

**BYLAWS OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF HAMILTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

May 2024

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Article I. Name

The name of this corporation is:

The First Congregational Church of Hamilton, Massachusetts

Article II. Covenant

The covenant by which this Church exists as a distinct body, and which every member accepts, is as follows:

Acknowledging Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord, and accepting the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice, and recognizing the privilege and duty of uniting ourselves for Christian fellowship, the enjoyment of Christian ordinances, the worship of God, and the advancement of his kingdom in the world, we do now in the sight of God and invoking his blessing, solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves to be a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as warranted by the Word of God.

We agree to maintain the institutions of the gospel, to submit ourselves to the orderly administration of the affairs of the Church, and to walk together in Christian love.

And this we do, depending upon the aid of our heavenly Father, who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for our salvation, and of Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us with his blood, and of the Holy Spirit, our comforter and guide.

Article III. Mission, Vision, and Core Commitments

MISSION

The mission of First Congregational Church of Hamilton is to be a community of God's people who covenant, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to glorify God by joyfully acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Lord of all, making disciples of Christ, and serving Him along the North Shore and beyond.

Capturing this in a single phrase that easily conveys our mission, we affirm that we are a people who are: **Rejoicing in God, Growing in the Gospel, and Pointing People to Jesus.** We have an upward focus (Rejoicing in God), an inward focus (Growing in the Gospel), and an outward focus (Pointing People to Jesus).

VISION

The vision of First Congregational Church of Hamilton is to be a Spirit-filled community of compassionate Christians who are growing in the grace of God, extending the welcome of Jesus and expanding the kingdom of God along the North Shore and beyond.

Capturing this in a single phrase that easily conveys our vision, we affirm that we desire to see First Congregational Church of Hamilton be: **A house of refuge, a community of joy, and a spiritual catalyst for personal and cultural renewal.**

CORE COMMITMENTS

Our mission and vision are supported by our core commitments: Making our worship of God central to the life of the Church, believing and receiving his authoritative Word, and teaching it to all ages, pursuing Christian maturity, fellowship with one another, reaching out to those in physical and spiritual need, and living faithfully in the world as disciples of Christ.

Capturing these commitments in 6 distinct points, we embrace the following unchanging core commitments that shape the contours of our ministry. We are:

- 1. A congregation loving God and one another**
- 2. A congregation delighting in Christ-centered worship**
- 3. A congregation living by God's authoritative Word**
- 4. A congregation developing opportunities for community**
- 5. A congregation cultivating a life of prayer**
- 6. A congregation communicating the gospel in word and confirming it in deed**

Article IV. Character

Section 4.01 Polity

The government of this Church is vested in its adult members, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted it by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. While it is not subject to the control of any ecclesiastical body, it maintains relations of mutual counsel, cooperation and fellowship with other like-minded churches and organizations.

Section 4.02 Doctrine

The Church receives the scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Our Church's understanding of Christian truth is embodied in the following statement of faith.

Section 4.03 Statement of Faith

I. We believe

That God who is one in being exists eternally in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1), each holy and loving. God created everything that exists (2), upholds it by his power, and rules sovereignly over it (3). In relation to the creation, God's knowledge is exhaustive (omniscience) (4), his power unlimited (omnipotence) (5), and he is present everywhere (omnipresence) (6).

(1) II Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; I Pet. 1:2. (2) Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:16-7. (3) Ps. 50:10; Prov. 21:1; Dan. 4:3a; Is. 40:6-31; Acts 2:23, 4:27-8; II Thess. 2:11; Heb. 1:3. (4) Ps. 139:1-6, 15-18; Heb. 4:13. (5) Job 42:1-2; Ps. 115:3; Matt. 19:26. (6) Ps. 139:7-10; Jer. 23:23-4.

II. We believe

That Christ was the incarnate second person of the Godhead, conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, fully human (7) and fully divine (8) in one person. He died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven (9), from whence he will return bodily and in glory (10).

(7) Matt. 1:18-21; Gal. 4:4; Rom. 1:3-4. (8) Jn. 1:1-2; Phil. 2:6-11; Tit. 2:13 Heb. 1:8-9; (9) Acts 2:33-6; Eph. 1:20-22; Heb. 1:3. (10) Matt.24:30-31; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20-1; I Thess. 3:13, 4:15-6.

III. We believe

That all human life has worth and dignity because all people are made in God's image (11). As such, they have been created to know and serve him, but this image is now marred by sin. In our fallen condition, we are in rebellion against God, his truth, and his law (12). We are alienated from him and under his judgment (13).

(11) Gen. 1:26-7; Jas. 3:9. (12) Rom. 1:18, 3:10-20, 8:7. (13) Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5-8; Heb. 9:27.

IV. We believe

That God the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible, giving us truth that is entirely free of error in its original autographs. It is an authoritative disclosure of God's character, will, and ways. It is by this Word that he instructs, corrects, guides, and nourishes the Church (14).

(14) Ps. 119:89, 160; Jn. 17:17; II Tim. 3:1; I Pet. 1:19-21.

V. We believe

That in his death, Jesus justified us when he was judged for our sin and we were credited with his righteousness (15). In this way he effected our reconciliation with the Father (16). His death is the only means of salvation (17), provided solely by God's grace (18), and its benefits are received by faith alone (19).

(15) Rom. 3:25; II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:1b. (16) II Cor. 5:19; Rom. 5:8-10. (17) Matt. 10:32-33; Jn. 5:24; Acts 4:12,17:30-31. (18) Rom. 3:24, 4:1-5, 11:6; Eph. 2:8-10. (19) Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8; Heb. 11:6.

VI. We believe

That the Holy Spirit imparts to us a saving understanding of Christ's death (20) and regenerates us, giving spiritual life in place of spiritual death (21). This initiates the life of obedience and spiritual growth God intends for his people. This growth shows itself in a love of the biblical Word, a hunger for righteousness, a desire to serve others, and a commitment to see God glorified as the gospel is taken to the nations (22).

(20) Jn. 15:26, 16:7-11; (21) Jn. 3:3-8; Jas. 1:18; I Pet. 1:3, 23. (22) Ps. 119:11, 18, 24, 27-28, 31-32; Matt. 5:6, 20-26; 28:18-20; Rom. 13:8; Gal. 5: 13, 16-23.

VII. We believe

That those who belong to Christ should assemble regularly for worship, fellowship, prayer, and teaching (23). They are to seek the Church's purity, preserve its unity, and respect its government (24).

(23) Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19-20; Heb. 10:25. (24) Eph. 4:1-6; Heb. 12:14; I Pet. 2:9-10.

VIII. We believe

That the Lord's Supper is a celebration of Christ's finished work on the cross which symbolizes and confirms to his people the benefits of his death (25). We make provision for both infant dedication and infant baptism. Children being baptized enter into the covenant under which at least one parent stands (26) but each child needs to come into a saving relationship with Christ for him or herself in due course. For believers, baptism declares publicly an existing identification with Christ in his burial and resurrection (27)

(25) I Cor. 11:23-6; Heb. 7:27. (26) Acts 16:15; I Cor. 7:13-4; Col. 2:11-12. (27) Acts 8:36-8; Rom. 6:4-5.

IX. We believe

That the kingdom of God inaugurated at Christ's first coming will be consummated at his second coming (28) when the dead will be raised. At the final judgment, believers and unbelievers will be separated forever. At that time, evil will be eradicated and Satan will be punished (29). Unbelievers will enter into an eternal, conscious separation from God, and the people of God will serve joyfully in his presence forever in the new heavens and earth (30).

(28) Rev. 19:20-1, 20:10, 14-15, 21:4. (29) Matt. 25:34-40; Rom. 14:12; Jude 6. (30) Rev. 22:1-5.

X. We believe

That the Church is called to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves (31). To this end we will act compassionately toward the poor and needy, pursuing justice for the afflicted. (32)

(31) Mark 12:29-31. (32) Deut. 15:11; Ps. 82:3-4; Is. 1:17; 58:6-7; Micah 6:8; James 1:27.

Article V. Membership

Section 5.01 Qualifications

Each person applying for membership must do the following:

1. Testify to a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
2. Be (or have been) baptized
3. Give public assent to the Church Covenant and Statement of Faith

Section 5.02 Admission

Admission of the applicant will occur upon completion of new member classes, examination by and approval by the Board of Elders, and reception into fellowship at a public worship service.

Section 5.03 Rights & Responsibilities

All active and adult members (18 years or older) may act and vote on all matters brought before the Church and serve as Officers or as members of Boards and Standing Committees. Members are urged to be faithful in the duties of their Christian lives, to exercise their spiritual gifts for the edification of the Church, to regularly attend the services of this Church, and to give sacrificially for its support and missions.

Section 5.04 Change of Status

Names may be removed from the membership roll of this Church for any one or more of the following reasons:

1. In response to a request for a letter of transfer to another Church.
2. At the member's own request.
3. As a result of misconduct or heresy after investigation and decision by the Board of Elders.
4. Members who have not actively engaged in the support of, or otherwise shown their interest in, FCCH for a period of two or more years may be dropped from active membership by action of the Elders, but the names of such members shall be retained on the list of inactive members. Inactive members are not eligible to vote or hold office. Inactive members shall be removed from the inactive roster by action of the Board of Elders after one year on the inactive list.

Members dropped from active membership may be reinstated upon reapplication by action of the Elder Board if the Board is satisfied that the action taken in removing them was unwarranted, past doctrinal/behavioral issues have been rectified, or they have returned to an active relationship with FCCH.

Article VI. Leadership

First Congregational Church of Hamilton and its ministries are led by the Board of Elders, Deacons, Pastors, Directors, Officers, and Standing Committees authorized by these bylaws. These leaders are held responsible by the voting members (adult only) of the congregation. The creation of Pastoral and Director positions may be proposed by leadership or adult members of the congregation, but may only be created by congregational approval at a business meeting. Other administrative/clerical staff positions may be created by leadership with Elder approval and do not require a vote by the congregation at a business meeting, provided that prescribed budget procedures are followed.

Article VII. Pastors and Directors

Section 7.01 Election

Decisions to call Pastors (normally defined as a licensed or ordained individual employed by the church) and Directors (normally defined as a layperson employed by the church) will be made by a vote of the adult members of the church. Such a vote will take place at a Church business meeting convened for that purpose. A two-thirds vote of those adult members present having the right to vote will be required. Pastors and Directors shall hold office without limitation of term. Either the Pastors or Directors or the Church may terminate the relationship upon at least a ninety-day notice. If the relationship is to be terminated upon the initiative of the Church, the termination shall be voted by a two-thirds majority of those adult members present with the right to vote at a special Church meeting called for the purpose.

Before entering upon their duties, Pastors and Directors so elected shall become members of FCCH upon agreeing to the Church covenant and the Statement of Faith. Pastors and Directors shall enter into contracts with FCCH, in a form to be determined by the Stewardship Committee, providing that the ministerial relationship may be terminated by either party upon ninety days notice.

Section 7.02 Responsibilities

The Lead Pastor(s), together with the other Elders, shall have charge of the spiritual development and welfare of the Church. The Lead Pastor(s) shall preach the gospel, administer the ordinances, take charge of the services of public worship, uphold and support the stated mission of the Church, and shepherd the activities of the Church in cooperation with the various Boards, Committees and Officers. The Lead Pastor(s) shall be member(s) of the Board of Elders and ex-officio members of all Boards, Standing Committees, and auxiliary organizations of the Church.

The Lead Pastor(s) will report regularly on their activities to the Elders and will prepare written reports for inclusion in the annual report of the Church.

Other pastors that the church may call are directly answerable to one of the Lead Pastors as determined by the Board of Elders. Organizational lines of reporting for Directors and administrative staff, and their duties and responsibilities, are to be defined by the Board of Elders or by the Lead Pastor(s) as the Board of Elders may delegate.

Article VIII. Boards

Section 8.01 Board of Elders

1. Role. An Elder is a shepherd of the flock. The role of a shepherd in itself implies leadership. Shepherds are out in front of the flock leading the flock by virtue of the knowledge, experience, wisdom, and insight they have as the result of their spiritual gifts and maturity.

Through prayer, study, and sensitivity to the work of the Holy Spirit in the congregation, the Elders will continually seek to identify God's will and purpose for His people at FCCH and will strive to encourage, equip, and guide the flock toward this vision.

The model of Elder leadership will be that of a servant leader who possesses the spiritual gifts of leading and shepherding, utilizes these gifts in positions of responsibility in the Church, and by faith expects and believes that God will use these gifts in ways that will honor Him, build up the body, and serve His kingdom.

2. Qualifications of an Elder. An Elder must be a man or a woman in full communion with the Church, of mature judgment, of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, able to teach sound doctrine, and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and the spiritual welfare of this Church (see Appendix A). Before election, an Elder must have been an adult member of this Church for at least three years.
3. Membership. The Board of Elders shall consist of the Lead Pastor(s) and seven (7) other adult members elected by the congregation. One (or two) of the Elders, but not a Lead Pastor, shall be elected by the Board of Elders to Chair (or Co-Chairs) of the Board of Elders.
4. Election. With the exception of the Lead Pastor(s), whose terms are continuous, each Elder is elected for a three-year term and may be nominated for a second consecutive three-year term. After completing two (2) consecutive full terms or leaving membership on the Board of Elders for any reason, a person may not be nominated again for membership on the Board for one year. To ensure continuity in leadership, the Board of Elders may consult with and request the assistance or participation of former Elders in doing Church business, as they deem prudent.
5. Responsibilities.
 - a) The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the Church and its members, shall have the general oversight of all aspects of the Church and its ministries, shall prayerfully seek and help implement God's will for FCCH, shall keep the Church's vision before the congregation, and shall deal with such Church business as cannot be delegated.
 - b) The Board of Elders is responsible to the congregation. As such, its decisions are subject to review and modification at a business meeting of the congregation.
 - c) The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the form of the worship services, shall assist the ministers in conducting these services, shall assist (as needed) in administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and shall select guest preachers.

- d) The Board of Elders shall organize itself by assigning its members to oversee the work of the Deacons and various committees responsible for the many functions of the Church, such as Christian education, assimilation and care, worship, missions and outreach, and administration and finance. In exercising this oversight, Elders:
- 1) Shall individually be assigned to attend meetings of the Deacons and Standing Committees to serve as a liaison between those committees and the Elders;
 - 2) Shall assign each new ministry to a Pastor, Director, Board, Standing Committee or Ministry Team from which it can gain encouragement and to which it can be accountable;
 - 3) Shall establish such ministries, councils, and ad hoc committees as it deems appropriate;
 - 4) Shall review and approve all candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee; and,
 - 5) Shall appoint pastoral and director search committees as needed.
- e) The Board of Elders shall annually review the service of the Lead Pastor(s).
- f) The Board of Elders shall assist the Lead Pastor(s) in the review of other Pastors and Directors, the details of which the Lead Pastor(s) and Elders will keep confidential.
- g) The Board of Elders shall provide counsel, which reflects accurately the principles of scripture.
- h) The Board of Elders shall examine and approve candidates for baptism and membership concerning their faith in Jesus Christ.
- i) The Board of Elders shall seek to empower members to utilize their skills and talents to the fullest measure.
- j) The Board of Elders shall administer Church discipline, as needed, according to the principles of Matthew 18:15-17.
- k) The Chair of the Elders shall have the authority to act for the Board of Elders on matters which arise between Board meetings and which demand immediate attention, said actions being subject to the approval of the Board at its next meeting.
- l) The Board of Elders has responsibility to review all budgets prior to congregational approval at a regular or special business meeting.
6. Meetings and Quorum. The Board of Elders shall meet at least monthly to pray for concerns, to receive reports, and to transact business. The Elder(s) elected annually by the Board to serve as Chair (or Co-Chairs) may call a special meeting of the Board of Elders when deemed necessary. The Church Clerk shall keep regular minutes of all meetings. The Board of Elders shall prepare a written report for inclusion in the annual report of the Church. A quorum of the Board shall be five (5) Elders.

Section 8.02 Board of Deacons

1. Role. The Board of Deacons is charged with ministering to the human needs of the membership and, as they are able, to those non-members that come to their attention. In addition, they assist the Board of Elders in caring for the spiritual needs of the congregation.
2. Qualifications of a deacon. A deacon must be a man or a woman in full communion with the Church, of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ, and able to minister with compassion (see Appendix B).
3. Membership, election and term. The Board of Deacons shall consist of twelve Deacons, each being elected for a three-year term and serving no more than two consecutive full terms. Before election, a Deacon must have been a member of this church for at least one year. After serving two full terms, a deacon will be ineligible for re-election for one year. An Elder will be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board of Deacons, will attend regular meetings, and will report to the Board of Elders.
4. Responsibilities.
 - a) Deacons shall be assigned leadership over ministries of the church and are responsible for these ministries to the Board of Elders.
 - b) The Board of Deacons shall assist Pastors in a visitation ministry to Church members and bring any pertinent information to the attention of the Pastors or Elders.
 - c) The Deacons shall administer the deacon's fund to those in special need, giving preference to members of the Church.
 - d) The Deacons shall oversee the ministry of hospitality, including fellowship functions.
 - e) The Deacons will prepare the elements of the Lord's Supper and assist with their administration; will supervise ushers and greeters; and may be called upon by the pastors or elders to assist in other ways in worship services.
 - f) The Deacons shall work with Pastors to provide new members classes as needed.
 - g) The Deacons shall prepare an annual budget to be submitted to the Stewardship Committee, and shall control expenditures within their budget.
 - h) The Deacons may create ad hoc committees to fulfill specific purposes deemed under their authority and may also assume additional responsibilities in keeping with their leadership role.
5. Meetings and Quorum. The Board of Deacons normally shall meet monthly for prayer and business, and maintain monthly minutes. The chairperson may call a special meeting of the Board when deemed necessary. The Board of Deacons shall prepare a written report for inclusion in the annual report of the Church. A quorum of the Board shall be seven Deacons.

Article IX. Standing Committees

Section 9.01 Standing Committees

1. Names. The three Standing Committees of the Church are: Nominating, Stewardship and Missions.
2. Membership. Each member of a Standing Committee shall be elected for a three-year term and shall serve no more than two consecutive full terms. After serving two full terms, a member will be ineligible for re-election for one year. An Elder will be an ex-officio, non-voting member of each Standing Committee, will attend regular meetings, and report to the Board of Elders, which is charged with the general oversight of the Committees.

The number of members comprising a Standing Committee may be changed by the committee with approval of the Elders and a simple majority vote at an annual or special meeting.

3. Meetings. Following the annual meeting and prior to the following February 1, a chairperson will be elected from the membership of each Standing Committee and shall preside at its meetings. Each Standing Committee shall also elect a secretary to keep a written record of all business transacted at the meetings. The chairperson may call a special meeting of the Standing Committee when deemed necessary. Each Standing Committee shall prepare a written report for inclusion in the annual report of the Church.

Except as specifically provided in the act of incorporation or in these bylaws, each Standing Committee shall provide and maintain a document of policies and procedures as it considers necessary for its organization and conduct of business, subject to the approval of the Board of Elders.

Unless otherwise specified elsewhere in these bylaws, a simple majority of the members of each Standing Committee shall constitute a quorum.

4. Ad hoc membership. A Standing Committee may appoint ad hoc subcommittees or ad hoc committee members (non-voting) as needed.

Section 9.02 Nominating Committee

1. Responsibilities. The Nominating Committee, consisting of 6 qualified adult members of the Church approved by the Board of Elders and elected by a majority of those voting at a Church meeting, is charged with nominating qualified candidates for Church Officers (with the exception of the Assistant Treasurer, who is appointed by the Stewardship Committee), Boards, Trustees of Permanent Funds, and Standing Committees. Their specific responsibilities shall include:
 - a) Consulting with each Standing Committee and Board to understand their specific needs and requirements and generating a list of possible candidates to fill those position(s);
 - b) Reviewing all prospective candidate names with the Board of Elders for their approval prior to any contact (this includes review of all current Committee members completing their first 3-year term who are eligible for a second term);
 - c) Maintaining (with the assistance of each Board, Standing Committee, and Officer) a detailed job description that can be provided to prospective candidates for their review;
 - d) Submitting to the Elders one month prior to the annual meeting the names of all nominees for the upcoming year;

- e) Submitting to the Church membership (adults only) two weeks prior to the annual meeting the names of all nominees. These shall be voted on at the annual meeting and will require a majority vote of the active members of the church.
2. Mid-term Vacancies. Upon the mid-term resignation of an Officer or member of a Board or Standing Committee, the Nominating Committee shall fill the vacancy according to the following process:
- a) Consult with the Elders and Standing Committee chairs to identify replacement candidates for nomination.
 - b) Submit nominees for approval by the Elders;
 - c) Upon approval, contact and confirm nominees;
 - d) Notify the congregation of the replacement nominee through weekly announcements and monthly newsletter;
 - e) Upon completion of a partial term, replacement nominees will be eligible for nomination to a full term according to the guidelines for Elders and Standing Committees.

Section 9.03 Stewardship Committee

1. Responsibilities. The Stewardship Committee shall consist of 7 qualified adult members of FCCH approved by the Board of Elders and elected by a majority of those voting at a Church meeting. The Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members. The Stewardship Committee shall oversee the property and finances of the Church. The Stewardship Committee shall:
- a) Manage all property, real and personal, held in the name of FCCH, its operation, preservation, improvement wherever feasible, and its protection, including adequate insurance coverage;
 - b) Hold, manage, invest, and reinvest at its discretion all funds of the Church for which no other provision is made by these bylaws or by vote of the Church, including but not limited to the operating finances, or any other fund established by gifts, legacies, bequests, or the Church. The Stewardship Committee may employ investment counsel, having investment discretion, to manage the invested funds of the Church, subject to periodic review by the Committee;
 - c) Provide for appointment or employment of such persons other than the Pastors and Directors, as it shall deem necessary for the conduct of the program of the Church authorized in the budget. Stewardship Committee shall determine the form of contracts or agreements with Pastors and Directors. It shall fix working hours and salaries, and define duties of all members of the staff except the Pastors and Directors, without regard for the fund from which payment for service is to be made. It shall fix the salaries of the Pastors, Directors, and Staff in consultation with the Board of Elders;
 - d) Provide adequate supplies and equipment for the proper operation of the Church;
 - e) Authorize the Treasurer and other individuals as required, to execute contracts in the name of FCCH for periods not exceeding one year unless a longer period shall be authorized by the Board of Elders. Authorization levels shall be established by the Treasurer for all delegates authorized to execute contracts and reviewed annually;
 - f) Empower the Treasurer to pay all authorized bills of the Church;

- g) With the approval of the Board of Elders and a two-thirds vote of the congregation at a business meeting, may authorize the Treasurer to borrow and/or establish a line of credit in the name of FCCH such amounts as the committee deems reasonable and appropriate. A line of credit may remain in place for multiple years without additional approvals;
 - h) Develop the annual operating budget for the ensuing year. The Committee shall submit the budget to the Board of Elders. After review by the Board of Elders, the budget will be submitted to the congregation in the annual report and made available to all adult members not less than fourteen days prior to the annual meeting;
 - i) Secure the services of a qualified auditor or auditing firm. Such auditor or auditing firm shall examine, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, the records of the Treasurer, the Missions Committee, and all other accounts of the Church. The report of the findings of such examination shall be presented once every three years to the Stewardship Committee, and a copy made available to any adult member of the congregation upon request;
 - j) Empower the Financial Secretary to accept gifts of securities into the Church's brokerage account and subsequently to empower the Financial Secretary immediately to sell these securities. The Church's policy on gifts of securities is to initiate a sell order upon receipt;
 - k) Submit a written report to the annual meeting of the Church;
 - l) Elect annually one or two adult Church member(s) to serve as Assistant Treasurer(s).
2. Deeds, Mortgages and Contracts. The Stewardship Committee shall negotiate the terms of and make other arrangements for deeds, contracts, and mortgages, and shall arrange for the Treasurer to sign such documents as a corporate resolution.
 3. Delegation. By its approval of the budget, the congregation delegates to the Stewardship Committee authority to expend funds as authorized by the budget without further approval. Such funds may come from funds on hand, or when deemed reasonable and appropriate by the Stewardship Committee, from a Line of Credit, which was previously approved by the Board of Elders and the congregation in accordance with Section 9.03, 1(g). Except in emergencies, no individual item or service shall be contracted in an amount exceeding 5% of the church's annual operating budget without approval of the majority of active and adult members present and voting at a regular or special business meeting. If a situation is deemed to be an emergency by the Stewardship Committee, the active and adult members will be notified of such decision as soon as possible.
 4. Reserve Funds. The Stewardship Committee is authorized to create rolling, board-designated Reserve Funds, through which funding is accrued over multiple years in order to prepare for significant and infrequent capital expenditures. The Stewardship Committee is further authorized to approve funding from a Reserve Fund in an amount exceeding 5% of the church's annual operating budget without additional approval.

Section 9.04 Missions Committee

1. Responsibilities. The Missions Committee, consisting of 9 qualified adult members of FCCH approved by the Board of Elders and elected by a majority of those voting at a Church meeting, shall have charge over the missionary program and missionary funds of FCCH. The Missions Committee shall submit an annual budget for approval to the Board of Elders and subsequently to the congregation at the annual meeting, including their recommendations on:
 - a) The missionaries and missionary enterprises to be supported and the extent of such support

to be contributed out of the missions fund of FCCH.

- b) The amounts to be contributed to other individuals or organizations that in the Committee's opinion should receive contributions for benevolent purposes from the missions fund of FCCH.
 - c) Any paid positions to facilitate the work of the Missions Committee.
2. Accounts. Under the authority of the Treasurer of the Church, the Missions Committee shall establish and maintain accounts to record all receipts and disbursements of mission funds. With the approval of the Elders and Stewardship Committee, the Missions Committee may establish paid positions to manage expenditures and information, and fund such positions through the normal budgeting process. In cases where such positions are established, persons fulfilling these duties would serve as ex-officio members of the Missions Committee.
 3. Annual Report. The Missions Committee shall submit a written report to the congregation at the annual meeting of the Church showing all receipts and disbursements of mission funds in the preceding calendar year and the status of such funds at the end of the year.
 4. Delegation. By its approval of the budget, the congregation delegates to the Missions Committee authority to expend funds as authorized by the budget without further approval.

Article X. Ministry Teams

Section 10.01 Role and Description

In order to ensure that ministry is multiplied through the laity of the Church, Ministry Teams shall be formed and maintained by the congregation and monitored by the Pastors, Directors, Elders, Deacons, or Standing Committees. A Ministry Team is a group of Church members and/or regular attendees who join together to meet a Church ministry need. Through Ministry Teams, members of the laity serve alongside Pastors and other official leaders in the church to do the work of the Church. Ministry Teams may serve in areas such as outreach, social concern, music and worship, administration, children's ministry, youth ministry, and adult ministries. Ministry Teams are flexible in size and length of service.

Section 10.02 Criteria for Formation

Pastors, Elders, members, or regular attendees may seek to form Ministry Teams for specific purposes. Each Ministry Team must be approved by the Board of Elders prior to its activation and is to be monitored by a Pastor, Directors, the Elders, Deacons, or a Standing Committee to ensure that tasks and direction of ministry are in accord with the Church's mission statement. Each Ministry Team shall develop its own internal administrative organization with the assistance of the Pastors, Directors, Elders, Deacons, or Standing Committee to whom it is accountable. When new Ministry Teams are formed and approved, the Board of Elders shall notify the congregation via its annual report.

Section 10.03 Membership

Members and/or regular attendees of the Church may serve on Ministry Teams.

Section 10.04 Funding

Ministry Teams shall be funded through the normal budget process of the Church. Funds are supervised by appropriate Pastors, Directors, Elders, Deacons, or other Standing Committees.

Section 10.05 Evaluation

The Board of Elders will see to it that all Ministry Teams are evaluated yearly, either by Pastors, Directors, Elders, Deacons, or other appropriate Standing Committees. Ministry Teams shall prepare a written report for inclusion in the annual report of the Church. In many cases this report will appear as part of a larger annual report from a Pastor, Director, Board, or Standing Committee.

Section 10.06 Dissolution

When the purpose of a Ministry Team is no longer viable, or its ministry tasks have been completed, the Board of Elders may elect to dissolve the Ministry Team. At such times the Board of Elders shall notify the congregation via its annual report.

Article XI. Officers Of The Church

Section 11.01 Names

The Officers of the Church are Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary.

Section 11.02 General

All Officers must be adult members of the Church and shall come under the general oversight of the Board of Elders. Each Officer shall prepare a written report for inclusion in the annual report of the Church. At the expiration of office, the Officer shall deliver immediately to the successor all books, files, records, and documents in possession.

Section 11.03 Moderator

1. Selection. The Moderator shall be elected at the annual meeting and serve a one-year term that can be renewed annually. Should the Moderator be unable to fulfill the duties of the office, the Board of Elders shall select an acting Moderator from among its number, excepting the Senior Pastor.
2. Responsibilities. The Moderator shall preside over the annual meeting and any other special meetings of the congregation, conducting all business in accordance with the rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules Of Order Newly Revised*.

Section 11.04 Clerk

1. Selection. The Clerk shall be elected at the annual meeting and serve a one-year term that can be renewed annually.
2. Responsibilities
 - a) The Clerk shall keep a written record of the meetings of the Board of Elders and annual and special meetings of the Church, and shall have charge of the membership records.
 - b) The Clerk shall give legal notice of the annual and special meetings of the Church as specified by these bylaws.
 - c) The Clerk shall process all correspondence regarding letters of transfer and shall maintain records of the following: the number of additions by confession of faith, by reaffirmation of faith, and by letter; the number of names removed from the roll during the year by granting of letters of transfer, by death, and for other reasons; the number of infant baptisms and dedications; and the number of adult baptisms.
 - d) The Clerk shall make a written report included in the Church's annual report of the numerical size of the congregation and the changes during the preceding year.
 - e) The Clerk shall notify Officers of their election.

Section 11.05 Treasurer

1. Selection. The Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting and serve a one-year term that can be renewed annually. The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Stewardship Committee.
2. Responsibilities
 - a) The Treasurer shall maintain custody of all Church funds and papers relating to Church property.
 - b) The Treasurer shall make no payment of money belonging to the Church except as authorized in writing by the Board of Elders, the Stewardship Committee, the Missions Committee, or other committee having control thereof.
 - c) The Treasurer shall keep adequate accounting records.
 - d) The Treasurer shall make an annual written report of the finances of the Church and present it to the congregation at its annual meeting.
 - e) The Treasurer shall report to the Stewardship Committee monthly, and at such other times as the committee may request.
 - f) When authorized by a vote of the congregation, a vote by the Board of Elders, or a vote of the Stewardship Committee, the Treasurer shall sign deeds, mortgages and contracts, and corporate resolutions for the execution of such documents.
 - g) The Treasurer shall serve as *ex officio* member of the Trustees of Permanent funds.

Section 11.06 Assistant Treasurer

1. Selection. The one or two Assistant Treasurer(s) shall be appointed by the Stewardship Committee from among the adult membership of the Church. They shall be appointed for a one-year term, and are eligible for re-appointment.
2. Responsibilities. The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer, assume all responsibilities of the Treasurer in his/her absence, and assume the role of interim Treasurer should the Treasurer be unable to fulfill the duties of that office. Additionally, the Assistant Treasurer(s) shall assist in the Financial Secretary, assume all responsibilities of the Financial Secretary in his/her absence, and assume the role of interim Financial Secretary should the Financial Secretary be unable to fulfill the duties of that office. Finally the Assistant Treasurer shall serve as an ex officio member of the Trustees of Permanent funds.

Section 11.07 Financial Secretary

1. Selection. The Financial Secretary shall be elected at the annual meeting and serve a one-year term that can be renewed annually. The Financial Secretary shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Stewardship Committee.
2. Responsibilities
 - a) Receiving, counting, and depositing, as directed by the Stewardship Committee, all monies given at the Church services and turning over records of such deposits to the Treasurer in a timely manner;

- b) Keeping an accurate record of the giving of each individual using offering envelopes and/or checks, and issuing semi-annual statements to each individual, showing contributions made to each fund; and,
- c) Making offering envelopes available to all interested individuals.
- d) The Financial Secretary shall serve as an ex officio member of the Trustees of Permanent funds.

Section 11.08 Assistant Financial Secretary

1. Selection. One or two Assistant Financial Secretary(s) shall be appointed by the Stewardship Committee from among the adult membership of the Church. They shall be appointed for a one-year term, and are eligible for re-appointment.
2. Responsibilities. The Assistant Financial Secretary shall assist the Financial Secretary assume all responsibilities of the Financial Secretary in his/her absence, and assume the role of interim Financial Secretary should the Financial Secretary be unable to fulfill the duties of that office.

Article XII. Officers Of The Corporation

Section 12.01 Designation

The Officers of the Corporation are as follows: President – Chair of the Board of Elders, except if there are Co-chairs, said Board will designate one to be President; Vice President – Chair of the Board of Deacons, except if there are Co-chairs, said Board will designate one to be Vice President; Secretary – Clerk; and Treasurer – Treasurer.

Section 12.02 Responsibilities

These Officers, in addition to their responsibilities within the Church, shall also represent the Church in all legal matters pertaining to contract, financial, and policy documents as required by, and in accordance with, the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Article XIII. Trustees Of Permanent Funds

Section 13.01 Purpose and Function

The purpose and function of the trustees of permanent funds is to preserve, protect, and/or oversee the investment of those funds left “in trust” to the Church. These funds are to be known as permanent funds. This is to be done in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the stated wishes of the donor. It shall also be the responsibility of the trustees to oversee trusts in which the Church is a beneficiary but which are controlled by other fiduciary management, such as the Smith Family Fund. A historical perspective of permanent funds is presented in Appendix C of these bylaws.

Section 13.02 Membership

There shall be three trustees, each being elected at the annual meeting for a three-year term and serving no more than two consecutive terms, but then ineligible for re-election for one year. Trustees must be active adult members of the church. An Elder will be appointed as a liaison to the trustees, and the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall serve as *ex-officio*, non-voting members.

Section 13.03 Meetings

Each year the Senior Trustee shall call the first meeting, and the Trustees shall elect a Chair. The Chair shall preside at each meeting and, in addition to regular quarterly meetings, any trustee may request a special meeting to address issues. Summary reports of meetings shall be submitted to the Board of Elders, and a written report shall be included in the annual report of the Church.

Section 13.04 Records

The Trustees of Permanent Funds shall maintain records of designated gifts, and unless directed otherwise by the intent of the donor, such gifts shall be deposited in the permanent funds investment program to produce income for the Church.

Section 13.05 Investment of Funds

Under the authority of the Treasurer of the Church, the trustees shall control the management of permanent funds and are responsible for the timely investment of bequests and gifts of all funds received “in trust” naming the Church as the income beneficiary in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in accordance with so-called prudent man rule.

Article XIV. Auxiliary Organizations

All organizations meeting within the Church or Church property, and/or having the name of the Church included in their official names, shall be considered as auxiliary organizations of the Church. The establishment, programs, and anticipated special activities of all auxiliary organizations shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Elders. Meetings of auxiliary organizations shall be held at such times as will not conflict with meetings of the Church. All auxiliary organizations shall provide a written annual report for the Church at the time of the annual meeting.

Article XV. Meetings

Section 15.01 Public Worship Services

Public services for worship shall be held each Sunday, and at any other times that the Lead Pastor(s) and Board of Elders deem advisable. The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper shall normally be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month.

Section 15.02 Annual Meeting

The annual business meeting of the Church shall be normally held in November on the Monday ten days prior to Thanksgiving. This meeting shall be held for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of the Pastors, Directors, Officers, Boards, Standing Committees, and Ministry Teams of the Church and its auxiliary organizations, the adoption of the annual operational and missions budgets, and the transaction of such other business as is proper to come before said meeting. Notice of the annual meeting, stating the purpose, place, and time, shall be posted by the Clerk in a conspicuous place, and shall be read from the pulpit on the two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

Section 15.03 Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings may be called by the Lead Pastor(s), Board of Elders, or upon the written request of ten active and adult members of the Church. Notice of such meetings shall be given in the same manner provided for the annual meeting.

Section 15.04 Quorum

At all Church business meetings twenty percent (20%) of the active and adult membership shall constitute a quorum.

Article XVI. Voting

Only active and adult members of the church may vote at business meetings.

A two-thirds majority vote of all active and adult members present and voting shall be required to call or terminate a Pastor or Director.

A two-thirds majority vote of all active and adult members present and voting shall be required to borrow money for any purpose (per 9.03 (1g)).

These bylaws may be amended at any annual or special meeting by a three-fourths majority vote of the active and adult members present and voting.

For all other motions a simple majority of all active and adult members present and voting shall be required for any motion to carry.

Article XVII. Rules Of Order

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules Of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the business proceedings of this Church in all cases where they are not inconsistent with these by-laws.

Article XVIII. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall be the calendar year.

Article XIX. Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any annual or special meeting by a three-fourths vote of the adult members present and voting. Proposed amendments shall be published in the notice of such meetings.

Appendix A: Qualifications For Elders

The following qualifications are taken from I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, James 5:14, and I Peter 5:1-4.

1. “Now an overseer must be above reproach,
2. The husband of but one wife,* The wife of but one husband,*
3. Temperate,
4. Self-controlled,
5. Respectable,
6. Hospitable,
7. Able to teach,
8. Not given to much wine,**
9. Not violent but gentle,
10. Not quarrelsome,
11. Not a lover of money.
12. He/She must manage his/her own family well and see that his/her children obey him/her with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his/her own family, how can he/she take care of God’s Church?
13. He/She must not be a recent convert, or he/she may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.
14. He/She must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he/she will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.”
15. “An Elder must be blameless,
16. A man/woman whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.
17. Not overbearing,
18. Not quick tempered,
19. Not pursuing dishonest gain.
20. Rather he/she must be... one who loves what is good,
21. Upright,
22. Holy,
23. Disciplined.
24. He/She must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he/she can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”
25. He/She should be able and available to pray for the sick.
26. “To the Elders among you, I appeal as a fellow Elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: tend the flock of God that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.”

* That is, monogamous or single, and not divorced.

** That is, not a drunkard.

Appendix B: Qualifications For Deacons

The following qualifications are taken from Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-16.

1. They should be men/women of good repute,
2. Full of the spirit,
3. And of wisdom.
4. “Deacons likewise must be worthy of respect,
5. Sincere,
6. Not indulging in much wine,
7. And not pursuing dishonest gain.
8. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.
9. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as Deacons.
10. In the same way, their wives/husbands are to be women/men worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.
11. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife*, wife of one husband*,
12. And must manage his/her children and his/her household well.”

* Previous marriages that ended in divorce may not disqualify a person from serving as a Deacon.

Appendix C: Historical Perspective Of Permanent Funds

The tradition of permanent funds has been that the trustees assume independent responsibility and recognize a legal reality that they serve as fiduciary guardians of designated funds, in effect as representatives or advocates of deceased members and friends, who have left funds “in trust” and named First Congregational Church of Hamilton as the beneficiary of any income earned by investment of the “trust.” **Therefore trustees (acting under the laws of the state) control such assets rather than the Church.**

The trustees are responsible for overseeing the continued investment status of the Smith Family Fund Portfolio of Marketable Securities under the management of the appointed trustees, Eastern Bank, in Salem. At least semi-annually, the trustees shall submit an oral or written report in the Smith Family Fund, and a written report shall be included in the annual report of the Church.