

The Congregational Church
of South Dartmouth

United Church of Christ

Organized 1807

Incorporated 1920

By-Laws

Revised March 2018

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PREAMBLE

“That they may all be one.” (John 17:21)

"In essentials—unity, in nonessentials—diversity, in all things—charity."

“These United Church of Christ (UCC) mottos survive because they touch core values deep within us. The UCC has no rigid formulation of doctrine or attachment to creeds or structures. Its overarching creed is love. Love and unity in the midst of our diversity are our greatest assets.”

Let us keep these mottos in mind in the activities of our Church, and our working together on its mission.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The corporate name of this Church is The Congregational Church of South Dartmouth, United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church is to facilitate the public worship of God, the development of God’s character in all human beings, and the advancement of God’s Kingdom in the world.

ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

Our congregation 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 reality of worship and in honesty of thought and expression. In accordance with our evangelical tradition, we recognize two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.

—Adapted from the Constitution of the United Church of Christ

We affirm that the right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience are rights and privileges of all people. Therefore, we believe in the freedom and responsibility of each individual to interpret scripture based upon his/her understanding of God. Each of us is free to believe and act in accordance with our perception of God's will for our lives.

As members of the Congregational Church of South Dartmouth, United Church of Christ, we are called to be in covenant relationship with one another as we inform each other’s faith journeys. We are called to nurture, care for, and support one another in all aspects of our lives, both private and public.

We have adopted the Covenant for Christian Communication to guide our congregation; see Appendix A.

ARTICLE IV. POLITY

Section A. Autonomy

This church is a basic unit of the United Church of Christ. The autonomy of this local church is inherent and modifiable only by its own action. The government of this Church is vested in its members who exercise sole responsibility for the management of its affairs.

Section B. Voluntary Fellowship

Recognizing the need for freedom that is responsible through voluntary, wider relationships this Congregation seeks to be in fellowship with other congregations united in the Old Colony Association, the Massachusetts Conference, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ and ecumenical bodies which provide opportunities for counsel, cooperation, and fellowship in matters of common purpose.

Section C. Church Meetings

1. *Annual Meeting.* There shall be an Annual Meeting of the congregation on a date in May set by the Council. It shall be announced from the pulpit on the two preceding Sundays. The Annual Meeting of the corporation will receive the yearly reports of the Officers, Ministries and Committees; elect Officers, Ministry Chairpersons and committees; and adopt plans for the continued functioning of the Church. All elections may be by ballot and will be determined upon majority vote of the members present. Term of all officers, Ministries and Committees will begin following the Annual Meeting.

2. *Yearly Budget Meeting.* There shall be a yearly Budget Meeting of the congregation at a date set by the Council following the annual stewardship campaign and prior to January 31. This meeting shall be for the purpose of approving the budget for the fiscal year commencing January 1. Approval of the Annual Budget shall be by a majority vote of the congregation present and voting. Notice to the members shall follow the same procedure as that for the Annual Meeting.

3. *Special Meetings.* A Special Meeting may be called by the Council, the Pastor or by written request of ten (10) members of the church. Notice of such Special Meeting shall include a specific statement of the purpose of such meeting and matters to be considered. Notice to the members shall follow the same procedure as that for the Annual Meeting.

4. If the Moderator cannot attend the Annual, Budget or Special meeting, the Vice Moderator will chair the meeting. If neither is available, the Moderator will appoint a temporary replacement. If the Moderator is unable to do so, the Church Council will appoint a temporary replacement.

5. At all Annual, Budget and Special meetings, ten percent of the total membership will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

Section A. Members

Members of the congregation shall be recommended by the Pastor and approved by the Deacons and received during a regular service of worship. Anyone who is unable to attend this service of worship after approval may be received in absentia.

Persons shall become members by:

1. Baptism and either confirmation or profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; or
2. Reaffirmation or re-profession of faith; or
3. Letter of transfer or certification from other Christian churches.

Section B. Responsibilities

Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the church, to live the Christian life, to share in the life and work of the church, to contribute to its support and benevolences, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and community.

Section C. Rights of Members

Church members shall have the right to vote on all matters.

Section D. Termination

Members by their own request may be granted a letter of transfer. If wishing to join a body not in fellowship with this church, they may be released with a certificate of church membership. Members moving to other localities may transfer their membership to the church of their choice.

ARTICLE VI. STAFF

Section A. Pastor

The relationships between the Congregational Church of South Dartmouth and its Clergy shall be governed by the terms of a Pastoral Call Agreement with the Clergy member. The Pastoral Call Agreement establishes a covenantal relationship between the Pastor and the congregation which openly outlines terms which both parties have agreed upon in good faith.

1. The call of a Pastor rests entirely with the Congregation who will make a choice by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a special meeting called for that purpose in accordance with Article IV, Section C, provided a quorum is present. The Pastor will be called to serve for an indefinite period and may have their call agreement dissolved by the Congregation by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a special meeting called for that purpose in accordance with Article IV, Section C, provided a quorum is present, or the Pastor may dissolve the call voluntarily. In order to terminate this relationship, three months' written notice stating such intention will be given by either party, unless shorter notice is mutually agreed upon.

2. He/she will have the freedom of the pulpit and be concerned with the welfare of the whole church. The Pastor has final responsibility for the planning and implementation of all worship services held by the congregation. He/she will: preach and teach the Good News of God; discharge the duties of religious teacher and counselor in public and in private; administer the Sacraments; conduct services of worship; and perform such other duties as belong to one whose responsibility is helping a Congregation be 'the people of God'. He/she will give a report to the Church Council on a regular basis of his/her activities and annually to the Congregation as a whole through the Annual Report.

3. He/she will be an advisory member to all Ministries, committees and organizations of the Church including Council, with voice but no vote.

4. As the Head of Staff, the Pastor will direct the day to day operations of the Congregation, and, with input from the appropriate Ministry, will be responsible for the direction and development of all church staff; setting of annual goals in support of the objectives established by the Church Council; and evaluations to be formally documented in writing at least annually and informally as appropriate, as detailed in the Employee Handbook. He/she will have the responsibility and authority regarding the employment, termination, annual evaluation and salary reviews of all church staff, in consultation with the appropriate Ministry, and the final approval of the Church Council.

5. The Pastor will have an annual evaluation as detailed in the Employee Handbook, to be coordinated by the Human Resources Ministry and written by the Moderator, and a member of the Human Resources Ministry.

6. The Pastor may be eligible for a Sabbatical Leave as established in the Call Agreement.

Section B. Other Church Staff

1. Other staff of the church may include the Church Administrator, Director of Religious Education, Music Director, Youth Group leaders.

2. Staff will be supervised by the Pastor with input from the appropriate ministry.

3. Any staff position addition will require a vote of the congregation to approve the position and its funding.

ARTICLE VII. CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP

Section A. Faithful in Worship

Since congregational worship is the central act of the Christian community and since the strength of the total life of the Church is derived from its service of worship, every member is expected to attend and participate regularly. Thus, it is considered of utmost importance that those who accept and engage in an official Church responsibility will be faithful in attending worship regularly.

Section B. Worship Times

Services of worship will be held weekly and at such other times as may be determined by the Pastor.

Section C. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be administered as determined by the Pastor.

Section D. The Sacrament of Baptism

The Sacrament of Baptism may be celebrated at any age upon the request of the candidate, in the case of an infant or child, at the request of their parent.

ARTICLE VIII. CHURCH COUNCIL

Section A. Responsibility

The Church Council will be responsible to the Church membership as a whole and will meet regularly at stated times, but not less than bimonthly, summer excluded as desired.

Council meetings are open to all members. When certain personnel or legal issues are being discussed, the council may go into executive session. Any decisions made in executive sessions will be made public to members in a timely manner, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

Section B. Composition

The Officers and Ministry Chairpersons of this Church will constitute the Church Council and will, excluding the Pastor, be elected at the annual meeting of the Congregation. Members of the Council include:

1. Pastor
2. Officers:
 - a. Moderator
 - b. Vice-Moderator
 - c. Clerk
 - d. Treasurer
 - e. Assistant Treasurer
3. The Chairs of the Ministries

Section C. Delineated Official Duties of Certain Unpaid Officers

1. The Moderator will conduct all meetings of the Church and Church Council, work closely with the Pastor and other Officers for the efficient and relevant operation of the total life of the Church, and represent the Church as its principal lay officer in all matters pertaining to the Church.

2. The Vice Moderator will assist the Moderator and become the nominated Moderator at the end of the Moderator's term and stands for election at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation. The Vice-Moderator will focus on long range plans.

3. The Clerk will have responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of all non-financial records of the Church including records of the membership of the Church; call meetings of the Church as prescribed in Article IV; will have custody of the seal of the Church; record and publish minutes of all Council and Church meetings; issue official Church correspondence.

4. The Treasurer is responsible for the week-to-week financial functioning of the church. The Treasurer will work with the church administrator to keep the church books in order, manage cash flow, and track receivables and payables. The Treasurer will be responsible for signing checks; in his absence checks may be signed by the Assistant Treasurer, the Finance Ministry chair, or Moderator. The Treasurer will review the church budget and make sure ministries are spending in line with the budget. The Treasurer will be a member of the Finance Ministry.

5. The Assistant Treasurer will assist the Treasurer and fulfill duties of the Treasurer in the absence of the Treasurer; will be a member of the Finance Ministry.

6. Term of Office

a) All Officers of the Church will be elected for a (2) two year term, except for the Vice Moderator, which may be a one year term in preparation for election as Moderator.

b) Individuals may serve no more than three (3) consecutive terms in the same Officer position.

Section D. General Functions

1. It will be the general function of the Church Council to consider the entire mission of the Church, to coordinate the work of the Ministries and to share with the Pastor responsibility for the overall well-being and direction of the Church.

2. The Church Council will act for the Church in all matters not specifically delegated to another Ministry or Committee except the following which will require action by the congregation.

a) The call and dismissal of the Pastor.

b) The purchase, sale or transfer of any church property.

c) The final settlement of any questions pertaining to action by the Church Council.

3. Two absences within a year without prior notification to the Moderator on the part of any Church Council member may be considered a voluntary resignation from their position. The Pastor and Moderator will meet with the individual to evaluate and determine their future standing as a member of Council.

Section E. Specific Functions

1. The Church Council will receive all program recommendations. These program recommendations will be coordinated by the Church Council, and planned and administered by the respective Ministry, except as the Church Council may otherwise decide.
2. The Church Council will present an annual budget at its yearly budget meeting. The development of the annual budget will be conducted in coordination with the Church Ministries so that each Ministry can develop annual goals for presentation to the Church Council prior to September 30th.
3. Each Ministry will develop annual goals that are supportive of the Church's purpose and mission; as well as the current physical and spiritual needs of the Church, the Congregation and the community at large.
4. The Council will be responsible for forming a Pastoral Search Committee to be approved by Congregational vote at a church meeting of the Congregation. The Committee should be representative of the spectrum of the Church membership, whose duty it will be to recommend a duly ordained person as candidate for called Pastor of the Congregation.
5. The Church Council will be responsible for the periodic review of the Church's by-laws and will make recommendations to the Congregation for changes as it deems appropriate.
6. The Church Council will assume responsibility for the Pastor's annual evaluation.
7. Contracts must be approved by Church Council and a copy filed in the church office as well as with the appropriate Ministry.

ARTICLE IX. MINISTRY/COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Section A. Responsibilities

The Church will have Ministries and Committees which focus on particular programs and functions of the Church.

Section B. Composition

1. Ministries will preferably have no fewer than six (6) members and Committees will preferably have no fewer than three (3) members, unless otherwise indicated for a specific Ministry/Committee. Ministry/Committee members will be expected to serve three (3) year terms with a limit of two consecutive terms. Efforts will be made to stagger terms to preserve institutional memory and enhance continuity. Exceptions will be noted within individual Ministry descriptions and/or may be approved by the nominating committee, as necessary.
2. Committees may be formed by the Council and/or a Ministry for a project, specialized program or function and generally are advisory in nature. Some committees may coordinate a specific program for which funds are budgeted through the sponsoring Ministry or Council. In

such cases, the Committee will have authority to disburse budgeted funds. Budget requests will be submitted through the sponsoring Ministry to the Council.

3. Ministry and Committee members will be procured by the Nominating Committee for three (3) year terms and presented to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting for election.

Section C. General Functions

1. The Ministries and Committees will meet monthly or as necessary and submit appropriate meeting minutes to the clerk.

2. Ministry and Committee meetings will be open to any Church member who may participate in discussions but not vote.

3. Decisions within a Ministry or Committee will be by consensus when possible, or by simple majority vote of the members. The Pastor and other church staff serving as ex-officio members of a Ministry or Committee have voice but no vote on all matters coming before the Ministry or Committee. Concerns not resolved will be brought to the Council.

4. Two absences within a year without notification to the Ministry or Committee Chair on the part of any ministry or committee member may be considered a voluntary resignation from the ministry. Continued unexcused absences by a ministry member will be reviewed by the Pastor and Moderator, to evaluate and determine the ministry member's future standing in the ministry.

Section D. Ministry and Committee Chairpersons

1. Chairpersons will be nominated by the Ministry or Committee membership. Ministry Chairpersons will be submitted to the Nominating Committee, reported to the Council and then placed before the Congregation for election at the Annual Congregational Meeting. Committee Chairpersons will be submitted to the sponsoring organization (Ministry, Council, etc.) for ratification and report to the sponsoring Ministry Chair or Moderator, whichever applies.

2. Term of office will be 2 years with no more than 2 consecutive terms as Chairperson of a Ministry or Committee.

3. Whenever possible, the Chair will have at least one year of experience on the Ministry or Committee prior to being elected.

4. Ministry Chairpersons will serve on the Council and are expected to attend all Council meetings. In the event the Chairperson nominee will not be able to attend Council meetings on a regular basis, the Ministry may nominate a Council Representative, in addition to a Chairperson, to be elected by the Congregation following the same process as described above.

5. In the event the Chairperson is not able to attend an occasional Council meeting, they may send a representative of the Ministry who will carry out all responsibilities for that meeting, including voting on behalf of the Ministry.

Section E. Ministries and Committees Established by the Church

1. Religious Education Ministry

Mission or Purpose

The Religious Education Ministry is committed to serving God through programs including, but not limited to: Sunday school, the Youth Group(s), Confirmation, and Adult Education that deepen the understanding of the Christian faith and encourage all ages in our collective and personal faith journeys.

Composition

In addition to the elected Chairperson and members, the Director of Religious Education and Youth Group leader(s) will serve as ex-officio members with voice but no vote.

Responsibilities

- a) Directs religious educational programs for all age groups, preschool through adult.
- b) Recruits and trains necessary staff in partnership with the Pastor and Human Resources Ministry.
- c) Provides input to performance evaluations of employed staff.
- d) Selects and administers the Sunday school curriculum in partnership with the Pastor and the Director of Religious Education.
- e) Partners with the Pastor, Director of Religious Education, and Worship Ministry in planning for Confirmation class.
- f) Oversees content and activities of the Youth Group(s).
- g) Oversees educational publications as needed.
- h) Communicates goals and accomplishments to the Congregation.
- i) Weekly communication with Sunday school families.

2. Fellowship & Membership Ministry

Mission or Purpose

The Fellowship and Membership Ministry plans and coordinates programs and events to encourage social participation in the Church Community, builds and maintains membership ensuring a welcoming environment.

Responsibilities

- a) Develops and implements events which encourage participation by all age groups.
- b) Develops and coordinates monthly Ministry assignments for coffee/fellowship time after worship; encourages voluntary participation by members of the Congregation at large.
- c) Aids the pastor in developing and implementing programs and events to attract visitors and new member prospects to the church.

- d) Aids the pastor in coordinating new member classes and reception as necessary to accept new members into the congregation.
- e) Aids the Church Administrator in developing and maintaining a pictorial directory.
- f) Produces and maintains member name badges; encourages members to wear their name badges.

3. Caregiving Ministry

Mission or Purpose

The Caregiving Ministry provides care and nurture to the Congregation and community during times of struggle, grief, and emotional or physical hardship.

Composition

Due to the nature of tasks involved, term limits for members would not apply. The Chairperson will be elected as for other Ministries.

Responsibilities

a) Lay Shepherds

(i) The ministry organizes Lay shepherds that visit Church members, family and/or members of the community to provide spiritual companionship and/or other support and comfort.

(ii) The ministry sends cards to Church members and families in times of difficulty or joy.

b) Prayer Shawls

(i) The ministry organizes regular meetings to knit, crochet or craft shawls and other items for those in need of comfort, solace, celebration and joy.

(ii) The ministry organizes the blessing of the shawls and other items during worship services.

(iii) The ministry distributes dedicated items to those in need.

4. Finance Ministry

Mission or Purpose

The Finance Ministry has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of the physical church and its finances. There are subcommittees for property, investments and finance. The Finance Ministry is responsible for the coordination of the annual stewardship campaign; coordination of budget development; acquisition, repair and maintenance of physical assets; oversight of the Children's Circle Nursery; and recommendation of policies and procedures to protect the Church's financial resources.

Composition

This Ministry will be comprised of five committees: Financial Oversight, Investments, Stewardship, Property and Children's Circle Nursery. The Finance Ministry Chairperson will sit on each of the sub-committees. Individual Committee Chairs will be determined in accordance with Section D above.

Committees

a) Financial Oversight Committee

Responsibilities

- (i) Establishes procedures for the receipt and disbursement of all funds of the Church.
- (ii) Provides financial reporting to the Council and Congregation in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for non-profit organizations.
- (iii) Ensures compliance with all applicable federal and state requirements for payroll and reporting.
- (iv) Develops the Annual Operating Budget in cooperation with the Ministries to be recommended by the Council and approved by the Congregation.
- (v) Develops and monitors a multi-year Capital Budget.
- (vi) Ensures an internal audit and reconciliation of the financial records occurs on an annual basis and that an external audit is completed every five (5) years.

b) Investment Committee

Composition

The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer serve on this Committee.

Responsibilities

- (i) Invests all available funds according to the established investment policy of the Church as voted by the Congregation.
- (ii) Keeps complete accurate records of all transactions, and reports to the Congregation the balance of invested funds, gifts received and monies disbursed, in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 180A, Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.

c) Stewardship Committee

Composition

The Pastor serves on this committee.

Responsibilities

- (i) Promotes the relationship between discipleship and giving: sharing our financial resources, sharing our time, and sharing our talents.
- (ii) Encourages, supports and challenges people to grow in their understanding that all of our giving is in response to the generous and loving God who created us.
- (iii) Plans and implements an annual financial stewardship campaign.

d) Property Committee

Responsibilities

- (i) Maintains and preserves the Church building, the parsonage, and the grounds and capital equipment.
- (ii) Responds to emergency maintenance issues; dispatches the proper contractors to address those issues.
- (iii) Recommends usage of the Church building, the parsonage and the grounds by members or others not delineated in the Building Use Policy to the Council for approval.
- (iv) Authorizes disbursement of the budgeted funds.

e) Children's Circle Nursery School Liaison Committee

Composition

A member(s) of the Finance Ministry serves on this committee as well as the Pastor. The Director of the Children's Circle Nursery School (CCNS) will be an ex-officio member with voice but no vote.

Responsibilities

- (i) Fosters communication between the Church and the CCNS Director.
- (ii) Reviews annual expenses with the CCNS Director and develops budget proposal.
- (iii) Monitors the financials of the CCNS accounts.

5. Christian Outreach Ministry

Mission or Purpose

The Christian Outreach Ministry leads programs of witness and outreach, in order that the love of God may be shared with the community, both local and worldwide.

Responsibilities

- a) Researches and allocates the Congregation's mission funds to local, regional, national, and international charitable organizations.
- b) Encourages witness and outreach through the Church's support of, and member participation in, charitable organizations, projects and/or Church-wide service projects.
- c) Liaison with sponsored external organizations.

6. Worship Ministry

Mission or Purpose

The Worship Ministry supports the Pastor in creating, coordinating and promoting meaningful worship services.

Composition

The Worship Ministry will be comprised of preferably twelve (12), but no fewer than eight (8), members who will be referred to as Deacons. The Pastor will be an ex officio member with voice but no vote.

Responsibilities

- a) Coordinates all worship services in collaboration with the Pastor, the Music Director and related groups and/or individuals.
- b) Ensures the Sacraments are administered in accordance with Church practices, policy and polity.
- c) Discusses feedback from the Congregation; incorporates feedback into worship where appropriate.
- d) Confirms pulpit supply during the Pastor's absence for vacation, Sabbatical leave, etc.
- e) Coordinates the Pastor's Sabbatical Leave:
 - (i) Provides interpretations regarding the provisions of the policy.
 - (ii) Reviews the Pastor's written Sabbatical Leave proposal to ensure that it is consistent with the Sabbatical policy.
 - (iii) Recommends approval of the Pastor's Sabbatical Leave proposal to the Church Council.

7. Human Resources Ministry

Mission or Purpose

The Human Resources Ministry establishes professional procedures and best practices for employee-related functions.

Composition

There will be no fewer than three (3) members of the Ministry.

Responsibilities

- a) Recommends policies, procedures and practices related to the hiring, development, supervision and termination of employees in accordance with standard practices and government regulations.
- b) Conducts and participates in salary surveys; recommends salary ranges and compensation for employed staff.
- c) Establishes and administers requisitioning process for new positions; writes job descriptions in coordination with the appropriate Ministry and the Pastor; obtains approvals; coordinates recruitment and hiring processes.

- d) Establishes process and format of annual performance reviews for the Pastor and all employed staff members. Coordinates and ensures completion of annual performance planning, goal setting and review processes for the Pastor and all employed staff.
- e) Ensures productive, cooperative working relationships exist between and among employed staff, the Council, Ministries and Congregation.
- f) Publishes and maintains the Employee Handbook; ensures all staff members receive a copy upon hire and when updated.
- g) Collaborates with the Pastor, Moderator, Ministries and the UCC as needed.
- h) Matters will be dealt with in a direct and respectful manner, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

8. Guild Ministry

Mission or Purpose

The Guild aims to promote Christian fellowship and service through fundraising and outreach efforts. All women and men of the church community are welcome to participate in The Guild.

Composition

In addition to the ministry chair and treasurer, there will be no less than four (4) and no greater than six (6) additional ministry members. The Guild treasurer shall maintain accounts for bookkeeping convenience and shall submit a financial report at the annual meeting.

Meetings

The Guild shall meet as needed but not less than three (3) times a year.

Responsibilities

- a) Organize seasonal rummage sales
- b) Plan for the annual holiday arts and craft sale
- c) Maintain oversight of the kitchen with the exception that periodic tasks may be delegated or shared with other ministries.
- d) Coordinate efforts with other church ministries, in particular with the Property Committee and Outreach Ministry.
- e) Consider special requests, subject to determination by a majority of the ministry.
- f) Anticipate the need for material support and service to the church and/or to the greater community.
- g) May assist with funeral collations of church members.

9. Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

Mission and Responsibilities

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) shall support and maintain an open relationship between the Pastor and the congregation. It shall strive for constructive and caring communication, in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust, for the purpose of helping the Pastor and members of the church share ideas, hopes, and dreams and thus enhance the effectiveness of the church's mission. It shall encourage the Pastor's growth and well-being. It shall promote mutual ministry between the Pastor and the congregation and shall encourage the communication of mutual expectations.

Composition

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) shall consist of four members: the Pastor will submit a list of no less than six names to the council and the council will choose four names; PPRC members shall be elected for a one year term and may serve up to three consecutive terms.

Meetings

The PPRC shall meet at least quarterly and shall report to the Church Council at least annually.

10. Nominating Committee

Mission or Purpose

The Nominating Committee will recruit and prepare a slate of Officers per Article VIII; Ministry and Committee members and Chairpersons. The right of a member to make a nomination from the floor will be recognized.

Composition

No fewer than three (3) members will be appointed by the Council to a one (1) year term. The Committee Chair will be determined in accordance with Section D above.

Responsibilities

- a) Recruits and prepares a list of candidates for election by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting for the positions of Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Pastoral Relations, Children's Circle Nursery Liaison Committees and delegates to associations and/or conferences to which the Church belongs (such as UCC, MAUCC, Old Colony Conference, etc.).
- b) Contacts individual Ministries to obtain nomination for the Chairperson.
- c) Fills Ministry and Committee membership vacancies
- d) Coordinates the Election process at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE X. SPONSORED ORGANIZATIONS

All organizations assuming sponsorship by this Church, using its name and equipment, are regarded as integral parts of the Church program and are under its general supervision through the appropriate Ministry. Any new auxiliary organization will present its plans and purposes to the Church Council for acceptance and assignment to a specific Ministry. Organizations

requesting sponsorship by the Church should have a purpose that is consistent with the mission of the Church. Annual reports will be presented in writing by all sponsored organizations to the Annual Meeting through the supervising Ministry and the Church Council.

ARTICLE XI. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church will be January 1st through December 31st.

ARTICLE XII. SEAL

The seal of the church will consist of two concentric circles with the words "Congregational Church of South Dartmouth, United Church of Christ" between the outer and inner circles and words "Incorporated: Massachusetts" around the inner side of the circle together with the date "January 13, 1920" horizontally across the center.

ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS

These By-laws may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any Annual, Quarterly or Special Meeting. No amendments will be made unless fully set out in the notice of the meeting.

ARTICLE XIV. RULES OF ORDER

In all matters of government not provided for in these By-laws, the Church will be governed by established Congregational usage and Robert's Rules of Order in accordance with which no proxy or absentee ballots will be allowed.

APPENDIX A. COVENANT FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION

As people called to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we acknowledge His teaching in Matthew 18:15-17, 21-22 and the Holy Spirit's leadership in Ephesians 4:15 concerning communication. As a Christian congregation in covenant with Christ as the Head of the Church, we accept responsibility to make God's teaching our watchwords.

Scripture Regarding Communication

Matthew 18:15-17, 21-22

“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector....”

Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.”

Ephesians 4:15

Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into Him Who is the Head, into Christ.

Guidelines Concerning Communication

1. When we hear something that raises concerns for us, we shall first make every effort to speak directly, one-to-one with the person involved. A deacon or the pastor(s) may be asked to coach us in advance, or to be present to witness communication as Jesus specifies at step two of the Matthew 18 process. If talking one-to-one or with one or two others fails, then concerns may be referred to the relevant group in the church or as a last resort to the whole congregation.
2. In order to speak truth in love, we shall speak for ourselves using “I” statements, not claim to represent others or use accusatory “you” statements.
3. When difficult subjects need to be named, we shall pray for all concerned and seek guidance of the diaconate and/or pastor(s) for help in speaking truth in love.
4. We accept that understanding and respecting each other does *not* necessarily mean agreeing with each other.
5. We affirm that the Holy Spirit may speak through any of us, so that all of us deserve a respectful hearing, even though congregational decisions are made by a majority vote.
6. While all people are welcome in Christian communities, behavior that is unchristian (for example: threatening, taunting, demeaning, harassing or attacking) conflicts with Christ's

teaching and will not be tolerated.