

**BYLAWS OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN NEWCASTLE, UCC
AMENDED on March 26, 2017**

INTRODUCTION

These Bylaws of the Second Congregational Church in Newcastle are complementary to the Constitution. These Bylaws specify how The Church shall conduct its business.

ARTICLE I - Membership

A. Active Members

1. Candidates for Membership may join The Church by Confession of Faith or by a letter of transfer from other Christian Churches. They will have been baptized and will enter into the Covenant of The Church, subscribing to its Constitution and Bylaws. Membership will be open to all. Qualified candidates will be formally received into Membership at a time approved by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons. Members present will take part in the service.
2. Members are expected to be faithful to the Christian Faith; to follow the Word of God; and to attend the services, participate in the activities of The Church, and to support The Church and its benevolences as they are able.
3. Members may participate in all functions of The Church. They are eligible to hold any office, serve on any Church Board or Committee and vote on any business brought before The Church. When leaving The Church for another, Members may obtain letters of transfer.

B. Inactive Members

1. Members may request transfer to Inactive status and, with the agreement of the Board of Deacons, the request will be granted and the Clerk so notified.
2. Church Member names on the Inactive List may be restored to Active Member status by appropriate action by the Board of Deacons.

C. Termination of Membership

1. The Board of Deacons may issue a letter of transfer to another church upon receiving the written request from a Member.
2. The Board of Deacons will terminate the Membership of a Member upon receiving the written request from the Member who wishes to be released from Membership.
3. The Board of Deacons may terminate the Membership of a Member for due cause, after good faith effort to communicate with the member.

D. Friends

People who participate in the life of the Church but who are not Members will be known as Friends

ARTICLE II - MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Pastoral Responsibilities

1. The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of The Church, and will direct, in cooperation with the Board of Deacons, the spiritual welfare and services of public worship of the Congregation, interpreting and proclaiming the Word of God, administering the sacraments of The Church, and will make pastoral calls.
2. The Pastor will coordinate and administer office activities with the Office Administrator and other professional staff.
3. The Pastor will prepare candidates for Membership, participate in the formulation of various programs of the Boards and Committees of the Church, and be a member of the Church Council and an *ex officio* member of all Boards and Committees.
4. The Pastor will prepare a summary of his or her activities for the Church Annual Report.
5. The Pastor will serve on behalf of The Church in positions in the larger community or in the United Church of Christ.

B. Youth and Family Ministry Responsibilities

1. The Ministry will be directed by a Minister for Youth and Family, who will oversee the programs and ministries of The Church that relate to Christian Education and assist the Board of Christian Education and the Superintendent of Sunday School in the development of curricula and the acquisition of materials.
2. The Minister will be an integral part of the life of The Church, following the leadership of the Pastor in reaching out to Members and Friends of the congregation and community.

C. Music Ministry Responsibilities

1. The Music Ministry will be directed by a Minister of Music who will be a qualified musician called by the Church on recommendation of the Music Committee.
2. The Minister will be an integral part of the life of the Church and will reach out to the staff, choir members, Members and Friends of the congregation and the community.
3. The Minister will exemplify the religious spirit of the Church, teaching music, worship and liturgical concepts.
4. The Minister will be diligent in preparation and performance, will cooperate with others to provide and enable the highest standard of worship in the Church, and will meet regularly with the Pastor, staff, Music Committee and others to facilitate that end.

5. The Minister will provide a variety of traditions and styles in organ and choral music appropriate for the services, and the use of other instruments when appropriate.

ARTICLE III - ADMINISTRATION

A. Officers of The Church

1. The **Moderator** will serve as head of The Church in legal matters, moderate all business meeting of The Church, be *ex officio* member of all Church Boards and Committees, chair the Council meetings, act as alternate for delegates and perform other appropriate duties.
2. The **Vice Moderator** will act as Moderator during any absence or incapacity of the Moderator, serve as a member of the Church Council and assist the Moderator as requested.
3. The **Clerk** will:
 - a. Issue calls for all Church meetings, record the minutes of all meetings of The Church and the Council, which shall become part of the official records of The Church.
 - b. Prepare for the Annual Report a yearly summary of changes in membership and ceremonies performed. The summary will include names of people who have joined the church, been baptized by a minister of the church, been married by a minister of the church, and had funerals performed by a minister of the church. The report also will include membership statistics and average monthly attendance statistics by categories consistent with the bylaws.
 - c. Send letters of transfer to other churches as directed by the Board of Deacons.
4. The **Assistant Clerk** will perform the normal duties of the Clerk in the absence or incapacity of the Clerk, and assist the Clerk as requested.
5. The **Treasurer** will:
 - a. Keep records of all financial matters of The Church and administer certain functions, including disbursement, payroll and investments.
 - b. Attend meetings of the Board of Trustees and The Church Council, and give monthly and annual reports.
 - c. Perform other tasks at the request of the Board of Trustees.
6. The **Assistant Treasurer** will perform the normal duties of the Treasurer in the absence or incapacity of the Treasurer, assist the Treasurer as needed and perform other tasks as requested by the Board of Trustees.

7. The **Financial Secretary** will:
 - a. Keep a permanent, confidential record of pledge payments and any special gifts from Members and Friends of The Church and issue quarterly statements to each pledged contributor.
 - b. Take charge of all offerings and special collections, disburse them as directed by the Treasurer, provide the Treasurer with bank-deposit receipts, a list of the monies received each week and the purpose for which they were given; and give the Communion Envelopes to the Board of Deacons and Special Collection Envelopes to the Board of Christian Outreach.
 - c. Assist the Board of Trustees in the preparation of the annual Stewardship Program.
8. The **Assistant Financial Secretary** will perform the normal duties of the Financial Secretary in the absence or incapacity of the Financial Secretary and will assist the Financial Secretary as needed.
9. The **Historian** will:
 - a. Maintain the official historic records and materials of The Church, store them in a safe place in The Church (with copies of essential records also stored offsite) and keep a comprehensive index of Church records and materials.
 - b. Prepare and publish annually a summary of the life of The Church for the historical record.

B. Boards

1. The **Church Council** is the leadership body of The Church. It coordinates programs and can initiate programs. It has the authority to act on behalf of The Church and make and approve binding decisions when meetings of the Congregation are not required as determined by a recorded vote of at least two-thirds of the total number of Church Council members.
 - a. The Council shall consist of: the Minister or Interim Minister, the Moderator, or in the absence of the Moderator, the Vice-Moderator; the Clerk or in the Clerk's absence, the Assistant Clerk; the Treasurer or in the absence of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer; the Chair of each Board or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair; and the Chair of each Standing Committee or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair.
 - b. The Moderator or Vice Moderator, Clerk or Assistant Clerk, Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer, the Chairs or Vice Chairs of each Board, and the Chairs or Vice Chairs of each Standing Committee shall each have one vote.

- c. The Council meets monthly at least ten times a year and will:
 1. Coordinate and initiate programs for The Church.
 2. Provide a means for the exchange of information and ideas among the various Boards, Standing Committees, and Officers of The Church.
 3. Guide and sanction the actions of Boards and Standing Committees and, when necessary, make recommendations to be considered by The Church.
 4. Approve binding decisions when deemed necessary.
 5. Review recommendations from the Nominating Committee and appoint nominees to fill vacancies, review proposed budgets and reports, and prepare them for publication prior to the Annual Meeting.
 6. Direct the Church Clerk to call Annual and Special Meetings of The Church.
 7. Designate members of the Council, at the behest of the Council or the Pastor, to attend meetings and conferences and to report the substance of those meeting.
 8. Annually provide to the Nominating Committee candidates for vacancies on the Pastoral Relations Committee.
 - d. Any Member of the Congregation may attend and participate but may not vote at Church Council meetings.
2. The **Board of Trustees** will be responsible for the care and maintenance of all property owned by The Church, including the general supervision of outside maintenance and repair contractors. The Trustees will have the authority to:
 - a. Buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any financial assets or real property having a value of less then \$10,000 (except this restriction does not apply to the internal equity management of the investment portfolios, which will be managed by the prudent investor rule) and to accept, hold in trust and administer for The Church any funds or property that may be conveyed to The Church, acknowledging such in writing.
 - b. Hire qualified candidates for the position of Custodian and Office Administrator upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee, prepare and revise their job descriptions annually, conduct annual reviews of the performance of persons holding these positions and effect the recommendations of the Personnel Committee concerning salary and benefit provisions.
 - c. Manage the finances of The Church, with the exception of the Memorial Fund, the Deacons Fund, the Christian Outreach budget or designated special offerings; and authorize the Treasurer to pay invoices, payrolls and other expenses.

d. Review and approve the budgets of the Boards and Standing Committees and authorize the release of monies to them.

e. Prepare an annual budget for The Church, and submit it to the Church Council for review not less than three months prior to its scheduled approval at the Annual Meeting.

f. Arrange for an independent audit of the Treasurer's accounts at the end of each fiscal year.

g. Plan and conduct, when appropriate, a Capital Fund Campaign; and notify the Church Council of appointees to that activity.

3. The Board of Deacons will:

a. Assist the Pastor in sustaining the spiritual welfare and conducting the services of public worship, in the administration of the Sacraments, in preparation for Church services, in calling on Members and prospective members and in the orientation of candidates for Membership.

b. Receive requests for letters of transfer and letters of resignation, review and update Member and Inactive Member lists annually.

c. Provide support and guidance to the Pastor, and provide for the supply of the pulpit during any absence of the Pastor.

d. Administer the Deacon's Fund and the Memorial Fund.

e. Conduct, with the Personnel Committee, an annual performance review of the Pastor, and submit salary and benefit recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

4. The Board of Christian Education will be responsible for the educational ministry within The Church. Specifically, it will:

a. Appoint a Sunday School Superintendent and assist in maintaining a Sunday School program, staff the Nursery during Sunday and other services and oversee facilities and materials.

b. Collaborate with the Pastor and Youth and Family Minister in social and educational activities, such as adult programs, youth and intergenerational events and confirmation classes.

c. Assist in the development and administration of an annual Christian Education budget.

d. Make recommendations to the Personnel Committee for Christian Education staff hires, prepare and revise annually the job description of the Youth and Family Minister and any other Christian Education staff, conduct annual performance reviews of the Christian Education staff and submit them to the Personnel Committee along with salary and benefit considerations.

5. The **Board of Christian Outreach** will:
 - a. Inform the Congregation of the role of Christian Outreach in the life of The Church and the need to fulfill Christ's commission by promoting mission giving, and participate in local programs meeting the needs of others outside The Church family.
 - b. Distribute Christian Outreach Funds and report those distributions in the Annual Report.

C. **Standing Committees**

1. The **Music Committee** will be responsible for the Ministry of Music in cooperation with the Pastor. Specifically, it will:
 - a. Oversee the maintenance and repair of musical instruments of the Church.
 - b. In cooperation with the Personnel Committee, revise annually the job descriptions of the Minister of Music and any other salaried music staff members, conduct a review of the performance of the Minister of Music and other salaried music staff members and submit those evaluations, including salary and benefit recommendations, to the Personnel Committee.
 - c. In the event of a vacancy, recommend a qualified candidate for the position of Minister of Music and/or Choir Director and Organist.
2. The **Nominating Committee** will:
 - a. Recruit and present nominees for all committee and board vacancies that are required to be filled at the Annual Meeting of The Church, choosing from a cross section of Church Members and Friends.
 - b. Recruit and present to the Church Council nominees to fill unexpired terms on boards and committees of The Church.
3. The **Personnel Committee** will provide support and guidance to the pastor and all the paid staff.
 - a. The Committee will review annually updated job descriptions, performance evaluations and salary and benefit recommendations concerning the paid employees of The Church from those Church Boards and Committees that oversee their employment, and forward those documents to the Board of Trustees.
 - b. The Committee will address any matters pertaining to personnel that are brought to its attention.
 - c. The Committee will solicit and interview qualified candidates for the positions of Custodian, Housekeeper, and Office Administrator, and forward its recommendations to the Board of Trustees for decision.

4. The **Stewardship Committee** will have the authority and responsibility for raising annually the funds needed to support the various budgets and activities of the Church. Specifically, it will:
 - a. Plan and conduct the Annual Stewardship Program.
 - b. Encourage Members and Friends of the Church to give of their time, talents, and resources in support of activities that contribute to the financial well-being of the Church.
 - c. Review and approve or reject all such proposed activities.
 - d. Enlist individuals as it deems necessary to aid in the task of educating the Congregation in the principles of Christian Stewardship and the support of the Church's activities and programs.
5. The **Pastoral Relations Committee** shall seek to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between the Pastor and Members and Friends of the congregation. The Committee should be representative of different demographic groups within the church. The committee shall meet at least quarterly.

D. Ministry Teams

Ministry Teams, consisting of at least two Church Members or Friends, may be established by the Church Council or by a Board or a Standing Committee to carry out an ongoing ministry with the support and guidance from either the Council, a Board, or a Standing Committee. Examples of Ministry Teams are: Flower Committee, House Ministry, Investment Ministry, Vitality Ministry, Chancel Ministry, Communications Ministry, Women's Fellowship Ministry, and Warm Offerings Ministry.

Article IV - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Operating Procedures for Boards and Standing Committees

1. Boards

a. No later than thirty days after the Annual Meeting the incumbent chairperson of each Board will call and preside at a meeting to elect or re-elect officers. The newly designated Board chairpersons will provide the Office Administrator with the names of the current officers.

b. All Boards will meet at least every other month, except during July and August, at times and places selected by the respective Boards. The Office Administrator will be kept informed of those meetings and all meetings will be open to Members and Friends of The Church.

c. Copies of Board Minutes and Records from previous years will be kept by the Office Administrator and will be made available to the Chairpersons for the respective Boards' guidance. The Boards will plan programs and activities for the ensuing year. Chairpersons will ensure that bank signature cards are updated. All Boards will submit annual reports to the Church Council.

2. Standing Committees

a. No later than thirty days after the Annual Meeting the incumbent chairperson of each Standing Committee will call and preside at a meeting to elect or re-elect officers. The newly designated Committee Chairpersons will provide the Office Administrator with the names of the current officers.

b. Standing Committees will meet at least every other month. These meetings will be open to the Members and Friends of the Church.

c. Standing Committees will coordinate their programs and activities with the Pastor. Committee budgets will be incorporated into the Church operating budget prepared by the Board of Trustees. All Committees will submit annual reports to the Church Council.

B. Church Services and Meetings

1. Worship

a. Worship services will be held on Sundays and at other times determined by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

b. Communion will be celebrated at times determined by the Board of Deacons.

2. Meetings

a. Special meetings of The Church will be called by the Clerk upon receiving the written request of any five members to the Church Council. The Call will be read at the worship service on Sunday before the day set for the meeting unless the purpose of the meeting is Dissolution or Amending the Constitution or Bylaws, in which case Articles X and XI of the Constitution and Article VI of the Bylaws will determine the proper procedure for calling the meeting.

b. The Annual Meeting of The Church will be held following the Church Service on the last Sunday in January, at which time annual reports will be presented, officers, board and committee members will be elected and the operating budget will be approved. The business of the Meeting will be limited to what is specified in the Call, as directed by the Church Council, and/or specified in the Constitution or Bylaws.

c. Meetings of The Church will be called to order by the Moderator, Vice Moderator, or, if neither the Moderator or Vice Moderator are present, the Clerk or the Pastor, in that order, following which an interim moderator will be chosen to chair the meeting.

d. A quorum will consist of twenty-five percent of the Members of The Church at the time of the meeting.

e. The vote of the majority of the Members present at any meeting of The Church will rule in all matters except when voting dissolution or Amendments to the Constitution.=

3. Voting Procedures

a. In preparation for voting at each meeting of The Church, the Moderator will appoint three tellers.

b. Voting on Dissolution or dismissal of the Pastor must be by written ballot.

c. Provision will be made for absentee ballots for Constitutional amendments and Dissolution, and under special circumstances approved by the Church Council.

d. Voting at Board, Committee and Council meetings requires that fifty percent of the respective Board, Committee or Council members be present.

C. Property and Financial Policies

1. Property

a. The Church may, in its corporate name, sue or be sued. It may acquire by purchase, gift, bequest or other means, and own, hold, invest, re-invest or dispose of financial assets and property, real or personal, for such activities that The Church may undertake. It may also encumber, sell, assign, transfer and convey property for the general purposes of The Church. It may receive and hold in trust financial assets and both real and personal property, and invest and re-invest the same, and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of The Church.

b. Financial assets and property, real or personal, that are to be conveyed to The Church to be held in trust for permanent possession, whether by gift, bequest or grant, must first be accepted by the Board of Trustees. Such gifts, bequests or grants will be acknowledged in writing to the giver.

c. The Board of Trustees will manage all financial assets and property, both real and personal, owned or held in trust by The Church.

d. The Board of Trustees will establish rules governing the use of Church facilities by outside organizations following consultation with the appropriate Boards and Committees.

2. Offerings and Donations

a. The Church may accept contributions from individuals and organizations.

b. A Stewardship Program will be offered to the Congregation annually for the support of the operating and Christian Outreach budgets of The Church.

c. Designated special offerings may be received at the request of the Board of Christian Outreach or the Board of Deacons for the support of identified programs. Funds received in Communion Offering envelopes will be added to the Deacons Fund.

d. Unless specifically restricted by a vote of The Church, loose offerings will be designated for use in the operating budget.

3. General and Special Funds

a. The General Fund will be the fund into which all offerings and unrestricted contributions are deposited. The Treasurer will draw against this fund and, under the direction of the Board of Trustees, pay expenses and transfer monies to other Boards or Committees according to their respective budgets.

b. The established special funds of The Church are:

1) The Deacons Fund and the Memorial Fund (both administered by the Board of Deacons),

2) The Jane Pomeroy Scholarship Fund (administered by the Board of Deacons and the Women's Fellowship),

3) The Myra Martin Fund (administered by the Board of Deacons and invested by the Board of Trustees),

4) The Capital Fund (administered by the Board of Trustees),

5) Investment funds and the Vera Varney Fund (administered by the Board of Trustees),

6) The Steeple, Landscaping and Lighting Fund (administered by the Board of Trustees),

7) The Music Fund (administered by the Music Committee),

8) The Library Fund (administered by the Deacons), and

9) The Flower Fund (administered by the Flower Ministry Team).

c. All disbursements made by the Treasurer or by various boards or committees will be paid by check, with the purpose of the disbursement clearly indicated on the check and in the Treasurer's records. Records and bank statements must be audited prior to each annual meeting.

d. Up to five percent (5%) of the three-year moving average of the December 31st investment account balances will be distributed for the support of Church operations and five percent (5%) of that value will be disbursed for support of the Christian Outreach budget.

e. For every five (5) years of full-time ministry a maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) will be provided for the Pastor's sabbatical expenses, and five thousand dollars (\$5,000) will be provided for the supply minister(s) during the sabbatical period.

f. Up to five percent (5%) of the three-year moving average of the December 31st Vera Varney balances will be distributed as follows:

1) Twenty-five percent (25%) for the support of the Christian Outreach budget,

2) Twenty-five percent (25%) for the Vera Varney Steeple, Lights and Landscaping Fund and

3) Fifty percent (50%) will be unrestricted.

4. Budget Restrictions

Total Spending may not exceed the budget by more than five percent (5%) without the approval of the members of The Church. The Trustees may move expenditures between line items, subject to the above limitation.

5. Debts

No loans may be contracted on behalf of The Church without the approval of the Membership of The Church.

6. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of The Church will be the calendar year.

D. Calling a Pastor

1. When there is a vacancy in the pastorate, a Pastoral Search Committee will be formed, consisting of at least seven Members and two alternates. The Church Council will present a list of candidates for the Search Committee which will be elected by the Membership of The Church.

2. The Search Committee will act for The Church to seek and select a candidate for Pastor. The Committee will present to the Membership the candidate it recommends. A favorable vote of the Membership constitutes a Call.

3. The Search Committee will work with appropriate Boards and Committees to develop terms of the Call.

4. During the vacancy, the Board of Deacons will provide interim pastors, who will be non-voting members of all Boards, Committees and the Church Council.

E. Official Records

The official records of The Church will include the following:

1. Membership records in an electronic database;

2. A bound book to be kept by the Clerk, in which are recorded baptisms and marriages and confirmations conducted by ministers of The Church. The book will be turned over to the Historian when full.

3. Minutes of official meetings of The Church and the Annual Meeting will be kept by the Clerk in loose-leaf notebooks and also by the Office Administrator in open files. These minutes held by the Clerk may be turned over to the Historian at five year intervals.
4. Minutes of the Boards and Church Council will be kept in an open file by the Office Administrator for a period of not less than five years.

Article V Parliamentary Authority

The current edition of **Robert's Rules of Order** will govern procedures at all meetings of The Church, its Boards and Committees, except as they conflict with The Church's

