

BROOKSIDE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC
BYLAWS
REVISED: June 10, 2012

ARTICLE I

Name and Seal

This church shall be known as Brookside Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Manchester, NH. This church is incorporated under the laws of the State of New Hampshire and has a corporate seal bearing the name of the corporation. This seal may be altered or changed at the discretion of the Council of Ministries.

The words "this church," whenever used in these bylaws, shall be understood to refer to this corporation. The words "the congregation" shall mean the covenant and associate members of this church collectively. The words "church staff" shall mean the employees of this church.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the sacraments; to realize Christian community and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward humanity; and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

ARTICLE III

Polity

This church shall be an independent body amenable to no other ecclesiastical authority, having within itself all necessary powers of government and discipline. The government of this church is vested in its members who shall exercise control of all its affairs, subject to the laws of the State of New Hampshire relating to religious, non-profit organizations. This church accepts the obligations of mutual counsel, comity, and cooperation involved in the free association of the United Church of Christ, and covenants to share the common aims and work of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE IV

Faith and Covenant

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

One expression of this faith is:

"STATEMENT OF FAITH"

United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the form of a doxology

"We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being,
create persons in your own image,
and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people
from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will
declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth,
our crucified and risen Savior,
you have come to us
and shared our common lot,
conquering sin and death
and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit,
creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages,
tongues, and races.

You call us into your church
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,
to be your servants in the service of others,
to proclaim the gospel to all the world
and resist the powers of evil,
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,
to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,
your presence in trial and rejoicing,
and eternal life in your realm which has no end.
Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.
Amen.

Covenant - We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. We pledge to walk together in the way of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of this church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world while worshipping God and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming reign of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

ARTICLE V
Membership

1. The following persons shall be members of this church:

- a. COVENANT MEMBERS - are those persons received into membership by (1) confession of faith, (2) presentation of satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches, or (3) reaffirmation of faith if such letters are not available. Covenant membership confers both benefits and responsibilities. The responsibilities of covenant members shall include regular attendance at Sunday worship, financial support of this church as personal resources permit, and participation in the service life of this church.

Every covenant member of this church shall be entitled to vote in person at the congregational meetings of this church. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. Only those members entitled to vote at a congregational meeting shall be permitted to speak from the floor of such meeting. Covenant members shall be eligible to serve as elected church officers and on any church ministry.

- b. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS - are those persons who wish formal affiliation with this church but who retain a full or covenant membership in another church. Associate Members are expected to be faithful in all the spiritual duties essential to the Christian life and to be loyal to this church by supporting it with their prayers, their presence, their gifts and their services. Associate Members may act and vote in the affairs of this church including participation as members of church ministries, except in matters that deal with the purchase or sale of property, the calling or dismissal of a Pastor, the amendment of these bylaws, and those that deal with the change of denominational affiliation. Associate Members shall not be reported as members on the membership roll or in the vital statistics of this church. They are not entitled to letters of transfer or to serve as officers of the church.
- c. INACTIVE MEMBERS - are those covenant and associate members whose addresses are unknown or who for a period of two years have not communicated with this church or contributed to its support and have therefore been listed as inactive on the membership list. An inactive member shall be restored to covenant or associate membership upon receipt of a letter from the inactive member requesting restoration to covenant or associate membership.

Inactive members shall not be entitled to vote at congregational meetings and shall not serve as church officers or on church ministries.

2. A Parish Roll, the list of persons who were members of Brookside but who are deceased or no longer covenant members, shall be maintained by the Clerk in cooperation with church staff.
3. Posting of the Membership List - Beginning the Sunday immediately preceding any congregational meeting and through its final adjournment, the Clerk shall post in Fellowship Hall a list of all members. It is the responsibility of each member to review the list and to cause the Clerk to correct any inaccuracies and update the information on the list. The membership list shall also be available from the Clerk at other reasonable times to any covenant member for inspection and use for church purposes.

ARTICLE VI

Termination of Membership

A Member may request termination of membership by notifying the Clerk or Pastor in writing. If termination is for the purpose of transferring to another Christian Church, the member shall be provided a letter of transfer.

A Member whose address is unknown or who for a period of two years has not communicated with this church or contributed to its support shall, upon the recommendation of the Christian Formation Ministry, be notified and reclassified as an inactive member.

When a member has been an Inactive Member for at least three years, the Christian Formation Ministry may vote to terminate membership and shall notify the Clerk to move the person's name to the Parish Roll.

ARTICLE VII

Officers and Duties

The officers of this church shall be Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer. All officers shall be covenant members of this church and shall be elected at the annual meeting of this church for a term of two (2) years and/or until a successor is chosen and qualified in his/her stead. Officers of this church may be removed from office by majority vote of the congregation.

1. Moderator - The Moderator of this church shall preside at all the meetings of the congregation and at all meetings of the Council of Ministries. In the absence of the Moderator at any such meeting, a Moderator for that meeting shall be chosen by a majority vote of those attending and entitled to vote at that meeting. The Moderator will be the signee of non-maintenance related contracts.

After serving three two-year terms consecutively, a Moderator shall be ineligible for re-election for one (1) year.

2. Clerk - The Clerk of this church shall, with the assistance of the church staff when such assistance is necessary:
 - a. Attend all congregational meetings of this church and the Council of Ministries and keep accurate records thereof;
 - b. Oversee the Clerk's records and all original papers showing the form of the organization of this church. Said records shall be maintained in the church office;
 - c. In cooperation with the Christian Formation Ministry, keep the membership list of this church and the Parish Roll. The membership list shall include the date of admission, membership status, and, if relevant, the date of termination of each member of this church;
 - d. Oversee the records of baptisms, marriages, and deaths;
 - e. Make a full report to this church at its annual meeting;
 - f. Give proper notices of all congregational meetings of this church; and,
 - g. Perform all other duties incident to the office of Clerk.

In the absence of the Clerk at any meeting, a Clerk for that meeting shall be chosen by a majority vote of those attending and entitled to vote at that meeting.

After serving three two-year terms consecutively, a clerk will be ineligible for re-election for one (1) year.

3. Treasurer - The Treasurer of this church shall, with the assistance of the church staff when such assistance is necessary:
 - a. Receive and keep an account of all the moneys of this church and disburse them in accordance with the directions of the Council of Ministries;
 - b. Oversee the financial reports of all church ministries;
 - c. Have custody of all securities, deeds, contracts, and other business papers of this church except those specifically retained by the Council of Ministries or the Clerk;
 - d. When duly authorized, execute and deliver in the name of this church all deeds of real estate and other instruments conveying property;
 - e. Oversee the preparation of monthly financial statements for this church and submit them to the Council of Ministries;
 - f. Make a report about the financial condition of this church to the annual meeting;
 - g. Be an ex-officio, voting member and shall attend meetings of the Council of Ministries; and,

The Treasurer shall serve up to three two-year terms, to be renewed annually thereafter subject to mutual agreement by the Council and Treasurer.

ARTICLE VIII

Ministries of the Church

The Ministries of this church are the Christian Formation Ministry, Mission Ministry, and Stewardship Ministry. The aforementioned ministries (hereafter referred to collectively as "ministries") and their affiliated committees and At-Large Members are governed by the following general considerations:

1. Those persons who serve on ministries shall be covenant or associate members of this church.
2. Nominations for membership on any ministry shall be made either by the Stewardship Ministry acting pursuant to Article XI or at the annual meeting of this church by a covenant member, whose action is seconded by another covenant member.
3. Members of ministries shall be chosen at the annual meeting of this church as provided for in Article XVI.
4. Members of ministries shall be chosen to serve two (2) year terms except that, whenever a church ministry is enlarged, one or more ministry members may be chosen for terms of less than two (2) years.
5. After serving three (3) full terms consecutively members of ministries shall be ineligible for re-election to the same ministry for one (1) year.
6. Vacancies on ministries are to be filled by the Stewardship Ministry pursuant to the procedures set forth in Article XI. Any person appointed by the Stewardship Ministry to fill a vacancy that may arise between annual meetings shall serve only until the next annual meeting. Such appointment shall not limit a covenant member's rights as stated in Article VIII, Sec. 5.

7. The Pastor(s) shall be ex-officio, non-voting member(s) of all ministries.
8. Each ministry is encouraged to meet at least ten (10) times during the official year of this church to conduct its business. Each ministry shall maintain in the church office written records of its meetings. The quorum of a ministry shall be a majority of the number of voting members. A ministry shall act by majority vote of those present and entitled to vote.
9. The Council and ministries, at their discretion, may create or sanction ad-hoc project based work groups to assist and support their ministry. These work groups are responsible to the Ministry that creates or sanctions them and can be comprised of covenant, associate and non-covenant members.
10. At its first meeting following the annual meeting of this church, each ministry shall choose a chairperson, a scribe, representatives to the Council of Ministries as set forth in Article IX, and such other officers as the ministry deems necessary.

ARTICLE IX

Council of Ministries

The Council of Ministries (Council) is the leadership body of the church and shall consist of the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer, three (3) representatives from the Christian Formation Ministry, two (2) representatives from the Stewardship Ministry, two (2) representatives from the Mission Ministry, and two (2) At-Large Members from the wider church. The Moderator shall be chair of the Council, voting only in the case of ties. The Pastor(s) and other staff shall be ex-officio, non-voting member(s) of the Council. The proceedings of the Council shall be governed by the procedural rules set forth in Article VIII, Sects 1, 7, and 9.

The Council shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Coordinate the functioning of church ministries;
2. Oversee the financial affairs and investments of this church:
 - a. Collect, have custody of, manage, and disburse all church funds;
 - b. Oversee all offerings and special collections;
 - c. Authorize expenditures in excess of the church budget, up to, but not to exceed the annual aggregate of 10% of the amount of the annual budget, when the Council determines such expenditures are necessary or desirable for the prudent operation of this church;
 - d. Receive and review a monthly financial report from the Treasurer;
 - e. Prepare, in consultation with the ministries, an annual church budget and submit the budget to the congregation at the annual meeting of this church;
 - f. Annually, oversee a review and/or audit of the church's financial records and authorize a third-party review and/or audit as needed;
 - g. Hold, buy, transfer, exchange, or deliver any or all securities held by this church whether in trust or otherwise;
 - h. Enter into any borrowing/loan agreements in accordance with the Borrowing Policy;
 - i. Enter into a lease of any real property so long as the initial lease term is for three (3) years or less; and,
 - j. Buy, sell, transfer, or otherwise dispose of any personal property.
3. Obtain such insurance as is necessary to protect church property and employees and volunteers of the church;

4. In partnership with the Pastor, shall prepare, review and administer a church personnel policy and shall hire, establish the terms and conditions of employment and discharge any church staff member, except the Pastor;
5. Provide for long range planning and annual evaluations of programs;
6. Mediate disputes between church ministries;
7. Delegate to a particular church ministry functions or responsibilities which are not specifically provided for in these bylaws and not within the authority of other church ministries;
8. Nominate a Pastoral Search Committee;
9. Act for this church between congregational meetings in those areas that do not require action at a congregational meeting and that are not assigned by these bylaws to other church ministries;
10. Supervise, annually evaluate, and if necessary in the best interests of this church, dissolve any church group other than the church ministries. The authority under this section shall include, but not be limited to, the authority to require the submission of annual financial reports;
11. Appoint any ad-hoc project based work groups, the primary function of which is the accomplishment of a specific task to carry out the work of the Council;
12. Determine the date of the annual meetings of this church and schedule any special meetings of this church called for pursuant to Article XVII;
13. Assist the Pastor(s) in the development of their relationship with the congregation and assist in the resolution of any differences between the Pastor(s) and members of the congregation;
14. Support the Pastor(s) in the formation and nomination of a Pastoral Relations Committee;
15. Annually evaluate the Pastor(s) performance and review the needs of the Pastor(s) in the areas of financial support, and personal growth and education;
16. Appoint positions such as Conference Delegates, Librarian, Historian, Trustee of the Elliot Hospital and other necessary appointments; and,
17. The Council shall not, without the authorization of the congregation granted at a meeting of this church:
 - a. Buy, sell, or mortgage any real property or enter into any lease for which the initial term is more than three (3) years; and,
 - b. Enter into an agreement to alter any real property if the estimated cost of such alteration exceeds 20% of the amount of the annual budget of this church.

ARTICLE X

Christian Formation Ministry

The Christian Formation Ministry shall consist of not less than twelve (12) nor more than fifteen (15) covenant or associate members. In addition, the Pastor(s) and any professional church staff hired to serve the Christian Formation Ministry shall be ex-officio, non-voting member(s) of the ministry. All members of Christian Formation will be deacons. Within thirty (30) days of the annual meeting of this church, all the deacons shall be recognized at a regular Sunday service. A deacon who has served for many years may be honored by the congregation as a Deacon Emeritus or Honorary Deacon.

The principal mission of the Christian Formation Ministry is to nurture the growth of the whole congregation in Christian discipleship and to provide opportunities to strengthen the bonds of covenant. The Christian Formation Ministry shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Assist the Pastor(s) by overseeing all aspects of Sunday worship and other liturgical observances such as Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve, and the Sacraments of communion and baptism;
2. Establish policies for rites of the church;
3. Assist the Pastor(s) in caring for the friends and members of this church with Christian love by assisting the Pastor(s) with visitations of home-bound members or members who are in hospitals or nursing homes; support members who are sorrowing or in need; and care for alienated and inactive members of the congregation;
4. Encourage Christian fellowship within the congregation by providing for times of fellowship following the service of worship; preparing receptions for new members and for other appropriate occasions; and encouraging and assimilating new members into the congregation;
5. Design and conduct educational programs for all ages;
6. Work with the Pastor, Music Director and Church School Coordinator to:
 - a. review and select music;
 - b. review and select educational curriculum; and,
 - c. identify staffing for music and educational programs
7. Assume, if necessary, the responsibility for securing supply ministers for the pulpit during the absence of the Pastor(s) and during any period when a pastoral position is vacant;
8. With the exception of the church organs which are the responsibility of the Stewardship Ministry, maintain and keep an inventory of the music library and all other musical instruments, choir robes and equipment;
9. Oversee the youth ministry program;
10. Maintain an accurate membership list of this church including overseeing the process of review and transfer to inactive status annually;
11. Prepare and submit a budget to the Council of Ministries for review and subsequent approval at annual meeting; and,
12. Coordinate ad-hoc project based work groups as needed to carry out the work of the ministry (i.e. Called to Care, Flower Committee).

ARTICLE XI

Stewardship Ministry

The Stewardship Ministry shall consist of not less than eight (8) nor more than ten (10) covenant or associate members. In addition, the Pastor(s) and any professional church staff hired to serve the Stewardship Ministry shall be ex-officio, non-voting member(s) of the ministry.

The principal mission of the Stewardship Ministry is to responsibly manage and develop all of the Church's assets which include buildings, furnishings, equipment, land, people (time and talents), annual giving, planned giving, and endowments. The Stewardship Ministry shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Administer and promote the annual financial pledge drive;
2. Create, promote, and support programs for planned giving;
3. Create, promote, and support programs for estate giving;
4. Manage the maintenance and/or improvement of Church buildings and systems;
5. Manage the maintenance and/or improvement of grounds, including common spaces and parking lots;
6. Manage the maintenance and/or improvement of the church organs;
7. Manage new construction projects as required;
8. Enter into maintenance related contracts (i.e. cleaning, snow removal, dumpster, lawn maintenance, etc.) in accordance with budget;
9. Provide qualified candidates for ministry positions;
10. Collect, update, and manage information on individual talents, useful to the Church, for long or short term projects;
11. Prepare and submit a budget to the Council of Ministries for review and subsequent approval at annual meeting; and,
12. Coordinate ad-hoc project based work groups as needed to carry out the work of the ministry.

ARTICLE XII

Mission Ministry

The Mission Ministry shall consist of no less than eight (8) nor more than ten (10) covenant or associate members. In addition, the Pastor(s) and any professional church staff hired to serve the Mission Ministry shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the board. The Thrift Shop and Women's Union shall be committees of the Mission Ministry and shall each have at least one representative who is a covenant or associate member to be a voting member of the Mission Ministry.

The principal mission of the Mission Ministry is to provide opportunities for members of the congregation and church resources to be effectively utilized in service to others. The Mission Ministry shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Identify and coordinate opportunities for the congregation to engage in service ministry globally and in the local community;
2. Identify issues of significant social concern and appoint a working group to develop a program whereby the issues of social concern may be addressed by the church;

3. Coordinate effective and optimal utilization of church assets through partnership with nonprofit organizations and other congregations;
4. Coordinate special offerings and appeals;
5. Interpret and enlist support for the mission of the wider church (i.e. UCC, NH Conference);
6. Prepare and submit a budget to the Council of Ministries for review and subsequent approval at annual meeting; and,
7. Coordinate ad-hoc project based work groups as needed to carry out the work of the ministry.

Thrift Shop Committee

The Thrift Shop (the shop) will be managed by an operating committee consisting of seven covenant or associate members elected at the Annual Meeting of the church. The shop operating committee will establish the operating rules of the shop. The Thrift Shop shall prepare and submit a budget to be included with the Mission Ministry budget submitted to the Council of Ministries for review and subsequent approval at annual meeting.

Women's Union Committee

The Women's Union membership is open to all women who attend Brookside, women in the community, and also men who can be Affiliate Members. The Women's Union will elect officers and establish operating rules for the Union. The Women's Union shall prepare and submit a budget to be included with the Mission Ministry budget submitted to the Council of Ministries for review and subsequent approval at annual meeting.

ARTICLE XIII

At-Large Members

There shall be two (2) At-Large Members who will serve on the Council of Ministries. They are covenant or associate members who will have previously served on a ministry.

As representatives of the congregation, At-Large Members will be responsible for ensuring a balanced viewpoint of the Council of Ministries and that the work of the church is in the best interest of the congregation. At-Large Members will also act as liaisons between the congregation and the Council of Ministries.

The At-Large Members shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Assist the Council of Ministries in promoting/coordinating short-term projects that are identified and are not reasonably handled within other ministries; and,
2. Serve on the annual pledge campaign.

ARTICLE XIV

Pastor(s)

Responsibilities of the Pastor(s)

The Pastor(s) shall be called for an indefinite time. At the time of the call, the Pastor(s) shall be able to be ordained by, or be in good standing with the United Church of Christ. As soon as possible after the call, the Pastor(s) shall become a covenant member of this church.

The Pastor(s) shall preach and teach the gospel, administer the sacraments and rites of this church, and provide pastoral care and leadership. In the event that more than one (1) Pastor has been called to serve this church, the responsibilities of the Pastors shall be shared in the following general manner:

- a. Senior Pastor: The Senior Pastor shall have primary responsibility for the services of worship and the administration of the sacraments.
- b. Associate/Assistant Pastor(s): The duties of the Associate/Assistant Pastor shall be determined in consultation among the Senior Pastor, the Council of Ministries, and any other church ministry for whose program the Associate/Assistant Pastor(s) is primarily responsible.

Procedures for the Call of a Pastor(s)

Upon receipt of notice of a vacancy in the position of Pastor(s) due to death, resignation, or recall, or upon the recommendation of the Council of Ministries to increase the number of pastors, the Council of Ministries shall inform the congregation of a vacancy or its recommendation. The Council of Ministries shall nominate a Pastoral Search Committee. See Procedure for Calling of a Pastor on file with the church office.

The Pastoral Search Committee: See Procedure on file with the church office.

Procedures for the Resolution of Disputes Involving Pastor(s)

- a. In the event that the Pastor(s) has (have) a concern about the terms or conditions of his/her relationship with this church, the Pastor(s) shall submit this concern in writing to the Moderator who will promptly meet with the Pastor(s) and, if necessary, with other persons, and shall attempt to resolve the issue of concern.
- b. In the event that a covenant member(s) of this church has (have) a concern about the Pastor(s)' performance of his/her duties, the member(s) shall submit this concern in writing to the Moderator who will meet promptly with the member(s) and, if necessary, with other persons, and shall attempt to resolve the issue of concern.

The pastoral relation may be dissolved either by the church or the Pastor(s) by written notice of such intention given two months in advance. The Church may at any time, by a majority vote at a meeting where this purpose is stated in the call, request a Pastor's resignation in accordance with the terms of the contract. See Procedure for Recall of a Pastor on file with the church office.

ARTICLE XV

Trustee of the Elliot Hospital

When requested to do so by the Board of Directors of the Elliot Hospital, the Nominating Committee shall nominate several covenant members of this church for the position of a Trustee of the Elliot Hospital. The selection of the Trustee shall be made by the Board of Directors of the Elliot Hospital. The Trustee can serve up to three, three-year terms at the pleasure of the Board of Directors of the Elliot Hospital.

ARTICLE XVI

Annual Meetings

The annual meeting of this church shall be held during the month of January each year on a date to be selected by the Council of Ministries. Notice of the annual meeting, including the nature of business to be transacted, shall be posted by the Clerk on the door of this church at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting and printed in the bulletin for the two (2) Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. The business of the annual meeting shall include:

1. Acceptance of the reports of the officers, boards, and professional church staff of this church;
2. Election of the officers and board members and any other elective positions from the list submitted by the Nominating Committee or nominated at the meeting by a covenant member whose action is seconded by another covenant member;
3. Presentation of the annual budget for the new fiscal year for action by the congregation; and,
4. Any other matter brought before the meeting in accordance with these bylaws or rules of parliamentary procedure.

ARTICLE XVII

Special Meetings

Special meetings of this church (except those concerning the Pastor[s]) may be requested by the Senior Pastor, the Council of Ministries, or 10% of the covenant members of this church. The request for a special meeting shall be in writing and include the nature of the business to be transacted. The request shall be submitted to the Clerk. The Council of Ministries will then schedule a special meeting to be held within thirty (30) days of the Clerk's receipt of the request. Notice of the meeting, including the nature of the business to be transacted, will be posted by the Clerk on the door of this church at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting and printed in the bulletin for the two (2) Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. Business will be limited to the matter(s) specified in the call to the meeting.

ARTICLE XVIII

Quorums and Votes

A quorum for congregational meetings will be ten percent (10%) of the covenant members of this church. The quorum is to be determined by reference to the most recent membership figures contained in the annual report of this church for the preceding year. If less than a quorum of members is present, a majority may adjourn the meeting to another time without further notice. If at the second meeting no quorum is present, a majority may adjourn the meeting to another time, but full notice of the meeting must be made by another posting on the door and publishing in the church bulletin for the specified times required for the original notice of the meeting. Whenever three (3) or more persons are nominated for the same position, election shall be by plurality vote. All other action at congregational meetings shall be by majority vote of the congregation, except as otherwise provided for in these bylaws. Whenever used in these bylaws, the words "majority vote of the congregation" shall mean a majority vote of those covenant and associate members present and voting.

ARTICLE XIX

Parliamentary Authority

Church Meetings and meetings of Church organizations are generally conducted as set forth by this Constitution and Bylaws. This guideline may be tempered by the judgment of the Moderator or Chair as to the need for formality and rigor in the conduct of any given meeting, through such tools as Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XX

The Official Year

The official year of this church shall begin on the date of the annual meeting. All officers, church board and committee members, and other organizations shall assume their duties immediately following that date and shall continue in office until their successors are elected or appointed. The fiscal year of this church shall end on the thirty-first (31) day of December in each year.

ARTICLE XXI

Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds ($2/3$) vote of the covenant members present and voting at any congregational meeting of this church. The text of the proposed amendment(s) must be included or referenced in the call for such a meeting.

ARTICLE XXII

Effective Date and Transitional Provisions.

These bylaws shall be effective upon passage.