

1 ***PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH BY-LAWS***

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46 **ARTICLE I: NAME**

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47 The name of this church shall be (the) Pilgrim Congregational Church, United Church  
48 of Christ, Leominster, Massachusetts.

49

50 **ARTICLE II: PRINCIPLES**

51 This Church is evangelical and is congregational in polity. It is self-governing, but  
52 joins with other members of the United Church of Christ in mutual covenant and  
53 cooperation and seeks to be in fellowship with all Christian Churches and other  
54 religious fellowships.

55

56 **ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

57 The avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the Gospel of  
58 Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian Fellowship and  
59 unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward  
60 all; and to strive for righteousness, compassion, justice, and peace.

61

62 **ARTICLE IV: COVENANT**

63 We, the members of Pilgrim Congregational Church, covenant with the Lord and with  
64 one another to seek and respond to the word and will of God. We pledge to walk  
65 together in the ways of the Lord, revealed to us in the past, in the present, and in  
66 the future. We give ourselves unreservedly to the mission of the Church to witness to  
67 the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world. Relying on God's grace, we will strive for  
68 truth, compassion, justice, and peace. We will be ever mindful of the welfare of our  
69 fellow members and walk with them in faithfulness and Christian love. We covenant  
70 together to join regularly in worship to observe the Church's sacraments, to share in  
71 its work, support and benevolences, and to endeavor to make it a fruitful body of  
72 Christians. As did our spiritual ancestors, we will depend on the Holy Spirit of God to  
73 lead and empower us.

74 God covenants with us to provide forgiveness of sins, fullness of grace, and his  
75 presence in trial and rejoicing. We will pray for the coming of the reign of God, and  
76 we will look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

77 **ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP**

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78 **ARTICLE V, SECTION I: MEMBERS.**

79 Pilgrim Congregational Church members shall consist of all persons who at the time  
80 of adoption of these By-Laws are already current members, and of all persons who  
81 shall hereafter unite with this Church either by letter or by public confession or  
82 reaffirmation of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and who subscribe to  
83 these By-Laws by signing the Church Roll. All members shall have the right to vote.

84 Membership shall continue until terminated by death, by vote of the Church, by  
85 direction of the Board of Deacons, by letter of transfer to another Church, or by a  
86 member's own written request.

87 **ARTICLE V, SECTION II: ELECTION OF MEMBERS.**

88 Persons desiring to join the church shall contact the Pastor and/or the Board of  
89 Deacons, and if the Pastor and/or Board of Deacons so recommends, may be  
90 received into membership at any regular worship service or specially scheduled  
91 service with a Pastor and Deacons present.

92 **ARTICLE V, SECTION III: INACTIVE LIST.**

93 People may be moved to the Inactive List at their own request, at the  
94 recommendation of the Board of Deacons, or after ten continuous years of inactivity  
95 within the church. Persons on the inactive list shall not have the right to vote and  
96 shall not be counted in the church's reported membership. They shall be removed  
97 from the Church directory and all its mailing lists. An alphabetical list of inactive  
98 members shall be maintained by the Church Clerk and the Church office. The Church  
99 may thereafter reinstate such persons to the active member list at their request, or  
100 at the recommendation of the Board of Deacons.

101 **ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS, COMMITTEES & BOARDS**

102 **ARTICLE VI, SECTION I: OFFICERS.**

103 The Church shall have the following Officers, who's selection shall be ratified or  
104 elected annually at the All Church Meeting. The Moderator shall not serve for more  
105 than three consecutive years. The Treasurer shall serve for one year however, is  
106 encouraged to serve for a minimum of two years, or until their respective successor  
107 is chosen by the Church.

108 **A.** A Moderator, who shall preside at all Congregational business meetings and all  
109 meetings of the Church Coordinating Council. He/she shall also help coordinate

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110 the Church activities and effective operation of all committees as directed by the  
111 Council. The responsibilities of each committee are outlined in Section II, Article  
112 IV. The Moderator will also oversee facility use by outside organizations. With  
113 the consent of the Coordinating Council, the Moderator can act as legal  
114 representative of the Church.

115 **B.** A Vice-Moderator, who shall perform the duties of the Moderator in the latter's  
116 absence or incapacity. He/she shall be responsible for the timely preparation and  
117 distribution of an agenda for each meeting of the Coordinating Council.

118 **C.** A Clerk, who shall keep a true and timely record of all business meetings of the  
119 Church called by warrant and also all meetings of the Church Coordinating  
120 Council. The Clerk shall have the responsibility for the satisfactory completion of  
121 the following;

- 122 1. Securing the signatures of new members to the Church Roll;
- 123 2. Keeping a record of names, with dates of admission, transfer  
124 of membership, or death, and a record of baptisms;
- 125 3. Issuing letters of transfer;
- 126 4. Keeping on file all written official reports;
- 127 5. Maintaining, updating and distributing as necessary, the church inactive  
128 list.
- 129 6. Posting the warrant of all business meetings of the Church and;
- 130 7. When necessary, the Clerk will account for voting members present at  
131 each Church meeting by maintaining a written record of attendance.
- 132 8. The Church may elect an Assistant Clerk to assist the Clerk and to serve in  
133 the absence of the Clerk.

134 **D.** A Treasurer, who shall be bonded as the Board of Trustees may require, and shall  
135 have the care and custody of all monies of the Church (as described in this  
136 section) and custody of its Trust funds. The Treasurer shall be duly authorized to  
137 handle all buy and sell decisions of the Board of Trustees, and shall have the  
138 authority to make the necessary arrangements for the payment of approved  
139 investments and signing of stock powers required on sales. The Chairperson of

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140 the Board of Trustees and/or the Assistant Treasurer shall assume these duties in  
141 the absence/incapacitation of the Treasurer.

142 1. The Treasurer shall keep separate accounts as follows:

143 a) Of all unpledged monies contributed at the Communion service,  
144 which monies shall be held in the fund known as The Diaconate  
145 Fund for the aid of those in need, and which, together with other  
146 monies given for that purpose, shall be held subject to the  
147 directions of the Pastor and/or the Board of Deacons;

148 b) Of all non-budgetary monies raised for the object of Christian  
149 benevolence, to be paid to the persons or societies entitled  
150 thereto;

151  
152 c) Of all non-budgetary unallocated monies raised for the benefit  
153 of the Church by special and distinct fund raising groups (i.e  
154 Capital Campaign), to be expended under the direction of that  
155 specific group working with the Church Coordinating Council, and  
156

157 d) Of all monies raised for the support of public worship and  
158 religious education, or of any department of the Church, to be paid  
159 out only in accordance with the provisions of the budget and as  
160 directed by the Board of Trustees.

161 2. The Treasurer shall submit a monthly written report in such form as the  
162 Trustees may require. Such report shall be distributed to the members of  
163 the Church Coordinating Council and also filed in the Church office for  
164 reference by any member.

165 3. At the Annual Meeting, the Treasurer shall make a written report to the  
166 Church of receipts and expenditures, and an independent examination  
167 shall be conducted by a/an approved individual(s) of the church,  
168 appointed by the Board of Trustees. These findings shall be reported.

169 4. The Church shall elect one or more Assistant Treasurers who shall be  
170 bonded as the Board of Trustees may require, and shall perform the  
171 duties of the Treasurer in the latter's absence or incapacity, and have such  
172 other duties as the Board of Trustees may determine.

173 **E.** A Collector and/or one or more Assistant Collectors, who shall be bonded as the  
174 Board of Trustees may require, and who shall collect all monies contributed for  
175 the mission of the Church, and deposit the money to the account of the Church.  
176 The Collector shall submit a monthly written report to the Treasurer in such form

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177 as the Treasurer may require. Such report shall be filed in the Church office for  
178 reference by any church member. In the event there is more than one Collector,  
179 they shall designate one of their number to represent them on the Church  
180 Coordinating Council.

181 **F.** One or more Lay Delegates, who shall have in their charge the interests of the  
182 laity of the Church with respect to the activities of the Central Association UCC,  
183 Massachusetts Conference UCC, and the National United Church of Christ. In the  
184 event that there is more than one Lay Delegate, they shall designate one of their  
185 number to represent them on the Church Coordinating Council.

186 **G.** A Historian, who shall record in permanent form such events, as in his/her  
187 judgment ought to be preserved as pertinent to the history of the Church,  
188 especially those events which do not fall within the province of the Clerk's duties.  
189 The Historian shall provide a written report for the annual church meeting.

190 **ARTICLE VI, SECTION II: COMMITTEES and BOARDS**

191 The Church shall have the following Committees and Boards, the selected members  
192 of which shall serve for three years or until their successors are selected. The  
193 members of each committee/board are to be ratified or elected at an All Church  
194 Meeting each year so that approximately one-third of each committee membership  
195 changes annually. At the first election following the adoption of these By-Laws, or  
196 subsequently in the event of a change of the number of the members of any  
197 Committee, members may be chosen for one, two, or three years, so that the terms  
198 of approximately one-third of its members will expire each year. No Committee  
199 Chairperson shall serve more than three consecutive years on the same committee  
200 as the chairperson. In the event a committee member is not able to meet their  
201 commitment, they may be removed by a majority vote of the committee/board at  
202 any time. Each Committee shall meet monthly from September through May  
203 inclusive, or additionally as the Chairperson determines. Each committee shall keep  
204 an accurate record of all meetings, and except for the Pastor-Parish Relations and  
205 Personnel Committees, a copy of which shall be given, to the Church Office to be  
206 placed on file within four weeks of the meeting. All Committees/Boards shall submit  
207 a written report at least three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting, which shall be  
208 made available to the Church members. All Committee/Board membership decisions  
209 shall be consistent with the Safe Church Policy.

210

211 **A. Church Growth and Membership Retention Committee**

212 **Number of Members:** 7

213 The purpose of this committee is to:

- 214 1. Invite new members and retain existing members into the life and  
215 fellowship of Pilgrim Congregational Church.
- 216 2. Educate and enlighten members and committees on church growth  
217 philosophies and techniques.
- 218 3. Continually encourage church members to invite friends or “the  
219 unchurched” to worship with us.
- 220 4. Devise ways to make the church more inviting and visible in the  
221 community.
- 222 5. Oversee all media publicity with respect to the church and its activities  
223 and the church website.

224 **B. Stewardship Committee**

225 **Number of Members:** Members of Coordinating Council, in addition to 2 Church  
226 members.

227 The purpose of this committee is to:

- 228 1. Solicit time, talent and money to the Church. This includes the  
229 recruitment, development, support and recognition of lay leadership, as  
230 well as leading the ongoing financial stewardship effort with the  
231 cooperation and guidance of the Board of Trustees.
- 232 2. Assimilate members and friends of the Church into full life of the Church,  
233 together with the Staff, Church School, and other groups.
- 234 3. Submit nominations for all Officers and Committees at the Annual  
235 Meeting, and to the Church Coordinating Council as vacancies occur  
236 between Annual Meetings.

237 **C. Worship Support Committee**

238 **Number of Members:** 5

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239 The purpose of this committee is to:

- 240 1. Support and enhance the Church's services of worship.
- 241 2. Secure and support Ushers, Greeters, Acolytes and other lay participants.
- 242 3. Provide for the acquisition and distribution of flowers, decorations and the  
243 care of the Altar.
- 244 4. Maintain open communication between the various groups and individuals  
245 involved in services of worship.
- 246 5. Perform its work directly or through such persons or Sub-Committees as it  
247 may appoint.
- 248 6. Recognize and honor the work of the acolytes and choir members.

249 **D. Board of Trustees**

250 **Number of Members:** 7 Church members. The Treasurer and designated  
251 Collector shall be ex-officio members. In the absence of the Treasurer, the  
252 Assistant Treasurer, if any, shall be an ex-officio member.

253 The purpose of this board is to:

- 254 1. Manage the business affairs of the Church; monitor the raising and  
255 expenditure of Church funds (except where authority is expressly given by  
256 these By-Laws to the Pastor(s) and/or any other board/committee).
- 257 2. Oversee the Church's investment portfolio.
- 258 3. Manage and maintain the Church property.
- 259 4. Diligently vet and supervise any contractor(s) and service vendors (i.e.  
260 cleaning contractors/ snow removal personnel) hired to care for the  
261 Church property.
- 262 5. Submit to the Church at the Annual Meeting a budget containing the  
263 recommended operational expenditures of the Church for the current  
264 and/or upcoming fiscal year for approval. The budget shall set forth as  
265 separate items all recommended salaries.



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- 266           6. Transfer authorized funds held within the various church investment  
267           portfolios (i.e. savings account, checking account, and stocks) to meet  
268           operating costs consistent with the approved budget.
- 269           7. Make adjustments within the approved budget up to a limit of 10% of the  
270           total operating budget. However, these limits shall not apply to the  
271           transfer of funds between the "Salary" and "Housing Allowance" categories  
272           of Pastoral compensation, provided the total Pastoral compensation  
273           remains unchanged. A report of such transfers must be provided to the  
274           Coordinating Council within 30 days of such transfers.  
275
- 276           ***EXCEPTION:*** *When the Church's investment portfolio is managed by an*  
277           *outside party, the Board of Trustees shall consist of 9 elected members.*  
278           *The two additional members will be responsible for overseeing the*  
279           *activities of the portfolio manager(s), ensuring the portfolio is being*  
280           *managed according to the goals and objectives set by the Board of*  
281           *Trustees. One of these two additional Trustees may also be an Assistant*  
282           *Treasurer, responsible for keeping the ledger on the portfolio.*
- 283           8. Ensure that securities belonging to the Church are kept in a fire-proof safe  
284           and/or safety deposit box. If the board deems it advisable they may seek  
285           to obtain professional advice with regard to the investment of the Trust  
286           Funds and securities. The Treasurer, or other designated personnel shall  
287           keep a true and accurate record of all investments and income received  
288           from same.

289   **E. Board of Christian Education**

290           **Number of Members:** 8 Church members (Plus either the Associate Pastor or  
291           the Director of Christian Education, and/or Superintendents of the various  
292           departments of the Church School.)

293           The purpose of this committee is to:

- 294           1. Develop and administer all programs and activities relating to the religious  
295           education in the Church, for children, young people and adults.
- 296           2. Appoint a sub-committee on Safe Church Policy to review compliance and  
297           update as necessary.

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- 298           3. Appoint a Superintendent of the Church School, and such other personnel  
299           as it may deem necessary.
- 300           4. Have charge of the curriculum of the Church School.
- 301           5. Secure and train teachers and leaders.
- 302           6. Have charge of the children's library.
- 303           7. Have charge of Vacation Bible School.
- 304           8. Have charge of the church youth group(s).

305   **F. Board of Deacons**

306           **Number of Members:** 12 Church members

307           The purpose of this committee is to:

- 308           1. Assist the Pastor with Communion services.
- 309           2. Provide the elements for Communion.
- 310           3. Cooperate with the Pastor in the work of the Church and the care of its  
311           people, being especially mindful of newcomers and of those in need or in  
312           trouble, or in special need of spiritual guidance.
- 313           4. Provide for the supply of the pulpit in the absence of the Pastor.
- 314           5. Encourage and stimulate membership in the Church.
- 315           6. To promote the Church's evangelism shall be the concern of the Board of  
316           Deacons.
- 317           7. Visit the sick and needy.
- 318           8. Call upon new members and prospective members and introduce new  
319           families into the life of the Church.
- 320           9. Monitor and distribute funds from the Board of Deacons checking account,  
321           and specially designated funds.
- 322           10. Provide support in the form of food, financial or other services for church  
323           and community members in need.

324 **G. Board of Missions**

325 **Number of Members:** 5 Church members

326 This purpose of this committee is to:

- 327 1. Promote the missionary objectives of the Church.
- 328 2. Stimulate interest in the Christian benevolences.
- 329 3. Educate and enlighten the Church as to the needs and purposes of our  
330 Christian Mission, both local and global.
- 331 4. Promote better relationships among peoples of the world, and foster the  
332 application of Christian ideals in society.
- 333 5. Interest itself in social concerns and civic affairs, especially in the City of  
334 Leominster and the surrounding localities.
- 335 6. Cooperate with local agencies in the promotion of community life.

336 **H. Pastor-Parish Relations Committee**

337 **Number of Members:** 5 Church members

338 The purpose of this committee is to:

- 339 1. Work to optimize communications and harmony between the Parish and  
340 Pastor(s).
- 341 2. Be sensitive to and honor matters entrusted in confidence.
- 342 3. Advocate for the Pastor(s) in matters of ministry, personal concerns, and  
343 professional growth so as to promote the parish's understanding of  
344 pastoral needs in these areas.
- 345 4. Be alert to sources of conflict between the Congregation and the  
346 Pastor(s)'s ministry.
- 347 5. Assist in mediating potential conflicts between the congregations and  
348 pastor(s).
- 349 6. Oversee the "Talk to Me" cards in the sanctuary pews. Anonymous cards  
350 or comments shall not be acknowledged.

351 **I. Personnel Committee**

352 **Number of Members:** 4 Church Members

353 The purpose of this committee is to:

- 354 1. Research, develop, implement and evaluate human resource tools that  
355 assist the Pastor, the Council, committees, and oversee the paid personnel  
356 of the Church with the Pastor in carrying out personnel matters.
- 357 2. Assist search committees in seeking information regarding job  
358 descriptions, contracts, office policies and procedures, and salary and  
359 compensation packages. Recommendations will be made to the Council or  
360 appropriate Committee for approval.
- 361 3. To hire or replace all paid non-pastoral staff upon recommendation of the  
362 appropriate search committee or Committee, to wit:
- 363 a. Sexton(s) and other custodial personnel
- 364 b. Director of Music and/or Organist
- 365 c. Church Administrative Assistant
- 366 d. Director of Christian Education
- 367 4. Act as the primary staff supervisor, ensuring each staff member performs  
368 his/her duties in accordance with the responsibilities of his/her job  
369 description or contract and/or goals and objectives set by the relevant  
370 oversight committee(s) or liaison designate.
- 371 5. Conduct performance reviews for paid non-pastoral staff and submit  
372 compensation to the Treasurer prior to the Annual Meeting.

373 **J. Music Committee**

374 **Number of Members:** 7 Church Members (Organist/Choir Director, Bell Choir Director,  
375 Assistant Bell Choir Director, 3 members of one of the Church's choirs, 1 at-large member.

376 The purpose of this committee is to:

- 377 1. Oversee the Church's music ministry.

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- 378           2. Be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the piano, organ and  
379           bells.
- 380           3. Oversee special music programs pertaining to Christmas, Easter, as well  
381           as other times of the year, as may be appropriate.
- 382           4. Be responsible for the music budget.

383   **ARTICLE VI, SECTION III: CHURCH COORDINATING COUNCIL**

384   The Church shall have a Coordinating Council.

385   **A.** The Council shall consist of the Pastor(s), the Moderator, the Vice-Moderator, the  
386   Clerk, the Treasurer, the designated Collector, the designated Lay Delegate and  
387   the Historian. In addition, it shall include the Chairpersons or their representative  
388   from the following committees: Board of Deacons, Trustees, Finance (if a  
389   standing committee), Stewardship, Church Growth and Member Retention,  
390   Worship Support, Christian Education, Missions, Pastor-Parish Relations,  
391   Personnel Committee, and the Music Committee.

392           1. If the Treasurer or designated Collector must be absent from a meeting of  
393           the Coordinating Council, said Officer will be represented by Assistant  
394           Treasurer and/or Assistant Collector respectively. The latter shall have full  
395           voting privileges on such occasion.

396           2. Deacon Emeriti may be voting members at any Council meeting.

397           3. Chairpersons of other Organizations and/or Sub-Committees of the Church  
398           are invited to sit with the Coordinating Council but will do so without vote.

399           4. All Church members are invited to attend each meeting of the Council  
400           without voting privileges.

401   **B.** The Moderator shall be the presiding Officer of the Coordinating Council and in  
402   the Moderator's absence, the Vice-Moderator. In the event that both the  
403   Moderator and Vice-Moderator are not present, the Chairperson of the Board of  
404   Deacons shall act as the presiding Officer. The Recording Secretary shall be the  
405   Clerk, but in the latter's absence the Council shall elect a Clerk, Pro-Tem to  
406   assume the duties.

407   **C.** When a majority of the Church Officers, Boards and Committees are represented  
408   by members attending the Council meeting, a quorum shall be declared providing

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409 proper notice of the meeting has been given to every member. When one  
410 member represents more than one position on the Council, that person shall cast  
411 only one vote regardless of the number of positions they represent.

412 **D.** The Coordinating Council shall have duties as follows:

- 413 1. To meet monthly from September through May inclusive. Additional  
414 special meetings may be called by the Moderator, or a written petition  
415 directed to the Moderator by any three members of the Coordinating  
416 Council. Such petition shall set forth in detail the reason(s) for such  
417 meeting.
- 418 2. To act as a point of coordination and communication between the various  
419 Boards and Committees, and to conduct both short-term and long-range  
420 planning for the Church.
- 421 3. To act as a point of appeal and mediator for any dispute submitted by a  
422 Board, Committee or member of the Church; subject to appeal to the  
423 Church at a special meeting called for that purpose.
- 424 4. To cooperate with the Pastor(s) in the formulation of Church programs,  
425 and the integration of pastoral activities therein.
- 426 5. In the event the Coordinating Council determines that a Committee is  
427 unable to perform its' duties, the Coordinating Council will overtake that  
428 Committee's responsibilities.
- 429 6. Between meetings of the Church, to act on the Church's behalf in carrying  
430 out declared policy. The Council may establish interim procedures and  
431 rules where none previously existed, applying the judicious use of  
432 resources to accomplish declared objectives whether specifically provided  
433 or not in these By-Laws. They may not establish policy but may  
434 recommend suggested policy to the Congregation.
- 435 7. To fill any vacancies of any office or committee or board until the next  
436 Congregational meeting.
- 437 8. To appoint Special Committees as needs arise in areas not the  
438 responsibility of a Board or Committee described in these by-laws.
- 439 9. To consider all proposed programs not considered at the Annual Meeting  
440 or provided for in these by-laws.

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441 10. In cases of emergency, the Church Coordinating Council may act in  
442 matters not involving the expenditure of money.

443

444 **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

445 At least 10% of the active church membership must be present at all meetings to  
446 constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.  
447

448 **ARTICLE VII, SECTION I: Annual Meeting**

449 The primary purpose of the Annual Meeting is to review and approve the Annual reports from  
450 all Committees/Boards and staff, Annual Budget, and conduct any other church business which  
451 is posted on the warrant.

452 **A.** The Annual Meeting shall be held on any date during the month of January, or as soon as  
453 practical.

454 **B.** The Coordinating Council shall prepare and produce the warrant for the Annual Meeting,  
455 and the warrant shall be directed to the Clerk, initiated by the Moderator, and signed by  
456 any three (3) of the following five (5) Officers; The Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Treasurer,  
457 Clerk, or Collector.

458 **C.** Any individual, group, Boards and/or Committee that has an item, or items which they  
459 desire to appear on the warrant shall present such items in writing to the Coordinating  
460 Council no less than four (4) weeks in advance of the Annual Meeting date.

461 **D.** The warrant must be posted no less than ten (10) days in advance of the meeting date.

462 **E.** Only such business as is contained in the warrant may be transacted.

463

464 **ARTICLE VII, SECTION II: All Church Meeting**

465 The primary purpose of the All Church Meeting is to ratify, or vote on the selection of any new  
466 church Officers and Committee/Board members, and to conduct any other church business  
467 which is posted on the warrant.  
468

469 **A.** An All Church Meeting shall be held on any date during the months of May or  
470 June or as soon as practical.

471 **B.** The Coordinating Council shall prepare and produce the warrant for the All  
472 Church Meeting, and the warrant shall be directed to the Clerk, initiated by the  
473

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- 474 Moderator, and signed by any three (3) of the following five (5) Officers; The  
475 Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Treasurer, Clerk, or Collector.  
476  
477 C. Any individual, group, Boards and/or Committee that has an item, or items which  
478 they desire to appear on the warrant shall present such items in writing to the  
479 Coordinating Council no less than four (4) weeks in advance of the All Church  
480 Meeting date.  
481  
482 D. The warrant must be posted no less than ten (10) days in advance of the  
483 meeting date.  
484  
485 E. Only such business as is contained in the warrant may be transacted.

486 **ARTICLE VII, SECTION III: Special Business Meeting**

- 487 The purpose of the Special Business Meeting is to ensure that any unforeseen issues  
488 which may arise between the Annual Meeting and the All Church Meeting can be  
489 addressed in a timely manner.  
490  
491 A. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time during the year in the same  
492 manner as is provided for the calling of the Annual Meeting.  
493  
494 B. Requests for Special Business Meetings shall be in writing by any five (5) active  
495 members of the church to the Coordinating Council, directed to the Moderator, or  
496 Vice-Moderator in the absence of the Moderator, specifying the purpose thereof.  
497  
498 C. If the requested Special Business Meeting is deemed appropriate by the  
499 Coordinating Council, then a date for such a meeting shall be set no later than  
500 four weeks after the decision to proceed.

501 **ARTICLE VII, SECTION IV: Regular Meetings for Worship**

- 502 A. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Church may without special  
503 notice act upon the reception of members, or the transfer of members to other  
504 churches, or the appointment of delegates to councils and conferences of  
505 churches, but not upon other business.  
506  
507 B. In cases of emergency, the Church Coordinating Council may act in matters not  
involving the expenditure of money.

508 **ARTICLE VII, SECTION V: Communion**

- 509 Communion will be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month, unless otherwise  
510 directed  
511 by the Board of Deacons. Communion will also be celebrated on other special  
512 occasions as deemed appropriate by the Board of Deacons and/or the Pastor(s).

513 **ARTICLE VIII: STAFF**



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514 Staff refers to any personnel who are on the churches active payroll. Staff includes  
515 employees who are at-will or on contract.

516 **ARTICLE VIII, SECTION I: Staff Reviews**

517 **A.** The Personnel Committee will conduct annual performance reviews of all current  
518 church employees during the months of September and October.

519 **B.** The Committee or a subset of its members will meet with each employee  
520 regarding work performance over the previous year.

521 **C.** Concurrently, reviews of each employee's salary will also be considered by the  
522 Personnel Committee.

523 **D.** On or before November 15<sup>th</sup> the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee will  
524 submit in writing any recommended modification(s) to the employee's  
525 compensation to the Board of Trustees and the Treasurer for consideration for  
526 the upcoming budget year.

527 **E.** The Personnel Committee may at anytime conduct an interim performance review  
528 to address any issues of concern with an employee.

529 **ARTICLE VIII, SECTION II: Review of Pastor and/or Associate Pastor**

530 **A.** Evaluation of the Pastor shall be conducted annually during the months of  
531 September and October for the prior year.

532 1. A committee of five (5) church members will perform the review:  
533 Moderator, Chairperson of Personnel Committee, Chairperson of Pastor  
534 Parish Relations, Chairperson of Board of Deacons, and Chairperson of the  
535 Board of Trustees.

536 2. Any recommendations for compensation adjustments will be submitted in  
537 writing to the Board of Trustees and the Treasurer on or before November  
538 15<sup>th</sup>.

539 **B.** Evaluation of an Associate Pastor will be conducted by the current Pastor and  
540 sub-committee to the Personnel Committee no later than October 15<sup>th</sup>.

541 1. Any recommendations for compensation adjustments must be submitted  
542 in writing to the Board of Trustees and the Treasurer on or before  
543 November 15<sup>th</sup>.

544 2. In the absence of the Pastor an Associate Pastor will be reviewed in the  
545 same manner as the Pastor.

546 **C.** For guidance, the Personnel Committee may consider; UCC Guidelines, other  
547 relevant professional guidelines, Cost of Living (COL), performance of the  
548 employee's job responsibilities, current budget considerations, and length of time  
549 in the current position, or other relevant documentation.

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550 **ARTICLE VIII, SECTION III: SENIOR PASTOR DUTIES**

551 The Pastor shall be chosen and called after a vote of the Church membership whenever a  
552 vacancy occurs. The Pastor shall be received into Church membership prior to installation by  
553 the Association in a duly called Ecclesiastical Council when the Church and Pastor so agree.  
554 The Pastor shall have in his/her charge the spiritual work and welfare of the Congregation,  
555 shall preach the Christian Gospel, have care of the services of worship, administer the  
556 sacraments, assist the Board of Deacons in providing for the pulpit supply during the Pastor's  
557 vacation periods, and aid the various Officers and Committees in administering the affairs of  
558 the Church. The Pastor may, from time to time, with the approval of the Board of Deacons and  
559 within budget guidelines select qualified persons to assist in connection with specialized  
560 aspects of pastoral care where clinical help or specialized talent is necessary. As an ex-officio  
561 member, the Pastor is encouraged to attend all Board and Committee meetings as his/her  
562 schedule shall permit.

563

564 **ARTICLE VIII, SECTION IV: SELECTION OF PASTOR.**

565 Upon the notice of death, incapacitation, or resignation of the Pastor directed to the Moderator  
566 or in the Moderator's absence to the Vice-Moderator:

567 **A.** The Moderator shall convene the Coordinating Council as soon as practical but no  
568 later than seven (7) days after receiving such notice. At this meeting the Council  
569 shall:

- 570 1. Review all known facts concerning the situation and take any action  
571 deemed desirable to collect additional pertinent information.
- 572 2. Set a date, not later than fourteen (14) days after the Council meeting  
573 and post a warrant for a meeting of the Church to hear and act upon the  
574 situation.
- 575 3. Appoint a five-member "Initiating Committee" to include one person from  
576 the group of Church Officers (who shall also be the Chairperson), one  
577 representative each from Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Worship  
578 Support Committee, and one additional member from the Congregation at  
579 large.
- 580 4. This Committee shall immediately, after its formation, contact the Central  
581 Association office, Massachusetts Conference, and UCC, and solicit the  
582 advice of that office regarding such matters as; e.g., the need for a self-

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- 583 study, current helps in pulpit searches, use of professional counselors,  
584 interim planning, etc. It may negotiate a visit from the Association Area  
585 Minister with Council.
- 586 5. Charge the Board of Deacons to arrange for supply Preachers as may be  
587 required.
- 588 6. In the instance of a resignation, charge the Pastor-Parish Relations  
589 Committee to conduct an "Exit Interview" within two (2) weeks if and  
590 after the resignation has been accepted, i.e., once the outcome of the full  
591 Church Meeting is known.
- 592 **B. The Initiating Committee shall:**
- 593 1. Take immediate steps to secure Interim Pastoral coverage as may be  
594 required.
- 595 2. If a Self-study is to be pursued, create, as required, the necessary group  
596 which shall be of a volunteer nature. The call for volunteers shall be to the  
597 entire Church membership. There shall be no limit in the number of  
598 participants. Chairperson selection shall be by vote  
599 of the attendees at the first meeting with the Chairperson of the Initiating  
600 Committee acting as organizing Chairperson up to that point.
- 601 3. The Self-study group shall strive to complete its initial work  
602 within six months, after which time, a Pastoral Search Committee shall be  
603 formed in the manner set forth in (3) below.
- 604 4. Solicit volunteers from the Congregation for a Pastoral Search Committee,  
605 which will be composed of nine (9) members plus two alternates. The  
606 initiating committee shall consider geographical, vocational, and gender  
607 representativeness in selecting members of the Search Committee.
- 608 5. Conclude its assignment with the selection and establishment of the  
609 Pastoral Search Committee and the issuance of its report to the  
610 Coordinating Council.
- 611 6. At least one member of the Initiating Committee shall serve on the Pastor  
612 Parish Relations Committee during the Interim Pastor's call.

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- 613 **C.** The Pastoral Search Committee will proceed with its duties guided by the then  
614 current manual for search committees published by the Pastoral Settlement  
615 Committee, UCC (or a then current equivalent).

616 **ARTICLE VIII, SECTION V: DISMISSAL OF PASTOR.**

617 Forced resignation or dismissal of a Pastor is to be considered an extreme action. It is to be  
618 viewed wholly as a choice of last resort, and only after honest and deliberate efforts have been  
619 pursued without success to effect a reconciliation.

620 Presentation of the petition:

- 621 **A.** A petition shall be submitted to the Moderator or to the Vice-Moderator in the Moderator's  
622 absence.

623 1. The petitioners shall individually contact the Chair of the Pastor Parish Relations  
624 Committee.

625 2. The petition shall request a hearing before the Coordinating Council.

626 3. This petition shall succinctly set forth the points of the contention and  
627 reasonable factors validating such points.

628 4. The petition shall be signed by no less than 10% of active members.

629 a. Upon receiving the petition, the Moderator/Vice Moderator  
630 shall refer it to the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, which shall  
631 attempt to reconcile the viewpoints of the parties involved.

632 b. If reconciliation is unsuccessful, the Moderator/Vice  
633 Moderator shall schedule a special meeting of the Coordinating Council to  
634 occur within ten (10) days after receiving notification from the Pastor-  
635 Parish Relations Committee.

- 636 **B.** The Coordinating Council will, after receiving the petition:

637 1. Evaluate the merits of the petition and either:

638 a. Dismiss the matter and publish the facts to the membership  
639 (Congregation); OR

640 b. If the matter is to be pursued take such action it deems helpful  
641 to resolving the situation. It might include:

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- 642 i. Re-involvement of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to  
643 further attempt reconciliation of the viewpoints of the parties  
644 involved.
- 645 ii. Further gathering of facts on both sides of the issues.  
646 This step may include specific assignments to individuals or Sub-  
647 Committees especially created.
- 648 iii. Seeking guidance from the Central Association, UCC.
- 649 iv. Any other action the Council deems appropriate.
- 650 c. Or set a date no later than fourteen (14) days hence for its next  
651 meeting and for reports from individuals or committees with specific  
652 assignments.
- 653 **C.** The Coordinating Council will resume (it may be the next regular meeting or a special  
654 meeting) deliberations on the matter and will
- 655 1. Hear reports from the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and any  
656 other reports due from special committees or individuals.
- 657 2. Hear input from concerned individuals who have petitioned to speak  
658 and who will submit a written summary of their petition.
- 659 3. Weigh the merits of the dispute within the new information gathered.
- 660 4. Move to:
- 661 a. Dismiss the complaint. If the petition is dismissed the facts  
662 shall be published to the Congregation.
- 663 b. Take any action it judges helpful to resolving the impasse.  
664 This may include setting:
- 665 i. A specific cooling off period.
- 666 ii. A period for further fact finding.
- 667 iii. A period for further negotiation or other action by the Pastor-  
668 Parish Relations Committee.

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- 669                                   iv.    A period for negotiations involving the presence and guidance by  
670    the representative(s) from the Central Association, UCC, etc.
- 671                                   v.    A new meeting date, no later than thirty (30) days, to terminate  
672    any of the above periods and to take action on a recommendation  
673    to the Church membership.

674   **D.** The Coordinating Council, if dismissal or a request for resignation is the decision of the  
675        Council, will:

- 676           1. Review the action contemplated with the Central Association Office, UCC to assure  
677    the correctness and fairness of the procedures and  
678    deliberations followed.
- 679           2. Notify the Pastor of the Council's decision and its proposed action.  
680    (This notification may, if beneficial to the situation, offer the opportunity for a  
681    resignation that could be accepted without prejudice to avert controversy).
- 682           3. Set the date and issue a call for a special meeting of the Church to hear and act  
683    upon the Council's recommendation.
- 684           4. Issue, in conjunction with such meeting call, a memorandum to each active  
685    member or family unit covering factually and without bias the issues and  
686    viewpoints involved, efforts of the Council to reconcile the contentions and the  
687    relevant information, pro and con, which was considered by the Council in  
688    reaching its decision. (If a minority statement should exist, this shall be indicated  
689    and a copy shall be included.)

690   **ARTICLE VIII, SECTION VI: OTHER PASTORAL STAFF.**

691   Any Associate Pastor, Assistant Pastor, or other lay pastoral staff, shall be chosen by a search  
692   committee appointed by the Coordinating Council.

693   The Church Coordinating Council, following investigation of the candidate by a Selection  
694   Committee, shall make a recommendation to the Church membership as to the person to be  
695   appointed, and the Church membership shall take final action at a duly called Church meeting.

696   The person so chosen shall be primarily responsible to the Pastor and secondarily to the  
697   Church through the relevant oversight committee. This person shall be reviewed annually by  
698   the Pastor and the relevant oversight committee.

699

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700 **ARTICLE VIII, SECTION VII: RESOLUTION OF STAFF DISPUTES.**

701 When disputes arise between staff members or between staff members and the Church, the  
702 following steps shall be taken:

703 **A.** If a dispute involves the Pastor, it shall first be referred to the Pastor/Parish Relations  
704 Committee. If the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee is unable to resolve the dispute, a  
705 Mediator agreeable to all parties shall be chosen by the parties to the dispute to attempt  
706 to resolve the differences between the parties.

707 1. The Mediator will attempt to document the points in dispute and  
708 mediate a mutually agreeable settlement. The Mediator will  
709 notify the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of  
710 the points in dispute and what steps are being taken to resolve  
711 them. All involved should take all steps necessary to maintain  
712 the confidences of the differing parties.

713 2. Should a mutually satisfactory resolution of the dispute prove to  
714 be impossible, either party may appeal to the Coordinating Council.  
715 The Council shall, in closed session, hear from the Mediator as to  
716 the issues in dispute and steps taken to resolve them. Both parties  
717 to the dispute may then present their views and, if possible, resolve  
718 any questions raised by the Council. The council will take whatever  
719 steps it deems necessary to resolve the dispute, if possible, including  
720 imposing a solution on all parties, or as a final report, begin the  
721 procedure for dismissal of the Pastor, if necessary.

722 **B.** In disputes involving Staff Members the Personnel Committee will attempt to document  
723 the points in dispute and mediate a mutually agreeable resolution to the problem.

724 1. Should a mutually agreeable resolution not be possible, any party  
725 to the dispute may appeal to their relevant committee(s) for guidance  
726 and/or assistance in resolving the problem(s). If a resolution of the  
727 dispute proves impossible, either party may appeal to the Coordinating  
728 Council for a resolution of the dispute. If the matter in dispute  
729 involves an oversight committee, the appeal may be brought directly to  
730 the Coordinating Council. In all cases, the appellate body will ask all  
731 parties to the dispute to present their views, if possible, in a closed  
732 session, and take appropriate steps to reach a resolution. The appellate

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733 body shall keep the Officers of the Church (listed above) updated on  
734 its views and recommendations.

735 2. The Coordinating Council, when it receives the appeal, will ask all  
736 parties to the dispute to present their views, in a closed session, if  
737 possible, and what proposals were made to resolve the problem(s).  
738 The Council may then take final action, including imposing a solution  
739 and, in the final resort, dismissing staff members.

740 **C.** Dismissal of a Staff Member is to be considered a step to be taken only as a final resort,  
741 and for cause, and after all attempts at reconciliation have failed. Except in the case of the  
742 Pastor (as noted above) dismissal of a staff member may be initiated only by the  
743 Personnel Committee. Reasons for dismissal shall be documented and presented in  
744 writing to the staff member or his/her representative. In extreme circumstances, a staff  
745 member may be dismissed for cause by the Personnel Committee. Reasons for dismissal  
746 shall be documented in writing and presented to the staff member or his/her  
747 representative at the time of dismissal. Subsequently, the Coordinating Council and  
748 Church Officers will be notified of the action, together with a copy of the documented  
749 reasons for dismissal.

750

751 **ARTICLE IX: RULES OF ORDER.**

752 **ARTICLE IX, SECTION I: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY.**

753 Robert's Rules of Order, Fourth Edition, shall be the parliamentary authority for all  
754 matters of procedure not specifically covered by these Bylaws, with the following  
755 modifications--The Pastor or any Deacon may interrupt a meeting at any time for a  
756 moment of Prayer.

757

758

759

760 **ARTICLE X: PERSONNEL MATTERS.**



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761 At any meeting where personnel matters of a sensitive nature are to be dealt with,  
762 that matter shall be dealt with in Executive Session.

763

764 **ARTICLE XI: DISPOSITION OF ASSETS.**

765

766 In the event of the dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interests  
767 of which it shall then be possessed, including any devises, bequests, gifts or grants  
768 contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after  
769 such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Massachusetts Conference of the United  
770 Church of Christ.

771

772 **ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS**

773

774 At any business meeting of the Church, these By-Laws may be amended by two-thirds vote of  
775 the members present and voting, the proposed amendment having been inserted in the  
776 warrant for the meeting.

777 The Moderator shall assure these By-Laws will be reviewed and/or revised, incorporating any  
778 heretofore voted amendments every five years.