

The Manual and Bylaws
of
The First Congregational Church
of Woodstock, Vermont

November 14, 2024

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.

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The Covenant

We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in His holy ways.

We will strive to be doers of the word, and not hearers only; to be firm in faith, quickened in hope, and constant in charity.

And we will consecrate our time, talent, substance, and influence, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Amen.

Statement of Faith

This church believes the Bible to be the inspired, inerrant and authoritative Word of God, its only sufficient rule of faith and practice. This church's understanding of scripture is set forth in the historic reformed creeds such as the Apostles' Creed and the Westminster Confession of Faith and summarized in the following statement of faith, first adopted by this church at its organization in the year 1781.

1. We believe that there is one only living and true God in three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
2. That God is the Creator of all things and the only rightful Governor of the Universe; and that His providence extends to all creatures, preserving them and overruling their actions for His own glory.
3. That God made man in His own likeness, upright, innocent, holy and happy but in a mutable state and put him under a covenant of works.
4. That man fell from this estate by sinning against God, and so by nature all mankind are children of wrath and liable to the pains of hell forever.
5. That God has not left all mankind to perish but before the world was made, elected some to everlasting life, and determined to save them by a Redeemer.
6. That Jesus Christ, who is both God and man wonderfully united, is the only Redeemer of God's elect; that He has offered up Himself a sacrifice to God to atone for sin, that He has purchased everlasting salvation for them and by His prevalent intercession carries on the work of redemption, sending His Holy Spirit to work faith and holiness in the elect.
7. That salvation through Christ is freely offered in the gospel to all that will accept it; yet so stubborn is the heart of every sinner that none will ever come to Christ till drawn by Almighty Power, so that faith by which the sinner is united to Christ is the gift of God and wrought by the Holy Spirit.
8. We believe that all those who obtain this precious faith (and none others) will receive a free and full pardon of all their sins; become the adopted sons of God; be transformed into His likeness by sanctification, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal life.
9. Though our salvation be wholly of free grace and there be nothing in us, or that we can do, in the least meritorious; yet God requires of us as necessary qualifications, faith, repentance and holiness (without which none shall see the Lord) with the diligent use of all the means, appointed for the application of the benefits of redemption, which are His work, the ordinances, baptism, and the Lord's supper, prayer and the preaching of the Word.

10. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God and that they contain everything which is necessary to be believed and practised by us.
11. That the moral law is forever binding upon all moral agents: that Christ in the gospel does not in the least dissolve but strengthens their obligations to obey it and to conduct their lives in a manner consistent with it.
12. We believe that marriage is a typology of Christ and the Church and that marriage has been ordained by God to be the exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman in a lifetime commitment.
13. We believe that the body will be raised from the dead and reunited to the soul so that they jointly will be susceptible to happiness or misery to eternity.
14. That at the last day there will be a great and general judgment, when the Son of man attended with His holy angels, will appear, seated on the Throne of Glory, and will judge the world in righteousness, the result of which will be that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Reception of Members

Presentation

“Dearly beloved, our Lord exhorted His faithful ones to go into all the world, to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to make disciples in all nations. In His name we are gathered to welcome new members into our Christian Fellowship.

“They have heard the promise of Christ, ‘Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.’ (Matthew 10:32-33). I present them to you. Receive them in Christ-like sincerity; that they may become one with us in love and service of Him Who proclaimed, ‘...they will become one flock with one shepherd.’ (John 10:16).”

Confession of Faith

“Forasmuch as you have been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and now present yourselves to make a public profession of Jesus Christ in the presence of God and this congregation, and to enter into the covenant relationship with this church:

The new members of the church shall say:

I now confess my faith in Jesus as the Christ and acknowledge Him as my Lord and Savior.

I also resolve to learn the will of God, known or to be made known, as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and to walk in the ways of the Lord.

I do covenant with this church to attend its services, to support its activities and missions, to pray and labor for its growth in grace, and to walk worthily with you in its communion of worship and work.”

The Welcome

The members of the church shall stand and say:

“We, the members of this church, receive you into our fellowship, and welcome you with joy. We promise to pray for you, to watch over you, and to help you so long as you shall abide with us.

“God grant that, loving and being loved, serving and being served, blessing and being blessed, we may be prepared while we dwell together on earth for the perfect fellowship of the saints in heaven.”

Then shall the minister say:

“Let us then with one heart and one voice, repeat together The Covenant, saying:

The members of this church, and those being admitted to membership shall say:

We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in His holy ways.

We will strive to be doers of the word, and not hearers only; to be firm in faith, quickened in hope, and constant in charity.

And we will consecrate our time, talent, substance, and influence, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Amen.”

The Right Hand of Fellowship

Then shall the minister say:

“Beloved in the Lord, in joining this local church you also reaffirm your membership in the holy catholic Church. You are not strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints—the faithful of the past, the faithful of the present, and the faithful of the time to come. You belong to the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

“Thus does this church receive you, and give to you the right hand of Christian fellowship, with the hope that we shall love one another even as Christ loved us.”

The Elders shall shake hands with each new member.

Prayer

Articles of Association

of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock, Vermont, Incorporated

We, the subscribers, hereby associate ourselves together as a corporation under the laws of the State of Vermont, to be known by the name of “First Congregational Church of Woodstock, Vermont, Incorporated” for the purpose of maintaining the public worship of God and promoting Christian knowledge and charity in accordance with the principles and doctrines of historical Biblical Congregationalism, at Woodstock, in the County of Windsor in the State of Vermont, upon the following conditions: that said association adopt bylaws for the election of its officers and the conduct of its business.

Dated at Woodstock in the County of Windsor this third day of July, A.D. 1920. Filed and recorded July 14, 1920, in the office of the Secretary of State, State of Vermont.

Bylaws

of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock, Vermont, Incorporated

Article I. Name

The name of this church shall be the First Congregational Church of Woodstock, Vermont, Incorporated.

Article II. Object

The object of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God and in making His will dominant in the lives of His people, individually and collectively.

Article III. Polity

This church believes that sovereign power over all the churches upon earth belongs to Jesus Christ, who is King and Head of the church. He has the government on His shoulders, and has all power given Him, both in heaven and earth. This church finds its guidance in matters of government in the Holy Scriptures.

The government of this church is a mixed government, with power granted by Christ to both the body, or membership of the church, and to the elders. The power granted to the church body includes the choosing of its own officers and, if the matter should require, the removing of an elder, as well as all other responsibilities set forth in these bylaws. The power committed to the elders is to feed and rule the church of God, to admit new members, and to call the church body together upon any weighty occasion. In such a mixed administration, church members are to submit themselves unto their leaders in the Lord, and elders are to seek the concurrence of the church body, so that the church body and the elders may be in agreement with Christ in every church action.

While this church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, it prizes and desires to have fellowship with all persons who love and worship the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and who wait upon His Word.

Article IV. Membership

A. Definition

The members of this church shall be those persons who, having demonstrated a sincere, continuing interest in its life, work, and worship, and having been instructed with regard to the Covenant, the Statement of Faith, the rules, and organization of this church, have been received by the church and by public profession of its covenant, after confession of faith, and baptism, and after presentation of a letter of transfer or certificate of confirmation, if already a member of another Christian church. Voting members shall be those who have reached the age of 18 years, and are on the active member list.

Members, who by virtue of physical disability are unable to participate in the activities of the church, may, by approval of the Board of Elders, retain their active status.

B. Reception

Persons approved by the Board of Elders may be received at a worship service by public profession of the covenant.

Any individuals who are unable to attend in person for reasons of health may, after approval of the Board of Elders, be received as members.

C. Termination of Membership

- 1) Any member who desires a letter of transfer to another Christian church shall request it from the Board of Elders.
- 2) Letters of transfer not directed to a particular Christian church shall not be granted.
- 3) Any member desiring termination from membership for reasons other than transfer to another Christian church, must meet with the Board of Elders. They who have joined with consent should not depart without consent. If the situation is doubtful and the member not persuaded, it is best to leave the situation unto God and not detain the member.
- 4) The Board of Elders may terminate, by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board of Elders, the membership of any member for good cause, but only after notice to the individual, and the opportunity for a hearing before the Board of Elders, if requested.

D. Restoration to Membership

Persons whose membership has been terminated may request reinstatement through the Board of Elders. The regular procedures for membership will be followed.

E. Associate Membership

A person while still a member of this or another Christian church may apply for associate membership with this church, subject to review by and approval of the Board of Elders. The steps for receiving candidates for associate membership shall be the same as for regular membership as described in these bylaws. The privileges and responsibilities shall be the same as for regular members with the following exceptions: that the associate member shall not vote upon matters pertaining to the purchase or sale of church real estate, nor upon matters pertaining to the merger of the church with any other religious body. Determining factors for associate membership could include, for example: the wish to retain for obvious reasons an office in another church and yet still be a part of this church while residing here, or, the division of residency between two or more places.

F. Inactive Membership

A person while still a member of this church may be moved from active membership to inactive membership with this church by the Board of Elders. The privileges and responsibilities shall be the same as for regular members with the following exceptions: that the inactive member shall not be a voting member of this church and shall not be eligible to hold any elected position. Determining factors for inactive membership could include, for example: irregular attendance at church services or having moved out of the area. A person shall not be an inactive member for more than two years.

Article V. Services and Meetings

The services and meetings of this church shall be as follows:

A. Worship Services

- 1) Services of worship shall be held each Sunday.
- 2) The sacraments of the Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The baptism of adults and children shall be administered at such times as the Board of Elders may

determine. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall also be celebrated at such times as the Board of Elders may determine.

- 3) Other services for worship may be held upon approval of the Board of Elders.

B. Business Meetings

All business meetings of the church shall be conducted with Robert's Rules of Order serving as a guide.

- 1) A November Congregational Meeting shall be held on the second week of November as called by the Board of Elders. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the yearly report of officers, boards, committees, and organizations, to transact business, to examine (where applicable) and elect those persons nominated, and to approve a proposed budget for the following fiscal year (January 1–December 31). The yearly reports of officers, boards, committees, and organizations shall be distributed to the Congregation in January. If necessary a special meeting may be called for the purpose of reviewing these reports.
- 2) Special meetings for business may be called by the Minister, the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons, or by the clerk on the written request of ten voting members of the church. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in the call.

C. Rules and Regulations

- 1) Notices: Notices for the November and other business meetings shall be given as follows: posted or printed in the church bulletin for two weeks and announced during a worship service for two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- 2) Quorum: For the purposes of conducting any business at these meetings, a quorum shall consist of one-third of active members.
- 3) Voting: Voting shall be by voice or by show of hands unless a motion for a written vote is approved. A simple majority of those present and voting is decisive except where the Bylaws specifically require a two-thirds majority.
- 4) Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of the church shall be the calendar year. All officers, boards, and committees shall assume their duties January 1 and shall continue in office until their successors are elected and qualified. A quorum consisting of a simple majority shall be required for all board and committee meetings.
- 5) Moderator: The chairman of the Board of Elders shall serve as moderator of all warned meetings or shall appoint a church member to serve in this capacity.
- 6) Reports: All officers, boards, and committees shall provide an annual written report to be included in the Church's Annual Report and at any other times requested by the Board of Elders.

Article VI. Officers and Duties

All officers shall be active members of this church.

A. Minister

This church shall seek out and call as its minister a man who gives evidence of divine call to the ministry, satisfactory preparation, and exemplary life. The call extended to him shall be

an indefinite period, but shall contain provision for the termination of the pastoral relationship, with due notice, upon the initiative of either the minister or the church.

No minister shall be called to the pastorate of this church who has not been given a copy of the latest Manual and Bylaws and has specified in writing that he wholeheartedly subscribes to the doctrine and polity of this church as described therein, and agrees in writing to direct the affairs of the church accordingly.

A contract covering the pastoral relationship shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders, and in cooperation with the Board of Deacons, shall specify the salary and other benefits, time and extent of vacations, and manner of termination of contract. The minister shall affirm his agreement with the Statement of Faith contained in this Manual and conduct himself in a manner consistent with the Statement of Faith. The minister's written employment contract shall include the requirement of these qualifications.

The duties of the minister shall be primarily to preach and teach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments. He shall have in charge the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Board of Elders. Such duties shall include: seeking to enlist persons as followers of Christ, leading the services of public worship, giving pastoral guidance and oversight, managing those appointed to assist him in the music ministry and public worship of the church, and the solemnization of marriages.

The minister shall be called by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting, after which copies of the contract shall be signed by the minister and the chairman of the Board of Elders, and retained by both parties.

The minister shall be expected to become a member of this church at his earliest convenience.

The church may, by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting, ask for the minister's resignation with the expectation that it will be presented within 90 days. Likewise, the minister shall give 90 days notice in case he wishes to leave of his own volition.

When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate of the church, the Board of Elders shall appoint and provide guidance to a Pastoral Selection Committee consisting of 11 members with one representative elected by and from the Boards of Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, Christian Education and Christian Mission.

B. Clerk

The clerk shall be elected by the Board of Elders for a three year term.

The clerk shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the church.

The clerk shall keep a register with addresses of members of the church, including dates and details of their membership.

The clerk shall keep a record of baptisms and marriages within the church family, also a record of the deaths of church members.

The clerk shall issue and record letters of transfer voted by the Board of Elders, and shall notify the churches to which they are addressed.

The clerk shall preserve on file copies of all communications and written official reports.

The clerk shall see that all persons elected to offices and committees are notified.

The clerk shall give legal notices of all meetings when such notices are necessary.

The clerk shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by law or as usually pertain to the office of a clerk or secretary of an assembly.

The clerk may appoint an assistant.

C. Treasurer

The treasurer shall be elected for three years by the Board of Deacons, subject to the approval of the church at the November meeting.

The treasurer shall receive all moneys of the church, and shall deposit them in such depository as the Board of Deacons shall order.

The treasurer, under the direction of the Board of Deacons, shall have the custody of all papers relating to the property of the church.

The treasurer shall pay the bills of the church on order from the Board of Deacons or their properly appointed agent.

The treasurer shall keep accurate account of all receipts and disbursements, and shall be bonded to the extent prescribed by the Board of Deacons.

The treasurer may, with approval of the Board of Deacons, invest endowments, legacies, trust funds and securities.

The treasurer shall keep separate account of all benevolent funds, and shall remit benevolence moneys in accordance with standing orders from the church.

The treasurer shall render a properly audited, written report for the church's Annual Report.

D. Assistant Treasurer

The assistant treasurer shall be elected for three years by the Board of Deacons, subject to the approval of the church at the November meeting.

The assistant treasurer shall assist the treasurer and act only with his approval, and shall be bonded to the extent prescribed by the Board of Deacons.

E. Auditor

The auditor shall be elected at the November meeting to serve for three years.

The auditor shall examine the accounts of the treasurer and report thereon as required by the church or the Board of Deacons.

F. Custodian of the Archives

The custodian (or custodians) of the archives shall be elected at the November meeting for three years, and shall keep the archives of the church.

G. Other Officers

Other officers may be elected as needed.

Article VII. Boards

All members of Boards shall be active members of this church.

All boards shall elect their own officers as needed.

A. Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall consist of the Minister, who shall be a permanent member, and a recommended minimum of three additional members, one or more of whom shall be elected annually to serve for a term of four years. After serving two full terms, an Elder shall be, for one year, ineligible for reelection. Any Elder may be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees. Members of the Board of Elders shall be selected and serve under the following rules and conditions:

- 1) **Qualification:** An Elder shall be elected with a view to the Biblical qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- 2) **Nomination:** The Board of Elders shall interview any member who aspires to the office of Elder. Should the Elders concur, they may nominate that member for election at a called meeting. Should the Elders not concur, that member may still seek nomination through a properly warned meeting but only after an interview with the Elders. No nomination from the floor for the office of Elder will be received without that member first having been interviewed by the Board of Elders.
- 3) **Examination:** All candidates for Elder shall be examined by the congregation prior to every election to that office, except for an Elder being elected to a second term of two possible consecutive terms.
- 4) **Election:** An Elder shall be elected by a two-thirds ballot vote of the members present and voting at a duly warned meeting for every term of office, including for a second term of two possible consecutive terms.
- 5) **Term:** A duly examined and elected Elder's term shall commence immediately following ordination. A service of ordination shall follow as soon as possible after the election. The term shall end December 31 following the 4th anniversary of that Elder's election.
- 6) **Resignation:** The church may, by a two-thirds ballot vote of the members present and voting at a duly warned meeting, ask for an Elder's resignation for Biblical reasons.

The Board of Elders shall be accountable for the following:

- 1) To watch over themselves and one another in areas of doctrine and life. (Acts 20:28, I Timothy 4:11-16, II Timothy 3:16-17).
- 2) To minister the Word of God through preaching, teaching and spiritual counsel. (Acts 6:2 & 4, 20:28, I Timothy 5:17).
- 3) For the faithful administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 26:26-30, 28:19 & 20, Genesis 17).
- 4) To rule the church according to the will of Christ, as dictated in Holy Scripture. (Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17, Hebrews 13:7 & 17, I Peter 5:1-3).

- 5) To prevent and heal such offenses in life or in doctrine, as might corrupt the church, including the Biblical administration of any discipline if necessary, with the goal of bringing about repentance and reconciliation of an individual to God and to the church. (Matthew 18:15-20, Acts 20:31, Galatians 6:1, I Thessalonians 5:12).
- 6) To examine and approve candidates for church membership, to assure their proper role in the church. (Hebrews 13:17).
- 7) To visit, comfort and pray over the sick, the elderly, critically ill, bereaved, shut-in and handicapped. (James 5:14).
- 8) To examine and nominate candidates for Deacon. (Acts 6:1-6).

Requests for marriage in this church shall be received and reviewed by the Board of Elders. Any marriage performed on church premises shall be officiated by an Elder of this church or by a member of the clergy after approval by the Board of Elders. Clergy officiating at marriage ceremonies on church premises shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith contained in this Manual and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the Statement of Faith. The final decision with respect to any request will rest with the Board of Elders.

All requests for baptism in this church shall be received and reviewed by the Board of Elders. Baptism by sprinkling or immersion shall be administered to the covenant children of a least one believing, baptized church member, and to young people and adults (who have not been baptized) upon the confession of their faith in Jesus Christ.

B. Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons shall consist of a recommended minimum of three members, one or more of whom shall be elected annually to serve for a term of four years. After serving two full terms, a deacon shall be, for one year, ineligible for reelection. The Board of Deacons shall administer their duties in cooperation with the Board of Elders. Members of the Board of Deacons shall be selected to serve under the following rules and conditions:

- 1) **Qualification:** A Deacon shall be selected with a view to the Biblical qualifications listed in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13.
- 2) **Nomination:** The Board of Elders shall interview any member who aspires to the office of Deacon. Should the Elders concur, they may nominate that member for election at a called meeting. Should the Elders not concur, that member may still seek nomination through a properly warned meeting. (No nomination from the floor for the office of Deacon will be received without that member first having been interviewed by the Board of Elders.)
- 3) **Term:** A duly examined and elected Deacon's term shall commence immediately following ordination. A service of ordination shall follow as soon as possible after the election. The term shall end December 31 following the 4th anniversary of that Deacon's election.
- 4) **Resignation:** The church may, by vote of the members present at a duly warned meeting, require a Deacon's resignation for Biblical reasons.

The Board of Deacons, in cooperation with the Board of Deaconesses, shall see to caring for the needy, the sick, the sorrowing, the elderly, the disabled, and the single parent family.

They shall also serve the church by helping in emergencies, by promoting giving, arranging for ushering, transportation, and recording sermons.

The Board of Deacons shall have sole jurisdiction in the administration of the Deacon's Fund. (See Article XI, Finances, A.)

The Board of Deacons may assist in the administering of the Lord's Supper.

The Board of Deacons shall call a meeting as soon as possible after January first to organize and elect from among themselves a president, a vice president and other officers as required for the corporation, for the purpose of complying with the corporate requirements of the State of Vermont. The treasurer approved by the church at the November meeting shall be the treasurer of the corporation. Such officers shall have only the powers described in these Bylaws.

The Board of Deacons, under the direction of the church and except as otherwise provided, shall have custody of the church property, its maintenance and repair. The Board of Deacons may appoint a Property Committee to assist them with the maintenance and repair of church property. The Property Committee shall consist of at least five members including a member of the Board of Deacons. The members of the Property Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons and, with the exception of the member of the Board of Deacons, be confirmed by the Board of Elders.

The Board of Deacons shall administer the church's financial affairs, including adopting policies relating to the use of the Pastor's Discretionary Fund and always subject to regulations prescribed by the laws of the state.

The Board of Deacons shall, prior to the November meeting, prepare the budget for the ensuing year.

The Board of Deacons shall act on behalf of the church in accepting and acknowledging gifts.

The Board of Deacons shall administer the disbursement of funds up to the amount provided in the annual budget, as well as extra funds privately given for specific purposes as the church may direct.

Except for the minister's contract (covered in Article VI, A.), the Board of Deacons shall, in cooperation with the Board of Elders, make or cancel any necessary contracts between the church and any and all staff members hired by the church. All proposed working arrangements are to be cleared through the Board of Deacons prior to any prospective interview. The creation of any new staff positions, or the elimination thereof, must be approved by the Board of Elders. Every employee shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith contained in this Manual and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Statement of Faith. Employees shall have a written employment contract that includes the requirement of these qualifications.

The Board of Deacons shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer real property without specific authority by vote of the church.

The Board of Deacons shall annually review the salaries of all members of the church staff. If the Board concludes that changes should be made, it will recommend said changes for

action at the November meeting, or at any meeting which has been called in accordance with the requirements of Article V.

C. Board of Deaconesses

The Board of Deaconesses shall consist of a recommended minimum of three members, two of whom shall be elected at each November meeting for a term of three years. After serving two full terms, a deaconess shall be, for one year, ineligible for reelection.

The Board of Deaconesses, in cooperation with the Board of Deacons, shall see to caring for the needy, the sick, the sorrowing, the indifferent, and the stranger. They shall also introduce new families into the life of the church, and shall call upon members.

The Board of Deaconesses shall prepare the elements for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

D. Board of Christian Education

The Board of Christian Education shall consist of a recommended minimum of three members, one or more of whom shall be elected at each November meeting to serve for a term of three years. After serving two full terms, a member of the Board shall be, for one year, ineligible for reelection.

The Board of Christian Education in cooperation with the Board of Elders shall have supervision and direction of the educational work of the church.

The Board of Christian Education may appoint a superintendent and teachers for the Church School, a director for Youth Fellowship, a director for the cradle roll, and any other leaders necessary for the Christian education endeavors of this church. The Board is empowered to dismiss any of the above.

The Board of Christian Education shall initiate appropriate and necessary Christian education activities.

The Board of Christian Education shall determine the distribution of funds contributed by the Church School, with the advice of the school and subject to the direction of the church.

E. Board of Christian Mission

The Board of Christian Mission shall consist of a recommended minimum of three members, one or more of whom shall be elected at each November meeting to serve for a term of three years. After serving two full terms, a member of the Board shall be, for one year, ineligible for reelection.

The Board of Christian Mission shall administer their duties in cooperation with the Board of Elders and may enlist other members of the congregation for special responsibilities as required.

The Board of Christian Mission shall study the calls upon this church for support of any projects which come within the scope of the Church's mission to the world and shall prepare an annual benevolence budget.

The Board of Christian Mission shall seek to keep the church informed on the uses made of money given by the church for benevolence purposes, and shall take continuing steps to bring to the membership an appreciation of the need for support of the program of the Board of Christian Mission.

Article VIII. Committee of Chairpersons

All of those serving as chairpersons of Committees or Boards within the church, or their representatives, shall meet quarterly with the pastor to pray and to facilitate clear communication regarding church life. This is not a deliberative body, but rather a means of encouragement. These meetings shall be open to all active members of the church.

Article IX. Committees

All members of committees shall be active members of this church.

All committees shall elect their own officers as needed.

A. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of a recommended minimum of three members, three of whom shall be elected, one at each November meeting for a term of three years. After serving for one elected term, a member of the committee shall be, for one year, ineligible for reelection. The other two members shall be chosen by and from the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons, to serve for one year.

The Nominating Committee at least one month prior to the November meeting shall have and post nominations for all offices and committees not otherwise provided for.

The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate nominating one person for each office, except Elder, Deacon, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Clerk, to be filled at the November Congregational Meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

The Nominating Committee shall be authorized to appoint church members to fill vacancies in positions that occur during the year for which the Nominating Committee makes nominations, effective until the next business meeting.

B. Permanent Committees

Committees shall be nominated to operate in the following fields: 1) Music, 2) Hospitality, 3) Flower, 4) Library, 5) Community Outreach, and 6) Nursery.

The term of service on committees, unless otherwise stipulated, shall be three years. A member of a committee, having served two full terms, shall be ineligible for reelection to that committee for one year.

C. Other Committees

Other committees may be appointed by the Board of Elders or the Board of Deacons as needed. The term of service on committees, unless otherwise stipulated, shall be three years. A member of a committee, having served two full terms, shall be ineligible for appointment to that committee for one year.

Article X. Auxiliary Organizations

All organizations connected with the church and using its equipment are under the general oversight of the Board of Deacons.

Article XI. Finances

A. Offerings

The church shall seek support by the tithes and offerings of the congregation.

The designations of moneys for current expenses, benevolences, and specific objects shall be under the plans or budgets approved by the vote of the church. The Board of Elders may, without a further vote of the church and with a recommendation from the Board of Deacons, approve the reallocation of funds within the total approved operating budget. The Board of Elders may also approve the collection of special offerings or receipt of gifts designated for specific purposes that are in addition to the budgets approved by vote of the church.

Ordinarily there shall be an offering received for the Deacon's Fund on a monthly basis. . This is to be used by the Board of Deacons for relief of the needy.

B. Permanent Funds

All legacies, restricting use of principal or not specifically appropriated by the donors to some purpose, shall be set aside in a permanent fund, the income only of which is to be used. However, if not restricted, the principal of the permanent fund may be used if so voted by the church upon the recommendation of the Board of Deacons.

The permanent funds shall be invested by the treasurer under the order of the Board of Deacons.

An opportunity may be given at any time for an offering to increase the permanent funds.

Article XII. Church as Employer

The purpose and mission of The First Congregational Church of Woodstock is to promote, in the lives of its members and in the world around us, the beliefs and doctrines set forth in the Statement of Faith in the church's Manual. This church employs individuals to support its work and ministry, and in doing so, hires and retains only individuals who agree with and affirm the church's Statement of Faith and conduct their lives consistent with it.

Article XIII. Amendments

These Bylaws may be altered or amended by two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting, provided that a notice specifying the time of the meeting and the substance of the proposed amendment shall have been given during a worship service and printed in the bulletin on the two Sundays immediately preceding said meeting.

Adopted: July 23, 1920

Revised: April 24, 1949

January 6, 1976

March 8, 1988

Amended: November 1960

January 25, 1962

December 2, 1962

January 24, 1963

January 26, 1967

January 28, 1971

January 23, 1975

January 26, 1978

January 22, 1981

January 28, 1982

January 25, 1990

November 18, 1990 (Art. VI, Sec. B, In. 1, and Art. VII, Sec. C, In. 1)

January 23, 1992 (Art. V, SB & Art. 7, SA)

January 27, 1994 (Art. II, men changed to His people.; Art. V. Sec. B., No. 1; Art. VI, Sec. A, paragraph 7, 60 changed to 90; Art. VII, Sec. A; and Art. IX, Sec. A, paragraph 3)

January 26, 1995 (all references to “annual” meetings defined as January or November meetings; Art. V, Sec. C, No. 5; Art. VI, Sec. B, pp.2; Art. VII, Sec. A, No. 3 changed under “rules and conditions, and No. 8 added under “accountable for the following”; Art. VII, Sec. B, pp. 1 deleted, pp. 2 changed, pp. 9 changed; Art. VII, Sec. E, pp. 1; Art. VIII, pp. 2 and 3 deleted, two paragraphs added after pp. 1; Art. IX, Sec. A, pp. 3, include Deacon.)

January 25, 1996 (Art. VII, Sec. C, pp. 3)

January 22, 1998 (Reception of Members amended, and Articles III, IV, V, and VII amended, giving the Board of Elders the responsibility of admitting new members. All changes are detailed in the 1997 Annual Report of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock.)

January 28, 1999 (Article IV, Section F.)

January 27, 2000 (Article VIII, paragraph 3, line 1)

November 14, 2001 (Article VII, Section D, line 1)

September 17, 2002 (Article VII, Section B amended, Article VII, Section F added, Article VI, Sections D, E, and F amended.)

November 12, 2003 (Article VII, Section B, paragraph 6; Property Committee added.)

November 9, 2005 (Article V, Section B, paragraph 1 deleted, paragraph 2 amended.)

November 12, 2008 (Article VII, Section B amended.)

November 11, 2009 (Reception of Members amended.)

November 10, 2010 (Article VI, Section A, paragraph 4: solemnization of marriages added)

November 14, 2013 (All changes are detailed in the 2013 Annual Report of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock.)

April 30, 2023 (Art. VII, Sections A-F & Article IX, Section A: all required minimums changed to a recommended minimum of three; Art. IX, Section B: Community Outreach added to Permanent Committees.)

June 16, 2024 (Art. V, Section C, paragraph 2: quorum for business meetings changed to one-third of active members)

November 14, 2024 (removed note on Article IV, Section C, point 4 referring to Article V. B. 3; Article VII, Section B—removed all references to Woodstock Christian Child Care; Article VII, Section F—deleted; Article VIII—Church Council changed to Committee of Chairperson and description changed accordingly)