE STATE CONFERENCE**

The Church shall be represented at the state conference of which it is a member by one (1) Alternate Delegate for each delegate to the conference. Alternate Delegates shall be active members of the Church.

Alternate Delegates shall not have voting rights at the conference unless replacing or acting for a Delegate.

1. **Election and Term of Service**

Alternate Delegates shall be elected for a term of service of one (1) year with the understanding that, under normal circumstances, they shall be appointed for a second term of service as a Delegate.

2. **Duties of Alternate Delegates**

The duties of Alternate Delegates include but are not limited to:

- a. Review the agenda and proposed resolutions prior to the annual state conference.
- b. Attend the conference and other state meetings to prepare for the ensuing term as a Delegate.
- c. Aid the Delegates in the carrying out of their duties.

C. **REPRESENTATIVES TO THE TOLLAND ASSOCIATION**

The Church shall have representatives to the Tolland Association in a number determined by the association. Representatives shall be active or associate members of the Church.

1. **Election and Term of Service**

Representatives shall be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected.

2. **Duties of Representatives**

The duties of the Representatives to the Tolland Association include but are not limited to:

- a. Attend meetings of the association.
- b. Represent the Church in ordination and installation of ministers in the association.
- c. Submit a report to the Church Council of the proceedings of the association.

ARTICLE XIV AUXILIARY AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

The Church may recognize other church centered organizations as Auxiliary or Support Organizations.

A. **AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

Auxiliary Organizations are those primarily formed to serve the needs and interests of the church members and as such may:

1. Enjoy the use of the physical facilities of the Church.

2. Be represented on the Church Council, with vote, provided the representative of the Church Council is an active or associate member of the Church.

Auxiliary Organizations may include but are not limited to:

- Women's Fellowship
- Men's Club
- 39 Club
- Couples Club
- Senior Pilgrim Fellowship
- Junior Pilgrim Fellowship

B. SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Support Organizations are those primarily formed to serve the needs and interests of the community and as such may:

1. Enjoy the use of the physical facilities of the church as approved by the Board of Trustees.
2. Be represented at Church Council meetings with voice but not vote except that a Day Care Center representative on the Church Council may vote providing the representative is an Active or Associate member of this Church.

Support Organizations may include but are not limited to:

- Boy Scouts
- Girl Scouts
- Cub Scouts
- Day Care Center

ARTICLE XV RESTRICTED USE FUNDS

Boards, Committees or other organizations within the Church may desire to establish a fund or funds separate from the general (budget) funds of the Church. Upon submission of such a request to the Treasurer, and with the approval of the Board of Finance, the Treasurer shall establish a restricted use fund in the name of the Board, Committee or other organization.

A. PURPOSE OF RESTRICTED USE FUND

Restricted use funds provide an opportunity for an individual or group to contribute to the support of a particular phase of the Church life not included in the budgeted operations of the Church. So doing provides funds for the administrative board, committee or other organization to use in discharging its responsibilities and duties. Restricted gifts to the church will not be accepted unless they are in support of current or planned programs or services.

B. ADMINISTRATION OF A RESTRICTED USE FUND

The establishing board, committee or other organization shall be the administrator of their restricted use fund. Funds shall be held by the Treasurer of the Church and disbursed only on authorization of the administrator of the fund.

ARTICLE XVI STANDING RULES OF THE CHURCH

Standing Rules of the Church are considered an integral part of the bylaws and apply in conjunction with and in the same manner as all other Articles.

A. OFFICERS AND BOARDS - MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

All Officers and members of the Boards of the Church shall be Active or Associate members of this Church.

B. COMMITTEES - MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

A minimum of fifty (50) percent of the members of each committee of this Church shall be Active or Associate members of this Church.

C. **BOARDS - LIMITATION ON MEMBERSHIP**

Two (2) or more members of the same immediate family shall not serve simultaneously on the same board. No one may serve on two (2) boards at the same time.

D. **CONVENING AND ORGANIZING BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

Each outgoing board and committee chairperson shall, prior to June 30 each year, convene the oncoming board or committee for the purpose of organization.

At this meeting the oncoming board or committee shall organize by the selection of its own chairperson, secretary and other officers or sub-committees as it may need.

The Assistant Clerk shall be apprised of the action taken by June 30 and shall report same to the Church Council at its July meeting.

E. **BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

1. **Quorum**

A quorum for any board or committee meeting shall be fifty (50) percent of the board or committee membership unless otherwise specified in these bylaws.

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of all actions taken shall be properly recorded, retained and a summary report of actions taken shall be submitted to the Church Secretary for inclusion in the annual report to the Church.

3. **Majority**

A majority of the legal votes cast is decisive. Proxy or absentee ballots are not permitted.

F. **ELECTION**

1. Election of members to the Stewardship Committee, the Auditing Committee and the Safe Church Committee shall take place at the Annual Fiscal meeting and the term of office shall commence February 1.
2. Election of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer(s) shall take place at the Annual Organizational meeting and commence the following January 1.
3. Election of members to all other elected positions in the Church shall take place at the annual organizational meeting and shall commence July 1.

G. **BOARD AND COMMITTEE GOALS**

Each Board and Committee of the Church shall develop written goals for their organization with actions to achieve the goals. Actions should be reviewed periodically and revised and updated as needed.

H. **REPLACEMENT OF BOARD OR COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

In case of a vacancy, each board or committee shall select new members to fill the vacancy subject to approval by the Church Council. The Assistant Clerk shall notify the Clerk of any such action taken by a board or committee and approved by Church Council.

I. **REMOVAL**

Removal from office of any Officer of the Church as defined in Article VIII or Other Position as defined in Article IX may be carried out by a simple majority vote of the Church Council. Should any such position serve on or be accountable to any Board or Committee then action by the Council shall be at the request of the respective Board or Committee.

Any other person serving on a Board or Committee may be dismissed by the Council at the request of the respective Board or Committee. Recommendation for dismissal may be brought for failure to regularly attend scheduled meetings of the Board or Committee or for failure or unwillingness to participate in the functions and responsibilities of the Board or Committee.

J. BUDGET SUBMISSION

Each Officer, Board, Committee and responsible staff member shall, prior to October 15 each year, submit to the Board of Finance a comprehensive budget of expected receipts and disbursements for the ensuing fiscal year to be included for consideration by the Board of Finance when preparing the annual budget of the Church.

K. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Any member or associate member of this Church may, and the various boards and committees shall, prior to the meeting of the Nominating Committee recommend names of qualified persons who will serve the Church faithfully in the positions to be filled.

L. TEMPORARY OR AD HOC COMMITTEES

Temporary or ad hoc committees may be formed by the Church Council. Such committees are formed to work on a particular project and are by design temporary in nature. Upon completion of the task set before the committee and submission of its final report, an ad hoc committee shall automatically cease to exist.

M. FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

Fund raising activities shall be presented by the initiating board, committee, auxiliary organization or support group to the Church Council for approval

N. EXCERPTS FROM BYLAWS

Excerpts from or abbreviated copies of these bylaws shall not be construed to be or replace the bylaws or any portion contained herein.

O. TERM

For the purpose of these bylaws, the word "Term" shall mean a period of one (1) year or more.

P. CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS

All contracts and agreements covering the purchase or lease of products and services which will likely exceed \$1000, as well as contracts or agreements with third parties covering the use of Church properties which will likely exceed \$1000, must be signed by the chairperson of the negotiating board or committee and co-signed by the Treasurer, or in his/her absence, the Moderator or Vice Moderator. In emergency situations or when payments are to be made pursuant to an existing contract or agreement, this rule does not apply.

ARTICLE XVII ARTICLE OF TERMINATION

This Church and its property shall forever be devoted to religious purposes. No officer, director, member or employee thereof shall receive any pecuniary profit from the Church except reasonable compensation for services in effecting one or more of its purposes.

In the event of dissolution of this Church, its property shall become vested in, and its functions as trustee, if any, administered by the Missionary Society of Connecticut or its successor or, in the event this be impossible by such church or other organization which is organized and operated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes which the membership of this Church shall designate at a meeting called before the

said dissolution or, in the absence of such determination as the Superior Court of the Tolland Judicial District shall determine.

ARTICLE XVIII AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the qualified voters present at any regular or special business meeting of the Church, provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in written form at a previously held regular or special business meeting of the Church, legally called and including that purpose in the call and legal notice of such meeting.

ARTICLE XXIV THE MEMORIAL GARDEN

A. PURPOSE

The Purpose of the Memorial Garden at the First Congregational Church of Vernon is to provide a place of simple beauty and dignity for the caring disposition of the cremated remains of loved ones. While it is not considered a cemetery, it provides an alternative committal site that is suited to our beliefs. In this capacity, it serves a function similar to that of traditional church burial grounds, and it is an extension of the pastoral care mission of our church. It is intended to be a living memorial to departed loved ones. In this place of remembrance and reflection, we can be thankful for God's gift of life and reminded of God's promise of eternal life.

B. RESTRICTIONS

The Memorial Garden is available for the interment of cremated remains of deceased members of First Congregational Church of Vernon and their immediate families, past members of the church, and friends of the church who have been recommended by the pastor (s).

C. THE MEMORIAL GARDEN FUND

1. Funding

The Memorial Garden Fund shall be established and maintained through

- a. Memorial Garden Donations, Gifts and Bequests. Donors can suggest specific uses for their gifts (e.g. garden construction costs, garden maintenance expenses, plantings, benches, etc.), subject to approval by the Memorial Garden Committee
- b. Suggested Donations (fees) for
 - 1) Burial or scattering of the ashes
 - 2) Names and dates inscribed on the Memorial Plaque

2. Disbursements

Disbursements from the Memorial Garden Fund account shall be determined by the Memorial Garden Committee, subject to the usual church rules