

By-Laws
Congregational Church
of Bar Harbor, Maine

~As adopted on _____(date) ~

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Article I: Name

The name of this Church shall be The Bar Harbor Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

Article II: Purpose, Covenant and Mission Statement

1. Purpose and Covenant: The purpose of this Church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ to share in the worship of God and in making God's will dominant in the lives of men, women, youth and children as exemplified in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we covenant with the Lord and one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in all God's ways as revealed to us in the blessed word of truth.

2. Mission Statement: Jesus tells us – 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Matthew 22: 37-39 (NRSV) In response, our mission is to be a Christ-centered community of prayer and worship, welcome and care, learning and growing, witness and service. We endeavor to embody God's love for all people.

Article III: Polity

1. This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its Head and finds in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Holy Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience, its guidance in matters of faith and discipline.
2. The government of this Church is vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, always seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
3. While this Church is governed by no ecclesiastical body, we accept the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ and pledge to share in its common aims and work.
4. Within the United Church of Christ, the various expressions of the church relate to each other in a covenantal manner. Each expression of the Church has responsibilities and right in relation to the others, to the end that the whole Church will seek God and be faithful to God's mission. Decisions are made in consultation and collaboration among the various parts of the structure. As members of the Body of Christ, each expression of the Church is called to honor and respect the work and ministry of each other part. Each expression of the Church listens, hears, and carefully considers the advice, counsel and requests of others. In this covenant, the various expressions of the United Church of Christ seek to walk together in all God's ways.

Article IV: Faith

This Church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice. Each member shall have the undisputed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of his/her own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The following statement of faith, therefore, is not a test but an expression of the spirit in which this congregation interprets the Word of God.

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 of 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.

Article V: Open and Affirming Statement

The following statement was adopted December 9, 2014:

Jesus teaches us to welcome all God's children into God's covenantal community. All people are created in God's image and, thus, are loved by God. Love is the unifying and strengthening force within the Christian faith. We recognize that within this church we possess different perspectives and interpretations of Scripture; we celebrate that diversity and seek to honor it.

We, the members of the Bar Harbor Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, hereby declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming Christian community within the United Church of Christ, actively expressing Jesus' inclusive embrace of all people. We welcome those who seek to follow Jesus including persons of every age, gender, race, national origin, faith background, marital status and family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, mental and physical ability, economic and social status, and educational background to share in the life, leadership, employment, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, rites, responsibilities, blessings and joys of our church family.

As we grow together in faith and love, let us strive to celebrate the diversity in which God has created us.

Article VI: Membership

1. There shall be two membership classifications: Covenant Members and Parish Members.
2. **Covenant Members** shall be persons who have publicly accepted the Covenant of this Church (a) on presentation of letters of transfer from other Churches, or (b) by reaffirmation of faith, or (c) confession of faith.
 - a. Covenant Members shall be received at a worship service. Any who are unable to attend such service may be received by the Pastor acting in behalf of the Church.

- b. Covenant Members may resign at any time. They may be granted letters of transfer to other Churches.
 - c. Covenant Members who for a period of two years have not communicated with the Church or contributed to its support may be transferred to an inactive list.
 - d. Covenant Members shall have the right to vote at all meetings of the Church upon all questions.
3. **Parish Members** shall be persons who contribute regularly to the support of the Church or whose interest and activity in the Church merit such membership. They shall have the right to vote at all meetings of the Church upon all questions except: (a) to call or dismiss a Pastor, (b) real estate transfers, (c) to appoint a By-Laws Committee or (d) to revise the By-Laws.

Article VII: Service and Meetings

1. Services for worship shall be held each Sunday, at such time and place as voted by the Leadership Council.
2. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the Sacrament of Baptism shall be administered at such times as the Pastor or the Leadership Council may appoint.
3. The Annual Meeting of the Bar Harbor Congregational Church, U.C.C. shall be held in January or other date determined by the Leadership Council to hear reports of the Leadership Council, committees and organizations, to elect officers and members of Church organizations, to adopt a budget and to transact all other business which may properly come before said meeting. The exact date of the Annual Meeting will be set and notice shall be given by the Clerk in the manner provided in Paragraph 5 below.
4. Special Meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Leadership Council or by seven Covenant members of the church and notice shall be given by the Clerk in the manner provided in paragraph 5 below. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in the call.
5. Notices for the Annual and for Special Meetings shall be given by posting the Call on the outer door of the main entrance to the Church and by mailing a copy to all members at least fourteen days prior to the date of the meeting. Said Call shall state the nature of the meeting, whether Annual Meeting or Special Meeting, shall state the nature of the business to be transacted, shall be signed by the parties initiating the Call, and shall be attested by the Clerk.
6. Twenty-five percent of the active Covenant membership, as published in the most recent Annual Report, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at the annual meeting or special meeting of the congregation.
7. Voting may be done by ballot, voice, or show of hands. A majority of those voting shall be decisive except in cases specifically stated otherwise in these By-Laws or by State Law.
8. For the hiring or the firing of a Pastor or for real estate transfers, Covenant members' votes may be submitted electronically or in writing to the Clerk one week prior to the meeting. Absentee votes will be counted for the motion in question, but will not be part of the quorum.

9. The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on February 1 of each year and end on January 31. All officers, boards, committees and organizations of the Church shall report at the Annual Meeting, and these reports shall cover their activities since the last Annual Meeting.
10. As part of the Call for the Annual Meeting, the Clerk shall post the Leadership Discernment Team's list of nominations on the Church bulletin board and publish the list in the annual report. At the Annual Meeting, the Leadership Discernment Team shall move the nominations and the meeting shall vote on them in such manner as the Moderator shall decide. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the Annual Meeting.
11. Copies of the annual report shall be available to the Congregation no later than the Sunday prior to Annual Meeting.
12. The following shall be the order of business for the Annual Meeting: Call to order; Prayer; Reading of the Call; Determination of a quorum; Reports of the Leadership Council, Leadership Discernment Team, and Ministry Teams; Adoption of an annual budget; Other business as specified in the Call; Election of Church Officers and members of the Leadership Council and Leadership Discernment Team; and Adjournment.

Article VIII: Officers & Other Positions

1. The Officers of this Church shall be the Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer, each of whom shall be a Covenant Member. These officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall hold office in accordance with the provisions found herein. All officers shall assume their duties at the close of the Annual Meeting and shall continue in office until their successors are elected.
2. **Moderator:**
 - a. The Moderator shall preside at the Annual Meeting and all Special Meetings of the Church.
 - b. The Moderator shall be a member of the Leadership Council with voice and vote.
3. **Clerk:**
 - a. The Clerk shall keep on file in the Church office a faithful record of the proceedings of the Church and of the Leadership Council, give notice of the Calls for all meetings, issue letters of transfer and perform such other duties as are prescribed by law.
 - b. The Leadership Council may appoint a Deputy Clerk to assist the Clerk with his/her duties and to act in the absence or disability of the Clerk.
 - c. The Clerk shall be a member of the Leadership Council with voice and vote.
4. **Treasurer:**
 - a. The Treasurer shall be a member, with voice and vote, of the Leadership Council.
 - b. The Treasurer shall act in compliance with the instructions of the Leadership Council in matters pertinent to the financial management of the Church and will report any deficiencies or problems in this area to the Leadership Council for its resolution.
 - c. The Leadership Council may appoint a Deputy Treasurer to assist the Treasurer with his/her duties and to act in the absence or disability of the Treasurer.
5. **Delegate:**
 - a. At the Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting, the Congregation shall elect Delegates to represent the Church at all meetings of denominational and interdenominational

organizations to which the Church belongs and is entitled to send Delegates. When Delegates are unable to attend any meeting, Alternate Delegates may be appointed by the Leadership Council.

- b. Delegates represent the Church at all meetings of the Maine Conference United Church and the Sunrise Association of the United Church of Christ, their successor organizations and interdenominational organizations to which the church is entitled to send delegates.
- c. Delegates shall be a member of the Leadership Council with voice and vote.

6. **Historian:**

- a. The Historian shall keep records of membership, baptisms, weddings, and funerals.
- b. The Leadership Council may appoint a Deputy Historian to assist the Historian with his/her duties and to act in the absence or disability of the Historian.

Article IX: Pastor

1. The Pastor shall be called by a two-thirds quorum vote of those Covenant Members present at a Special meeting.
2. When a Pastor has been elected and has accepted the call, he or she shall become a Covenant Member of the Church.
3. The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church with the cooperation of the Leadership Council. The Pastor shall seek to enlist men, women, youth and children as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, have under his/her care all services of worship, and administer all the activities of the Church in covenant with various officers, councils, teams, and other Church organizations. The Pastor shall be a member with voice but no vote, of the Leadership Council, Leadership Discernment Team, Ministry Teams, and other Church organizations.
4. The Pastor shall interview and recommend the hiring of new employees to the Leadership Council and shall supervise and direct the activities of all Church employees.
5. The Congregation may at any time, by a two-thirds quorum vote dismiss the Pastor, said dismissal to be effective sixty days from the date of said action, or in case the Pastor wishes to resign, he/she shall give sixty days of notice of this intention to the Leadership Council. The sixty days may be adjusted by mutual agreement as stated in the Pastor's contract.
6. When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, a **Pastoral Search Committee** of eleven Covenant Members shall be nominated by the Leadership Discernment Team, after consultation with the Leadership Council, and elected at a duly called meeting of the Congregation. The Committee should include a broad representation from the Church, including at least one representative from either the Leadership Council or the Leadership Discernment Team. It shall be the duty of the Pastoral Search Committee to canvass available ministers and recommend to the Congregation the election of the person who best meets the requirements of the pastorate. It shall be the further duty of the Pastoral Search Committee to arrange for supplying the pulpit during the time the pastorate is vacant.

Article X: The Leadership Council

Mission Statement

Jesus tells us – ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matthew 22: 37-39 (NRSV) In response, our mission is to be a Christ-centered community of prayer and worship, welcome and care, learning and growing, witness and service. We endeavor to embody God’s love for all people.

1. The Leadership Council shall lead the church to live out the goals set forth in the Mission Statement. Working in covenant with the Pastor and Congregation, the Leadership Council shall set priorities for and oversee activities of the following ministries:
 - a. Prayer and worship
 - b. Welcome and care
 - c. Learning and growing
 - d. Witness and service

2. Under direction of the Congregation, and except as otherwise provided, the Leadership Council shall be the legal and business agent of the Church, shall have the care and custody of the Church property, shall be responsible for its maintenance and repair, and shall have charge of its financial affairs.
 - a. The Leadership Council shall hire and fix the salary and any other compensation of the Organist/Music Director, Sunday School Coordinator, Custodian and Nursery Attendant, if any. The Leadership Council shall set the Pastor’s salary, but the Pastor shall be called as provided by Article IX.
 - b. The Leadership Council may discharge employees for cause, after notice and hearing, except that the Pastor may be discharged only as provided in Article IX.
 - c. The Leadership Council shall not purchase, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any of the real property of the Church without specific authority to do so by vote of the Covenant Member of the Congregation.
 - d. The Leadership Council shall survey the financial needs of the Church and its ministry and present a budget for the ensuing year to the Annual Meeting for approval. The budget shall contain estimates of income and expenses for the maintenance of the Church properties and the ministries of the Church.
 - e. The Leadership Council shall arrange for the raising of the funds required to support the budget.
 - f. The Leadership Council shall serve as the custodian of all endowments and manage them in accordance with all applicable resolutions adopted by the Congregation.

3. The Leadership Council shall consist of 12 members including the Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Delegate and eight at-large members of the Congregation. The Pastor shall serve as a member of the Leadership Council, with voice but no vote.

Article XI: Ministry Teams

1. Ministry Teams shall be formed to accomplish the day-to-day activities of the church. Ministry Teams shall carry out specific, focused activities with variable time commitments.
 - a. Ministry Teams shall be commissioned by The Leadership Council. They also may be formed by Church members who are not Leadership Council members, but have endorsement by The Leadership Council to form a Ministry Team.

- b. Ministry Teams shall be composed of volunteers. Elections are not required for members of Ministry Teams.

Article XII: Leadership Discernment Team

1. The Leadership Discernment Team shall identify the talents and interests of Church members; match those talents and interests with positions available within the life of the Church, community, and wider Church; and recruit Church members for positions.
2. The Leadership Discernment Team shall nominate candidates for Church offices, the Leadership Council, and the Leadership Discernment Team, as provided below:
 - a. The Leadership Discernment Team shall prepare and file with the Clerk, at least fifteen days before the succeeding Annual Meeting, a list of nominations for the expiring terms of all Church offices, Leadership Council, and Leadership Discernment Team positions, but not the office of Pastor.
 - b. At each Annual Meeting, the Leadership Discernment Team shall nominate Congregation members for election to Church offices, Leadership Council, and Leadership Discernment Team positions, but not the office of Pastor.
 - c. The Leadership Discernment Team shall appoint members to fill any vacancies, except the office of Pastor, that arise between Annual Meetings, said appointed members to serve until the next Annual Meeting, at which time the Congregation shall vote to fill any unexpired portion of the term.
 - d. If a Congregational Meeting shall approve the creation of a By-Laws Committee, the Leadership Discernment Team shall appoint the members thereof.
 - e. The Leadership Discernment Team, working with the Leadership Council, shall provide opportunities for Congregation members to volunteer for participation in Ministry Teams.
3. The Leadership Discernment Team shall provide opportunities for members of the Leadership Council and the Congregation to develop leadership skills.
4. The Leadership Discernment Team shall be composed of three covenant members, no more than two of whom are elected in any year at the Congregation's Annual Meeting. The Pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member with voice, but no vote.

Article XIII: Auxiliary Organizations

All organizations using Church facilities are regarded as integral parts of the life of the Church and shall be under its general oversight.

Article XIV: By-Law Amendments

These By-Laws may be altered or amended as follows:

1. **Proposal** – The Leadership Council or three covenant member may propose a By-Laws Amendment as follows:
 - a. The Leadership Council may, by consensus, adopt provisional By-Laws changes to be considered for permanent adoption and voted on at the next Annual Meeting or Special Meeting.

- b. The Leadership Council may form a By-Laws Revision Team to consider proposed amendments to the By-Laws.
 - c. Three or more Covenant Members may offer By-Law amendments for consideration at the next Annual Meeting or Special Meeting subject to Notice requirements in paragraph 2 below.
2. **Notice** – The Leadership Council or at least 3 Covenant Members will provide written copies of the proposed amendment to the Congregation at least fourteen days prior to the Annual Meeting or Special Meeting, at which time an amendment will be considered for vote.
 3. **Adoption** of the By-Laws amendment shall require approval by a two-thirds quorum vote of those Covenant Members present at the Congregational meeting and shall become effective immediately, unless otherwise stated in either the amendment or the motion to adopt the amendment.
 4. **Revision** – Once approved by the Congregation, the Clerk shall incorporate the Amendment into the official By-Laws of the Church.

Article XV: Transition

1. **Effective Date** – This By-Law revision shall be effective immediately upon adoption, except that the term of all current Church Officers and members of the Church organizations shall be continued to _____(date).

[End of By-Laws]

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