



We are a welcoming family of faith who proclaims God's love and grace in words and deeds, in covenant with each other and the community.

**BYLAWS OF
THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF EAST SUMNER**

**ARTICLE ONE:
NAME AND PURPOSE**

Section 1. Name

The name of this Church shall be "Congregational Church of East Sumner."

Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Church shall be to provide a way to love the Lord our God and to love our neighbor through worship, by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and by celebrating the Sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion). The purpose of this Church is further to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this Church and the Christian Church Universal, to render loving service toward all people, and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

**ARTICLE TWO:
FAITH AND COVENANT**

Section 1. Faith

This Church acknowledges as its sole head Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of all people, as revealed in the Holy Bible. It receives as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Holy Scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to advance its loving, creative, and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church, expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own.

One expression of that faith is:

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to His deeds we testify:

He called the worlds into being, creates people in His own image, and sets before them the ways of life and of death.

He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

He judges people and nations by His righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord:

He has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death, and reconciling the world to Himself.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, creator of fellowship, source of inspiration, faith, and comfort:

He is commissioned by the Father to build up and renew the Church of Jesus Christ, uniting and binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

We believe that we are called into His Church:

To accept the cost and receive the joy of discipleship, to be His servants in the service of all people, to proclaim the Gospel to all the world, to resist the power of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at His table, to join Him in His passion and victory.

We accept, with joy, His promise to all who trust in Him:

Forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace;

Courage in the struggle for justice and peace;

His presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in His Kingdom of which there shall be no end.

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

Section 2. Covenant

We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the Word and the Will of God. We propose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our forebears, we depend upon the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

ARTICLE THREE:

MEMBERS, RIGHTS OF MEMBERS, AND CHURCH POLITY

Section 1. Members

This Church recognizes three types of membership: (1) full, (2) associate, and (3) inactive. Full membership shall be open to any person who: (1) has been baptized, and (2) has been confirmed or has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. Members shall pledge themselves to attend regular worship in this Church, to share in the celebration of the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion), to live the Christian life of love, to share in the life and work of this Church, to contribute to its support and benevolences, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and all peoples.

Full membership: To become a full member of this Church, a person requests membership and is instructed by the Pastor in the beliefs of the Church. The Pastor and Deacons will concur in the membership. (2015 deleted Council vote). At a regular worship service, the new member will make either a profession or reaffirmation of faith and, with prayer, be welcomed into the membership. Full members may vote on all issues brought to a congregational meeting. Should the Church be without a pastor when membership is requested, the Deacons shall undertake the duties without the involvement of a pastor. (2010 revision removed two additional paragraphs).

Youth members:

Youth, to age 18, will become members by confirmation. (2012 revision)

Associate membership: Associate members are those who wish to keep their full membership in another Church, but want to work with and commune with this Church on a regular basis. Associate members shall be accorded the same rights and privileges as full members except the right to vote to call a Pastor.

Inactive membership: Inactive members are those members who previously were full members but have not contributed to the work or support of this Church or received Holy Communion in the previous calendar year. The Pastor and Deacons are responsible for contacting and encouraging a reactivation of these inactive members. They will automatically become full members when they again receive Holy Communion or contribute to the work or support of this Church. Inactive members do not have the privilege of voting at congregational meetings.

Section 2. Rights of Members

Any member, upon request (recorded), shall be supplied with a letter of transfer. If wishing to join a body not in communion with this Church, said member shall be supplied with a certificate of Church membership and dismissed. If, because of a change of faith or for other reasons any member requests in writing, or verbally to the pastor, a Deacon, or council President, to be dismissed, this Church shall patiently endeavor to secure continuance of membership. (2015 revision removed requirement for written requests). If such endeavor fails, the request of termination may be accepted by vote of the Church Council.

Members whose addresses are unknown, or who despite spiritual care have not received Holy Communion or contributed to this Church's work or support for a period of one year, shall by recommendation of the Deacons and by vote of the Church Council have their names removed from the full membership roll and placed into the rolls of inactive members. If, after notification of this change, interest is not expressed, nor attendance improved, a further vote of the Church Council may remove that person from the inactive membership rolls in the following calendar year.

Section 3. Church Polity

The governing body of this Church shall be the membership assembled in a duly called congregational meeting. A meeting is duly called by announcement made at a worship service two weeks prior to the meeting by the Pastor, the president of the Church Council, or by two or more Church Council members. Written notice sent to all voting members one week prior to a meeting will also serve to establish a duly called congregational meeting. A quorum of the congregation will be 33% of the voting membership. A quorum of the Church Council is addressed in Article 4, below (2012 revision). Majority vote of voting members present at the meeting shall be the action of this Church. A change in the Bylaws requires that 33% of the voting membership and 75% of the Church Council be present and that a majority of those present vote in favor of the amendment.

Section 4. Fiscal Year (2012 revision)

The church's fiscal year is established as the calendar year. (2015 revision deleted 2013 transition year).

ARTICLE FOUR: OFFICES OF THE CHURCH

The Church Council shall be the executive body of this Church and shall act in the place of the membership in the running of the day-to-day business of this Church. All Church Council members

must be full or associate members of this Church. The Church Council shall consist of the Officers (president, clerk, and treasurer), Trustees and Deacons. (2015 deleted Sunday School Superintendent membership in Council). The Pastor is a member ex officio of the Church Council and of the various Boards. While all church officers, deacons and trustees are members of the Church Council and encouraged to participate in each monthly stated meeting, for the purposes of quorum, the minimum required attendance shall be (1) president or vice president, (2) clerk, (3) treasurer or assistant treasurer, (4) one deacon, and (5) one trustee. (2012 revision). Should the clerk be unable to attend, another member of the Council shall attend in order to record the deliberations of the Council. By laws changes require that three-quarters of the Council shall be present. The Officers shall stand for reelection annually after being nominated. (2015 deleted Sunday School Superintendent election)

Prior to the Annual Meeting, a nominating committee will select people from the list of people who are full or associate members of this Church for nomination to be (1) Officers (president, clerk, and treasurer), (2) Trustees, (3) Deacons, (4) assistant treasurer, and (5) delegates to meetings of the Maine Conference of the U.C.C. and the Oxford-Union Association.

The nominating committee shall consist of three full members of the Church. The committee will serve from annual meeting to annual meeting and be a standing committee for that year. Members of the committee shall be elected as follows: one serving deacon from the Diaconate; one serving trustee from the Board of Trustees; and one member elected by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. Should any of these members be unable to complete the one year term, the body electing them shall elect a replacement to complete the term. In the case of the congregation's representative, this will require the calling of a special congregation meeting. (2010 revision)

Section 1. Officers

All Officers (president, clerk, and treasurer), assistant treasurer, delegates, and committee chairpersons are elected for one year at the Annual Meeting by a majority of those voting. A replacement for any of these positions will be for the remainder of the current Church year.

- A. The president shall preside at all congregational and Church Council meetings and, upon request of five full or associate members of this Church, shall call special meetings of this Church. The president shall submit a report of the Church Council's activities to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- B. The vice-president serves in the president's absence. The vice-president will be elected from the membership of the Board of Trustees and Diaconate by the Church Council. (2010 revision)
- C. The clerk shall keep record of all proceedings, births, deaths and marriages; shall maintain a current membership list; record baptisms and letters of transfer; shall have custody of all records, or access thereto; shall post notice of the Annual Meeting, extraordinary meetings (i.e. for changes in Bylaws); and shall submit an annual report.
- D. The treasurer will be authorized to act and conduct transactions on behalf of the congregation in connection with all monies, funds, and securities owned by the congregation. Financial records shall be open and available for review upon reasonable notice by the **Church Council**. A report shall be submitted at the Annual Meeting.
- E. The assistant treasurer will have authority to sign checks in the absence of the treasurer. The assistant treasurer is not automatically a member of the Church Council, but may be by being one of the other Officers, a Trustee, Deacon, or Sunday School Superintendent.

Section 2. Board of Trustees

Three trustees are elected by the membership to three-year terms, with one trustee being voted in each year. Trustees shall not be eligible for reelection until one year has passed since the expiration of their previous term. If there are no other members available or willing to serve, the vacating trustee may be nominated and elected to serve another 3 year term. Those trustees incumbent at the time that the term is changed from 5 to 3 years and the board size from 5 to 3 will remain in the elected classes for normal rotation. (2015 reduced trustee board from 5 to 3 and changed term from 5 years to 3 years).

It is appropriate to elect a young member (ie. Youth) as a trustee. In such cases, the term of service will be one year. (2015 added youth trustee)

They are responsible for the financial condition of this Church, working up a budget that, through consultation, reflects the priorities of this Church and its programming needs. They are also responsible for the development of this Church into the future through improvement of the facilities, for the maintenance of the buildings related to Church work, and for an annual report.

Section 3. Board of Deacons

Six deacons are elected by the membership for three-year terms to the active Board of Deacons. At the end of their three years, the deacons become inactive deacons. Two deacons rotate annually. Deacons, completing a full term, are not eligible for membership on the active Board of Deacons until they have been off of that Board for one year. If there are no other members available or willing to serve, one or both of the vacating deacons may be nominated and elected to serve another 3 year term.

All deacons, active and inactive, support and advise the Pastor and each other. Two junior deacons may be elected for one-year terms. They may be reelected for two succeeding terms. The junior deacons are of junior or senior high school age. Junior deacons shall be accorded full voting rights on the active Board of Deacons and Church Council.

Deacons shall undergo training upon their election in order to ensure that they are fully aware of the scriptural basis of their call and the duties and responsibilities in this particular Church.

Deacons are responsible for the spiritual welfare of this Church and the wider community, the worship life (including preparing for Holy Communion, providing greeters, obtaining supply preachers) and educational work of this Church, including Sunday School superintendence (2015 added Sunday School responsibility), the fellowship functions of this Church, evangelism and mission, and for setting an example of Christian living, remembering their high calling, to those inside and outside this Church. The deacons are to delegate responsibility to committees formed of Church members for specific Church needs. The deacons will present an annual report to the Annual Meeting of this Church.

Section 4. Church Council

The Church Council shall be the executive body of this Church. A meeting of the Church Council shall be required for extraordinary expenses. The Church Council shall make a recommendation to be voted upon by the members present at a congregational meeting before the Treasurer shall disburse funds. The Church Council will meet monthly throughout the year at a regularly scheduled (stated) meeting. Special meetings shall be called, as necessary. All Church members are invited to attend Council meetings as non-voting observers and are invited to offer comments. All Council meetings shall include prayer and devotions, and shall provide adequate study of all policies and agenda items being

considered. Special meetings of the Church Council may be called at the request of two or more Church Council members.

Section 5. Vacancies

Should a vacancy occur on the Church Council, the nominating committee shall meet to nominate a replacement. The committee shall nominate this member for election at a special meeting of the congregation to complete the vacated term.

ARTICLE FIVE:
PASTOR

Section 1. Search

In the event of a Pastoral vacancy, a Search Committee shall be formed, elected by the congregation. A job description shall be developed, stating needs and expectations as well as benefits, salary, etc. If agreeable, the Maine Conference of the U.C.C. shall be consulted and involved in the search.

Section 2. Call

Following interviews and examination, the Search Committee shall present to this Church the name and credentials of the recommended candidate. The candidate will be invited to preach a trial sermon and lead a worship service. At the next regular worship service after the trial sermon, a deliberate and favorable vote of this Church at a duly called congregational meeting shall constitute a call. The record of the call and all relevant information shall then be sent to the candidate, the Oxford-Union Association, and the Maine Conference of the U.C.C.

Section 3. Installation

The minister, having accepted the call, shall, with this Church, request a service of recognition from the Oxford-Union Association. The date of this service shall be announced to this Church, to the Oxford-Union Association, and to the Maine Conference of the U.C.C.

Section 4. Pastoral Election

A Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time. Three months' notice shall be required by either party in termination, and the matter brought before the Church Council.

Section 5. Associate Pastors

Such persons may be chosen at this Church's discretion, and at terms agreeable to the parties concerned.

ARTICLE SIX:
PROPERTY

Section 1. The Church Corporation.

This Church may in its corporate name sue, or be sued, acquire and own, hold, invest, reinvest or dispose of property both real and personal for the work of this Church and may purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber such property. It may

hold in trust both real and personal property and enter into contracts to promote the purposes of this Church.

Section 2. Use of Church Facilities for Non-Church Activities. (section added in 2015)

The church is available for use for non-church activities when authorized.

- a. Sanctuary. Requests for use of the sanctuary shall be made to the Pastor. In his/her absence, such a request shall be made to the Diaconate. Normally, the sanctuary shall be used only for worship activities.
- b. Other Church Facilities. Requests for use of any area outside of the sanctuary shall be made to the Board of Trustees.
- c. Fees. A fee may be assessed by the responsible Board for use by non-members. Use by members shall carry no fee.
- d. Prohibitions.
 - i. Alcohol shall not be consumed on church property, with the exception of communion wine during worship.
 - ii. Smoking is not allowed inside the building.
 - iii. Profane behavior or clothing, including slogans on clothing, are inappropriate and discouraged.

ARTICLE SEVEN:
ANNUAL AND OTHER CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The Annual Meeting of this Church shall be held following Sunday worship on a date set by the Church Council not less than two months prior to the meeting date (2015 revision changed meeting from 4th Tuesday night to October Sunday). At this meeting, the clerk, president, Trustees, Deacons, treasurer, Pastor, and all Church committees shall give reports. The annual budget will be voted on. Elections for the following positions will be held: (1) Officers (president, clerk, and treasurer), (2) Trustees, (3) Deacons, (4) assistant treasurer, and (5) delegates to meetings of the Maine Conference of the U.C.C. and the Oxford-Union Association.

All other meetings shall be called by the president, Pastor, or two members of the Church Council with a two-week prior notice at worship services or by one-week written notice to all voting members.

ARTICLE EIGHT:
RULES OF ORDER AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Rules of Order

Roberts Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these Bylaws. (2010 revision)

Section 2. Amendments

Amendments to the Bylaws must be posted in this Church two weeks prior to a duly called congregational meeting called to deliberate on such matters. A quorum of 33% of those holding voting membership and 75% of the Church Council shall be required to be present, and a simple majority of these members passes an amendment.

Date of Adoption of these Bylaws: October 22, 2002

First revision: October 26, 2010

Second revision: October 23, 2012

Third Revision: October 25, 2015