

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SALISBURY, UCC  
Salisbury, Connecticut

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this Church shall be “The Congregational Church of Salisbury, UCC”. It is a member congregation of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ in the love of God and of neighbor through the worship of God in Christ, the development of Christian character and fellowship and the extension of the principles of the Christian faith.

ARTICLE III

POLITY

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its Head. It is Congregational in its polity, i.e., the congregation is the governing body.

It cherishes the bonds of fellowship and mutual ministry which bind it to other churches. Therefore this Church is a member of the United Church of Christ, the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Litchfield North Association of the United Church of Christ and shall be represented in the activities of these bodies.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

**Section A - Membership**

Membership in this Church is open to all baptized Christians who in covenanting with this congregation support The Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ (1981) and the current Mission Statement of this congregation. Membership in this church shall not preclude persons from retaining or initiating member status elsewhere.

**Section B - Admission to Membership**

Persons may become members by confession of faith, letter of transfer from another church or reaffirmation of faith. Any person seeking membership in the church shall signify his or her intention to the Pastor or a Deacon. After personal consultation, the Pastor shall present the name(s) to the Deacons for reception into membership. Persons being received into membership shall confess their faith in Jesus Christ and declare their purpose to live a Christian life. They

shall receive the right hand of fellowship at a regular service of worship or, in case of extraordinary circumstances, at some other time at the discretion of the Pastor.

### **Section C - Expectations of Members**

Members promise, with the help of God, to contribute and participate in the life and mission of this family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this Church as it serves this community and the world.

### **Section D - Termination of Membership**

1. Any member requesting to leave this Church and join another Christian church shall be granted a letter of transfer signed by the Pastor or the Clerk who shall report such termination to the Church Council.
2. Any member who requests termination of membership in writing without transfer to another Christian church will be granted such request by the Church Council.
3. On the first Sunday in June a special service will be devoted to having members of the church renew their covenant with one another. In preparation for that service, all church members will be contacted by email or letter to determine whether they wish to renew their membership covenant. Church members need not be present for this service but will be included in the covenant renewal. New members will be received at this service.

### **Section E - Voting**

Members in good standing may vote in meetings of the congregation. The Clerk shall be responsible for tabulating properly cast votes.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **MEETINGS**

All meetings of the congregation, the Church Council and the boards and committees shall include prayer and shall stress thoughtful deliberation of church policy and appropriate study to keep the church mindful of its mission.

### **Section A - For Worship**

1. The Church shall meet for worship each Sunday at a time determined by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.
2. The Sacrament of Communion shall be administered at the morning service of worship on the first Sunday of each month and/or at such other times as the Board of Deacons may determine.
3. The Sacrament of Baptism shall be administered at such times and places as the Pastor or the Board of Deacons may determine.
4. Other services for worship, inspiration, prayer and study may be held as determined by the Pastor or the Board of Deacons.

## **Section B – Congregational Meetings**

1. The Church shall meet at least twice yearly. Twenty percent (20%) of the members of the Church shall constitute a quorum, except as noted in the Bylaws. A lesser number may adjourn a meeting to a fixed date. Notice of meetings shall be given from the pulpit and printed in the Sunday worship bulletin and the newsletter. A written agenda of the items to be discussed shall be electronically communicated and/or mailed to all members no later than two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Items of business that need immediate attention may be introduced at any Church meeting unless objection is made and is sustained by one-third of the members present.
2. The program year of the Church, and the terms of all elected officers and committee members, shall commence on June 1 and end on May 31.
3. The Annual Meeting shall be held on the last Sunday of April to receive annual reports of officers, boards and committees; to elect officers and committees and to act upon other such business as shall properly come before the meeting.
4. The fiscal year of the Church shall be the calendar year.
5. A budget meeting shall be held in the month of October to adopt the annual budget and to act upon other such business as shall properly come before the meeting.
6. Special meetings shall be called by the Clerk upon request of the Pastor, the Church Council, or a petition signed by no fewer than twenty percent (20%) of the members of the Church, stating the purpose of the proposed meeting. The Clerk shall schedule the special meeting no later than two (2) weeks from the date of the request or the receipt of the petition.
7. Except where specifically stipulated to the contrary in the Constitution and Bylaws, the vote of the majority of members present and voting at a church meeting shall be required to approve a motion of this church.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **OFFICERS AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERS**

#### **PREAMBLE**

The officers, all of whom shall be members, shall be the ordained Pastor, the Moderator, the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk, the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer. All officers with the exception of the Pastor shall serve for the following terms: the Moderator for two years and for not more than three consecutive terms; the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk for two years and for not more than three consecutive terms; the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer for two years, and for not more than four consecutive terms. After election to an unexpired term a person may be eligible for the full number of terms specified above. The Moderator, Treasurer and the Chair of the Trustees may sign legal and financial documents for the Church.

Professional leaders of this Church may be hired to staff Christian education, music, and/or other aspect of parish ministry as may be determined by the appropriate board or committee and as approved by the Church Council.

## Officers

### Section A - The Ordained Pastor

The Pastor is called by the congregation and is responsible to the congregation and its needs as expressed in congregational meetings and/or by its appropriate boards or committees. The Pastor shall be ordained with full pastoral standing in the Association to which this Church belongs. The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church with the assistance of the Board of Deacons. S/he shall seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the sacraments of baptism and communion, have under his/her direction all services of public worship and administer the activities of the Church in cooperation with the boards and committees. S/he shall be an *ex-officio* member of all boards and committees, with voice but without vote. The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time. When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the Church Council shall authorize the Board of Deacons to present a slate of names to the Council for nomination to a Pastoral Search Committee. The Church Council is authorized to appoint a Pastoral Search Committee of no fewer than seven no more than twelve members. It may add to or delete from the slate presented by the Board of Deacons. The final slate shall be approved at a congregational meeting.

The Search Committee shall present to the congregation the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. The congregation, at a duly called meeting at which forty percent (40%) of members shall constitute a quorum, shall then determine by at least an eighty-five percent (85%) vote of those present and voting whether it wishes to call the candidate recommended.

In the call the conditions of the pastoral relationship shall be stated. The Pastor, the members of the church, and the Church and Ministry Committee of the Litchfield North Association shall receive a copy of the call. When the Minister accepts a call s/he and the Capital Church may request the Litchfield North Association of the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, to arrange a service of installation.

While the term of the Pastor shall be indefinite, the Church may, by a majority vote at an Annual Meeting or special congregational meeting duly called for the purpose, request his/her resignation with the expectation that it will be presented within ninety days. Likewise, the Pastor shall give at least ninety days' notice if s/he wishes to resign.

### Section B - Interim Pastor

In the event of a prolonged pastoral vacancy, the Church Council will direct the Board of Deacons to appoint a committee to secure the services of an Interim Pastor. The Trustees will recommend and the Church Council shall have final approval of the Interim Pastor's contract.

The Interim Pastor shall be an ordained person in good standing in the United Church of Christ or a partner denomination. Preference shall be given to those with formal training and experience in intentional interim ministry.

The Interim Pastor shall have all the rights and privileges granted to the Pastor of the Church, except those rights that require Church membership. The Interim Pastor shall not be a candidate for the settled position, and a statement to this effect shall be included in her/his contract with the Church. If desired by the Search Committee, the Interim Pastor may assist them in matters relating to committee function or development of the church's profile or the interviewing and evaluating of prospective candidates.

### **Section C - Moderator**

The Moderator shall preside at the Annual Meeting of the Church, at any special meeting of the Church, and at all meetings of the Church Council of which s/he shall be a member with voice and vote. In consultation with the Pastor, the Moderator shall be responsible for the drawing up of the agenda for the meeting at which s/he is to preside. The Moderator shall be an *ex-officio* member with voice but without vote of all boards and committees of the Church.

The office of the Moderator shall be filled at the Annual Meeting of the Church. In the event of the Moderator's absence, the Pastor or Clerk may call the meeting to order and a moderator *pro-tempore* shall be elected for that meeting. The Moderator shall act, along with the Pastor, as a link between the Church Council and the congregation and between the Church Council and the Pastor. S/he is to be responsible for the implementation of the Bylaws, actions taken by meetings of the congregation and of the Church Council.

### **Section D – Clerk and Assistant Clerk**

The Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church. S/he shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the Church and of the Church Council, of which s/he shall be a member, *ex-officio*, with vote, and its Secretary. S/he with the assistance of the office staff shall keep a register with addresses of the members of the church, with dates and modes of their reception and removal; also a record of baptisms, marriages and deaths. S/he shall issue letters of transfer. S/he shall direct office staff to preserve on file all written official reports and communications, notify all persons elected to offices and committees, 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 other duties as are prescribed by law or as usually pertain to the office of Clerk or Secretary of an assembly.

The Assistant Clerk shall perform these duties in the absence of the clerk.

### **Section E - Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall receive all monies belonging to the Church and keep accurate records of all operating, endowment, special funds, securities, receipts and disbursements of the Church. S/he shall act as an agent of the Board of Trustees and shall act as the Trustees direct to maintain the investment accounts of the Church. The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be credited to the Church, all investment income in such manner as the Board of Trustees shall direct. S/he shall promptly pay all bills and salaries as directed by the Board of Trustees, disburse the monies received from special funds and outreach funds in accordance with the orders of the board or committee which is charged with the collection and disbursement of such funds. The Treasurer shall disburse funds from the Deacons' Fund at the sole discretion of the Pastor. The Treasurer shall keep separate and accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements for each fund handled. The Treasurer shall render an accounting of the financial condition of the Church at the Annual Meeting and at other times upon request. S/he shall perform other duties as usually pertain to the office of Treasurer.

The Assistant Treasurer shall perform the duties in the absence of the Treasurer.

## **Professional Leaders**

### **Section A - Coordinator of Christian Education**

The Coordinator of Christian Education shall be a member *ex-officio* with voice but without vote of the Board of Religious Education and the Church Council and shall have responsibility for the general management of the Church School program, including teacher recruitment and training, advising the Board of Religious Education in the selection of church school curriculum, explaining theological and educational aspects of the curriculum, maintaining records and preparing reports for the Board of Religious Education, the Church Council and the annual meeting. The Coordinator will assist the Board of Religious Education in organizing family programs and other educational and related projects.

The Coordinator of Christian Education may be called to serve on the staff of the Church. The Board of Religious Education, in consultation with the Pastor, shall seek a candidate for the position and shall obtain a proposed compensation package from the Board of Trustees. The Board of Religious Education shall then present the name of the candidate it recommends to the Church Council, at which time the Council will determine by a majority vote whether or not it wishes to call the candidate and approve the proposed compensation package. In the call the Coordinator's responsibilities and compensation shall be specified. While the term of the Coordinator of Christian Education may be of indefinite duration, the Church Council, in consultation with the Pastor and the Board of Religious Education, may at any time by a majority vote at a meeting duly called for that purpose, terminate employment immediately for cause or request the incumbent's resignation with the expectation that it will be presented within sixty days. Likewise, the Coordinator of Christian Education shall give at least sixty days' notice in the event s/he wishes to resign voluntarily.

### **Section B – Director of Music**

The Director of Music shall be a member *ex-officio* with voice but without vote of the Music Committee and the Church Council and shall be responsible for the music of the church under the direction of the Pastor and the Music Committee.

The Music Committee, in consultation with the Pastor, shall seek a candidate for the position of Director of Music and shall obtain a proposed compensation package from the Board of Trustees. The Music Committee shall then present the name of the candidate it recommends to the Church Council, at which time the Council will determine by a majority vote whether or not it wishes to call the candidate and approve the proposed compensation package. While the term of the Director of Music may be of indefinite duration, the Church Council, in consultation with the Pastor and the Music Committee, may at any time by a majority vote at a meeting called for that purpose, terminate employment immediately for cause or request the incumbent's resignation with the expectation that it will be presented within sixty days. Likewise, the Director of Music shall give at least sixty days' notice in the event s/he wishes to resign voluntarily.

## **ARTICLE VII**

## COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

### PREAMBLE

Board and Committee membership is open to members and friends of the Church except the following, which must be comprised of church members: Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, Pastoral Relations Committee and Representatives to other church bodies. The terms "Board" and "Committee" are understood to have the same meaning. All Church Council members, thus all committee and board chairpersons, shall be members of the Church, with the exception of the Coordinator of Christian Education and the Director of Music.

The members of each Board and Committee (except the Council) shall be divided into three classes with one-third of the members elected to terms, which expire each year. No member shall be eligible for re-election after having served two consecutive three-year terms until at least one year has expired after the conclusion of his/her second term. After election to an unexpired term a person may be eligible for two full terms. Each Board and Committee shall elect its own chairperson(s) and secretary at its first meeting in June. Regularly scheduled meetings shall be called by the chair who shall give at least one week's notice and when appropriate, shall provide a written agenda with the call to the meeting. Special meetings may be called as needed. All meetings are open to the congregation except when confidentiality requires otherwise. Minutes of all meetings shall be sent to the members of that Committee or Board, the Pastor, the Moderator, and filed in the Church Office. A quorum shall be one-half of the voting membership.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, if a member of any Board or Committee fails to attend at least sixty percent (60%) of that body's regular meetings during any twelve-month period, the chair of the body concerned shall consult with the member to see if they wish to continue to serve. In the event of a vacancy each Board or Committee shall appoint a replacement.

### **Church Council**

The Church Council shall consist of the officers of the Church, the Pastor, the Coordinator of Christian Education, the Director of Music, all chairpersons of regular standing Boards and Committees of the Church or their designated representatives, and the chair of such other groups as the Church Council may organize and deem it appropriate to be represented on the Council. The Council shall also include three at-large members who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting, and may serve for one three year term. They shall be persons who are not otherwise members of the Council. Other members or friends of the Church may attend Church Council meetings with voice but without vote.

No person may vote for more than one Board or Committee on the Church Council. Members, excluding the Pastor, shall appoint alternates to represent them on the Church Council in the event they cannot be present at any meeting.

On behalf of the Congregation, the Church Council shall have general authority, care and oversight of the interests of the Church and shall be responsible for the overall planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the mission and ministry of the Church. It shall receive reports and take action upon recommendation of the Boards and Committees. It shall resolve any conflicts of responsibility. It shall recommend to the Trustees items for inclusion in the annual budget. In addition to the Committees provided for in these Bylaws, the Church

Council shall have the power to appoint such committees and for such terms as it deems advisable to fill any need on an *ad hoc* basis.

The Church Council shall schedule at least 6 monthly meetings per year. Special Council meetings shall be held upon the call of the Pastor, the Clerk, the Moderator, or of two members of the Council, giving reasonable notice of such meetings. Meetings of the Council may address any appropriate business pertaining to the Church without special notice in the call of the meeting. The Moderator shall preside at its meetings. A majority of the Council shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may adjourn a meeting to a fixed date.

### **Board of Deacons**

The Board of Deacons shall consist of twelve members. It shall also include such Honorary Deacons as the Church may elect to office for life. Their primary responsibilities shall be the spiritual oversight, guidance, health and care of the congregation working closely with the Pastor. The Board shall meet at least once a month, and the chair or the Pastor shall have the authority to call additional meetings as are deemed necessary. The Board shall be responsible for Sunday services, as well as other services including communion, special holidays, funerals and weddings. The Board advises and assists the Pastor in promoting the spiritual interests of the Church and provides for the supply of the pulpit during the Pastor's absence and during any interim between pastorates. The Board shall submit an annual operating budget to the Trustees.

### **Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine members and the Treasurer, who shall be a member *ex-officio*, with voice but without vote. The Board shall have full charge and care of all the buildings and grounds, shall appoint a Sexton and have responsibility for the review, negotiation and termination of employment contracts, establishment of salaries, review and negotiation of other contracts, and the conduct of the other secular affairs of the Church but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, release or transfer any real property of the Church without a vote of the Congregation authorizing such action. Provided, however, that the Trustees shall have full power and authority to rent any Church owned real estate other than the Meeting House/Parish Hall property, upon such terms and conditions as they, in their sole discretion, shall deem appropriate without the consent of or approval by the congregation. The use of any portion of the Church building for other than directly religious purposes shall be subject to the control of the Board.

The Board shall provide for the raising of money for the support, maintenance and improvement of the Church and its properties, and shall have charge of the Church's finances including any and all investments. The Board shall be responsible for development and implementation of investment and audit policies. The Board shall, with the assistance of the Treasurer, annually prepare and submit a budget for the upcoming fiscal year for consideration and approval by the congregation at the Annual Meeting of the Church copies of which proposed budget shall be mailed to all members of the Church no less than two weeks before the meeting. The Board shall authorize and direct the Treasurer as to the payment of monies under its control.

The Board shall have the power and authority to form such *ad hoc* committees as it shall deem advisable to insure the proper performance of its responsibilities pursuant to the provisions of these Bylaws.

The Board shall be responsible for the proper maintenance and repair of all church buildings, grounds and equipment. The Board shall also be responsible for the interior decoration of all church buildings. All gifts of furniture, pictures, art objects and similar items shall be screened by the Board before being accepted.

The Board of Trustees shall customarily meet monthly at such time and place as it may determine and may hold such special meetings as may be called by its Chair. The Board shall have the further power and authority to conduct special meetings telephonically or by other electronic means. Ballots may be cast in person, by voice or by electronic means as the circumstances may dictate.

### **Board of Religious Education**

The Board of Religious Education shall consist of six members. It shall oversee the Church school program and provide other appropriate activities and opportunities for families with children. It shall hold meetings at the call of the Pastor, the Coordinator of Christian Education or any two of its members. The Board, in consultation with the Pastor, may recommend to the Church Council a candidate for Coordinator of Christian Education and other personnel, and describe their duties. Matters pertaining to contracts shall be referred to the Trustees and the Church Council. The Coordinator of Christian Education shall be a member of the Board, *ex-officio*, with voice but without vote. The Board of Religious Education, in consultation with the Pastor, shall seek a candidate for the position of Coordinator of Christian Education and shall obtain a proposed compensation package from the Board of Trustees. The Board of Religious Education shall then present the name of the candidate it recommends to the Church Council, at which time the Council will determine by a majority vote whether or not it wishes to call the candidate and approve the proposed compensation package. The Pastor, the Coordinator of Christian Education and all members of the Church Council shall receive a copy of the call. The Board shall submit an annual operating budget to the Trustees.

### **Board of Christian Action**

The Board of Christian Action shall consist of nine members. It shall encourage the Church's knowledge of and participation in "Our Christian World Mission" and shall promote a serving fellowship and seek and support Christian solutions to human and social problems. It shall recommend to the Board of Trustees the amount designated for Christian Action in the annual budget and may seek financial support for specific projects if approved by the Church Council. It shall meet at the call of its Chair. The Board shall submit an annual operating budget to the Board of Trustees.

### **Fellowship Committee**

The Fellowship Committee shall be made up of a minimum of six and a maximum of nine members, and will meet at least four times per calendar year. Its purpose shall be to oversee and/or execute the following tasks: fellowship hour after worship services, collations following funeral or memorial services, provision of flowers for services and special days, organizing food and refreshment preparation for special social events, response to food needs in emergency situations of Church family members and maintenance of the Parish Hall kitchen. The Committee shall submit an annual operating budget to the Board of Trustees.

### **Music Committee**

The Music Committee shall consist of six members. It shall meet monthly or at the call of the Chair or Director of Music. The Committee shall be responsible with the Pastor and the Director

of Music for the ministry of music for all worship services. The Committee, in consultation with the Pastor, may recommend to the Church Council a candidate for Director of Music and other personnel and describe their duties. Matters pertaining to contracts shall be referred to the Trustees and the Church Council. The Director of Music shall be a member of the Committee, *ex-officio*, with voice but without vote. It shall work with the Director of Music to oversee the Al Sly Fund. It shall consult with the Director of Music on all musical matters. The Music Committee, in consultation with the Pastor, shall seek a candidate for the position of Director of Music and shall obtain a proposed compensation package from the Board of Trustees. The Music Committee shall then present the name of the candidate it recommends to the Church Council, at which time the Council will determine by a majority vote whether or not it wishes to call the candidate and approve the proposed compensation package. The Pastor, the Director of Music and all members of the Church Council shall receive a copy of the call. The committee shall submit an annual operating budget to the Trustees.

### **Ushers Committee**

The Ushers Committee shall consist of twelve members. It shall have charge of ushering at all services of worship. The Chair of the Ushers Committee shall prepare a schedule of service by the members. The Committee shall submit an annual operating budget to the Board of Trustees.

### **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six members: one from the Board of Deacons, one from the Board of Trustees, one from the Board of Religious Education, one from the Board of Christian Action and two Members-at-Large from the Church membership. Members shall serve no more than two consecutive one-year terms.

Each Board represented on the Nominating Committee shall elect its Nominating Committee representative from among its own members. The two Members-at-Large shall be appointed by the Church Council. The first meeting of a new Nominating Committee shall be called by the Moderator to convene after the annual meeting in October. The Moderator shall preside only until the Chair is elected. The Committee shall prepare, mail and/or electronically communicate to each member of the Church at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting a slate of nominees for Officers, Boards and Committees to serve for the term specified in the bylaws. Any member of the Church may make a nomination from the floor at the annual meeting.

### **Pastoral Relations Committee**

The Pastoral Relations Committee shall consist of the Moderator, the Pastor, and three other members appointed prior to the annual meeting by mutual agreement of the Moderator and the Pastor. The appointed members may serve no more than three consecutive years. The Committee shall support and maintain an open relationship between the Pastor and members of the congregation. It shall help the Pastor and members of the Church share ideas, hopes, dreams and interpretations of mission. It shall let the Pastor know what members of the church are thinking. It will provide a framework in which conflict can be dealt with creatively. Meetings of the Committee shall be called as needed at least four times annually by any committee member. Minutes shall not be taken and confidentiality shall be respected. The Pastor shall be present at all meetings. The Committee shall report annually to the Congregation.

### **Representatives to Other Church and Community Bodies**

Two representatives and one alternate shall be elected to represent the Church in both the Litchfield North Association and the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ.

These representatives shall be elected annually for a one-year term. One of the two representatives shall be a member of the Church Council. An annual report shall be submitted summarizing all activities.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution and these Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed by a vote of two-thirds of the voting members in attendance at any Annual Meeting, or at any special meeting duly called for that purpose, if a quorum is present. A call must be given specifying the time of the meeting and the substance of the proposed amendment.

The Church Council shall appoint an *ad hoc* committee to review the Bylaws every five years.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised shall govern the business of this church in all cases to which they are applicable and in cases in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Bylaws and any special rules of order, which the Church may adopt.