



Bylaws

September 2018

**Atkinson Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**

Revision Control

Date	Who	Details
January 2015	Shirley Reed	Grammar fixes
May 2018	Ad Hoc Committee Team	Broad rewrite to address move to Teams from Committees
September 2018	Ad Hoc Committee Team	Removal of Statement of Faith voted on during congregational meeting.

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BYLAWS OF ATKINSON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

ARTICLE I: NAME

This church shall be called the Atkinson Congregational Church of Atkinson, New Hampshire, and by a vote of the church, an integral part of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND POLICY

The purpose of this church shall be to maintain public services for the worship of God and the teaching and preaching of the Gospel and to work for growth in Christian grace, the progress of knowledge, the pursuit of justice, the reign of peace and the realization of human brotherhood.

The church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and finds in the Holy Scriptures (interpreted by the Divine Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience) its guide in matters of faith and discipline.

This church shall be an independent body, amendable to no other ecclesiastical authority, having within itself all necessary powers of government and discipline. The government of this church is vested in its members, who shall exercise control of all its affairs. It accepts the obligation of a mutual council, comity, and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ and pledges itself to share its common aims and work.

ARTICLE III: FAITH

The September 16, 2018 revision of the Bylaws does not include a Statement of Faith. This article is reserved for the possible future inclusion.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Qualifications

All members shall be admitted in one of the following ways:

- A. Those who confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord, promise to live a Christian life and have been baptized.
- B. Those who present letters of dismissal and recommendation from other churches.
- C. Those who have been received with satisfactory proof that they have been members of some other church.
- D. Those confirmed at Atkinson Congregational Church

Section 2: Reception of New Members

Persons desiring to become members of this church, either by confession of faith, presentation of letter of transfer, or certificate of membership from other Christian churches, shall meet with the Pastor and a member of the Diaconate for consultation and evaluation at least two weeks prior to the Sunday at which new members will be received. If recommended for membership by the Pastor and Diaconate representative, they will be presented during a worship service for consideration and affirmation by the assembled congregation.

The congregation shall be notified of the person's intention to join the church by an announcement from the Pastor two weeks before the date of anticipated reception.

Once affirmed by the congregation, said persons are received into membership, with voting rights. The Clerk will ensure that new members are entered into the official record and included in the next Annual Report.

Section 3: Responsibilities of Members

Members are expected to attend regularly the services of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, to give systematically to its support and benevolence, to share in its organized work, and to diligently seek the spiritual welfare of the church.

All members of this church may vote at its business meetings.

Section 4: Change of Status of Members

- A. By reason of death.
- B. By letter of transfer. Any active member who desires a letter of transfer to any other church is entitled to receive such a letter upon a recommendation of the Pastor and Diaconate.
- C. Members who desire to maintain membership in this church will be expected to communicate at least once per year or make a financial contribution toward the support of the church. If any person neglects to do this for two consecutive years, he or she will no longer be a member. The Diaconate and Pastor in consultation shall make this determination and notify the Clerk.

ARTICLE V: PASTOR AND OFFICERS

Section 1: Pastor, Associate Pastor, and other staff

This church shall have a Pastor and, at the discretion of the church, an Associate Pastor. An Associate Pastor may be called under similar terms by which a Pastor is called.

- A. Pastor - The Pastor shall be charged with the spiritual welfare of the church and its relationships. The Pastor shall seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ; preach the Gospel; administer the sacraments and rites; have under his/her care the services of public worship; give pastoral guidance and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with the Council, Diaconate and Teams. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Council, the Diaconate, and all teams, but does not have to attend all team meetings.

The Pastor shall be called under terms as specified in the Letter of Call, by a two-thirds vote of the active members present and voting at a properly called Church Meeting.

Whenever the Pastor or the church wishes to terminate the relationship, each party agrees to give two months written notice. If the church wishes to terminate the relationship, it shall be by the same voting procedure as that by which the Pastor is called.

- B. The Pastor shall be responsible for the supervision of the Associate Pastor and other staff. Annually he/she will perform a performance review of all paid staff in accordance with their job description.

- C. Associate Pastor and other staff are hired or terminated at the discretion of the Council.

Section 2: Officers

Officers of this church shall be the Council. All officers shall be members of the church.

All officers are elected positions and eligible for reelection without restriction.

A. Council

The Council shall consist of the Pastor ex-officio, the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer(Comptroller), a representative from the Diaconate, a representative from the Church Support Team, a representative from the Congregational Engagement Team and a representative from the Community Engagement Team. Any church member is welcome at Council meetings, except if there is a need for an executive session. The Council shall elect a Chair from its members at the first meeting. They shall also select a member to serve on the Pastoral Relations Team.

The Council shall meet monthly, or whenever necessary, at the call of the Clerk or Pastor. A majority of the Council membership shall constitute a quorum.

1. The duties of the Council shall include:
 - a) Reviewing church programs and issues.
 - b) Cooperating with the Church Support Team in the preparation of the annual budget of the church.
 - c) Appointing and dissolving ad hoc teams as it deems appropriate.
 - d) Cooperating with the Pastor in the formulation of a well-rounded program for the congregation.
 - e) Having the power to affirm from the slate provided by the Congregational Engagement Team, a successor to any officer or member of any team who is unable for any reason to finish his/her term of office, and for offices which are created during the church year.
 - f) Responsibility for approving the use of facilities with input from the Church Support Team.
 - g) Performing an annual performance review of the Pastor in accordance with the Pastor's job description and Terms of Call.
 - h) The Council shall appoint church staff to teams in an ad hoc basis.
2. Fiduciary Responsibilities:
 - a) **Authority of the Council:** The Council shall have the care and custody of stock and other evidence of ownership in the name of the corporation. The Council shall authorize the Treasurer of the corporation to execute such instruments of transfer as may be required. However, the Council shall not have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer real property without specific authority by a vote of the church at a called meeting.
 - b) **Funds donated without restrictions:** As to unrestricted gifts or bequests, the Council may treat the funds in any manner deemed proper for the maintenance and betterment of the church and its congregation, including use for current expenses or long-term investments.
 - c) **Funds donated with restrictions:** As to funds bequeathed or donated to the church with restrictions to be held as income-producing, they shall be invested with the United Church

- of Christ Conference as custodian, in long-term savings certificates, or through another investment company as recommended by Council and our current investment manager.
- d) **Dissolution:** If the church should cease to exist or function, or upon a vote of its Members to dissolve, the Church Council, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all the liabilities of the Church, shall then transfer its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any device, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after dissolution, to the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ, or its successor body. In accepting such assets, the New Hampshire Conference agrees to administer said assets for the purpose of supporting ministry in Atkinson, or elsewhere in the Conference. If a worshipping UCC community is ever re-established in Atkinson, said assets are to be transferred to this new congregation to fund that ministry.
 - e) **Reports:** The Council shall present a full report of trust funds and all other property entrusted to its care at the Annual Meeting of the church.
 - f) **Budget Preparation:** The Council, in conjunction with the Church Support Team, shall annually prepare a budget for the upcoming fiscal year for presentation, possible modification, and adoption at the Annual Meeting.

B. Moderator

The Moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year and be eligible for reelection without restriction. He/she shall preside at all congregational meetings and shall be a member of the Council. In the absence of the Moderator, a member of the Council will be designated as Moderator Pro Tem.

C. Clerk

The Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for the term of one year and be eligible for reelection without restriction. He/she shall attend all meetings of this church and the Council and keep accurate records thereof and shall perform all other duties incident to his/her office. He/she shall provide the church office with duplicate records of all clerk records. All original papers showing the organization of this church shall be maintained by the church office and stored in a protected place, along with all official church records.

He/she shall keep a register of all members of this church with dates of admission and membership status change, record baptisms and deaths and make a full report to this church at its Annual Meeting. He/she shall notify all persons who have been elected at the annual meeting. He/she shall give proper notice of all official meetings of this church. In the absence of the Clerk at any meeting, the Moderator shall choose a Clerk Pro Tem.

D. Treasurer

The office of Treasurer may be held by one or two persons. If held by two, one should perform the functions of comptroller and be a voting member of the Council. The other person will perform the function of bookkeeper and be an ex-officio member of the Council.

The Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting, shall hold office for one year and be eligible for reelection without restriction. He/she/they shall receive and keep account of all money of this church,

received and disbursed in accordance with the direction of the Council. He/she/they shall have the custody of all securities and deeds, contracts and other business papers of the church, except those retained by the Council and the records of the Clerk. He/she/they shall, at reasonable intervals, report to each contributor the amount received to date. He/she/they shall take charge of all offerings and special collections.

Under the direction of the Council, he/she/they shall sign, seal, and deliver in the name of the church, all deeds of real estate and other instruments conveying property or other contracts, or obligations of this church. At the Annual Meeting and at Council meetings he/she/they shall present a report on the financial condition of this church.

ARTICLE VI: DIACONATE

Section 1: Deacons

There shall be nine Deacons, all of whom shall be members of the church. They shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for one year and be eligible for reelection without restriction. The Diaconate shall annually elect two of their members to serve as Co-Chair at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting.

The Diaconate shall select one member to serve on the Council, and one each to serve on the Pastoral Relations Team, the Congregational Engagement Team and the Community Engagement Team each year.

The Diaconate shall assist the Pastor in the exercise of worship, the administration of the sacraments and any services held on church grounds. They shall cooperate with him/her in promoting the spiritual life and overall program of the church and shall meet for that purpose. The Diaconate shall greet new visitors and welcome them to the church and church school. The Diaconate, along with the Council, shall confer with the Pastor on uses of the sanctuary.

Section 2: Deacon Emeritus

The Diaconate may, by unanimous agreement, nominate a former member of the Diaconate as a Deacon Emeritus. Such nominations shall be on the basis of having performed outstanding service to the church as a member of the Diaconate and shall be submitted to the church membership for vote at any regular or special meeting of such membership. The person so honored shall retain the title for life and may participate in the duties of an active member of the Diaconate if he/she desires. He/she may attend all meetings of the Diaconate in an advisory role but shall not have a vote in any of the Diaconate's deliberations.

ARTICLE VII: TEAMS

There will be four teams consisting of the Church Support Team, the Congregational Engagement Team, the Community Engagement Team and the Pastoral Relations Team.

There will be five core members of the first three teams, the Church Support Team, the Congregational Engagement Team and the Community Engagement Team, all of whom shall be members of the church. The core members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a one-year term and will be eligible for

reelections without restrictions. The members of the team shall annually elect a Chair. Additionally, one member of the team will serve as a representative to the Council but must not already be a member of the Council. Teams shall meet as needed. Additional membership will be flexible/fluid and extra team members shall be recruited for specific projects or purposes. When proposed by members, ad hoc teams can be formed and dissolved as needed upon approval of the Council.

The fourth team, the Pastoral Relations Team, shall consist of four members. A representative from the Council, a representative from the Deacons and two members elected at-large who shall be members of the church. The team shall elect its chairperson. The at-large members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a one-year term and will be eligible for reelections without restrictions.

Section 1: Church Support Team

The responsibility of the Church Support Team will include such things as assisting in fiscal management, memorial donations, stewardship, campus care and marketing and communications.

The Church Support Team is accountable to the Council.

Details of the team's responsibilities are delineated in the Church Support Team Handbook.

Section 2: Congregational Engagement Team

The responsibility of the Congregational Engagement Team will include such things as developing programs, and in assisting in areas such as visitation, music, worship, fellowship, hospitality, prayer, faith formation, scholarship, and nomination.

Details of the team responsibilities are delineated in the Congregational Engagement Team Handbook.

Section 3: Community Engagement Team

The responsibility of the Community Engagement Team will include such things as developing Christian mission both locally and globally, community outreach and connections, strengthening our bond with the wider church and performing public relations.

Details of the team responsibilities are delineated in the Community Engagement Team Handbook.

Section 4: Pastoral Relations Team

The Pastoral Relations Team seeks to support and maintain an open and productive relationship between the pastor and the members of the Church. This would include identifying and supporting the needs and concerns of the pastor and the members and resolving misunderstandings and disagreements in either direction. This Team will help the pastor and members of the church share ideas, and it shall serve as the framework in which conflict can be dealt with creatively.

The Pastoral Relations Team shall meet with the pastor at least twice a year. It may receive information in confidence, and its meetings may be closed to persons other than those the Pastoral Relations Team chooses to invite.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

Section 1: Annual Meetings

The Annual Meeting of this church shall be held on the last Sunday in January each year following worship service. At this meeting there shall be presented the yearly reports of the officers, teams, and organizations of this church. Officers, core team members, and at-large members, as provided above, shall be elected at this time and other necessary business shall be transacted. Nominations for candidates for office can be made from the floor at this meeting.

Section 2: Special Meetings

Special Meetings of this church shall be called by the Clerk at the request of the Pastor, the Council, or five members of this church. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in The Call.

Section 3: Notices of Meetings

Written notices of all Annual and Special Meetings should be posted on the church bulletin board, disseminated through electronic communication and shall be announced from the pulpit at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 4: Minutes of Meetings

The Council, the Diaconate, and all the teams are responsible for recording minutes of all meetings and submitting a quarterly and annual report to the office.

Section 5: Quorum for Annual and Special Congregational Meetings

A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of ten percent (10%) of the total current active membership as given in the latest January report to the New Hampshire Conference. A majority vote shall be sufficient in all cases except as otherwise indicated in these Bylaws.

Section 6: Ex-Officio

An ex-officio member shall have a voice but shall have no vote.

ARTICLE IX: OFFICIAL YEAR

The official fiscal year of this church shall begin on the 1st day of January in each year, while elected terms begin at the close of the annual meeting.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended, altered or repealed upon request of Officers/Team Chairs/church members after being brought to any regularly scheduled Council meeting for possible modification and acceptance. These changes may then be approved with a two-thirds vote of qualified members present at the Annual Meeting or any other legally called special congregational meeting, providing the notice of a/the proposed amendment(s) was/were given in the Call for such a meeting.

End of Official Bylaws of the Atkinson Congregational Church

Effective Date of Last Revision: 9/16/2018