

**CONSTITUTION
of
MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, INCORPORATED**

**ARTICLE I
NAME**

The name of this church is MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, INCORPORATED of Monroe, 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; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

**ARTICLE III
POLITY**

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its Head and places its temporal affairs in the hands of its members, who will exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to the laws of the State of Connecticut relating to nonprofit corporations.

This church shall be a member congregation of the United Church of Christ; and it shall sustain that relationship to the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ, adopted July 4, 1961, and as subsequently amended, relating to local churches.

**ARTICLE IV
FAITH AND COVENANT**

Section 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 in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. 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 (Holy Communion).

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One expression of this faith is:

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STATEMENT OF FAITH
in the Form of a Doxology

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.
Amen.

Section 2. Covenant

The covenant of this church shall be the following:

OUR COVENANT

We declare our faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
In holy covenant, we find ourselves to God and each other,
becoming devoted disciples and active apostles.

We promise each other to be faithful in worship
and in support of this church,
whose Savior and Lord is Jesus Christ.

In Christian love, we will care for and support each other.

With the Bible as our guide, we willingly promise
all that we are
and all that we have
to the fulfillment of God's Kingdom.

Freely we say these things, glorying in the joy of our salvation.

**ARTICLE V
MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. Invitation

It is the heritage and vision of this church that anyone seeking the word of God and the presence of Jesus Christ in their life is welcome, without exception, to join in its Christian worship services and participate in the life of this church. Invitation to receive the right hand of fellowship to become a member of this church may be given by the Board of Deacons to anyone who has demonstrated before the congregation this commitment of faith and willingness to faithfully embrace this church's statement of faith and its covenant.

Section 2. Types of Membership

- A. **REGULAR MEMBERSHIP**: Regular membership in this church is open to all baptized Christians who shall own the covenant of the church and receive the right hand of fellowship at a regular service of worship or, in the case of extraordinary circumstances such as illness or infirmity, on some other occasion approved by the Board of Deacons. A regular member shall be received by any one of the following procedures:
1. Confirmation;
 2. Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
 3. Transfer of membership from another Christian church;
 4. Reaffirmation of faith in those cases where no transfer of membership is possible.
- B. **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**: A person who wishes to participate in the life of this church while maintaining membership in another church may be received as an associate member by the same process as regular active members are received. Associate members shall have

all the rights and duties of regular active members except the right to a letter of transfer to another church.

- C. ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP: An active member of this church shall be defined as a "regular member" or "associate member" who faithfully embraces this church's covenant and regularly participates in and supports the life of this church through worship attendance and annual giving of their personal talents and financial means. Exception shall be made for extraordinary circumstances such as illness, infirmity, or extended absence for educational purposes.

Section 3. Preparation for Membership

All candidates for membership shall be invited to prepare adequately for it. In the case of previously confirmed adults, a Pastor, in consultation with the Board of Deacons, shall hold one or more orientation sessions during which Christian beliefs may be reviewed and this church's history, government, and programs explained.

In the case of youth preparing for Confirmation, a Pastor, in consultation with the Board of Deacons, shall conduct a confirmation class. Its length and curriculum shall be determined by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons in consultation.

Section 4. Responsibilities of Membership

Members are expected to the best of their ability to attend the regular services of worship, to contribute financially to the support of the church and its benevolences, to participate in its life and work, and to evidence in their daily lives a Christian lifestyle.

Section 5. Termination of Membership

- A. Any member desiring to leave this church and join another is entitled to a letter of transfer at the member's request.
- B. If a member resigns in writing, the Board of Deacons shall endeavor to secure his or her continuance in the church. Failing such effort, the Board of Deacons shall accept the resignation.
- C. Any member whose behavior becomes a scandal and affront to the good name of the church may be dismissed by vote of the church after patient and loving efforts by the Board of Deacons and the Pastor(s) to persuade the member to amend his or her life.
- D. Any member who fails to attend worship and pledge their personal talents and financial support for two (2) consecutive years may be placed on the inactive list by vote of the Board of Deacons. Prior to such action, the member shall be notified by the Board of Deacons. Persons placed on the inactive list shall lose all rights of membership and shall not be counted in compiling the official roll of members. They shall be considered terminated as members of the church after being on the inactive list for one year. An inactive member may be reinstated after renewing their active participation in the life of the church.

ARTICLE VI GOVERNING BODY

The governing body of this church shall be the membership assembled in congregational meeting.

ARTICLE VII MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

Regular meetings for worship shall be held on the Lord's Day at times set by the church or the Board of Deacons. Special services also may be held as the Board of Deacons and/or the Pastor(s) shall direct. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at regular intervals as a Pastor or Board of Deacons shall order.

Section 2. Congregational Meetings

A. TYPES OF CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS:

1. The Annual Meeting shall be held at the call of the Clerk in the month of January each year to elect officers, boards, committees, and delegates to the Association and Conference to which this church belongs; to adopt an annual budget; to hear annual reports from officers, boards and program units; and to transact such other business as may be set forth in the call.
2. Special congregational meetings shall be called by the Clerk (or, in the absence of the Clerk, by some other officer of the church) at the request of a Pastor, the Church Council, or any board, or at the request of any ten (10) members of the church.

B. PROCEDURES FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS:

1. *The Call:* All annual and special congregational meetings shall be called by reading the call from the pulpit at the two regular worship services that precede the meeting and by mailing the call, through the newsletter or by special mailing, to the members so as to be delivered to all local addresses at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting. The call shall state the business to be conducted at the meeting.
2. *Voting and Rules of Order:* All members shall have the right to vote at any meeting of the church. The vote of a majority of the members present at the meeting shall be the action of the church, except in the case of the election of a Pastor (see Article VIII, Section 2) and as provided in the General Statutes. Robert's Rules of Order, Revised shall be observed in the conduct of the meetings.
3. *Quorum:* A quorum for all membership meetings shall consist of ten percent (10%) of the members.

C. OFFICIAL YEAR: The official year of this church shall begin on January 1st.

ARTICLE VIII PASTOR(S), PROFESSIONAL STAFF, OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers

The officers of the church shall be the Pastor(s), the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer, the Receiver, the Historian, and such other officers as the church may determine. All officers shall be members of the church.

Section 2. Pastor(s)

- #### **A. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Each Pastor shall be an ordained minister with full and regular ministerial standing in the Association to which this church belongs. He or she shall have charge of the worship services of the church and shall carry on a ministry of preaching, pastoral care, and leadership. As an ordained minister of the congregation of which he or she shall be a member, each Pastor shall be a full member of the Church

Council and ex-officio member of all boards and committees and entitled to the present at any meeting of any church-sanctioned group except meetings of the congregation during the time his or her tenure or salary is under discussion if the church so votes. The collegial relationship between all of the Pastors will be defined in writing and approved by the Senior Pastor and the congregation at the time of the call.

- B. COVENANT/CONTRACT: Each Pastor shall be engaged by a written covenant serving as a legal contract which shall be approved by the congregation and the Senior Pastor (if one exists at the time) and the pastoral candidate. Copies shall be given to the Senior Pastor and the pastoral candidate and retained in the church records by the Clerk. Such contracts shall cover financial relationships, housing, applicable arrangements for further education, position description and any other pertinent agreements. If the contract is to be of limited duration or subject to periodic review, such information shall be included.
- C. INSTALLATION: If the church and the Pastor(s) agree, the Fairfield East Association shall be invited to meet as a Council to install the newly hired Pastor.
- D. TERMINATION AND VACANCY:
1. *Senior Pastor*: When a vacancy in the office of Senior Pastor occurs, the church shall elect a Pastoral Search Committee of no less than seven (7) and no more than twelve (12) members who, after seeking the advice of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, shall nominate a successor at a meeting of the church called for the purpose of acting on such nomination. At least ten percent (10%) of the members of the church shall be present at the meeting, and the election of the Senior Pastor shall be by at least a two-thirds majority vote. The term of office shall be of indefinite duration, unless otherwise stipulated, with termination by congregation or the Senior Pastor on sixty (60) days written notice, provided, however, that the term of the Senior Pastor shall terminate automatically and immediately upon his or her losing ministerial standing in the Association and the church shall be under no obligation to pay him or her following loss of such standing.
 2. *Other Pastors*: When a vacancy in the office of a Pastor (other than Senior Pastor) occurs, the church shall elect a Pastoral Search Committee which will include the Senior Pastor and no less than seven (7) and no more than twelve (12) members who, after seeking the advice of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, shall nominate a successor at a meeting of the church called for the purpose of acting on such nomination. At least ten percent (10%) of the members of the church shall be present at the meeting, and the election of the said Pastor shall be by at least a two-thirds majority vote. The term of office shall be of indefinite duration, unless otherwise stipulated, with termination by congregation or said Pastor on sixty (60) days written notice, provided, however, that the term of said Pastor shall terminate automatically and immediately upon his or her losing ministerial standing in the Association and the church shall be under no obligation to pay him or her following loss of such standing.

Section 3. Other Ordained Ministers/Professional Persons

The church may from time to time call other ordained ministers and/or professional persons (e.g. Director/Minister of Christian Education, Minister of Music) to serve with the Pastor(s) as colleagues. They shall be called by the church at a congregational meeting upon nomination by the responsible board or committee with the following stipulations:

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- A. Special relationships may be established between such persons and the boards or committees with which they are expected to work in specialized ways.
- B. The collegial relationship between such person and a Pastor shall be defined in writing and approved by the Senior Pastor and the congregation at the time of the call.
- C. When more than one ordained minister serves the church, it shall be understood that any member of the church may call upon any minister of the church for pastoral services such as counsel, marriages or funerals.

Section 4. Other Staff

Persons hired to function within the church in a capacity not mentioned in Article VIII, Section 3, shall be hired by the responsible board, committee or minister providing that funding is available and approved by the Board of Trustees. Salary, tenure, and responsibilities shall be established in writing before hiring and recorded by the Clerk.

Section 5. Moderator

The Moderator, who shall serve as President of the corporation, shall have been a member of the church for at least two (2) years and shall have served actively within the church structure. He or she shall be elected by the church for a term of two (2) years and shall be eligible for reelection for one (1) additional term, after which he or she shall not be eligible for election to the office until one (1) year has elapsed since the end of his or her second term. The Moderator shall:

- A. Preside at all congregational and Church Council meetings. In the event of the Moderator's absence a Pastor or the Clerk shall call the meeting to order, and the Moderator Pro Tempore shall be elected for the meeting;
- B. Seek to insure that the government of the church functions within the structure and intent laid down by this Constitution, including providing oversight to resolving constitutional disputes/clarification as required;
- C. Call meetings of any board or committee which finds itself unable to organize or function. He or she may appoint a chairperson or may serve as temporary chairperson, if necessary.

Section 6. Clerk

The Clerk shall be elected by the church for a term of two (2) years and shall be eligible for reelection for one (1) additional term, after which he or she shall not be eligible for election to the office until one (1) year has elapsed since the end of his or her second term. His or her term shall alternate with that of the Moderator. The Clerk shall:

- A. Serve as Secretary of the corporation, and be the secretary for all congregational and Church Council meetings, and shall keep a legal record of the proceedings of both;
- B. Be responsible for maintaining the accuracy of the Constitution by:
 - 1. Reflecting constitutional amendment(s) voted for inclusion during a congregational meeting and presenting them to the Council for review within thirty (30) calendar days;
 - 2. Filing one (1) hard copy and (1) electronic copy of the revised Constitution in the church office, and distributing one (1) hard copy to the church Historian;
- C. Be responsible for the Church Register, which shall include records of membership, baptisms, marriages, and deaths;
- D. Issue letters of transfer of membership;
- E. Preserve on file all communications, official reports, and contracts;

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- F. Give legal notice (call) of meetings when such notices are necessary;
- G. Conduct correspondence, including an annual report to the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Section 7. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected by the church for a term of two (2) years and shall be eligible for reelection for two (2) additional terms, after which he or she shall not be eligible for election to the office until one (1) year has elapsed since the end of his or her third term. The Treasurer shall not be related in any way to the individual holding the office of Receiver or Assistant Receiver. His or her term shall be concurrent with that of the Moderator. The Treasurer shall:

- A. Have charge of all funds of the church;
- B. Pay all bills and otherwise disburse monies as directed by the Board of Trustees, Board of Christian Outreach, or other organizations responsible for designated funds;
- C. Keep open and true accounts of all the fiscal transactions of the church;
- D. Be a member ex-officio of the Board of Trustees;
- E. Be bonded by the church.

Section 8. Receiver, Assistant Receiver and Financial Secretary

A. **THE RECEIVER** shall be elected by the church for a term of two (2) years and shall be eligible for re-election for two (2) additional terms, after which he or she shall not be eligible for election to the office until one (1) year has elapsed since the end of his or her third term. The Receiver shall not be related in any way to the individual holding the office of Treasurer or Assistant Receiver. The Receiver shall oversee a Receiving Committee, receive all offerings and other income, will be a member ex-officio of the Board of Trustees, and be bonded by the church.

a. The Receiving Committee:

1. The Receiving Committee Shall consist of five members of the congregation each of whom will have been members of the congregation for a minimum of two years. Each member of the committee will be unrelated to each other, to the Receiver, Assistant Receiver, or Treasurer and be appointed by the Trustees to two year terms. Members are not be eligible for re-election to the Receiving Committee until one (1) year has elapsed since the end of his or her prior term.
2. Under the direction and presence of the Receiver, or in the absence of the Receiver, the Assistant Receiver, it shall be responsible for counting church donations after a worship service or church function.
3. a. At least two members of the committee, including the Receiver, (unrelated to each other) must be present for the counting of the money. The final deposit amount shall be agreed upon by the two counters, stored securely onsite and deposited in the bank at the first available opportunity.
b. In the event that neither the Receiver nor Assistant Receiver can be present, the Chair of Trustees, or in the Chair of Trustees absence the

Treasurer shall assign a third member of the Receiving committee to act in the Receiver's behalf.

B. THE ASSISTANT RECEIVER shall be elected by the church for a term of two (2) years and shall be eligible for reelection for two (2) additional terms, after which he or she shall not be eligible for election to the office until one (1) year has elapsed since the end of his or her third term. The Assistant Receiver shall not be related in any way to the individual holding the office of Receiver or Treasurer. His or her term shall be nominated on years alternating with that of the Receiver. The Assistant Receiver shall assist the Receiver in performing the Receiver's assigned duties and perform those duties in the Receiver's absence and shall be bonded by the church.

C. THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY shall be responsible for promptly recording the deposit in the accounting records, keep accurate account of each pledge, and furnish each person pledging with periodic statements. The Financial Secretary shall deposit all monies to the church's bank accounts at the first available opportunity. The Financial Secretary shall be appointed by the trustees and bonded by the church

Section 9. Historian

The Historian shall be elected by the church for a term of two (2) years. No limit shall be placed on the number of successive terms which may be served in this office by the same person.

The Historian shall maintain the historical records of the church and, from time to time, shall update the written history of the church. Record files shall include, but not be limited to, church publications, newspaper clippings, pictures, and documents.

Section 10. Other Officers

The church may elect an Auditor and/or such other officers as needs may dictate. The duties and privileges of such officers shall be established in the minutes of the meeting at which they are elected.

Section 11. Manager of Information Systems

The Manager of Information Systems shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees to a term of two (2) years. No limit shall be placed on the number of successive terms which may be served in this office by the same person. His or her term shall alternate with the Receiver. The Manager of Information Systems shall:

- A. Be charged with the management of the church's computerized database system;
- B. Maintain provisions for all required data reports by appropriate personnel;
- C. Assign all computerized passwords to appropriate personnel, ensuring that records are kept in a confidential manner;
- D. Provide instruction on the computer programs as required.

ARTICLE IX CHURCH COUNCIL

Section 1. Composition

The Church Council shall consist of the Pastor(s), Moderator, Clerk, and board chairpersons, each with one (1) vote.

Other elected heads of church organizations which do not function under a board should attend Church Council meetings for purposes of program planning and coordination. They will not have a vote.

Section 2. Powers and Responsibilities

The Church Council shall:

- A. Hold such powers as may be delegated to it by the church in congregational meeting;
- B. Have responsibility for the filling of vacancies caused by death or resignation, and the assignment of responsibilities that fall outside the scope of this Constitution to boards or organizations for their implementation;
- C. Have responsibility for conforming the Constitution to reflect any amendments approved by the congregation at congregational meetings and for reporting those changes in the Council minutes;
- D. Have the responsibility for the coordination of all program activities of the church;
- E. Carry out those functions assigned to it by other sections of this Constitution;
- F. Appoint members to ad hoc committees whose tasks are other than the work of any one board;
- G. Hold a minimum of eleven (11) open monthly meetings each year.

ARTICLE X BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

For the purpose of this Article X, the term “Board” or “Boards” shall hereafter include “Boards” and “Committees” unless otherwise stated.

Section 1. General Requirements and Procedures of Boards

- A. **MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF BOARDS:** Membership in the church shall be required for all who are elected or appointed to the standing boards and free-standing committees (not to include board committees), including the Board of Deacons, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Christian Education, the Board of Christian Outreach, the Board of Christian Fellowship, the Safe Church Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Pastoral Relations Committee(s).
 - All board members, unless otherwise stated, shall be elected by the church for a term of two (2) years renewable once for an additional one (1) year, allowing up to three (3) consecutive years on any board.
 - No member shall be eligible for re-election to the same board or standing committee after having served two (2) consecutive terms until at least one (1) year has elapsed since the conclusion of his or her second term.
 - No member may simultaneously serve on more than one (1) board or be an officer of the church.

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Between Annual Meetings, the Church Council may approve a member to fill a board vacancy. A board member filling a vacancy shall be eligible for election to the same board as follows:

1. If the member served for more than one (1) year then the member shall be eligible for election to the same board for one (1) additional term of one (1) year upon the expiration
2. If the member served for one (1) year or less then the member shall be eligible for election to the same board for one (1) term of one year followed by one (1) additional term of one (1) year upon expiration of the term.
3. No member filling a vacancy shall be eligible for re-election to the same board or standing committee after having served two (2) consecutive terms until at least one (1) year has elapsed since the conclusion of his or her second term.

Amendment I, adopted in Congregational Meeting February 19, 2017: Extending Term of Board and Committee Members by One Additional Year

In the event and upon specific occasion or circumstances it is deemed necessary for the good of the congregation and its work, the Church Council may take exception to the provision of Article X, Section 1, and extend the term of office of any Board or Committee member or members for an additional one time, one (1) year. Following an affirmative two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council quorum, the Church Moderator shall instruct the nominating committee to include the affected board or committee member or members on the list of recommended candidates for election at the annual meeting, or subsequently scheduled special general meeting of the congregation. An affirmative two-thirds (2/3) vote by the quorum of the congregation at its annual meeting or special general meeting shall be required to elect the affected board or committee member or members. Such action shall not establish a precedent and shall be justified on its own individual merits.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR BOARDS:

1. Unless otherwise stated, and except for the Nominating Committee, each standing board shall hold a minimum of eleven (11) open monthly meetings each year.
2. At least three (3) months prior to the completion of a chairperson's term, the members of the board at a scheduled meeting shall select by formal vote, an incoming chairperson from its continuing membership. This vote shall be recorded in the Boards' meeting minutes. Transition of responsibilities shall be made at a pace and time determined by the board members.
3. Each board shall also (unless otherwise stated), at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the church, elect from its membership a recording secretary, and other such officers or chairpersons of specific areas of endeavor as the board deems necessary.
A majority of the members of a board shall be required to conduct official business of such board.

- C. ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR BOARDS:** Unless otherwise stated, and except for the Nominating Committee, each standing board shall hold a minimum of eleven (11) open monthly meetings each year. Each board shall, at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the church, elect from its membership a Chairperson who shall have served on that board for at least one (1) year before assuming the chair. Each board shall also (unless otherwise stated), at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the church, elect from its membership a recording secretary, and other such officers or

chairpersons of specific areas of endeavor as the board deems necessary. A majority of the members of each board shall be the minimum to constitute a quorum for purposes of taking official action on the business of such board.

- D. **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**: Members designated as ex-officio serve on the appropriate board by virtue of the office. They hold all privileges due any member of the board except that, if an ex-officio member of one board holds full membership or ex-officio status on another board, such a member shall not hold voting privileges on more than one board. For members holding full membership on one board and ex-officio status on one or more other boards, such members will have voting rights only on the board on which they hold full membership status. For members holding only ex-officio status on more than one board, such members are required to select, prior to the commencement of their terms on such boards, on which board they will exercise voting rights. Such selection must be communicated in writing to the boards on which they serve and to the Council and cannot be modified during the term of office.
- E. **FRIEND OF THE BOARD**: A friend of any of the standing boards shall be a church member or non-member actively participating in the life of the church. A Friend of the Board shall be a non-elected individual who willingly accepts assigned tasks from the board. Attendance at scheduled board meetings is not mandatory, but when attending a Friend of the Board may participate in board discussions without voting privilege. There is no term restriction, and a Friend of the Board may be dismissed at the discretion of the Board. Board members may appoint as many Friends of the Board at any point in time as deemed necessary and proper to fulfill the responsibilities of the particular Board.

Section 2. Board of Deacons

- A. **COMPOSITION**: The Board of Deacons shall consist of twelve (12) members. A member of the Board of Deacons shall have been a member of the church for at least one (1) year before election and be one who has experienced the transformative power of God's love or strives to embrace and exemplify the spirit of the Biblical standards for the office. (Reference: Matthew 20:26-28 and 22:37-40, and I Tim. 3:8-10)
- B. **RESPONSIBILITIES**: The concern of the Board of Deacons shall be the spiritual welfare of the congregation and community. The Board of Deacons shall:
1. Share with the Pastor(s) the oversight of the spiritual life of the church;
 2. Schedule regular services of worship and, in consultation with the Pastor(s), such other appropriate services of worship as may be desired;
 3. Provide the elements of the Lord's Supper and, when invited by a Pastor, assist in their distribution;
 4. Serve as or appoint ushers for the orderly and dignified seating of worshippers and the maintenance of an atmosphere conducive to worship;
 5. Advise the Pastor(s) and congregation on faith and morals when such become subjects of issue in the church;
 6. Conduct a program of evangelism, reaching out to welcome and invite new members into the church, and be concerned for the nurture, care and discipline of members;
 7. Assist the Pastor(s) in the training and examination of candidates for membership in the church;

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8. Be responsible for pulpit supply during the absence or disability of a Pastor;
9. Accept or reject gifts given as memorials and, in prudent counsel with the Board of Trustees, direct the disbursement of gift monies, and the interest therefrom. It is to be understood that the Board of Trustees will be the custodians of the monies, but the Board of Deacons alone will approve their expenditure;
10. Appoint an individual to be responsible for the provision of flowers for worship services;
11. Be responsible for the music ministry of the church, including selection and evaluation of appropriate personnel and the coordination of the music with the worship service;
12. Establish committees to carry out its charges and, with the exception of the preparation and service of the Lord's Supper and assistance with Baptism, call upon the general membership of the church to serve upon such committees. The chairperson of any such committee shall be a member of the Board of Deacons.

Section 3. Board of Trustees

- A. **COMPOSITION**: The Board of Trustees shall consist of a minimum of seven (7) and a maximum of twelve (12) elected members. The Treasurer, Receiver, and Assistant Receiver, as elected officers of the church, are defined as ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees with full voting rights on the board. The Board will also include a Property Manager elected by the church as part of the minimum of seven (7) and maximum of twelve (12) for a term of two (2) years and no limit shall be placed on the number of successive terms which may be served by the person in this role. The Property Manager will have full voting rights as an ex-officio member of the Board.
- B. **RESPONSIBILITIES**: The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the property and finances of the church. The board shall:
 1. Review and supervise all disbursements in relation to income and authorized budget expenses, review all bills for supplies and services, and authorize the Treasurer to make payments from funds under its control;
 2. Organize, prepare, and submit the church budget for the coming year, and make it publicly available at least seven (7) days before the Annual Meeting;
 3. Be responsible for approving the use of the church property by any and all persons and organizations and for establishing rules, regulations, and fees for the use of all church property;
 4. Receive and hold, invest and reinvest all permanent funds of the church and such other special funds and properties as may, from time to time, be derived by gifts, other than memorials, from individuals or families. The board shall, at its discretion, accept or reject such gifts or real or personal property which may be offered to the church;
 5. Establish and maintain uniform personnel practices for all employees in general conformity with personnel policies of the church, and review and approve all personnel contracts and employment arrangements for all professional and salaried employees, full and part-time;
 6. Recommend to the congregation and request authority to borrow funds, when required, to pay current obligations or to finance major purchases, repairs, renovations, improvements, or long-term projects;
 7. Obtain specific authority from the congregation to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any real property.
- C. **COMMITTEES**:

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1. *Finance Committee*: The Finance Committee shall consist of at least three (3) persons: members of the Board of Trustees (other than the Chairperson), one of whom shall serve as chairperson of this committee, the Treasurer, and the Receiver. The Committee shall handle all receipts and disbursements under the direction of the Board of Trustees. It shall:
 - a) Pay direct expenditures;
 - b) Control savings and investments;
 - c) Submit a written report summarizing the previous year's financial transactions at the Annual Meeting;
 - d) Cause said annual written financial report to be audited by a qualified person who is not a member of the Board of Trustees and is not related to a member of the Board of Trustees, whose report shall be received and filed in the church's permanent record and shared with the Board of Trustees and Council within 180 days of the end of the fiscal year which is the subject of the audit;
 - e) Be responsible for the placement of fire, compensation, public liability, and other forms of insurance and other provisions as will safeguard the property and workers of the church.
2. *Stewardship Committee*: The Stewardship Committee shall consist of three (3) members of the Board of Trustees, one of whom shall serve as chairperson of the Committee. The Stewardship Committee shall:
 - a) Be responsible for organizing the annual Stewardship Campaign for the purpose of obtaining pledges for the coming year, act as a follows-up committee to the canvass during the remainder of the year, and contact and endeavor to obtain pledges from new members joining the church between canvasses;
 - b) Monitor special funding activities.
3. *Property Committee*: The Property Committee shall be responsible for the control, supervision, and maintenance of all church properties except objects used within services which are the responsibility of the Board of Deacons. This committee shall obtain competitive bids on all major projects and submit such bids to the Board of Trustees for approval.
4. The board shall form special committees to work in specific areas and direct specific short-term projects. The chairperson of such a committee shall be a member of the board while the membership of the committee may include anyone from the congregation.

Section 4. Board of Christian Education

- A. **COMPOSITION**: The Board of Christian Education shall consist of:
 1. A minimum of six (6) and a maximum of nine (9) elected members.
 2. Ex-officio members shall be:
 - Church School lay leader,
 - Church Librarian,
 - One (1) Junior Pilgrim Fellowship Advisor or Representative, and
 - One (1) Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Advisor or Representative.
 3. Ex-officio members may participate in board discussions without voting privilege.
- B. **RESPONSIBILITIES**: The Board of Christian Education shall function in a cooperative relationship with the ordained staff person who relates to the board and shall be responsible

for the conduct of a well-rounded program of Christian education including the following ministries: the Nursery, Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Adult Education, and the Church Library. The board shall:

1. Survey the needs of all age groups;
 2. Formulate the goals and objectives for the total program;
 3. Appoint personnel;
 - a) The board shall appoint annually the Church School lay leadership, the Church Librarian, and the Junior and Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Advisors.
 - b) The board shall appoint, for appropriate terms of service, all other educational personnel, such as teachers, leaders, and directors of educational programs.
 4. Provide for the training and on-going support of personnel;
 5. Make decisions regarding the administration of educational programs;
 6. Provide materials, resources, and equipment;
 7. Evaluate the effectiveness of current programs;
 8. Initiate needed changes in the educational programs;
 9. Coordinate the work of the various educational groups;
 10. Cooperate with responsible boards or committees in providing and maintaining adequate space for educational programs;
 11. Determine and recommend financial needs and policies as related to Christian Education;
 12. Keep the entire congregation informed of the educational programs and needs;
 13. Provide input into the annual evaluation of the ordained staff person who provides pastoral oversight for the Christian Education program as requested by the applicable PRC.
- C. **COMMITTEES:** The board shall form standing committees to work in specific areas and shall establish special committees, as needed, to direct short-term projects. Chairpersons of the committees shall be members of the board; however, the membership of the committees may include anyone from the congregation.

Section 5. Board of Christian Outreach

- A. **COMPOSITION:** The Board of Christian Outreach shall consist of a minimum of six (6) and a maximum of nine (9) elected members.
- B. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Board of Christian Outreach shall be responsible for the planning and conduct of the mission program of the church. The board shall:
1. Be responsible for developing and coordinating a comprehensive program of ministry for the entire church beyond its membership. Such program shall include, but not be limited to, both educational planning and provision for service projects. The board shall inform the church of these opportunities for learning about and carrying out the world-wide mission of the church in the local area, state, nation, and world;
 2. Research and inform the church of those social issues which the board deems to be pertinent to Christian social action, conscience, and responsibility;
 3. Prepare and recommend to the Board of Trustees annually a benevolence budget for giving beyond the general operating expenses of the local church;
 4. Authorize the disbursement of budgeted funds received for benevolences;
 5. Recommend, arrange, and conduct special benevolence offerings of the United Church of Christ and other agencies, such as One Great Hour of Sharing and Neighbors in Need.

- C. **COMMITTEES:** The board may form special committees to work in and direct specific short-term projects or areas. The chairperson of such a committee shall be a member of the board; however, the membership of the committee may include anyone from the congregation.

Section 6. Board of Christian Fellowship

- A. **COMPOSITION:** The Board of Christian Fellowship shall consist of a minimum of six (6) and a maximum of nine (9) elected members.
- B. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Board of Christian Fellowship shall be responsible for the coordination of fellowship activities of the church. The focus of the board is to ensure that a balanced program of fellowship opportunities is being offered throughout the year that will interest members---established, new, and prospective---as well as visitors to the church. The board shall:
1. Focus on hospitality as a mission of the church, integrating and strengthening such events as coffee hour and fellowship activities in the life of the congregation;
 2. Collect submissions of desired and regularly held fellowship requests from all boards and groups. Consulting with the Pastor(s), council, and other groups, BCF shall review requests, assess the variety and frequency of fellowship activities and map out the church calendar for the program year. As new requests are submitted to BCF, they will be reviewed and placed on the calendar. This will be done to prevent overlapping or duplication of programming and/or gaps in the fellowship life of the church;
 3. Evaluate the various fellowship opportunities offered by the church and provide periodic opportunities for each interest/age group that is not already addressed by other boards' events, e.g. inter-generational events, men's and women's activities, small group offerings, etc.;
 4. Monitor and evaluate fellowship activities on a continuing basis.

Section 7. Nominating Committee

- A. **COMPOSITION:** The Nominating Committee shall consist of three (3) members. Members of this committee shall be nominated by the Church Council and be elected by the church at the Annual Meeting, shall be members of the church, and shall serve one (1) two (2) year term not to be renewable. No person serving on the Council or a board shall be eligible to serve as a member of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall elect a chairperson from its membership.
- B. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** The Nominating Committee shall, before each Annual Meeting, prepare a slate of officers, members of boards and committees (excluding the Nominating Committee), and delegates for election at the next Annual Meeting. The committee shall gain the acceptance of each nominee for his or her proposed position. No position shall be restricted except as required in other sections of this Constitution, and except that all members of elected offices or bodies shall be members of the church. No person shall hold two (2) elected positions simultaneously, with the exception of church delegates, who may hold a second position also.

Section 8. Pastoral Relations Committee(s) (PRC)

The purpose of the Pastoral Relations Committee(s) shall be to provide specific avenues of communication between each Pastor and the congregation. There shall be a PRC for each of the ordained members of the pastoral staff.

A. COMPOSITION:

1. Each committee shall consist of a Pastor and five (5) members of the congregation, with no member serving on more than one PRC at a time. No lay member of the Church Council or any other elected or appointed officer shall serve on PRC.
2. When a change in membership for a PRC is required, both the respective Pastor of that PRC and Church Council shall submit names of potential members from the congregation at large as soon as possible.
3. That Pastor or the Church Council as a group may veto any name that has been presented.
4. The finalized list of committee members must be approved by the respective Pastor and the Church Council prior to being announced at the Annual Meeting. (It is desirable that a majority of the committee remain intact for continuity.)
5. The term of office for committee members shall be two (2) years, with the possibility of renewal for one (1) additional term. In order to ensure continuity, it is desirable that no more than two (2) members be replaced at one time.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Establishment of a continual formal dialogue between each Pastor and members of the congregation to discuss non-board issues and to share general information;
2. Support of each Pastor's total ministry, within and beyond the local church community, including continuing education, planning sabbatical, retreat, prayer and other reflection times, etc. Also included shall be support for each Pastor's family life and encouragement for appropriate allocation of time for family activities within each Pastor's schedule;
3. Conduct an annual development and review of ministry covenants as they relate to the specific responsibilities of each Pastor, the various boards, and the congregation. This review shall reflect mutual growth, goals and responsibilities;
4. Each committee shall meet at least four (4) times yearly, or at the request of any committee member and send representation to Council meetings following each meeting;
5. The committee(s) shall meet jointly a minimum of one time annually. In addition, two (2) representatives from each committee shall meet jointly at least once per year to work in unison and act with a common interest regarding pastoral salary and other working conditions recommendations. These recommendations shall be advocated to the Board of Trustees in time for the yearly budget formation;
6. Appropriate reports of committee activities shall be made periodically to the Council, as well as to the general membership through the annual report and other written or oral communications;
7. Participate in the pastoral evaluation process as adopted by the Church Council;
8. The committee members for each PRC shall share leadership responsibilities and select a facilitator;
9. All information shared at meetings of the PRC shall be kept strictly confidential unless otherwise stated. Although no minutes shall be published, the committee shall share any decisions or other information determined appropriate with the Church Council or other selected board(s).

- C. **CONFLICT RESOLUTION:** In the event that conflict arises between the Pastors, the action to seek resolution will include the following steps in this order:
1. The Pastors will attempt to work out their differences between themselves to their mutual satisfaction.
 2. Should this action fail to resolve the difference, the next course of action is to meet with two (2) representatives from each PRC to reach consensus.
 3. Failing through the above steps, the PRCs shall jointly seek involvement and resolution assistance from the Conference Minister.

Section 9. Denominational Delegates

- A. **COMPOSITION:** Two (2) lay delegates and two (2) alternates to the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ and two (2) lay delegates and two (2) alternates to the Fairfield East Association of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ shall be elected by the Annual Meeting. Each delegate shall serve a two-year term, renewable for one (1) additional two (2) year term. Initial election of delegates shall allow for staggered terms. A delegate may simultaneously hold a second elected position. A delegate may serve as a delegate to more than one of the above organizations simultaneously.
- B. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Each delegate shall:
1. Attend all annual, semi-annual and special meetings or convocations of the organization to which he/she is a delegate;
 2. Serve as liaison with church boards and the congregation as appropriate in order to keep the congregation informed of significant official action;
 3. Gather information throughout the year on the work and policy of the organization to which he/she is a delegate as well as the issues and matters with which it is concerned and on which it may take action.

**ARTICLE XI
AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

Section 1. Women's Fellowship Deleted.
Was dissolved and incorporated into the Board of Christian Fellowship.

Section 2. Other Organizations
The church may sponsor such other organizations as may be useful to its Purpose (Article II).

Section 3. Mustard Seed Thrift Shop Committee.

- A. **PURPOSE:** The Mustard Seed Committee shall oversee the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe with respect to its daily operations, financial accounting and reporting process, and the disbursement of funds.
- B. **ORGANIZATION:** The committee shall consist of at least 5 members of Monroe Congregational Church who are appointed by the Church Council for up to two consecutive terms of two years each. At least one member shall be directly responsible for the daily operations of the shop. The committee will vote to fill the three officer positions of Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

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The committee meetings will be held quarterly or more frequently as needed. The committee Treasurer shall provide the Church Treasurer quarterly financial reports and a fiscal yearend financial report.

- C. BY-LAWS: The committee may adopt by-laws to govern itself, provided that such by-laws in no way conflict with this Constitution.

Section 4. Safe Church Committee

- A. PURPOSE: The Safe Church Committee is to encourage a safe, nourishing environment for all who participate in the activities of the Monroe Congregational Church. The Safe Church Committee shall consist of three (3) members appointed by Council for up to two consecutive terms of two years each. The Safe Church Committee shall work within the guidance and protocols provided by the Council-approved Safe Church Policy.

They shall:

1. Conduct training and orientation of all persons who are in direct contact with youth.
2. Conduct background checks as required.
3. Process complaints or reports of incidents of sexual exploitation or harassment.

The committee shall consist of three members who shall not:

1. Be related to each other.
2. Be one of the pastors or a member of a pastor's PRC.
3. Be a member of Church Council or one of the major boards.
4. All be the same sex.

**ARTICLE XII
TERMINATION**

The church and its property shall be forever devoted to religious purposes. No officer, member, or employee thereof shall receive any pecuniary profit from the church except reasonable compensation for services in effecting one or more of its purposes. In the event of the dissolution of the church, its property shall become vested in and its functions as trustee, if any, administered by the Missionary Society of Connecticut or its successor or, in the event this be impossible, by such church or other organization which is organized and operated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes which the membership of the church shall designate at a meeting called before the said dissolution or, in the absence of such determination, as the Superior Court for the Judicial District of Fairfield at Bridgeport, State of Connecticut, shall determine.

**ARTICLE XIII
AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any annual or special congregational meeting of the church, provided that the meeting is duly called as ordered by Article VII, Section 2.B.1. of this Constitution and that the substance of the proposed amendment is printed in the call.