

**THE BYLAWS  
OF THE  
COLUMBIA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
(a Connecticut Corporation)**

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this Church shall be the Columbia Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, located in the town of Columbia, County of Tolland, State of Connecticut.

**ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The avowed purpose of this Church shall be to worship God, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this Church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward humanity; to strive for righteousness, justice and peace; and to commit ourselves to the Church's educational mission.

**ARTICLE III – POLICY**

1. This Church shall be a part of the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ as amended relating to local churches.
2. The government of this Church is vested in its Members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to the laws of the State of Connecticut relating to religious corporations.

**ARTICLE IV – FAITH AND COVENANT**

1. **FAITH** – This Church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of all people. It acknowledges as brothers and sisters, all who share 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. It claims as its own, the faith of the historic Church, expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two Sacraments: Baptism, and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. Our expression of faith is the "Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ."
2. **COVENANT** – We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the 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 of the Kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

## **ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP**

1. Membership in this Church shall be open to any person who has been baptized and confirmed, or has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, in accordance with the gospel covenant which binds into a unity faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.
2. Members shall pledge themselves to attend the regular worship of the Church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the Church; to contribute to its support and benevolences; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the Membership and the community.
3. Any Member by his/her request will be granted a letter of transfer. If wishing to join a body not in fellowship with this Church, the Member may be released with a certificate of church membership.
4. A Member may request, verbally or in writing, the Pastor or the Board of Deacons to be released from membership. The Church Council, upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons, shall grant the request and terminate the membership. The Church Clerk shall issue the appropriate letter of release.
5. Annually, a Senior Deacon shall meet with the Pastor, Church Clerk, and Treasurer to review and update the membership roll of the Church. A Member who has moved out of the area or whose address is unknown, or who has not attended the Church's worship or shown a continuing interest or contributed to its support may, by recommendation of the Board of Deacons and vote of the Church Council, be placed on the inactive membership list. Upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons and vote of the Church Council, the membership of a person who has remained on the inactive membership list for a minimum of five (5) consecutive years may be terminated. A letter informing the inactive Member of this action will be sent by the Church Clerk if the address is known.
6. In matters of Church discipline, the Board of Deacons shall appoint a panel of four (4) Deacons, including a Senior Deacon, to examine and settle the matter, following the rule of Matthew 18:15-17. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Deacons and vote of the Church Council, membership may be terminated.

## **ARTICLE VI – GOVERNING BODY**

1. The governing body of this Church shall be the Membership assembled in a Church meeting. All Members shall be eligible to vote. A quorum shall consist of fifteen (15) Members. The vote of a majority of Members present at the meeting shall be the action of the Church except for amendments to these bylaws and decisions on the distribution of Church assets under Article XV Section 2, which shall each require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present.

## **ARTICLE VII – CHURCH COUNCIL**

1. The Church Council shall be the executive body of this Church. It shall be composed of the Pastor, President, Vice President, Church Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Historian, the chairperson or designated permanent appointee of all Boards and Committees, the presidents of all Auxiliary Organizations, and two Members-At-Large. Eight (8) members of the Church Council shall constitute a quorum.
2. The Church Council shall appoint any other Committee that it may deem necessary for the furtherance of the work of this Church.
3. The Church Council shall fill vacancies from recommendations presented by the Nominating Committee during the year for unexpired terms.
4. The Church Council shall be the policy-making body, transacting the business of the Church, and shall have authority to act on behalf of the Church between meetings of the Church Membership. It shall prepare the proposed annual budget for submission to the congregation for approval. It shall be responsible for securing financial commitments to meet the annual budget. It shall provide for Our Church's Wider Mission and benevolence funds. It shall keep a complete and accurate record of its proceedings, be the custodian of all Church records, and report to the Church at regular and special meetings of the Church.
5. The Church Council may authorize any non-budgeted expense, other than capital improvements, which shall be handled in accordance with Article IX, Sec.9, if funds are available. If borrowing is necessary, it must receive approval of the Membership assembled at a Church meeting.
6. The Church Council shall meet monthly for transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings are subject to the call of the President and/or Church Clerk. Notice will be given a minimum of three (3) days prior to a special meeting. Emergency meetings may be called at any time.
7. Unless the governing body of the Church has previously issued an interpretation or taken enforcement action, the Church Council shall have responsibility for the enforcement or interpretation of these Bylaws, subject to review by the governing body, should it determine to do so.

## **ARTICLE VIII – OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

1. (a). The officers of this Church shall be the President, Vice President, Church Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer. No officer of the Church shall serve in more than one (1) office simultaneously. The President shall be elected to serve a term of two (2) years and may serve three (3) successive terms only or until a successor is duly qualified and elected (effective with the term beginning September 1, 2011). The President may be re-elected to this position after a third successive term, only after a break in service as President of at least one (1) year. The Vice President, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Church Clerk shall be elected annually.  
  
(b). There shall be a Church Historian elected annually.

(c). The two (2) Members-At-Large shall be elected to a two (2) year term, and may serve two (2) successive terms, or until a successor is duly qualified and elected, and may be re-elected to this position after a break in service as Member-At-Large of at least one (1) year.

2. There shall be a Board of Deacons composed of eight to twelve (8-12) members. All members shall be elected to a four (4) year term on a staggered basis with two or three (2 or 3) terms expiring each year. Insofar as possible, the membership will be composed of an equal number of men and women.
3. There shall be a Board of Trustees composed of five (5) persons. Members shall be elected to a five (5) year term, one (1) term expiring each year.
4. The following Boards and Committees shall be comprised of four to six (4-6) members each: Stewardship Committee, Board of Christian Education, Board of Christian Concern, and Board of Finance. The members of these Boards and Committees shall be elected to a three (3) year term on a staggered basis with one or two (1 or 2) terms expiring annually.
5. The following Committees shall be composed of the number of members indicated: the Decorating-Flower Committee shall have four members, the Music Committee shall have three (3) members and the Nominating Committee shall have two members. The members of Decorating-Flower and Music Committees shall be elected to three (3) year terms on a staggered basis with one or two (1 or 2) terms expiring annually. The Nominating Committee members shall be elected to two year terms on a staggered basis with one (1) term expiring annually.
6. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be composed of four (4) members. Three (3) members of the Committee, who are not deacons, shall be nominated by the Board of Deacons and elected to three (3) year terms with one (1) term expiring annually. The fourth member of the Committee shall be one (1) of the Deacons to be appointed annually by the Board of Deacons. During the initial year of a new settled pastorate two additional members may be appointed by the applicable Search Committee from its membership prior to disbanding.
7. There shall be an Investment Committee comprised of a minimum of three and a maximum of five members. Members shall be elected for three year terms on a staggered basis, one or two terms expiring each year, as applicable. One member of the Board of Finance and one member of the Stewardship Committee, as selected annually by such Board and Committee, shall serve as additional non-voting ex officio members of the Investment Committee.
8. All Church officers and Board and Committee members shall be installed at the worship service on the second or third Sunday following their election.
9. All members elected to Boards and Committees may serve two (2) successive terms, or until a successor is duly qualified and elected. A person who has served two (2) successive terms on the same Board or Committee shall remain off that Board or Committee for one (1) year before re-election to that same Board or Committee.

## **ARTICLE IX – DUTIES OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

1. All meetings of the Church and Church Council shall be presided over by the Church President, or the Church Vice President, or, in the absence of the President and the Vice President, the designee of the President. If there is no appropriate person present at a meeting, the Members of the Church or Church Council shall appoint someone present to preside at that meeting. The Church President is authorized after Church Council approval to sign all contracts and agreements in the name of the Church. The President shall work with the Pastor, Church staff and Members of the Church to exercise oversight ensuring that Church concerns are conducted in accordance with Church Bylaws and policies, subject to Article VII, Section 7. The President shall confer regularly with the Pastor to facilitate the harmonious functioning and health of the Church's governance, operations and business concerns, and the Church's spiritual mission.
2. The Vice President shall assist the President with his/her duties and shall perform the duties of the President during the President's absence or disability.
3. The Church Clerk shall keep a complete and faithful record of the transactions of the Church and Church Council, and shall keep a register of the Members of the Church with dates of their reception and removal, record baptisms, marriages and deaths, and make a full report at the annual meeting. The Church Clerk shall issue letters of transfer, preserve on file all Church Council communications, documents and written official reports, give legal notice of all meetings when such notice is necessary, and conduct Church Council correspondence.
4. The Treasurer shall keep account of all monies received by the Church. The Treasurer shall prepare a monthly report for the Church Council and shall present a complete report at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all government tax forms. The Treasurer shall oversee the payment of funds as required for all routine bills as presented by the Boards, Committees and program departments consistent with budgeted funding or approval of the Church Council. The Treasurer shall be an ex officio member of the Board of Finance and Stewardship Committee. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, and anyone else authorized by Church Council, shall have the power and authority to deposit and withdraw funds on behalf of the Church. In addition, Church Council may from time to time specify one or more other officers who may be signatories on the Church's accounts with applicable financial institutions.
5. The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer with his/her duties, shall perform the duties of the Treasurer during the Treasurer's absence or disability and shall be an ex officio member of the Board of Finance and Stewardship Committee.
6. The Members-At-Large shall represent the congregation on issues of interest and concern and convey such issues as appropriate to Boards, Committees and Church Council. The Members-At-Large may with approval or at the request of Church Council assist with projects for the congregation.

7. The Historian shall keep a journal or scrapbook of all occurrences of interest to the Church. The Historian shall serve as a resource and within reason as a researcher for Church Members, Church Council and Boards and Committees seeking information regarding Church history. The Historian shall oversee the preservation, maintenance and safekeeping at the Church of documents and objects pertaining to Church history.
8. The Board of Deacons shall be an instrument of the Church's ministry of compassion, love, and a bearer of the Word in life, aiding the Pastor in spiritual duties.

The Deacons shall assist and support the Pastor in the spiritual affairs of the Church and in the Pastor's development of a confirmation program. They shall prepare the elements for communion and assist the Pastor in their distribution. Deacons shall take heed to the high calling of their office, guarding faithfully all the spiritual interests of the Church, maintaining order in the house of God, visiting the sick, and ministering to the edification and comfort of all. The senior deacons are the deacons serving the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) year of their terms. In the absence of the Pastor, the Board of Deacons shall be responsible for providing for the services of worship. The Board shall assist in the service, as required, and shall provide for greeters and ushers.

The Deacons shall actively seek out potential new Members for the Church and shall inquire into the status of inactive Members, when appropriate. They shall make an effort to recognize and greet Members of the congregation and extend a friendly welcome to visitors. The Board of Deacons shall work with and support the Pastor and the congregation with respect to matters pertaining to spiritual welfare, worship, and administration of sacraments and rites.

The Board of Deacons shall prepare and maintain a manual of duties and instructions for use by the Deacons. This manual shall include procedures for setting up for the Sunday worship service, communion, baptism, instructions for ushers, and whatever else is deemed necessary or appropriate for the proper conduct of their office.

The Board of Deacons will conduct annual performance appraisals of the Pastor, report results of same to Church Council and make compensation recommendations.

9. The Board of Trustees shall provide for the care and management of all Church property, equipment, and furnishings, creating and maintaining an environment conducive to the spiritual, educational, and fellowship needs of the Church in a manner reflecting effective stewardship of the Church's property.

These duties shall include the care, maintenance, improvement, and routine servicing of all buildings, grounds, furnishings, and equipment, and preparation for any potential property-threatening catastrophic events and response to any property casualties experienced.

The Board of Trustees shall oversee the custodial care of the Church's facilities, including the hiring of custodians and management of service contracts within the limitations of the Church budget. The Board of Trustees shall oversee the use of and access to Church facilities, and prepare necessary contracts for use of Church facilities by outside parties. The Board shall present to the Church Council a schedule of usage fees for approval or changes thereto. The Board of Trustees shall act on behalf of the Church by entering into contracts for capital improvements that are approved by the Membership in a Church meeting in accordance with Article VI of these Bylaws. Capital improvements are defined as any change, alteration, rearrangement, addition, or repair (other than emergency repairs) to existing Church property which constitutes potential alteration of the aesthetic character of Church property and/or requires expenditure of an amount greater than or equal to 7% of the current year budget. An emergency repair is any repair needed to address a sudden, urgent and unexpected situation where prompt action is required to avoid injury, loss or damage to any person and/or property and/or to the environment. Unless the nature of the emergency does not permit, emergency repairs shall only be undertaken by the Board of Trustees after authorization to do so has been obtained from Church Council. If the nature of the emergency requires immediate repair to avoid any such injury, loss or damage, any one or more Trustees may, using reasonable and prudent judgment, proceed with any temporary measure or authorize a permanent emergency repair.

The Board of Trustees shall provide for adequate property casualty and liability insurance coverage for the Church's properties, programs and personnel. An annual review of the various policies will be made, with the Church Council approving any major changes in coverage or carrier.

The Board of Trustees, in consultation with other Boards and Committees, shall provide Members and friends of the Church with suggestions for approved memorials or gifts such as paintings, furniture, furnishings, musical instruments, equipment, etc.

The Board of Trustees shall prepare and annually review and modify a multiyear prioritized Plan of scheduled, preventive and deferred maintenance and new capital improvements. The Board of Trustees shall review the resulting Plan with the Board of Finance to identify which portions of the Plan for the ensuing year can be included in the next annual budget for the Church for that year and which portions might be addressed by any appropriate alternate funding sources. The Board of Trustees shall present the Plan, with the recommendations of the Board of Finance, to the Church Council during the second quarter of each fiscal year. Church Council shall annually review, modify and approve such Plan and the recommendations of the Board of Finance, prior to the Plan's inclusion in the annual report of the Board of Trustees and to portions of it being implemented in the next fiscal year. Any special fund-raising programs sponsored by the Board of Trustees shall be approved by the Church Council prior to commencement.

10. The Board of Finance shall receive reports of budget needs for the support of various congregational ministries from all Boards, Committees, and activity groups, prepare a budget draft for the succeeding year including wider mission activities, and submit this budget draft to the June Church Council meeting for its action. The Board of Finance is responsible for compensation recommendations for Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and any financial staff. The Board of Finance shall exercise responsibility for the Church's investments (to the extent not assigned to the Investment Committee in Article IX

Section 20), bookkeeping and banking procedures under the direction of the Church Council. The Board of Finance shall see that all financial obligations of the Church are paid promptly, and the benevolence monies are forwarded to the Missionary Society of Connecticut and Tolland Association of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, as appropriate. Boards and Committees requesting monies beyond their approved budget shall consult with the Board of Finance prior to presenting a request to Church Council. The Board of Finance shall make financial recommendations to all Boards, Committees and Church Council on financing of non-budgeted items. The Board of Finance shall arrange annual audits of the accounts of the Treasurer and those managed by the Investment Committee, as well as for the accounts of Auxiliary Organizations within the congregation. One (1) member will be appointed to serve as ex officio member of the Stewardship Committee and another as an ex officio member of the Investment Committee.

11. The Board of Christian Education is a policy-making body responsible for the development of a plan of Christian Education for children, youth and adults with the exception of confirmation which is under the purview of the Board of Deacons. The policies should be developed in consonance with the Pastor and other Boards and Committees, as appropriate.

The educational plan should provide for knowledge of the Bible, history and practice of the Church and Christian doctrine, nurturing and strengthening of Christian faith in daily life and its application in the wider community.

The Board of Christian Education shall: (a) identify and recommend to Church Council along with proposed employment terms a candidate to serve as the Church School Coordinator. Church Council shall determine whether to approve such applicant, to authorize the reported employment terms and to authorize contract acceptance and signature by the President, (b) interview and similarly recommend to the Church Council any other candidates for a paid position related to the Christian Education program, and (c) conduct annual evaluations of the Church School Coordinator and any other paid Christian Education staff and report the results thereof to Church Council. The Board will work with the Church School Coordinator for the procurement of Church School teachers, and will secure leaders for the youth groups. The Board will prepare and submit an annual budget including compensation for staff to meet its goals.

12. The Board of Christian Concern shall involve the Church in local and world-wide missions, and coordinate all Church mission activities. The Board shall stimulate interest in current social issues and problems so that our Church may have some understanding about the relation of the Gospel to society. The Board should provide opportunities for Church Members to become involved in mission projects. The Board shall annually submit a budget and recommendations to the Board of Finance for the expenditures of the mission portion of the Church budget.
13. The Stewardship Committee shall promote the understanding of stewardship responsibilities throughout the year and organize the annual canvas of the Membership for pledges of time, talent and money toward the programs of the Church for the upcoming year. The Committee shall report to the Board of Finance. One (1) member will be appointed to serve as an ex officio member of the Investment Committee.

14. The Flower-Decorating Committee shall be responsible to the Board of Deacons. The Committee shall see that appropriate floral arrangements and decorations are provided for the services of this Church.
15. The Music Committee shall be responsible to the Board of Deacons and shall recommend to the Board of Deacons policies for the Church's music program. The Music Committee shall: (a) make recommendations to the Board of Deacons regarding special music events, (b) interview and recommend to the Church Council candidates for positions related to the music program, (c) negotiate contractual terms with approved candidates for subsequent review and approval by Church Council and, upon Church Council approval, execution and delivery by the President, (d) regularly review the music staff members' contracts, (e) annually evaluate the music staff and program, and report findings to the Board of Deacons which will report same to Church Council, (f) prepare and submit the yearly music budget, including compensation for the music staff, to the Board of Finance, (g) make recommendations to the Church Council for major purchases of instruments, (h) recruit participants for the music program, (i) publicize special musical events, and (j) maintain musical records.
16. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be responsible to the Board of Deacons and shall act as an advocate for the needs and concerns of the congregation and pastor by providing constructive support, resolving conflict in pastoral matters, and facilitating communication between and among the congregation and pastor.

The Committee shall promote communication and understanding of the Church's vision, mission and objectives by clarifying expectations, roles, assumptions and perceptions of the congregation and Pastor in setting pastoral priorities and achieving stated Church goals.

17. The Nominating Committee shall secure candidates for Church offices, Boards and Committees, except the Pastoral Relations Committee, for election at the annual meeting, and make recommendations to the Church Council to fill unexpired terms after resignations. The Committee shall report to the Church Council.
18. The Investment Committee shall be responsible for the investment of the Columbia Congregational Church Legacy Endowment Fund and all other endowment, gift and memorial funds and accounts of the Church provided that each of the other such funds and accounts has a principal balance over \$10,000 at the time that management responsibility is assumed. Should the balance of any such fund or account subsequently fall below \$10,000, the Investment Committee shall, at its option, continue to manage the same, or coordinate with the Board of Finance for the Board to assume such responsibility. The Investment Committee shall manage the Columbia Congregational Church Legacy Endowment Fund in accordance with the investment and spending policies adopted in accordance with such Fund's indenture. Notwithstanding anything in this Section to the contrary, the Investment Committee shall not assume the responsibility for investment of any particular sum or asset other than the Columbia Congregational Church Legacy Endowment Fund until its duties with respect to such sum or asset have been established in written investment and spending policies adopted by the Church Council. The Investment Committee shall fulfill its investment responsibilities in accordance with the relevant investment and spending policies and applicable law.

The Investment Committee shall coordinate its activities under all spending policies with the Board of Finance, with respect to the distribution of investment assets in accordance with applicable spending policies and shall cooperate with such Board with respect to the audit functions thereof. The Investment Committee and the Stewardship Committee shall coordinate their activities to the extent appropriate, with respect to the development of the Columbia Congregational Church Legacy Endowment Fund.

## **ARTICLE X - RULES GOVERNING BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

1. All Boards and Committees shall schedule regular meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Chair of any Board or Committee.
2. A quorum for any Board or Committee shall be at least one-half (1/2) of the total number of voting members. Except as may be provided with respect to the Investment Committee in the indenture of the Columbia Congregational Church Legacy Endowment Fund, all decisions shall be by majority affirmative vote of those present at a duly convened meeting.
3. All Boards and Committees shall hold their first meetings during the first month after the Annual Meeting at which members of the Boards and Committees are elected. The outgoing chair of each Board and Committee, even if he or she is no longer serving on the Board or Committee, shall chair this first meeting to oversee the selection of the new chairperson, and offer guidance to the incoming members.
4. At its first meeting, each Board and Committee shall elect a presiding chairperson, recording secretary, and Church Council designee if the chair is unable to serve as Church Council representative. The recording secretary will keep accurate minutes of the deliberations and actions of each Board or Committee, and deliver them promptly to the Church Secretary to preserve on file and to distribute to the Church Council for informational purposes.
5. Each Board and Committee and other group which must report budget needs to the Board of Finance pursuant to Article IX Section 10, shall prepare and submit to the Board of Finance and the Stewardship Committee a projected budget for the upcoming fiscal year by March 31 of each year.
6. Should a Member fail to attend at least half of the Board or Committee's regular meetings during any six-month period, that Member shall be deemed to have resigned. The vacancy must be reported at the next meeting of the Church Council.
7. No later than July 15th of each year, the chair or chief officer of each Board, Committee and Auxiliary Organization of the Church shall submit to the Church Secretary an annual written report summarizing the activities of his or her Board, Committee or Auxiliary Organization for the past year.

8. Any questions arising with respect to the interpretation or application of these Bylaws shall be submitted to and resolved by the Church Council. Should Church Council be unable to reach satisfactory resolution to the question, the matter may then be brought before a meeting of the Members of the Church, pursuant to Article XVI, Section 2, for discussion of and possible amendment, in accordance with Article XIX, of these Bylaws.
9. All meetings of the Church, Boards and Committees shall be conducted in compliance with parliamentary procedure as specified in Roberts' Rules of Order.

### **ARTICLE XI - FUNDRAISING POLICIES**

Any Board, Committee, group or individual seeking to raise funds outside of the budget must conduct all fundraising activities in accordance with such rules, procedures and guidelines as Church Council shall from time to time adopt.

### **ARTICLE XII – AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

In the life of the Church, Auxiliary Organizations may be formed to promote fellowship and the purpose, policy and mission of the Church. Such groups may include men, women, families, and others. Each Church Auxiliary Organization shall have its own bylaws which shall be consistent with these Bylaws and must be reviewed and approved by Church Council. Each Auxiliary organization must unless Church Council agrees otherwise manage and raise its own funds subject to such audit requirements as Church Council may from time to time impose and adhere to such other requirements as Church Council or the governing body of the Church may impose to assure compliance with Articles II, III and IV and any other applicable provisions of the Bylaws and to assure compliance with applicable laws, insurance requirements and other policies of the Church. Each Church Auxiliary Organization must be officially recognized by the Church Council before it may make any claim of affiliation with the Church. Each duly recognized Church Auxiliary Organization may have representation on the Church Council. Any Church Auxiliary Organization that fails to abide by the requirements of this Article may be disbanded or disassociated from the Church by a two-thirds vote of the full membership of Church Council, excluding any vacancies, and ratified by a two-thirds vote of the Members of the Church present at a Church meeting duly noticed for such purpose at which a quorum is present.

### **ARTICLE XIII – PASTOR**

The Pastor will provide for the spiritual welfare of the Church Members. The Pastor is responsible for conducting worship, administering sacraments and rites, and administering and facilitating the spiritual activities of the Church in cooperation with the various Boards and Committees and Organizations. The Pastor shall report to Church Council on all matters for which oversight has not been assigned by these Bylaws to the Board of Deacons. From time to time, Church Council shall establish a Pastor job description which shall govern all aspects of the Pastor's relationship with the Church. The Pastor shall confer regularly with the President to facilitate the harmonious functioning and health of the Church's governance, operations and business concerns, and the Church's spiritual mission.

## ARTICLE XIV - PASTORAL VACANCY

1. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, it shall be appropriately reported to the Regional Minister or other appropriate staff of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ.
2. When necessary, the Deacons will request and secure services of an Interim Minister. The Deacons will reach accord with, and select the candidate of their choice. After consulting the Board of Finance and Treasurer, an employment contract shall be drawn, approved by Church Council and signed by the President, specifying the Interim Minister's duties and hours of service required per week, and offering compensation in accordance with the then current guidelines of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ and the abilities of the Church.
3. Church Council will appoint a Search Committee when appropriate that shall be responsible to seek a candidate for the vacancy in the position of Pastor. In filling a vacancy, the Search Committee will seek the counsel of the Conference Regional Minister or other support offered by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Search Committee shall request the Regional Minister or any other person designated by the Connecticut Conference to secure relevant information about any ordained minister whom it wishes to consider for the vacancy. Any ordained minister, meeting United Church of Christ standards may confer with the Regional Minister or any other person designated by the Connecticut Conference concerning a pastoral vacancy, and may request the Regional Minister or any other person designated by the Connecticut Conference to submit his or her name for consideration by the Search Committee all in accordance with United Church of Christ guidelines.
4. The Search Committee shall present to the Church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. The Church Council shall call a Church meeting to act on the recommendation and an affirmative majority vote of those present at a duly convened meeting shall constitute a call for the candidate to become Pastor of the Church.
5. The employment relationship between the Church and a called Pastor shall be embodied in a letter of call. The Search Committee shall be responsible for negotiating the initial letter of call, which shall state all the terms of the relationship between the Pastor and the Church, including: (a) the agreement of the Church to participate in pension, disability, and health insurance programs; (b) other compensation, housing and benefit terms agreed to between the candidate and the Search Committee; and (c) the pastoral job description developed and approved by Church Council. In due course as part of this process, the Search Committee shall consult with the Board of Finance. The final call letter shall be subject to Church Council approval and upon such approval, shall be signed for the Church by the President and the chairperson of the Search Committee. The Pastor, the Church, the Tolland Association, and the Conference Regional Minister or any other person designated by the Connecticut Conference shall each receive a copy of the letter of call.
6. When an ordained minister accepts a call to this Church, the Church, and the ordained minister shall join in requesting the Tolland Association to arrange for a Service of Installation or Recognition.

7. The Pastor shall be called for a period stipulated in the letter of call, which may provide for a minimum renewable term or an indefinite term according to the contract. The term of any called Pastor may be terminated at any time for good cause. Absent cause, such term shall end as provided in the letter of call, unless the term is extended. The letter of call may provide for termination by either side without stated cause, in which case, two (2) months written notice shall be given by the terminating party. Should the Church Council determine to terminate the Pastor for cause, Church Council may, before or after a formal vote, place the Pastor on notice and on leave of absence with full benefits and otherwise suspend the Pastor's duties. If Church Council proceeds without prior notice to the Pastor, it shall provide prompt notice to the Pastor of any decision to terminate the Pastor. Upon receipt of any notice given pursuant to this section, the Pastor shall have an opportunity to address the cause stated at the next regular meeting of the Church Council. If the Pastor pursues this right to be heard by prompt notice to the President of Church Council and seeks reinstatement if a termination vote has already been taken, the Church Council shall, after the Pastor has so addressed the Church Council, promptly in executive session without the Pastor present, reconsider its decision to terminate the Pastor and communicate its final decision to the Pastor. Any termination shall be effective as of the date the final vote is taken and all rights and benefits of the Pastor under the applicable letter of call shall cease as of the end of such date. Any notice of termination or nonrenewal given by Church Council to a Pastor shall also be sent by the President of the Church Council to the Conference Regional Minister or any other person designated by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, and to the Tolland Association.
8. The Church may, at its discretion, call an Associate or Assistant Pastor, following the general procedures of this Article, and after appropriately considering the advice and guidance of the Pastor.

#### **ARTICLE XV – PROPERTY**

1. The Church may, in its corporate name, sue or be sued; acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise, and own, hold, invest, reinvest or dispose of property, both real and personal, for such work as the Church may undertake; and may purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell, assign, transfer and convey such property for the general purposes of the Church including the production of income.
2. Should the Church ever be dissolved, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred for appropriate further use in the service of God and the preaching and Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ and/or, to the extent approved by the Members at the time of any such dissolution acting in accordance with Article VI Section 1 of these Bylaws to another religious corporation, any one or more religious societies or other organizations formed for public worship, or for ecclesiastical, missionary, charitable or educational purposes, provided that any property held pursuant to the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes, revision of 1958, Section 47-2, or any successor thereto, shall continue to be held for such purposes. Any such transfer shall only be made in accordance with these Bylaws and otherwise applicable law.

### **ARTICLE XVI – CHURCH MEETINGS**

1. The annual meeting of the Church shall be held on the third Sunday in the month of September. At this meeting, the Church Council shall submit, for approval, the annual budget and annual reports, in writing, of the officers of the Church, the Boards, the Committees and all Auxiliary Organizations. All elections shall be held at this meeting, including delegates to the State Conference and Tolland Association.
2. Special Church meetings may be called by the Church Council, or by a petition to the Church Council signed by not less than thirty (30) Members. The Church Council shall arrange for such meetings to be held within six (6) weeks from the receipt of the petition.
3. Announcement of any meeting of the Members of the Church shall be made during the worship service on three (3) consecutive Sundays, and a written notice to the same effect shall be sent to all Members by mail, or other means for which a previous approval by the recipient is on file at the Church, and no later than ten (10) days prior to the day designated for the meeting.

### **ARTICLE XVII – FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year will be from the period September 1 to August 31 of the following year.

### **ARTICLE XVIII – RULES OF ORDER**

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these Bylaws.

### **ARTICLE XIX – AMENDMENTS**

1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be made at any duly called Church meeting, by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Members present, provided that notice of the text of the proposed amendment(s) is publically announced and available to the Members at the Church at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting, and that such text is included in the written notice of the meeting.
2. Without limiting the authority of the Members to amend these Bylaws at any time, it shall be the responsibility of the Church Council to appoint a temporary Committee to review these Bylaws every five (5) years, or earlier if deemed necessary. Such Committee shall report its findings and any recommended changes to the Church Council, within 12 months of its appointment. Church Council shall receive and consider such report and take whatever action with respect to it as it deems appropriate.
3. Notwithstanding any provision of these Bylaws to the contrary, any amendment affecting the Investment Committee must also be consistent with the provisions of the indenture governing the Columbia Congregational Church Legacy Endowment Fund, as the same may be amended from time-to-time in accordance with the requirements of such indenture.
4. Concurrent with the adoption of these Bylaws, all previous bylaws or regulations, inconsistent herewith, are hereby repealed.

The foregoing Bylaws contains all amendments adopted by the Members of the Church through \_\_\_\_\_, 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, Clerk