

The Constitution and By-Laws
of
The First Congregational Church of Buxton, Maine
United Church of Christ

Church Organized 1742

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Constitution

Article One: Name

The name of this Church shall be The First Congregational Church of Buxton, Maine, United Church of Christ (also known as Tory Hill Meetinghouse)

Article Two: Purpose

The avowed purpose of this Church shall be to worship God, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the sacrament of Baptism and Holy Communion, to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this Church and the church universal, to render loving service toward all persons, and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

Article Three: Welcoming Statement

We the First Congregational Church of Buxton declare ourselves to be open and affirming of all humankind. We acknowledge and affirm the equal value of people of all ages, races, nationalities, ethnicities, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, regardless of physical, mental, or emotional abilities, family structures, faith backgrounds, or socio-economic status. All are welcome into the full life and ministry of the church.

Article Four: Mission Statement

Recognizing that we comprise the living Body of Christ in the world today, and understanding that as followers of Jesus we are both called and commissioned by God in the daily living out of our Christian faith, we understand the mission of this local church and ourselves as individual disciples is to endeavor to love God with all our hearts and souls, minds and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. Further, it is our mission to minister to our members and respond to the needs of God's world: to foster an inclusive spiritual environment and seek spiritual growth, to live Jesus' teachings through words and example, to fellowship with a spirit of compassion, openness and integrity, to share our gifts and resources, and to invite others to join us.

Article Five: Polity (Government)

The government of this Church is vested in its members, who, in accordance with the provision of this Constitution and By-Laws, exercise the right of control over all its affairs while enjoying an atmosphere of autonomy, subject, however, to the laws of the State of Maine pertaining to corporations not for profit or ecclesiastical corporations. This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, yet honors its covenant with the United Church of Christ and welcomes opportunities for mutual counsel, cooperation, and fellowship with the York Association and Maine Conference.

This church shall be part of the United Church of Christ and the York Association of the United Church of Christ, and it shall covenant with and sustain that relationship as described in those portions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ, adopted July 4, 1961, and subsequently amended relating to local churches.

Article Six: Faith and Covenant

Faith

This Church acknowledges as its sole head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Lord and Savior. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to empower its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own, in accordance with the teachings of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, and it recognizes two sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion.

Our Church Membership Covenant

Being guided by the faith of Jesus Christ,
And believing this to be his Church and our Church home,
We covenant with God and each other to pray and to work for this Church,
To support its worship, programs, and mission
By our faith, substance, and witness.
We promise to walk together in Christian love,
Seeking to strengthen one another in faith and by prayer,
Being slow to anger and ready for reconciliation,
Bearing one another's burdens,
Sharing each other's joys,
Welcoming the stranger,
Befriending the poor and lonely,
Educating all in the Christian faith,
And spreading the Gospel into all the world.

By-Laws

Article Seven: Membership

A. Covenant Membership

Full covenant membership, with all of its rights and privileges, costs, and responsibilities including voice and vote, shall be open to any person who has been baptized into the Christian faith and who:

- 1) Makes a public confession of faith, required of all candidates for covenant membership.
- 2) Presents a Letter of Transfer from another church in which he or she holds active membership standing, if applicable.
- 3) Understands that his or her acceptance into covenant membership is subject to the recommendation of the minister and Deacons. (change made previously)
- 4) Agrees to conform to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church, and who assumes the obligations and responsibilities of the Church Covenant and Mission Statement.

B. Conditions of Covenant Membership

- 1) All covenant members 18 years of age and older shall have voting privileges.
- 2) All officers of the Church shall be covenant members.
- 3) Only covenant members may serve on committees.
- 4) All covenant members shall pledge themselves to regularly attend the worship of this Church and participate in the celebration of Holy Communion and to live, as best God grants them the ability, the Christian lifestyle, 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.

Article Eight: Pastor

A. Pastor

- 1) When a person accepts a call from the Church to serve as Pastor, the Church, with the Pastor, shall request the York Association of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ to arrange for licensing and/or standing within the York Association. If a non-ordained person is called, that person shall also seek licensure/standing, and in due order, ordination from the York Association.
- 2) The Pastor, together with the Diaconate, shall be charged with the spiritual oversight of the Church. The Pastor shall preach the Word of God, enjoy freedom of pulpit, lead public worship, and administer the Sacraments. He or she shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Church, with freedom of voice and counsel, but without voting privileges.
- 3) The Pastor shall be a member of the Church, and by extension, the York Association.
- 4) The relationship between the Pastor and the Church shall be for an indeterminate time and be dissolved by either the written resignation of the Pastor or by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present at a duly called meeting of the Church.
- 5) Immediate notice of termination of the relationship between Pastor and Church shall be given by the Church if the York Association and/or the Church and Ministry Committee, for any reason, revoke the Pastor's

ministerial standing in the York Association and/or United Church of Christ.

Article Nine: Officers

All officers shall submit to the Church at the Annual Meeting a written report summarizing their past year's activities. All officers of the Church shall attend Church Council meetings.

A. Moderator

- 1) The Moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church for a term of two (2) years and shall not serve more than three (3) consecutive terms.
- 2) The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the Church.
- 3) The Moderator shall serve as Chair of the Church Council.
- 4) The Moderator shall file a written report at the Annual Meeting of the year's activities of the Council and collect reports from all committees and officers
- 5) The Moderator shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees, with privilege of voice and counsel but without voting privileges.
- 6) During intervals when the Church may be without a Pastor, or if the Pastor is unavailable, the Moderator, as chief lay officer, shall coordinate the activities of the Church and its committees.

B. Vice Moderator

- 1) The Vice Moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church for a term of two (2) years and shall not serve more than three (3) consecutive terms.
- 2) The Vice Moderator shall assume the role of the Moderator if the Moderator is absent or unable to attend.
- 3) The Vice Moderator shall assume the duties of the Moderator if the Moderator's position is vacated until a new Moderator can be elected.
- 4) This position may go unfilled in the event that there are no volunteers.

C. Church Clerk

- 1) The Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church for a term of two (2) years. The Clerk may not serve more than three (3) consecutive terms.
- 2) The Clerk shall keep the minutes of all general and special meetings of the Church.
- 3) The Clerk shall keep all official records of the Church including, but not limited to, baptisms, marriages, deaths, and membership lists.
- 4) The Clerk shall prepare advance written notification of all general and special Church meetings. Said notices shall be posted at the Church and Parish House at least one week prior to a meeting. Notice of a meeting shall also be placed in the Church bulletin and other Church media.
- 5) The Clerk shall develop a good-faith-membership list for dues based on attendance and support of the Church for the annual report to the UCC.

- 6) The Clerk's records/minutes shall be made available to the Pastor and all officers and committees of the Church upon request.
- 7) The Clerk shall also serve as the Church's public relations person, ensuring that community newsletters, internet, and/or radio/TV stations have the Church's correct worship and Sunday School times. Chair people and/ or event organizers will be responsible for advance word of all upcoming special events, fairs, concerts, and so on is given to the media.
- 8) The Clerk will be responsible for providing coverage for Church meetings and meeting notes when he or she cannot attend the meetings.
- 9) The Clerk shall bring membership lists to all church meetings that will require a vote of said members.

D. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

Treasurer

- 1) The Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church. The Treasurer shall serve without term limits and shall be re-elected for a term of two (2) years at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall serve as an agent of the Business Committee.
- 2) The Treasurer shall keep accurate records of all Church financial information and shall be responsible for issuing checks and recording deposits.
- 3) Barring extreme circumstances or for reason of ill health, the Treasurer's presence is mandatory at all Business Committee meetings.
- 4) The Treasurer shall present a current financial reporting to the Congregation of the First Congregational Church of Buxton, UCC, at each Annual Meeting, as well as a quarterly financial update.
- 5) The Treasurer shall also be responsible for supplying end-of-the-year financial information to the United Church of Christ, as requested.
- 6) The Treasurer shall maintain a Book of Remembrance for all memorial gifts bequeathed to the Church, pursuant to Article Ten herein.
- 7) The Treasurer shall be responsible for training and updating the current financial procedures with the Assistant Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be responsible for training the new Treasurer.

Assistant Treasurer

- 1) The Assistant Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church for a two-year term staggered with the term of the Treasurer with no term limits.
- 2) The Assistant Treasurer shall be responsible for recording and depositing incoming monies (except Deacon's fund) and associated record keeping and documentation.
- 3) The assistant treasurer and Treasurer cannot be the same person and cannot be related to one another

E. Auditor

The business committee is empowered to hire or find a qualified volunteer to conduct a yearly audit.

Article Ten: Standing and Non-Standing Committees

Standing Committees

All committees shall submit a written report to the Church at Annual Meeting summarizing their past year's activities. All committees are annually responsible for submitting a proposed budget for their committee to the Business Committee. All committees are responsible for maintaining accurate records of all meetings. No committee member can be a member of more than one standing committee or office. The committees may continue to conduct their business with fewer than the recommended number of members when necessary.

A. Diaconate

Composition

The Diaconate shall consist of five (5) members who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for terms of three (3) years, and who may serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms. To ensure consistency, the terms shall be staggered.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1) Deacons shall assist the Pastor in helping the Church envision and achieve its spiritual potential. They shall lead the Congregation to a deeper understanding of the nature and mission of the Church and lead a lay ministry to the people of the Church, including a ministry of visitation to shut-ins.
- 2) Deacons shall assist the Pastor in leading worship and in administering the Sacraments. They shall attend all services of Baptism, Holy Communion, and reception of new members, and assist the Pastor when weddings and memorial services are held in our sanctuary.
- 3) Deacons shall periodically review the membership list of the Church, making necessary changes to active and inactive lists. Any covenant member may, upon written request and for whatever reason, be granted a Letter of Transfer to another church.
- 4) Deacons and witness shall count and keep record of offerings and make information available to the Auditor upon request.
- 5) Deacons, with the Pastor, shall meet with prospective members, participate in their education for membership to ensure that they are familiar with and embrace the Covenant and Constitution of the Church, and shall determine whether to recommend a person to the Congregation for acceptance into the membership of the Church. They shall actively assign mentors to people newly attending Church functions.
- 6) Deacons shall be responsible for arranging supply preachers whenever the Pastor is unavailable.
- 7) The Diaconate shall accept donations to the Diaconate Fund and be in charge of its disbursements in consultation with the Pastor.

- 8) The Diaconate shall be responsible for “keeping its finger on the pulse of the Church” and for periodically gathering input in the form of an evaluation from the Church. The input shall be used to evaluate the ministries, worship, and fellowship life of the Church, and the Diaconate shall report their findings to the Church. The Deacons shall act as mediators to facilitate any church members dissatisfaction with church matters.
- 9) The Diaconate shall act as a Pastoral Relations Committee, serving as liaison between the Pastor and the Congregation for purposes of improving communication and clarifying any misunderstandings. It shall develop and maintain a strong and collegial working relationship with the Pastor and be available to the Congregation, listening to their respective insights, concerns, suggestions, and comments regarding the Pastor and worship life of the Church.
- 10) Deacons shall oversee flowers and music for events.

B. Church Council

Composition

The Church Council shall be composed of the Pastor, the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer, representatives of each standing committee, and general Church membership. The Church Council shall meet once every quarter unless extenuating circumstances arise. The Church Council shall be chaired by the Moderator. The Church Council is a non-voting body.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1) The Council shall develop the long-term strategic vision of the Church direction, a platform for communication for church committees and members, and a call to action for special Church meetings.
- 2) All of the Church Council’s acts and deliberations (as is true of all other committees and officers) are subject to the will of the Church assembled at Annual or Special Meetings, in accordance with Article Twelve herein.

C. Business Committee

Composition

The Business Committee shall consist of three (3) members who shall be elected for a term of three (3) years and who shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms. To ensure consistency on the committee, the terms shall be staggered.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1) The Business Committee shall oversee and manage expenses related to the Church’s activities and facilities, including such things as receiving bids and negotiating contracts with heating oil companies.
- 2) The Business Committee shall draft and submit an annual budget proposal to the Church for adoption at the Annual Meeting. The budget proposal shall be made available to the Church members at least one week prior to the Annual Meeting.
- 3) The Business Committee shall determine the best allocation of Church benevolences, if not specifically designated by the donor(s), and manage

all investment funds, making necessary changes as deemed appropriate due to changing economic conditions.

- 4) The Business Committee may, as deemed necessary, authorize non-budgetary expenditures up to five-hundred (\$500.00) dollars. If a non-budget expense exceeds that amount, the Business Committee must receive the approval of the Church at an Annual or Special Meeting of the Church. However, in situations deemed by the Business Committee to be emergencies in which immediate action is required, the Business Committee has the authority to authorize expenditures in excess of five-hundred (\$500.00) dollars. If such action is taken, the Business Committee is required to post the reason and the amount of expenditure immediately at both the Church and the Parish House.
- 5) The Business Committee shall meet monthly.
- 6) The Business Committee shall oversee all restoration, renovation, maintenance, and general upkeep of the Church properties. The Committee's responsibilities include documenting required work to be performed and meeting with and receiving estimates from contractors and supervising contractors to ensure all work is satisfactorily completed as per contractual agreement(s).
- 7) The Business Committee shall work in conjunction with the Treasurer to provide a quarterly financial update.
- 8) The Business Committee shall draft all contractual agreements with salaried employees and submitting them to the Church at Special or Annual Meeting for approval.

D. Christian Education Committee

Composition

The Christian Education Committee shall consist of Teachers, Superintendent of the Sunday School, Youth Group Leaders, and Pastor.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1) The Christian Education Committee shall oversee the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and the Youth Group programs as needed based on enrollment. The Committee shall provide support to these programs including, but not limited to, setting up budgets, approving major (in excess of twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars) expenditures, assisting with fundraising to supplement budget allotment, solicit potential contributors of materials and supplies, and work with the individual program directors to ensure quality and safe programs.
- 2) The Sunday School Teachers shall nominate the Sunday School Superintendent and the Youth Group Leader(s).
- 3) At least two, preferably three, Christian Education Committee members shall attend information sessions provided by the UCC in regards to Sunday School curriculum. These members shall share the information with the School Teachers and the remaining members of the Committee. The Committee shall determine the curriculum to be used by the Sunday School.
- 4) The Christian Education Committee shall keep a complete and accurate record of all individual program activities, including income and expenditures.

E. Animators

Composition

The Animators shall consist of two members. One member shall serve as the Head Animator can also serve as Vice Moderator. Each member will be elected at Annual Meeting for a term of two (2) years and shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms. To ensure consistency on the committee, the terms shall be staggered.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1) Animators will serve as representatives of the Church to the membership to solicit input from the Congregation on items related to the Church and also to facilitate ideas and proposals.
- 2) Animators will be responsible for identifying and nominating members for offices, committees, and as delegates. When vacancies exist between annual meetings, the animators can appoint members to fill positions.
- 3) The Animators will maintain a list of committee members, and the dates on which their terms expire.

F. Mission, Fundraising, and Stewardship

Composition

The MFS Committee shall consist of two (2) members who shall be elected for a term of three (3) years and who shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms. To ensure consistency on the Committee, the terms shall be staggered. All monies, fundraising and otherwise, shall be managed by the Treasurer. All items of a confidential nature shall be directed to the Treasurer.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1) The MSF Committee shall help the Congregation to more thoroughly understand how all members of the Church are stewards of the Church and shall encourage them to accept ever-increasing responsibilities of faithful stewardship.
- 2) The MSF Committee shall encourage bequests and gifts, memorial and otherwise.
- 3) The MSF Committee shall, on an ongoing basis, educate the Congregation regarding the Church's mission. To this end, the Committee shall periodically provide programs regarding the mission and outreach of both our Church and denomination for purposes of encouraging increased giving. It shall be mindful of new opportunities available to the Church for reaching out in the name of Jesus Christ on local, national, and worldwide levels.
- 4) The MSF Committee shall coordinate any and all fundraising activities. All committees or groups of the Church desiring to participate in fundraising activities of any kind shall coordinate with the MFS.
- 5) The MSF Committee shall be responsible for the Annual Stewardship Campaign to encourage and challenge Church members toward greater and more substantial stewardship of their faith and the Church and its program and missions.
- 6) The MSF Committee shall meet monthly with additional meetings as necessary.

7) The MSF Committee shall, on an on-going basis, seek grant monies whenever and wherever available for improvements to Church facilities and will complete all required paperwork concerning grant applications.

Non-Standing Committees

*Members on non-standing committees may include officers and members of standing committees.

A. Delegates

Composition

The Delegates will be recruited and assigned by the Animators based on event requirements.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Delegates shall represent the Church at duly called association and conference meetings in which the Church is requested to be represented. The Delegates shall keep the Church informed of association and conference activities, solicit the Congregation's counsel regarding issues to be considered at said meetings, and serve, however possible, as true representatives of all members of the local Church to the wider Church.

B. Pulpit and Search Committee

Composition

When a vacancy in the pastorate occurs, the Moderator may call a Special Meeting of the Church for purposes of forming a Pulpit and Search Committee. The Committee may also be formed at the Annual Meeting. The Pulpit and Search Committee shall consist of seven (7) members of the Church and shall be duly elected by the membership. The Committee shall begin its search at a time to be determined by the membership and remain in conversation with the Church regarding its progress throughout the duration of the search.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1) The Pulpit and Search Committee, working in conjunction with the Church Council and Business Committee, shall determine a salary and benefits package for review by any candidate requesting it. The Maine Conference of the UCC shall be notified of a pastoral vacancy, and the assistance of the Conference staff in the search process shall be requested.
- 2) The Pulpit and Search Committee shall compile a Church Profile to be made available to the Maine Conference and all candidates who request one.
- 3) During pastoral interim periods, should the Church determine that an Interim Pastor would be beneficial, the Pulpit and Search Committee, in consultation with the Church Council, shall have the responsibility of reviewing and recommending to the Church a candidate to serve as the Interim Pastor, with the length of pastorate and particulars of said pastorate to be contractually stated and presented to the Church for approval.
- 4) Any candidate interim or permanent, upon the recommendation of the Pulpit and Search Committee, shall be presented to the Church at a meeting of the Church. A favorable vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the gathered membership shall constitute a Call.

C. Constitution and By-Laws Committee

Composition

The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall be formed upon request of the Moderator at an Annual or Special meeting of the Church whenever changes to the Constitution and By-Laws are deemed necessary. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall consist of five (5) members elected at a meeting of the Church.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1) The Constitution and By-Laws committee shall draft an amendment or revision of the Constitution and By-Laws and present it to the assembled membership at a duly called meeting of the Church. All changes are subject to a favorable vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the gathered membership and immediately become effective.
- 2) The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall make a draft of proposed revisions available to the Church at least seven (7) days prior to a duly called meeting of the Church.
- 3) When any changes are adopted at a meeting, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall, in short order, execute necessary revisions to the document and make copies of newly revised Constitution and By-Laws available to the Church.

Article Eleven: Property and Financial Policies

Property

The First Congregational Church of Buxton, United Church of Christ, shall forever be devoted to religious purposes. No officer, 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 the Church, a committee will be formed to recommend the distribution of property and assets prior to a vote to close.

Financial

Memorial gifts to the Church shall be recorded in a Book of Remembrance, maintained by the Treasurer, and shall be placed in the general Fund, unless the donor(s) requests otherwise. Any gifts received during a fiscal year shall be stated in detail by the Treasurer in the next Annual Report, including name(s) of donor(s) and amount of bequest, unless anonymity is requested by the donor(s), which shall be respected. All non-monetary bequests to the Church, shall be approved or declined at a duly called meeting of the Church. Gifts are considered the property of the church, to do with as the church deems necessary.

Article Twelve: Special Offerings, Additional Offerings, and Collections

All special offerings or additional offerings received during a service of worship shall be coordinated with the Pastor, Diaconate, and Mission, Fundraising, and Stewardship Committees.

The Congregation shall be given notice of such offerings at least one week prior to the service of worship during which they will be received.

Special collections may be taken outside the context of a worship service in consultation with the Pastor, Diaconate, and Mission, Fundraising, and Stewardship Committees by posting a notice of such collection in the church bulletin and/or the parish newsletter.

Article Thirteen: Procedures and Meetings

Procedures

- 1) Public notification of all meetings, Annual and Special, must be made at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting. A notice shall be posted by the Clerk on the exterior of both the Church and the Parish House upon request of the Moderator and/or Church Council. When possible, notification of any meeting should also appear in the preceding week's Church bulletin.
- 2) A current Roberts Rules of Order shall govern all matters of procedure for all meetings and committees.
- 3) A quorum for an all-church meeting shall consist of a minimum of ten (10) members or 15% of the Church's active weekly attendance as approximated at the time of the meeting by the Deacons, whichever is greater.
- 4) Church members may vote to remove officers by two-thirds (2/3) majority in a Church meeting.

Meetings

Annual Meetings

- 1) The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be in the fall of each year with the specific date to be annually determined by the Church Council.
- 2) The purpose of the Annual Meeting shall be to review and discuss the budget for the upcoming year and to vote on committee and officer nominees.
- 3) Each committee chair and officer of the Church shall be responsible for submitting a written report at Annual Meeting reviewing the year's activities of their committee or office.

Special Meetings

- 1) A Special Meeting may be called by the Moderator, by a majority vote of the Church Council, the Pastor, or by a signed petition presented to the Moderator from at least six (6) members so requesting. A minimum of one-week's notice must be given and duly posted as pursuant to Article 12 Procedures.