



Christ Church United Bylaws  
Effective September 24, 2023

Contents

**Article 1 – Name** 1

**Article 2 – Purpose** 1

**Article 3 – Membership** 2

1. Membership Categories..... 2

    A. Spiritual Member..... 2

    B. Sustaining Member..... 2

2. New Members..... 2

3. Termination of Membership..... 2

4. Annual Membership Review..... 3

**Article 4 – Officers** 3

1. Moderator..... 3

2. Treasurer..... 3

3. Clerk..... 4

4. Financial Secretary..... 4

**Article 5 – Team Leads** 4

1. Faith Formation Lead..... 4

2. Innovation Lead..... 5

3. Community Lead..... 5

4. Property Lead..... 5

**Article 6 – Leadership Council** 5

1. Leadership Council Membership..... 5

2. Leadership Council Responsibilities..... 5

3. Member-at-Large..... 6

**Article 7 - Teams** 6

**Article 8 – Church Employees** 7

**Article 9 Meetings and Services** 7

1. Meetings..... 7

2. Services..... 8

**Article 10 – Pastor** 8

1. Requirements..... 8

2. Pastoral Vacancy..... 8

3. Involuntary Termination of the Pastor.....	9
<b>Article 11 - Governance</b>	<b>9</b>
1. Governing Body.....	9
2. Meeting Governance.....	9
3. Financial Account Signatories.....	9
4. Bylaws Amending.....	10
5. Fiscal Year.....	10
6. Fiscal Year Budget.....	10
7. Church Merger.....	10
<b>Article 12 – CCU Dracut Meeting Rules of Order</b>	<b>11</b>
1. Chairperson.....	11
2. Clerk.....	11
3. Meeting Progression.....	11
4. Motions and Amendments.....	12
5. Appeal Ruling of the Chairperson.....	12
6. Participants Responsibilities.....	13
7. Requesting Points.....	13
8. Executive Session.....	13
9. Cheat Sheet.....	15
<b>Bylaws Change Record</b>	<b>16</b>

## Article 1 – Name

The name of the church is Christ Church United, located in Dracut, Massachusetts. Christ Church United is part of the United Church of Christ.

## Article 2 – Purpose

The purpose of Christ Church United, a congregation of the United Church of Christ, is to worship and serve God; to teach and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ; to celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion; and, with the aid of Scripture and the Holy Spirit to offer fellowship and provide loving service and ministry to all people within this community and throughout the world.

The church recognizes the current United Church of Christ Statement of Faith as a guide to the practice of its faith and ministry.

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you, forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

## Article 3 – Membership

Membership in Christ Church United is open to all who have been baptized and confirmed or has made public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

There are two categories of membership in the church.

### 1. Membership Categories

#### A. Spiritual Member

- 1) Claims Christ Church United as their church.
- 2) Prays for the well-being of the church.
- 3) Attends congregational meetings having voice without vote.

#### B. Sustaining Member

- 1) Frequently attends the worship services of the church (in person or remotely).
- 2) Provides support by donating time, talent, and/or treasure to the church.
- 3) Attends congregational meetings having voice and vote.

### 2. New Members

A. New members will be recommended by the Pastor and approved by vote of the Leadership Council. They must also meet at least one of the following:

- 1) On presentation of satisfactory letter of transfer
- 2) By reaffirmation of faith
- 3) On confession of faith
- 4) Through the Act of Confirmation

B. New members will be presented to the congregation during worship services.

### 3. Termination of Membership

A person's membership in the church ceases under the following circumstances:

- A. By letter of transfer. A member wishing to transfer membership to another church shall request such a transfer from the Pastor, Clerk, or the Leadership Council.
- B. By letter of resignation. A member wishing to resign from membership may do so by notifying the Pastor, Clerk, or the Leadership Council in

writing. This action shall be reported to the Clerk who will write a letter of dismissal from membership to the member resigning.

- C. By vote of the Leadership Council for not fulfilling the requirements of their membership category or does not uphold the behavioral covenant.
- D. By death.

#### 4. Annual Membership Review

Six months prior to the annual meeting, the Pastor, Faith Formation Lead and Financial Secretary, will review the category of each member and will present a recommended Membership List to the Leadership Council. The Leadership Council will review and approve the new Membership List.

Any member whose membership category has been adjusted will be notified in writing. That member will have the ability to request a different membership category from the Leadership Council.

## Article 4 – Officers

Officers are elected for a one(1)-year term, at the Annual Congregational Leadership and Budget meeting. Officers may serve for up to five (5) consecutive terms. The officers shall:

- 1. Oversee the well-being of the church.
- 2. Be Sustaining Members of the church.
- 3. Be listed on the annual report that is filed with the Massachusetts Secretary of State Office.
- 4. Vet all prospective staff members and provide human resource oversight.

### 1. Moderator

The Moderator will strive to be well informed of the health and well-being of the Congregation. The Moderator shall:

- A. Preside as Chairperson at Leadership Council meetings.
- B. Preside as Chairperson at all Congregational meetings.
- C. Understand CCU Dracut Meeting Rules of Order.

### 2. Treasurer

The Treasurer is tasked with watching over the financial aspects of the church. The Treasurer shall:

- A. Work closely with the Financial Secretary to ensure that all giving is recorded in the correct funds of the church.
- B. Pay all bills of the church, in accordance with the Operating and Mission budget approved by the congregation and as directed by the appropriate Team Lead or the Leadership Council.

- C. Be responsible for the payroll of the church, including processing weekly payroll and filing required state and federal tax documentation.
- D. Provide a monthly financial report to the Leadership Council and Congregation.
- E. Working with direction from the Leadership Council, create a yearly budget for the church.
- F. Present a yearly financial report to the congregation.
- G. File all state and federal financial reports as required.
- H. Support annual financial audit by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party.

### 3. Clerk

- A. The Clerk will maintain an accurate record of all Leadership meetings, special meetings and annual meetings of the church.
- B. Will maintain an accurate record of members of the church, including the date of reception and/or removal.
- C. Maintains accurate records of all baptisms, weddings, and deaths.
- D. Issue letters of transfer of membership when requested.
- E. Act as the custodian of all permanent records of the church.
- F. File the Annual Report with the Massachusetts Secretary of State Office.

### 4. Financial Secretary

- A. Maintains a record of all pledging units.
- B. Acknowledges all contributions to operating, missions, second mile, and memorial donations.
- C. Provides semi-annual and annual acknowledgement reports to pledging units of monies contributed.
- D. Maintains a record of and reports all offerings and donations as appropriate.
- E. Maintains confidentiality of those who contribute financially.
- F. Works to form Counting Teams to record the weekly giving of the congregation.

## Article 5 – Team Leads

Team Leads will serve as voting members of the Leadership Council alongside the Officers. Team Leads will be elected from Sustaining Members.

### 1. Faith Formation Lead

The Faith Formation Lead shall work with Teams that are formed to support the following:

- A. Worship Services.
- B. Spiritual care of the congregation in coordination with the Pastor,



- C. Care of the sanctuary.
- D. Faith formation of adults.
- E. Faith formation of children and youth.

## 2. Innovation Lead

The Innovation Lead shall work with Teams that are formed to support the following:

- A. Maintaining and growing technology
- B. Creativity and innovation
- C. Work in partnership with the Property Lead

## 3. Community Lead

The Community Lead shall work with Teams that are formed to support the following:

- A. Partnering with our Community to fulfill our mission
- B. Caring for the people in our local and global community

## 4. Property Lead

The Property Lead shall work with Teams that are formed to support the following:

- A. Maintenance and improvements of the church properties
- B. Creative and Innovative use of the church properties
- C. Work in partnership with the Innovation Lead

# Article 6 – Leadership Council

The Leadership Council is responsible for the overall health of the church. The council will work together to oversee the spiritual and business well-being of Christ Church United.

## 1. Leadership Council Membership

The Leadership Council will be made up of the four Officers, the four Team Leads, Member at Large, and the Pastor who will be a non-voting, ex-officio member. An individual may only hold one(1) position on the Leadership Council; however, they may participate in any number of Teams.

## 2. Leadership Council Responsibilities

- A. Work closely with the congregation to create and execute the vision of the church.
- B. Meet regularly to conduct the business of the church. Voting at a meeting requires a minimum of five (5) members of the Leadership Council to be present.



- C. Create and maintain written Policies and Procedures to cover all areas of the church.
- D. Responsible for all paid positions of the church.
  - 1. The Leadership Council is responsible for hiring, supervising, and terminating all paid positions, except for the Pastor (see Article 12).
- E. Creating and presenting a yearly budget to the congregation for approval.
- F. Approve contracts not to exceed three (3) years. Contracts over three (3) years must be presented to the congregation for a vote.
- G. Ensure a yearly audit of the church's financial records is completed and presented.
- H. In the event an Officer or Lead position is vacant, the Leadership Council will appoint someone to fill that vacancy until a permanent replacement can be voted on by the congregation.
- I. Appoint delegates to represent the congregation at Northeast Association and Southern New England Conference Meetings and a Ecclesiastical Councils and Ordinations.
- J. Ensure clear personnel policies and procedures are available to staff.
- K. Arrange for an annual financial audit by a 3rd party.

### 3. Member-at-Large

The Member-at-Large is a Sustaining Member, whose role brings the perspective of the congregation to the Leadership Council.

## Article 7 - Teams

Christ Church United knows that the key to having a vibrant healthy church is the volunteerism done by the members of the congregation. Volunteers provide vital services throughout the church, from spiritual, educational, community outreach, upkeep, and administrative. Without volunteers, many functions of the church would not be done.

The congregation understands that it is difficult for people to commit to volunteering for long terms. Christ Church United has adopted a Teams organizational system, around volunteerism, to better engage the congregation around their passions for the ministry of the church.

- 1. Team System:
  - A. Teams are formed to fulfill the mission and vision of the church.
  - B. Any two (2) or more Sustaining Members of the congregation can request to form a Team. The requests to form a team and any

physical and financial resources needed are made to the appropriate Team Lead.

- C. Anyone can join a Team once it is formed.
- D. Teams do not have set terms but the Leadership Council may request people joining certain teams to endeavor to commit for one (1) year.
- E. Teams are not required to keep minutes, elect a chairperson, or have policies and procedures but may do so at their discretion.
- F. If funding is provided, Teams shall follow the Leadership Council's Policies and Procedures.
- G. Teams will communicate their progress to their assigned Team Lead monthly.

## Article 8 – Church Employees

The Leadership Council is responsible for recruiting, hiring, supervising, and terminating all paid staff except for Clergy.

- 1. The Leadership Council will provide written job descriptions that provide clear definitions of roles and responsibilities and reporting requirements.
- 2. The Leadership Council will ensure there is a written annual review of each employee's job performance.
- 3. All staff will receive fair and equitable compensation.
- 4. Personnel policies will be defined in an employee handbook.
- 5. Members of the church cannot be employees, except for clergy. Any member who is currently employed on or before July 1, 2023, is grandfathered.

## Article 9 Meetings and Services

### 1. Meetings

- ~~A.~~ Christ Church United shall hold a minimum of one (1) congregational meeting each year. The meeting will be to discuss and approve the annual budget, Officers, and Team Leads.
- B. A quorum consisting of 20% of the Sustaining Members of the congregation is necessary to conduct official church business.
- C. Special meetings of the congregation may be requested by vote of the Leadership Council, Pastor, or in writing by 10% of the Sustaining Members of the congregation.
- D. The Clerk will post a written notice of all congregational meetings in the narthex and on the church's side door entrance, 14 days before the meeting. The notice will also be read during regular Sunday worship and communicated to the church. The notice will state the purpose and agenda of the meeting.

- E. A majority vote shall be decisive unless otherwise stipulated in the ByLaws.
- F. The Leadership Council will decide upon absentee or electronic voting at the beginning of each fiscal year.

## 2. Services

- A. Worship services shall be held at a regularly scheduled time.
- B. Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion shall be administered as determined by the Pastor and the Faith Formation Lead.
- C. Special services may be arranged in consultation with the Pastor.

## Article 10 – Pastor

The Pastor shall be both preacher and teacher, administering the sacraments and fulfilling the pastoral office according to the faith and order of the United Church of Christ.

### 1. Requirements

- A. Shall be an ordained minister whose ministerial standing has been authorized by the Northeast Association of the Southern New England Conference (SNEUCC) of the United Church of Christ.
- B. Shall preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, lead in worship, and assist in providing a warm and welcoming fellowship by developing and initiating programs for the spiritual benefit of the congregation and community.
- C. Shall be available to people who need pastoral support.
- D. Shall seek to know the people of the church.
- E. Shall assist the church in fulfilling its covenantal responsibility to the wider church and community.
- F. Shall have knowledge of the total program of the church and be a Sustaining Member without vote.
- G. Additional requirements will be identified in the Pastoral Call Agreement.

### 2. Pastoral Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs in the Pastorate:

- A. The Leadership Council shall act to provide continuation of religious services.
- B. The Leadership Council shall work with the SNEUCC to find and covenant with a qualified Transitional Interim Minister. The candidate may come from any UCC Conference so long as they are authorized to circulate a valid Ministerial Profile.
- C. The Leadership Council shall initiate action to form Teams which will be charged with the responsibility of updating the Church Profile and selecting a candidate to recommend to the congregation for Settled Pastor. The Teams

- will follow the current recommended denominational procedure for the selection of a candidate, i.e. Search & Call process.
- D. When the Team has a candidate to present to the congregation, the Leadership Council will call a special congregational meeting for the purpose of voting to call the candidate to be the church's Settled Pastor. There must be at least a three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) majority vote of the Sustaining Members present, to extend a call to become the Settled Pastor.

### 3. Involuntary Termination of the Pastor

In the event the Leadership Council determines a Pastor no longer serves the needs of the church:

- A. The Leadership Council, (excluding the Pastor) following a vote of seven (7) of the nine (9) members (Moderator has a vote) will recommend terminating the Pastor to the congregation.
- B. The Leadership Council will call a Special Congregational Meeting for the purpose of recommending terminating the Pastor's call. There must be at least a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) majority vote of the Sustaining Members present, to terminate the call.

## Article 11 - Governance

### 1. Governing Body

The Congregation is the ultimate governing body of Christ Church United. Any powers not granted to the Leadership Council by these By-Laws are reserved to the majority vote of the congregation.

### 2. Meeting Governance

Congregational and Leadership Council meetings will be conducted in accordance with the "CCU Dracut Meeting Rules of Order."

### 3. Financial Account Signatories

- A. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary will be the only signatories to the church's checking/saving accounts.
- B. The Moderator and Clerk will be the only signatories to the church's investment accounts.
- C. No person shall be a signatory to both the checking/saving and the investment accounts.
- D. Immediate family members or significant others cannot be signatory on the checking/saving and the investment accounts.
- E. The Pastor cannot be a signatory on any church accounts, except if a special Pastor's Discretionary bank account is established.

- F. The Pastor's family or significant other cannot be a signatory on any church accounts.

#### 4. Bylaws Amending

- A. The Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Sustaining Members present and voting at any special or general business meeting of the church, provided notice of the proposed amendment(s) are given on the warrant for the meeting as outlined in Article 9.

#### 5. Fiscal Year

- A. The Fiscal Year of the church will run from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> of the next calendar year.

#### 6. Fiscal Year Budget

- A. The Leadership Council can exceed the total yearly budget amount approved by the congregation at the yearly Budget Meeting by 5%. Any amount in excess of 5% will require a special meeting of the congregation to approve the additional funds.

#### 7. Church Merger

There may come a time that Christ Church United decides to explore merging with another church. The minimum steps required to complete a merger are as follows:

- A. The Leadership Council will notify the congregation about the interest to merge.
- B. The Leadership Council will form a Team to gather information about what the merged organization may look like. This Team will report back to the Leadership Council.
- C. A special congregational meeting will be held to update the congregation on the information gathered and to collect the thoughts of the congregation.
- D. An attorney will be hired to review any merger documentation and to review any legal impact.
- E. The Leadership Counsel will consult the Conferences of each church.
- F. Once all details and legal reviews have been finalized, a second Congregational Meeting will be held to call a vote of the Sustaining Members. The vote must pass by two-thirds (2/3) to approve the merger.

# Article 12 – CCU Dracut Meeting Rules of Order

## 1. Chairperson

- A. The Moderator will act as Chairperson for all Congregational Meetings and Leadership Council Meetings. In the event the Moderator cannot make a meeting, or the position is vacant, the Leadership Council will appoint a Chairperson before the meeting begins. The Chairperson responsibilities are as follows:
- 1) To open the meeting at the stated time and call the members to order.
  - 2) Call for an opening prayer.
  - 3) Ask the Clerk to validate that there is a quorum for the meeting.
  - 4) Announce the Warrant of the meeting in the order in which it is to be acted upon.
  - 5) Recognize members entitled to the floor.
  - 6) Call a motion/amendment to vote after discussion is completed.
  - 7) Maintain an orderly meeting, within these Rules of Order.
  - 8) Decide all questions of order (subject to an appeal).
  - 9) Call for a Motion to Adjourn.

## 2. Clerk

- A. The Clerk is the recording officer of all Congregational and Leadership Council meetings. In the event the Clerk cannot attend a meeting, or the position is vacant, the Leadership Council will appoint a Clerk before the meeting begins. The Clerk's responsibilities are as follows:
- 1) Record all aspects of the meeting including.
  - 2) Motion details
  - 3) Amendment Details
  - 4) Vote Results
  - 5) Validate that there is a quorum for voting at the meeting.

## 3. Meeting Progression

- A. The Chairperson will call the meeting to order and request an opening prayer.
- B. The Clerk will validate that the meeting meets a quorum to authorize voting during the meeting.
- C. The Chairperson will announce the Warrant/Agenda of the meeting.
- D. The meeting will progress through the Warrant/Agenda with motions, amendments, and voting on specific Warrant/Agenda items.
- E. Each meeting will have a New Business section that allows members to raise any new business. No voting is allowed on New Business items.
- F. The Chairperson will determine when discussion on the Warrant/Agenda has been completed and call for a motion to adjourn.

#### 4. Motions and Amendments

Motions and Amendments are made to allow meeting members to consider an item for vote. Motions, amendments, and voting, may be made by any Sustaining Member during a Congregational meeting. Motions and amendments proceed as follows:

- A. A Sustaining Member will be recognized by the Chairperson and they make their motion. To make a motion the member says, ***“I move that....”***
- B. Once a Motion is made, the Chairperson will call for another Sustaining Member to Second the Motion. A Second is needed to proceed with the motion.
- C. Once another Sustaining Member seconds the motion, the Chairperson will call for discussion on the motion. During discussion, individuals will be recognized by the Chairperson to speak.
- D. During discussion, any Sustaining Member may be recognized by the Chairperson, and move that the motion under consideration be amended. To make an amendment, the member says "I move that this motion be amended by..."
  - 1) Once a motion to amend is made, the Chairperson will suspend all discussions on the original motion and request a Sustaining Member to second the amendment.
  - 2) Once a second is made to the amendment, the Chairperson will call for discussion on the motion to amend.
  - 3) Once the Chairperson determines discussion has completed, the Chairperson will call for a vote of Sustaining Members.
  - 4) The vote will be recorded and if it passes, the original motion will be amended.
- E. Discussion on the original/amended motion will resume.
- F. Once the Chairperson determines discussion has completed, the Chairperson will call for a vote of Sustaining Members.
- G. The vote results will be recorded.

#### 5. Appeal Ruling of the Chairperson

Any Sustaining Member may appeal the ruling of the Chairperson. To appeal the ruling:

- A. A Sustaining Member does not need to be recognized and will state, ***“I appeal the Chair’s decision”*** and state the decision being appealed.
- B. The Chairperson will stop all other discussions and call for a second on the appeal motion.
- C. If there is a second, discussion of the appeal starts with the Chairperson stating the reason for their decision. Sustaining Members will be recognized for discussion.
- D. Once the Chairperson determines discussion has completed, the Chairperson will call for a vote of Sustaining Members.



- E. The vote will be recorded and if it passes, the decision of the Chairperson is overruled.

## 6. Participants Responsibilities

- A. All meeting individuals will conduct themselves in a manner and in accordance with the church's Behavioral Covenant
- B. All meeting members will be recognized by the Chairperson before speaking unless these rules state otherwise.
- C. All members will follow the rules of the meeting (i.e., waiting for microphone before speaking)

## 7. Requesting Points

- A. **Point of Order:** Draws attention to a breach of rules, improper procedure, breaching of established practices, etc.
  - 1) The individual states their Point of Order. Does not need to be recognized by the Chairperson.
- B. **Point of Information:** An individual may need to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a non-debatable statement) so that the other Sustaining Members can make fully informed votes.
  - 1) The individual states their Point of Information. Does not need to be recognized by the Chairperson.
- C. **Point of Inquiry:** An individual may use Point of Inquiry to ask for clarification to make better voting decisions.
  - 1) The individual states their Point of Inquiry. Does not need to be recognized by the Chairperson.
- D. **Point of Personal Privilege:** An individual may use Point of Personal Privilege to address the physical comfort of the setting such as temperature or noise. Individuals may also use it to address the accuracy of published reports or the accuracy of a participant's conduct.
  - 1) The individual states their Point of Personal Privilege. Does not need to be recognized by the Chairperson.

## 8. Executive Session

During a Leadership Council Meeting, if a confidential issue arises that requires discussion, a member of the Leadership Council can make a motion to go into Executive Session. The process and rules of Executive Session are as follows:

- A. A member of the Leadership Council makes a motion to enter Executive Session by saying "I move that we enter Executive Session".

- 1) The Chairperson will ask for a second on the motion.
  - 2) If there is a Second, the Chairperson calls for a vote. If a majority of members vote in the affirmative, the Leadership Council is in Executive Session.
- B. Discussions in Executive Sessions are confidential, and no minutes are kept.
- C. Discussions in Executive Session cannot be shared later with anyone outside of Executive Session.
- D. Only Leadership Council members can attend the Executive Session. The Leadership Council may vote to include individuals with pertinent information.
- E. To exit Executive Session, a member of the Leadership Council makes a motion to exit Executive Session by saying “I move that we exit Executive Session”.
- 1) The Chairperson will ask for a Second on the motion.
  - 2) If there is a Second, the Chairperson calls for a vote. If a majority of members vote in the affirmative, the Leadership Council has exited Executive Session.

## 9. Cheat Sheet

To	You Say	Need to be Reconized by Chairperson	Second Needed	Debateable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Motion	"I move that..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority unless Bylaws requires a different percentage
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Point of Order	"Point of order"	No	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Point of Information	"Point of information"	No	No	No	No	None
Point of Inquiry	"Point of Inquiry"	No	No	No	No	None
Point of Perosnal Privilege (Complain about noise, room temp. etc.)	"Point of privilege"	No	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Appeal Chairperson Decision	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Enter/Exit Executive Session	"I move that we enter/exit executive session"	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority

## Bylaws Change Record

Change Date	Changes Approved
09/24/2023	Previous Bylaws dissolved and these Bylaws adopted effective 09/24/2023