

Frankfort Congregational Church, UCC
42 Main Road South, Frankfort, ME 04438

Constitution & Bylaws

Amended & Ratified 2016

THE FRANKFORT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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ARTICLE I. — NAME

The name of this church shall be, “The Frankfort Congregational Church, United Church of Christ,” in Frankfort, Maine.

ARTICLE II. — PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to bind believers into a community of sharing together in the worship of God. As a community, we will strive to make God’s will dominant in our lives, endeavor to support one another spiritual growth, and reach out to the community at large.

ARTICLE III. — POLITY

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its only head, and finds in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Divine Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience, its guidance in matters of faith and discipline.

The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject in legal matters to the State of Maine.

While this church is subject to no ecclesiastical judicatory or authority, it accepts the obligation of mutual council, comity, and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of United Church of Christ churches, and pledges itself to share their common aims and work.

ARTICLE IV. — DOCTRINE

This church recognizes the Holy Bible as a sufficient rule of faith and practice, and holds that striving and living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is a true test of fellowship. Each member shall have the undisturbed right to follow the word of God according to the dictates of one's own conscience, and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The following Statement of Faith, therefore, is not a test, but an expression of the Spirit in which the church interprets the Word of God.

Faith — We believe in God the Father, Creator and Redeemer, infinite in wisdom, goodness and love, the righteous judge of all; And in Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Lord and Savior, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and liveth evermore; And in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ and revealeth them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls, hearts, and minds of all people.

We seek to be an expression of God's Love in the world. We are an inclusive and diverse church; a place of unconditional love that inspires all individuals in our community, regardless of race, culture, age, sexual orientation, ability, and socio-economic status. Partnering with the Holy Spirit and the community, we are committed to fighting and eradicating social ills that oppress God's children, preventing them from experiencing a fulfilled life. Following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ, we declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming Church.

Covenant — We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, as revealed by the Holy Spirit to us and in our purpose to talk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We do repent our sins, and receive Jesus Christ as our crucified Savior and risen Lord; His teachings as the law of our lives. We seek communion with God through the Holy Spirit, the comforter, and trusting in God to confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, we promise to strive to do God's will and to walk with this church in truth and righteousness. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all people, exalting

the worship of the one true God and laboring for understanding and wisdom of ourselves and others, the promotion of justice, and the reign of peace. Depending, as did our ancestors, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us in all truth, and protect us from destructive error, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting. We acknowledge God as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE V. — MEMBERSHIP

Covenant members of this church shall be persons who have been received by vote of the church and publicly accepted its covenant. Candidates for covenant membership shall present themselves for a period of instruction of at least one (1) hour on polity, doctrine, stewardship, and structure, given by the pastor and/or the diaconate.

Covenant members are presented to the church:

- A. On presentation of satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches; or
- B. If letters are not available, by reaffirmation of faith on recommendation of the diaconate; or
- C. On confession of faith and baptism (if not previously baptized or exempted because of conviction); or
- D. On recommendation of the diaconate when external baptism is waived because of conviction.

Persons seeking membership shall receive a copy of this constitution and signify before reception that they have read it and fully understand its content.

1. **Reception:** Persons recommended by the minister and/or the diaconate shall be received at a communion service or at some other time as ordered by the church. Any who are unable to attend in public, after approval by

the church, may be received by the diaconate acting on behalf of the church.

2. Termination of Membership: The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles and usage of the United Church of Christ, and especially as follows:

A. Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to another church, upon request is entitled to receive it. This letter shall be valid as a recommendation for one (1) year only from its date, unless renewed; and this restriction shall be stated in the letter. The right to vote shall be suspended and membership shall terminate from and upon the notice of acceptance into another church. Letters addressed to churches in general shall not be granted.

B. If, because of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct, a member in regular standing requests in writing to be released from one's covenant obligations, the church shall patiently endeavor to secure one's confidence in its fellowship; failing in such effort, the church shall place the member on an inactive list.

C. Members whose address have long been unknown or who for a period of two years, in spite of kindly approaches, have not communicated with the church or contributed to its support may, by vote of the church, be transferred to an inactive list. From date of such transfer, such persons shall cease to be reported on the active membership roll.

3. Restoration to Membership: Any person whose membership has been inactivated may be restored by affirmation of the church.

4. Parish Members: Parish members shall include those who contribute and/or participate regularly in the support of the church.

ARTICLE VI. — SERVICES AND MEETINGS

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

1. Worship

A. Services of worship shall be held at given hours each Sunday, except when temporarily suspended by vote of the church.

B. The Sacraments of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at such times as the church may determine. The baptism of adults and the baptism or dedication of children shall be administered at such times as determined by the minister and/or, the diaconate.

C. Other services for worship, inspiration, prayer, and study may be held as determined by the church and the pastor.

2. Business Meetings

A. The annual meeting shall be held on the second Tuesday in January of each year, to receive the yearly reports of officers and organizations, to elect officers, transact business, adopt the annual budget, and set up plans for the new year.

B. Regular business meetings shall be held the second Tuesday of each month, except when suspended by mutual consent at a regular business meeting.

3. Special Meetings

A. Special meetings for business may be called by the pastor, the diaconate, the trustees, or shall be called by the clerk, on written request of five (5) adult members of the church. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in the call.

4. Quorum

A. A quorum shall consist of five (5) voting members.

5. Voting

A. Elections shall be by show of hands, unless any member present objects, in which case voting shall be by secret ballot, except as otherwise provided in the bylaws. Unless otherwise required, a majority vote is decisive, and unless restricted by law, all members of the church are entitled to vote, and all parish members who contribute regularly to the support of the church may vote upon all matters.

6. Official Year

A. The official year of the church shall begin January 1st, and all officers, boards, and committees shall assume their duties upon election and continue in office until their successors are elected and qualified.

7. Moderator

A. The chairman of the board of trustees shall ordinarily be the moderator of business meetings.

8. Reports

A. All officers, boards, committees, and departments shall report at the annual meeting and at such other times as may be requested by the church.

ARTICLE VII. — OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall be the following:

1. Pastor(s)

A. The pastor(s) shall be called for an indefinite time by a two-thirds vote of the church, or in compliance with covenants entered into with other churches. The pastor(s) shall have in care the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the diaconate. He/She shall see to enlist all people as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, have under care all services of public worship, and administer the activities of the church in cooperation

with the various boards and committees. The pastor(s) shall be ex officio, an advisory member of all boards and committees.

B. In the special case of a student pastor, the church shall follow the polity of the United Church of Christ as carried out by the Sunrise Association of the Maine Conference, UCC.

2. Clerk

A. The clerk shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the church. He or she shall keep a register with the addresses of the members of the church; with dates and modes of their reception and removal; and a record of baptisms, dedications and marriages and deaths. He/She shall issue letters of transfer voted by the diaconate, notifying the churches to which they are addressed. He/She shall preserve on file all communications and written official reports. He/She shall give legal notices of all meetings when such notices are necessary; conduct all correspondence so far as this is not otherwise provided for, and perform such duties as are prescribed by law or as usually pertain to the office of a clerk or secretary of an assembly.

3. Treasurer

A. The treasurer shall receive all the monies from the church, and where necessary give receipts for same. He or she shall deposit funds received in such depository as the church shall order. Under direction of the church, he/she shall have the custody of all papers relating to the property of the church. The treasurer shall pay the bills of the church as approved in the annual budget or on order from the church. He/She shall keep accurate account of all receipts and disbursements and give such bonds as the church shall prescribe. The treasurer may, with the approval of the church, contract with some trust company, national bank, the state conference or the fiduciary authority, to invest endowments, legacies trust funds and securities, and to pay the regular income from the same to the treasure in regular installments. The treasurer shall keep a separate account of all benevolence funds. He/She shall remit benevolence monies in accordance with the standing orders from the church.

ARTICLE VIII. — BOARDS

1. **The Diaconate**

A. The diaconate shall consist of six (6) members, two of whom shall be elected annually. Each member shall be elected for a three (3) year term, and shall be limited to serve two (2) successive terms. Any diaconate member who has served many years may be an honorary member, upon the recommendation of the diaconate, to be approved at the monthly church meeting, shall be entitled for life to all the privileges of an active member of the diaconate, except that by voting. Members of the diaconate shall be covenant members of the church. The diaconate shall organize by the selection of its own chairperson, its own clerk, and such other officers or subcommittees as it may choose. Records of meetings shall be kept and a report shall be forwarded to the church clerk, and read at the monthly church meeting.

B. It shall be the duty of the diaconate to cooperate with the pastor(s) in ministering to the spiritual interests of the church and community. They shall assist in the preparation and administration of the sacraments, in caring for the poor, the sick, the sorrowing, the indifferent, and the stranger. They shall provide the supply of the pulpit in case of a vacancy and in the absence of the pastor. They shall call upon new members and introduce new families into the life of the church. The diaconate shall receive applications by letter or otherwise for admission to church membership and shall examine all applicants for membership on confession of faith, with respect to their fitness therefore. They shall make an annual survey of the church roll and at the annual meeting submit recommendation to the church regarding necessary revisions.

2. **The Board of Trustees**

A. The board of trustees shall consist of six (6) members, elected for a term of three (3) years. At least three-fourths of the members of the board of trustees shall be covenant members of the church. The board shall meet at least once a year prior to the annual meeting. The

board shall elect its own officers and committees and determine its own mode of procedure. A quorum shall consist of four (4) members. Records of meetings shall be kept and a copy shall be forwarded to the church clerk.

B. Under the direction of the church and except as otherwise provided, the board of trustees shall have the care and custody of the property of the church and have charge of its financial affairs. The board shall have no power to buy, sell, lease, or transfer property without specific authority by a vote of two-thirds of the church.

ARTICLE IX. — COMMITTEES

1. **Nomination Committee**

A. At least one (1) month prior to the annual meeting, the church shall appoint a nomination committee to prepare nominations for all officers, boards, and committees not otherwise provided for. This committee shall prepare a ballot; one (1) or more (no more than three [3]) persons for each office filled at the annual meeting, such nominations shall be printed and available at the church no later than two (2) Sundays previous to the annual meeting. Ten (10) adults members of the church may make similar nominations. The ballot thus prepared shall be the official ballot at the annual meeting, provided always that any voter may write upon his ballot the name of any eligible person and that the right of a member to make a nomination from the floor shall always be recognized. In the case any nominee after election declines to serve, the nomination committee shall propose a substitute at the next regular business meeting of the church.

2. **Other Committees**

A. Other committees may be appointed by the church as needed.

3. **Annual Delegates**

A. At the annual meeting, the churches quota of delegates shall be elected:

- To the State conference
- To the Sunrise Association, United Church of Christ
- To any other conferences, councils, or other gatherings in which the church may decide to participate in or be invited to.

ARTICLE X. — AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

All organizations connected with the church and using its facilities and equipment are regarded as integral part of the church and under its jurisdiction. Upon dissolution of any such organizations without notice to the church of such action, or upon failure to hold a meeting in any calendar year, all its funds and property in care of the church shall be surrendered to the church.

ARTICLE XI. — FINANCES

1. Offerings

A. The church shall seek support by contributions of individuals and organizations that are members or connected with the church. Opportunity shall be offered to covenant and parish members of the church to make written subscriptions. The designation of monies for current expenses, benevolence and specific objects shall be under plans approved by vote of the church. Auxiliary organizations are invited to contribute under plans of their own choosing.

2. Apportionment

A. The church will cooperate with the churches of the association and state conference under what is known as Our Churches Wider Mission. Likewise the church shall include in the budget of expenses of the church the “per capita contribution” or “fellowship dues” for the expenses of the association, the state conference and the General Synod, United Church of Christ.

3. Special Funds

A. All legacies not specifically appropriated by the donors to some other purpose may, by vote of the church, be set aside in a special

fund. The special funds shall be placed in trust by the treasurer under order of the church with a trust company, with the state conference or with an other fiduciary authority. The object of the special fund shall be to supplement subscriptions rather supplant them. An opportunity shall be given annually for an offering to increase the special fund, and for public presentation of the claims of the church upon persons writing will and making capital gifts.

ARTICLE XII. — AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be altered or amended by two-thirds vote at any regular or special meeting, provided that notice specifying the time of the meeting and the substance of the proposed amendment shall be given from the pulpit or printed in the calendar on the two (2) Sundays immediately preceding said meeting; except that Bylaws I. through V. may be amended only by a two-thirds vote, being the vote of at least fifteen (15) of the resident members present at an annual meeting, the proposed amendment having been laid before the church in writing not less than two (2) months previously, and copies having been made available to the members of the church.