

**COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CHRIST
FRANCONIA, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Articles of Association were filed with Franconia, New Hampshire's town clerk on
2 February 1948.

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ARTICLE 1 - NAME

This church shall be called **THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CHRIST** of Franconia.

ARTICLE 2 - FAITH, GOVERNANCE, AND COVENANT

A. Faith

This church has its roots in the "covenantal" tradition - meaning there is no centralized authority or hierarchy that can impose any doctrine or form of worship on its members. Christ is the head of the church. We seek a balance between freedom of conscience and accountability to the apostolic faith. We therefore receive the historic creeds and confessions of our ancestors as testimonies not tests of the faith. We believe that each generation is responsible for rethinking its beliefs as God's word unfolds and conditions change. The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience are rights and privileges for all. Believing in the freedom and responsibility of the individual and the right of private judgment concerning religious fellowship, this church holds as a general declaration of faith:

We are not alone; we live in God's world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God. We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to love and

serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

B. Governance

The Government of this church is vested solely in its members, but while holding to the autonomy of the local church and its independence of all ecclesiastical control, we cherish fellowship with other people and organized bodies who seek answers to the questions of faith. In that spirit, we associate ourselves in membership with the North Country Association of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ and in affiliation with the American Baptist Church – NH/VT and the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ.

C. Covenant

We covenant with the Lord, and with one another, to walk together in Christian fellowship, in the continuing search for truth through Jesus Christ. We will endeavor to attend the services of this church, observe its sacraments, and share in its work.

ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Qualifications

a. This church welcomes all into membership who wish to covenant with the church in Christian fellowship, faith, and service. Membership in the church is a responsibility. All persons, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender, age, or national origin, are welcome to request membership.

Section 2 - Membership Status and Duties

a. **Active members:** Active members are those who, to the best of their ability, attend the services of the church, give systematically to its financial support, share in its organized activities, and seek diligently and prayerfully the spiritual welfare of the whole church. Except as provided in Section 5 of this Article and in Article 5, Section 7, active members are entitled to vote and hold office, except that members under the age of 18 may participate on church boards as non-voting members.

b. **Associate members:** An associate member maintains membership in another church and enjoys a dual membership, by association with the Community Church of Christ of Franconia. In a wider church census, this church will not report associate members. Associate members are entitled to vote and to hold office.

c. **Inactive members:** Inactive members are those who have not supported the church by their presence and/or their gifts to a reasonable degree for a period of one year. By vote of the Board of Deacons they may be removed to the inactive list and no longer be reported with the active membership. Every effort shall be made by the Board of Deacons and by the church to

encourage such members to maintain an active relation. The action of the Deacons does not in any way terminate their membership. They may be reactivated by vote of the Board of Deacons. Inactive members are not entitled to vote or to hold office.

d. **Transfer of Membership:** Letters of transfer to other Christian churches will be granted at members' request.

Section 3 - Admission

As the need arises, the pastor and board of deacons shall conduct membership orientation. New members may be received at any regular service of the church. The mode of admission shall be determined as follows:

- a. Those who join the church on confession of faith.
- b. Those who present letters of transfer from other Christian churches.
- c. Those joining by confirmation or reaffirmation of faith.
- d. Those who possess qualifications for joining as associate members.

Section 4 - Membership Roll: The board of deacons is responsible for maintenance of a membership roll. And they shall be current with this duty no less than one month prior to the annual meeting.

Section 5 – Rights of Members

All members in good standing shall be members of the corporation. Voting participation by members is allowed except where the laws of the State of New Hampshire demand the legal voting age.

ARTICLE 4 - OFFICERS AND TERMS OF OFFICE

Section 1 - Officers

The officers of the church shall be the pastor(s), the moderator, the treasurer, the assistant treasurer, and members of the Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, and Mission Board.

Section 2 - Term of Office

Any member of a board who has been elected for and who has served a full term is not eligible to succeed himself or herself in office without one year of leave. Lacking a candidate to fill a vacancy, a majority of the annual meeting may vote to waive this leave rule.

If a vacancy occurs on any of the boards, i.e., Trustees, Deacons, or Mission, the vacancy may be filled with the following process. The board chair, in consultation with the moderator and pastor, may appoint a replacement for the vacancy. This replacement must be approved at the next meeting

of the Church Council. This approval is valid until the next Annual Meeting of the church. Other vacancies (except for pastors) shall be filled by a majority vote of the Church Council.

ARTICLE 5 - ELECTION AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Section 1 - Pastor(s)

The pastor shall be chosen by the church when a need occurs, by a vote of two-thirds of the active members present at a constitutionally called meeting. He or she shall be a minister in good standing in a Christian denomination.

The pastor shall have in his or her charge the spiritual welfare of the parish, shall care for the stated services of public worship, administer the sacraments, and seek to inspire people to a deeper commitment to the will and service of God.

The pastor shall be a full member of the Board of Deacons with voting rights and an ex-officio member of the other two boards without voting rights. He or she shall prepare and submit a report of the year's work to the annual meeting of the church.

The pastoral relation may be dissolved either by the church or by the pastor by written notice of such intention given three months in advance or in a shorter period of time if mutually agreed upon. Dismissal by the church shall require a two-thirds vote of those present and entitled to vote at a meeting called in accordance with Article 6.

The pastor shall keep a register of the members of the church with the date of their admission and/or removal, record baptisms, marriages and deaths and make a full report of these transactions to the church at the annual meeting. He or she shall issue letters of transfer, preserve on file all communications, documents, and written official reports; notify all persons elected to office, to committees, or as delegates or to membership in the church; give legal notice of meetings when such notice is required, report all communications intended for the church, and conduct its correspondence as may be necessary.

The pastor, under the direction and authority of the Board of Trustees, shall serve as supervisor to church employees.

Section 2 - Moderator

The moderator is the lay leader of the congregation and shall be elected annually, for a term of one year. He or she shall preside as chairperson of the Church Council. He or she shall preside at the annual meeting and any other business meetings of the church. And he or she shall ensure that a faithful record is kept of the proceedings of the Church Council and other business meetings. In the moderator's absence, the attending church members shall select an alternate to person to conduct that meeting. The moderator is eligible to serve successive terms.

Section 3 - Treasurer

The treasurer shall be elected or re-elected for a term of three years. He or she shall receive and disburse all current monies of the church and shall keep these accounts distinct from all other accounts. He or she shall keep an accurate account of same, and his or her actions shall be subject to the direction and control of the Board of Trustees. The treasurer will represent a properly audited financial report by an outside firm at the annual meeting of the church for the preceding fiscal year which corresponds to the calendar year. He or she shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees with vote.

Section 4 – Assistant Treasurer

The assistant treasurer shall be elected or reelected for a term of three years and shall stand in for the treasurer in his or her absence.

Section 5 - Board of Deacons

A Board of Deacons shall consist of not more than eight nor less than four members and the pastor. Each Deacon shall serve a term of three years. Article 4, Section 2, governs re-election.

The Board with the pastor shall constitute the ministry of the church. It shall promote the spiritual life of the church and supervise the administration of the sacraments. It shall provide for the supply of the pulpit in the absence of a pastor.

The Pastor is entitled to full voting rights. Three Deacons (at least two of whom must be laity) shall constitute a quorum.

The chairperson of the Board of Deacons shall be elected annually by the Board.

Section 6 - Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall consist of not more than six nor less than four members. A maximum of two Trustees shall be elected annually to serve a term of three years. Article 4, Section 2, governs re-election. The Trustees shall have the care and management of the property of the church and of its use and shall manage its financial and business affairs including the invested trust funds, but they shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any real property of the church without majority vote of the active members of the church authorizing such action.

They shall be responsible for organizing and conducting throughout the parish a yearly campaign for the financial support of the church and its benevolence.

They shall prepare a budget covering the needs of the church for the following calendar year, which shall be presented for approval to the church at the annual meeting and which shall be used as a basis for the amount to be raised in the actual canvass.

They shall authorize and direct the treasurer as to the payment of monies under his or her control

and shall provide for the proper auditing of his or her accounts.

They shall provide a full, detailed report at each annual meeting of all transactions and of the condition of the church property.

The Trustees shall accept the treasurer as an ex-officio member with vote, and an assistant treasurer as an ex-officio member without vote. They shall have the authority to require a bond in such amount and in such company as they determine for church officers whom they specify, the cost of same to be met by the church.

Three members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall be elected annually by the Board.

Section 7 - Mission Board

The Mission Board shall consist of not more than eight nor less than four members elected for three-year terms. Article 4, Section 2, governs re-election.

The board is charged with developing and guiding the church's program of Christian witness and outreach to the local community and the wider world. The specific mission projects organized by the board shall give voice to the principles of justice and charity evident in holy scripture and shall further the development of a strong fellowship within the Franconia Community Church itself and of the spiritual life and understanding of its members.

The board is charged with disbursement of funds earned by the Evelyn Bancroft Trust Fund. In that regard, the board shall propose to the annual meeting a general outline of where these funds shall be spent and the meeting shall authorize such expenditure by majority vote or suggest alternate allocations. The board is authorized to raise and expend other funds for its projects and to do so outside of and independent of the church's budget. The board is responsible for submitting to the annual meeting a proposed budget and general mission plan for the coming year and a full and accurate accounting of its income and disbursements for the preceding year.

The chair of the board shall be elected annually. Three committee members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 8 – Christian Education

The pastor is charged with the provision of Christian education for the church as a whole and the supervision of educational programs for children, youth, and adults. A church school superintendent may be appointed by the Church Council in consultation with the pastor. The superintendent, in consultation with the pastor, shall appoint church school teachers, determine courses of instruction for the church school, and provide leadership-training opportunities for the church school and other staff. Together, they shall recommend to the trustees the necessary budgetary appropriations for educational programs.

Section 9 – Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

Under the direction of the Church Council, a pastor-parish relations committee shall be constituted and appointed to address relations between the congregation and pastor. Names and contact information for committee members shall be posted in church publications.

This committee is charged with supporting and maintaining an open and healthy relationship between the pastor and members of the congregation. It serves as an advisory group to the pastor and as support for the pastor's leadership. Constructive and caring communication in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust is essential to the work of the Board. More specifically, the committee shall conduct an annual review of the pastor's work, progress, and goals in relation to the congregation.

Section 10 - Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of the moderator and the chairs of the Boards of Trustees, Deacons, and Mission. The moderator is charged with calling meetings and notifications. The duties of the committee shall include the preparation and submission of a proposed slate of nominees for officers to the church to be presented to the annual meeting.

Section 11 - The Church Council

The Church Council shall include all officers elected by the church and other committee chairpersons, and any church member choosing to participate in council meetings. Ten voting members shall constitute a quorum for the Council, provided also that the ten include at least one member from each standing board.

The Council shall be the representative body of the church and have the general supervision and control of the work of the church, acting on behalf of the church in matters not requiring the action of the whole church. This body shall be the general advisory council of the pastor. It shall be watchful of the spiritual interests of the church. It shall appoint and direct such committees as may be required for carrying on the various activities of the church, except those where election or appointment is herein otherwise provided for. A church committee must be comprised of at least three church members.

The Church Council shall meet once in the fall and once in the spring. The date of the meeting shall be set by the moderator in consultation with the three board chairpersons, and the date will be announced at worship services on three successive Sundays prior to the meeting. Other Council meetings may be called by a majority of the three board chairs, the moderator, and the pastor; notice of such meetings will be made in the same manner as is for annual meeting.

ARTICLE 6 - MEETINGS

Section 1 - Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and close on December 31 of each year. The preceding year's annual budget will serve as a continuing resolution to authorize expenditures in the weeks

prior to the annual meeting

Section 2 - Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the church shall be held before the end of February. The business of the meeting shall include, but not be limited to presentation, discussion, and approval of an annual report in writing consisting of separate reports from all boards and committees, a review of the previous year's budgets, proposed budgets for the coming year, the election of officers for the coming year, and any other business as may be specified in the by-laws. This meeting shall be called by the moderator in consultation with the pastor and board chairs. Notice shall be given by announcement at worship services on the two Sundays preceding the meeting, posting next to the church door for no less than two weeks prior to the meeting, publication on the church's website, and advertisement in any church publications distributed after the new year.

Section 3 - Worship

Public worship services shall be held on every Sunday of the year, Christmas eve, and on such other occasions as the pastor or Church Council deem appropriate..

The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated monthly.

Section 4 - For Business

At any regular meeting for worship, the church may, without special notice, act upon the following matters: reception of new members, appointment of delegates to the North Country Association and annual or other meetings of the New Hampshire Conferences, but not upon any other business.

The pastor may, and shall when requested by the Church Council or Board of Trustees, call from the pulpit special business or committee meetings, the particular object of the meeting being clearly stated in the notice.

Special meetings of the church may be called at the direction of the Church Council or by consensual agreement of the three board chairs, the moderator, and pastor; notice of such a meeting will be made in the same manner as is for annual meeting. Additionally, five voting members may petition the Council in writing to call a special meeting of the church, specifying the object and agenda thereof; Such a meeting will be called and scheduled, unless one-half the council votes against proceeding so. Further, upon submission of such a petition and with agreement of a majority of the three board chairs, the moderator, and the pastor, a special Council meeting shall be called and scheduled to consider the petition. Notice of all meetings preliminary to a church meeting called by five-member petition shall be announced in the same manner as is for annual meeting. A special meeting of the church shall be scheduled so as to provide no less than one month's notice offered in the same places as annual meeting notices.

One-fourth of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for annual meeting and special church meetings. A majority of those present and voting shall rule, except as provided elsewhere in these by-laws.

ARTICLE 7 - DISSOLUTION

In case the church shall cease to exist or become depleted so that it does not function as an active church in the maintenance of its services of worship and general activities for a period of three years, the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ and the American Baptist Convention of New Hampshire shall succeed to all rights and titles of the church property and funds in accordance with the Articles of Association as they were filed with the Town Clerk of Franconia on 2 February 1948 and with the right to dispose of its real estate and to preserve the proceeds thereof, together with the endowment of the church as the Church of Christ funds, and to administer them as nearly as possible according to the intent of the donors for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God in New Hampshire.

ARTICLE 8 - AMENDMENTS

The Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at any annual or special business meeting of the church, provided that the requirements of a quorum are met and that notice of the meeting includes additional notice that by-law changes are to be presented.