

**BYLAWS**  
**of the**  
**SECOND CONGREGATIONAL**  
**CHURCH**  
**of WARREN MAINE**

**Revised**  
**FEBRUARY 2024**

## **Bylaws**

For the purpose of these Bylaws, the word “church” is used to designate the legally organized society known as The Second Congregational Church of Warren whose articles of incorporation were filed September 6, 1957 with the Maine Secretary of State.

### **Article I – Name**

The name of this corporation shall be The Second Congregational Church of Warren.

### **Article II – Purpose**

The purpose of this church is to advance the Kingdom of God by maintaining public worship, celebrating the sacrament, teaching religious truths, cultivating Christian character, promoting Christian Fellowship, alleviating distress and winning people to the service of Christ. And in connection therewith, to carry on any religious or educational activity which, in the opinion of the membership, is warranted by the facilities, funds and other requirements that are or can be made available.

### **Article III – Dissolution of Church**

Upon the dissolution of the Second Congregational Church and a congregational vote, all assets shall be conveyed to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and/or a religious organization within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future Federal Tax code.

### **Article IV – Covenant**

The church is independent in its organization, affirming the Holy Trinity and the Lord Jesus Christ as its head and the Holy scriptures as the sole authority in faith and practice. Yet, it desires association with other Christian Churches for fellowship, counsel, and cooperation in Christian works, and gladly acknowledges membership in the fellowship of Congregational Churches.

While holding to the freedom of the individual in matters of religious opinion, it adopts for purposes of instruction only, as expressing the fundamental points in its doctrine the Kansas City Platform and creed as printed on the last page of these by-laws.

**This Church adopts the following Covenant:**

*As disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we do solemnly covenant together that, denying all ungodliness and every worldly lust, we will walk in all ways according to the precepts of the Gospel and in sincere conformity to its ordinances. We unite together into one body as a Church of Jesus Christ for mutual edification and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. We promise to submit to its order and discipline, to labor for its peace and purity, and to walk together in love.*

**Article V – Sacraments**

The Church recognizes two (2) acts specifically commanded by Christ.

1. **Baptism** – The act by which one is ushered into the presence of God's grace. Children of Christ are regarded as children of the Church and may be admitted to baptism in infancy.
  
2. **Communion** – The act by which the self-giving of Christ is celebrated by the reenactment of the Lord's Supper. This Church adopts the principle of open and free Communion and admits to the Lord's Supper all who are in fellowship with Christ. The sacraments of the Lord's Supper shall be administered on the first Sunday of each month. The Pastor with the Diaconate may add or omit as deemed necessary.

**Article VI – Membership**

Any person of Christian faith, who is in sympathy with our object and methods and in essential accord with the spirit of our teachings, may become a member of this Church upon publicly receiving or acknowledging baptism and assenting to the Church Covenant. Prospective members will meet with Pastor and representatives of the Diaconate and for instruction in Church polity and responsibility of membership.

- a) Members are expected to be faithful in all spiritual duties essential to the Christian life.
- b) Regularly attend the service of this Church.
- c) Financially support the Church and its charities.
- d) Share in its organized work.

## **Section 1. Acceptance of Members**

Any person may be admitted to membership upon favorable recommendation of the Diaconate and the Church Council, and public acceptance of the Church Covenant. Members may be received by affirmation of faith, reaffirmation of faith or be a letter of transfer.

## **Section 2. Withdrawal of Membership**

Any member may withdraw from membership or request a letter of transfer to another church by giving written notice to the Clerk. Members shall also be removed from membership if there is no communication with Diaconate members/church during the biennial (every two-year) membership update.

## **Section 3. Membership Rolls**

The membership rolls shall be updated every odd year by the Diaconate, Clerk, Treasurer, and Administrative Assistant.

# **Article VII – Annual and Special Meetings**

## **Section 1. Annual Meetings**

The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held on the Sunday following the January Church Council meeting, to hear the yearly reports of the Pastor, Officers, Boards, Committees, and Organizations, to elect officers, and to transact any necessary business.

The Clerk or a representative shall post notice of this meeting seven (7) days before the time of such meeting and it shall be announced from the Pulpit on the preceding Sunday.

## **Section 2. Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the Church may be called by the Diaconate, the Trustees, the Church Council, or the Pastoral Relations Committee on behalf of the Pastor, or upon written request of five (5) or more members of the Church delivered to the Clerk or Assistant Clerk. The nature of the business shall be stated in the call. Seven (7) days' notice of all special meetings must be posted and announced from the pulpit.

## **Section 3. Quorum**

- a) A quorum for meetings of the Church shall consist of 20% of the membership.
- b) A quorum for Board and Committee meetings shall consist of a simple majority.

## Article VIII – Pastor

The Pastor shall become a member of the Church upon call. The pastor shall be in charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church with the assistance of the Diaconate.

The Pastor shall seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments, and take care of all services of public worship and administer the activities of the Church in cooperation with the various boards and committees as detailed in the Pastor's job description. The Pastor shall submit to the Annual Meeting a report of the year's accomplishments.

The Pastor and his/her family may be excused from the annual meeting during the discussion and voting of that portion of the budget that pertains to the welfare of the Pastor. The Pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of all boards and committees with the exception of the Nominating Committee and all pulpit search committees. The Pastor will be a nonvoting member of the membership.

The Pastoral relationship may be terminated by either the Pastor or the Congregation by giving thirty (30) days written notice. In a breach of Ministerial Code of Ethics/NACCC Personal Code of Professional Practice (attached) and/or by not fulfilling Pastoral duties, the relationship may be terminated immediately by the Trustees without pay.

When a vacancy occurs in the Pastorate, the Council shall form a Pulpit Search Committee of at least seven (7) members of the Church within (30) thirty days. The Pulpit Search committee shall elect its own chairperson and make a canvas of available ministers and settle upon one who in their judgement should be called into the Pastorate of the Church. The committee's decision must be based upon at least two-thirds vote of its committee members. After a formal vote of the Pulpit Search Committee, the candidate shall preach a sermon at a regular Sunday worship service. The committee (in cooperation with the Trustees) shall prepare a detailed compensation package to be presented to the candidate. The committee shall then propose the election of the candidate at a duly called meeting immediately followed by a vote. The candidate must receive a two-thirds majority vote of the members present to be called into service. All balloting for the calling or dismissing of the Pastor shall be by Australian Ballot. An installation service will be celebrated as soon as practicable after they are called. The committee is encouraged to use the NACCC guidelines to help with their search.

## **Article IX – Interim Pastor**

Shall be under the direction of the Diaconate. The Diaconate shall canvas available ministers and settle upon one who, in their judgement, shall be called into the Pastorate of the Church. (The Diaconate is encouraged to use the guidelines from the NACCC). When the committee chooses, the candidate is to prepare a sermon on a regular Sunday to the congregation for consideration, then a majority vote by Australian ballot will be taken immediately. Confidentiality must be maintained for all ministers that apply. The interim minister who is presently serving shall not be eligible for consideration as a settled pastor. Nor is she or he to be a consultant to the Pastoral Search Committee.

The church and the interim minister should have a clear understanding about these matters at the outset. The interim shall be given at least thirty (30) days' notice of dismissal when a Settled Pastor is chosen by vote of the congregation, and the relationship may also be terminated by Interim or Congregation by (30) days written notice. In a breach of Ministerial Code of Ethics/NACCC Personal Code of Professional Practice (attached) and/or by not fulfilling Pastoral duties, the relationship may be terminated immediately by the Trustees without pay.

A simple contract of pay and duties will be provided. The Interim Pastor will be a non-voting member of all Committees and Boards.

## **Article X – Officers, Boards and Committees**

### **Section 1.**

All the following officers, board and committee members, with the exception of the Pastor, or unless otherwise stated, shall serve under the following guidelines:

- a) All elected officers and committee members shall be sworn to faithfulness during regular public worship as soon as practicable after they are elected.
- b) Shall be elected among the membership of the church at its Annual Meeting for terms of one (1) to three (3) years or until a successor is elected.
- c) No person shall serve concurrently on the Board of Trustees and the Diaconate.
- d) Each Board and/or Committee shall elect a Chairperson within their respected groups. In the event of the chairperson's absence, the group will choose a temporary chairperson.
- e) The Chairperson of each Committee shall be responsible for the annual report of that Committee.
- f) All Business Meetings shall be conducted using Roberts Rules.
- g) All Treasurers of the Church shall be bonded.

## **Section 2. Meeting Attendance**

Officers, Boards, Council and Committee members are expected to attend all regular and special meetings of their respective groups. If a member fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings, the member or officer may be removed from their position in accordance to the following:

- a) The member(s) will be contacted by the group's chairperson or another designated by the chairperson to determine the reason(s) for the frequent absence.
- b) If the matter cannot be resolved within the member's committee, the subject of absenteeism should be brought to the attention of the Church Council
- c) The Church Council may, by majority vote, remove the member from the office, board, or committee. The Council may then fill the vacancy as it deems necessary.

## **Article X-a – Officers**

The following officers are to be elected annually:

### **Section 1. Moderator**

A moderator shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church. It shall be the task of the Moderator to chair all business meetings of the Church and shall insure proper order at same, under the provisions of these bylaws.

### **Section 2. Assistant Moderator**

The Assistant Moderator shall perform the Moderator duties in his or her absence.

### **Section 3. Clerk**

The Clerk shall preserve on file all official written and oral proceedings of all Church Meetings and keep all prior records of the Church. *See Appendix 1*

### **Section 4. Assistant Clerk**

The Assistant Clerk shall perform the duties of the Clerk in his/her absence, and if there is more than one (1) meeting running concurrently, shall take the official minutes as requested by the clerk.

### **Section 5. Treasurer**

The Church Treasurer shall have custody of all current funds of the Church and be bonded by the Church. *See Appendix 2*

## **Section 6. Assistant Treasurer**

The Assistant Treasurer shall perform the duties of the Treasurer in his/her absence and any duties delegated to him/her and shall also be bonded by the Church.

## **Article X-b – Boards**

### **Section 1. Diaconate**

The Deacons shall be the Spiritual Board of the Church for a term of three (3) years with no fewer than seven (7) Deacons. *See Appendix 3*

### **Section 2. Trustees**

The five (5) trustees shall be the business committee of the Church with a term of three (3) years. *See Appendix 4*

### **Section 3. Missions Board**

Seek to be led by the Spirit of God to proclaim the love of Christ by helping people in need at home and abroad. Promote spirituality and create personal awareness of individuals responsibility to God and their neighbor. Seek to spread the Gospel by support of various endeavors through our financial aid, our prayers, and the sharing of missions needs and our visibility within the Church and Community. *See Appendix 5*

### **Section 4. Board of Directors of the Bowes Fund**

The Bowes Fund helps the “Poor and Needy of the Town of Warren.”

- a) Shall meet no later than November 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, and at any such time as the need arises. Directors shall be church members and vacancies shall be filled as required in the Bowes’ Will. The Director shall make a report at the church Annual meeting and at each other times as the Church requires.
- b) Bowes Fund Treasurer shall have custody of the Bowes Fund and make payment as directed by the Board of Directors of the Bowes Fund for the “Poor and Needy of the Town of Warren.”

### **Section 5. Church Council**

The Church Council shall direct the activities and advise in all matters of general interest to the Church. *See Appendix 6.*

### **Section 6. Board of Christian Education**

Shall supervise, coordinate, and promote Christian Education among the members and children of the Church. See Appendix 7.

## **Section 7. Pastoral Relations Board**

The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be composed of three (3) members elected with an alternating three (3) year term, one (1) Deacon and one (1) Trustee (Appointed by their respected boards Annually)

- a) They shall be a liaison between the Congregation and the Pastor.
- b) Shall elect a chairperson.
- c) Shall meet with the Pastor in February, May, August and November or as deemed necessary by the Pastoral Relations Board and/or Pastor.
- d) All Pastoral Relation Board meetings shall be Confidential except as determined by the Board.
- e) The Pastoral Relations Board may call a special meeting for at the request of the Pastor under the guidelines of Article VI, Section 2 of Special Meetings.

## **Article X-c – Committees**

### **Section 1. Flower Chairperson**

The Flower Chairperson shall make arrangements for and make note of flowers placed in the Church sanctuary and its grounds, and make report of same at Annual Meeting.

### **Section 2. Historians**

There shall be two (2) Church Historians who shall maintain a historical record of the Church. Copies of all historical records shall be kept in the Church. They shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for alternating three (3) year terms.

### **Section 3. Memorial Committee**

The Memorial Committee shall be comprised of the Board of Missions. They shall consult with those persons desiring to make a memorial gift to the Church and recommend how such gifts be used. A report shall be prepared for the Annual Report.

### **Section 4. Nominating Committee**

Shall seek out members to serve on Boards and Committees and present these nominees for election at the Annual Meeting. *See Appendix 8.*

## **Section 5. Miscellaneous**

From time to time the Church Council may choose such officers, pulpit committees, agents, and attorneys, as may deem necessary.

### **Article XI – Year-Round Delegate**

The Year-Round Delegate shall participate in monthly communication with the NACCC and relay important information back to the Church. He or she shall be chosen at the annual meeting for a term of three (3) years.

The Year-Round Delegate shall attempt to:

- Strengthen the connection between the NACCC and the local church by providing congregations a consistent and ongoing voice in all matters and happenings.
- Have the opportunity to communicate with their sister churches in the Association.

### **Article XII – Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Church by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and balloting, provided the notice of the proposed amendment was given at a previous meeting or in the call of the meeting at which action thereon is proposed. Whenever requested by five (5) or more members, the Clerk shall insert into the call of a meeting appropriate notice of the amendment, which those members are proposing.