

CONSTITUTION

Second Congregational Church in Newcastle, Maine 04553
Amended March 26, 2017

Article I **Name**

The name of this Church shall be The Second Congregational Church in Newcastle, United Church of Christ, hereafter called The Church.

Article II **Purpose**

We welcome all into the fellowship of the beloved community of worshippers gathered by God in Christ, as we walk together, nurturing our inward spiritual journey of faith and our outward spiritual journey by practicing love and justice in our communities and the world.

Article III **Covenant**

We join in covenant as a faithful people of God, committed to the ways of life revealed by Jesus Christ our Lord, and open to the guidance and comfort of the Holy Spirit. We join together to worship God, to study the Holy Scriptures and learn of God's will for all of God's creation, to care for one another in Christian community, and to serve neighbors both near and far. Grateful for the heritage of faith and the institution of the church given to us by those who have gone before us, we dedicate our time, talent and treasure to the life and mission of the Second Congregational Church in Newcastle. We ask God to support us and inspire us as we seek to fulfill this covenant.

Article IV **Doctrine**

This Church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. It believes in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul, and the right of private judgment. We hold to the autonomy of the local church and its independence of all ecclesiastical control.

Article V **Sacraments**

This Church recognizes two Sacramental acts as specifically commended by Jesus Christ. These are: 1. Baptism; 2. Communion.

Article VI Polity

The government of this Church is vested in the body of the believers who compose it. This body exercises its right of control in all its affairs, subject in legal matters to its Articles of Incorporation, and to laws pertaining to not-for-profit or ecclesiastical corporations.

It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. We reach out in fellowship to all Christian churches and other faith communities.

It recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among United Church of Christ Churches.

Article VII Governing Body

The governing body of this Church shall be the membership assembled in a duly called church meeting. The vote of a majority of members present at the meeting shall be the action of the Church in all matters with the exceptions of Dissolution (see Article X) and of changing this Constitution (see Article XI). A quorum shall consist of 25% of the active members of the church at the time of the vote.

Article VIII Officers, Boards, Standing Committees, and Ministry Teams

The Officers, Boards, Standing Committees, and Ministry Teams of this Church shall be:

1. The **Minister** to be chosen and called by the Church when a vacancy occurs. When necessary, the appointment of an interim minister may be recommended by the Board of Deacons and approved by a vote of the congregation.
2. The following **officers**, who shall be church members, to be chosen at each annual meeting to serve for one year (or as otherwise defined herein), or until a successor shall be elected: Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Historian (term to be indefinite), and three delegates to denominational bodies.
3. A **Church Council**, consisting of: the Minister or Interim Minister, Moderator or in the absence of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator, 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 of the Board; and the Chair of each Standing Committee or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair of the Standing Committee.
4. **Board of Trustees**, to consist seven Church members. Two members will be elected at each of two successive Annual Meetings, and three members will be elected at every

third Annual Meeting, for terms of three years each, or until their successors are elected. After serving a full three-year term, a Trustee may serve one additional term, but will then be ineligible for re-election for one full year.

5. **Board of Deacons**, to consist of nine Church Members, one third (three) of whom will be elected at each annual meeting for terms of three years, or until their successors are elected. After serving a full three-year term, a Deacon may serve one additional term, but, will then be ineligible for re-election for one full year.
6. **Board of Christian Education**, to consist of five people. Two board members will be elected at each of two successive Annual Meetings, and one board member will be elected at every third Annual Meeting, for terms of three years, or until their successors are elected. After serving a full three-year term, a member may serve one additional term, but will then be ineligible for re-election for one full year.
7. **Board of Christian Outreach**, to consist of seven people. Two board members will be elected at each of two consecutive Annual Meetings and three board members will be elected at every third Annual Meeting, for terms of three years each, or until their successors are elected. After serving a full three-year term, a board member may serve one additional term, but will then be ineligible for re-election for one full year.
8. **Music Committee**, to consist of the Organist, Choir Director (who may also be the Organist) and five other people. Two committee members will be elected at each of two successive Annual Meeting and one committee member will be elected at every third Annual Meeting, for terms of three years each, or until their successors are elected. After serving a full three-year term, a committee member may serve one additional term, but will then be ineligible for re-election for one full year.
9. **Nominating Committee**, to consist of three Church Members, one third of whom will be elected at each Annual Meeting for terms of three years, or until a successor shall be elected. After serving a full three-year term, a committee member may serve one additional term, but will then be ineligible for re-election for one full year.
10. **Personnel Committee** to consist of five Church Members. Two members will be elected at each of two successive Annual Meetings and one member will be elected at every third Annual Meeting, for terms of three years each, or until their successors are elected. After serving a full three-year term, a committee member may serve one additional term, but will then be ineligible for re-election for one full year. No employee of the Church is eligible to serve on this committee.
11. **Stewardship Committee** to consist of five people. Two people will be elected at each of two Annual Meetings and one person will be elected at every third Annual Meeting, for terms of three years each, or until their successors are elected. After serving a full term, a committee member may serve one additional term, but will then be ineligible for re-election for one full year.

12. **Pastoral Relations Committee** to consist of four Church Members. Two members to be nominated annually by the nominating committee from a list provided by the pastor and two from a list provided by the Council. Members to serve for a minimum of one year or until a successor is elected. Members of a search committee may serve at the beginning of a pastorate and gradually rotate off.
13. **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 Ministry, House Ministry, Investment Ministry, Vitality Ministry, Chancel Ministry, Communications Ministry, Women's Fellowship Ministry, and Warm Offerings Ministry.

Article IX **Rules and Procedures**

The Church may adopt a set of Bylaws such as it may deem necessary for the conduct of its business, consistent with these Articles.

Article X **Dissolution**

This Church (i.e. Corporation) may be dissolved at any duly called meeting of members of this Church (i.e. Corporation), or at any special meeting called for that purpose by an affirmative vote of three fourths (3/4) of the members voting, such vote being by written ballot, including provisions for properly prepared absentee ballots. The proposed dissolution must be presented by the Clerk to the membership in writing at least two months in advance. Upon such dissolution, the assets of the Church (i.e. Corporation) shall be distributed to charitable organizations which would then qualify under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended. Further, such dissolution procedures shall be in conformity with the laws of the State of Maine.

Article XI **Amendments**

These Articles may be amended, by written ballot, at any duly called Church meeting by a two thirds affirmative vote of the members voting — either in person or by absentee ballot. Any proposed amendments must be presented by the Clerk to the membership in writing at least two months in advance and be presented to the Congregation on the two Sundays preceding such a meeting.

January, 2002

Amended: January 29, 2006; January 27, 2008; January 30, 2011; January 29, 2012; June 5, 2016; and March 26, 2017

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