

Revised October 26, 2006

ARTICLE 1 NAME

The name of this Church shall be Center Congregational Church - United Church of Christ, Meriden, Connecticut.

ARTICLE 2 OBJECT

The object of this Church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God, and in making His will dominant in the lives of men individually and collectively, especially as that will is set forth in the life, teachings, death, resurrection and living presence of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 3 POLITY

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

The government of this Church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted it by the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut.

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

ARTICLE 4 DOCTRINE

A) This Church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship.

Each member shall have the right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of one's own conscience, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We adopt the following principles as expressive of our faith and doctrinal attitude:

1. The Holy Bible, our only rule of faith and practice.
2. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and our only Savior.
3. Christian, a sufficient name for the followers of Christ.
4. Christian character of life, the only test of fellowship.
5. Individual interpretation, the right and privilege of all Christians.
6. The union of all the followers of Christ, that they shall all be one.

B) The COVENANT of this Church shall read as follows:

WE COVENANT with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves, in the presence of God, to walk together in His holy ways.

WE WILL STRIVE to be doers of the Word and not hearers only, to be firm in faith, quickened in hope and constant in love.

AND WE WILL CONSECRATE our time, talent, income and influence as heirs of God and joint- heirs with Christ. Amen.

ARTICLE 5 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Members shall be received by vote of the Church with public acceptance of the Church Covenant. Applicant--either by confession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or by letter of transfer--shall, after personal consultation with the clergy, have their names presented to the Diaconate, who after due consideration may submit their names to the Church at its public worship at least one week prior to reception into membership. If approved by a vote of the members present, applicants will become full voting members.

The Clergy, with the Diaconate, may confer non-voting membership on worthy parishioners who choose not to relinquish Church membership elsewhere, these to be known as Associate Members.

Infants baptized into the Christian faith through the sacrament of Holy Baptism administered through Center Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, shall be recognized as baptized members of this congregation.

ARTICLE 6 SERVICES OF WORSHIP

THE LORD'S SUPPER shall be administered when the Clergy and the Diaconate deem it advisable.

BAPTISM shall be administered at the time of admission to Church Membership to applicants who previously have not received the Sacrament.

BAPTISM shall be celebrated during a regular service of worship, in the presence of the congregation. When circumstances make baptism necessary apart from the presence of the congregation, a member of the Diaconate, if possible, shall be present to represent the congregation.

BAPTISM shall be administered to children of whom at least one of the parents presenting the child for baptism shall be a member of a Christian congregation in full communion; otherwise sponsors, who have been interviewed and approved by the Diaconate and who are members of a Christian congregation in full communion, shall join in answering baptismal questions.

ARTICLE 7 VOTING

ALL MEMBERS, as defined by the Connecticut Statutes of Incorporation, shall have One Vote. Associate members have no vote. Elections shall be by ballot. At other decisions a ballot vote may be requested by any member present and shall be granted without discussion. A majority of votes cast is decisive.

SPECIAL MATTERS, such as the call or dismissal of a Minister, Church polity, discipline, major expenses in excess of 5% of the current operating budget, and alteration of the by-laws shall require a two-thirds vote of members present.

THE CLERGY shall be a member(s) of all committees with full voting privileges.

ARTICLE 8 CHURCH OFFICERS

Officers of the Church shall be:

- a. Clerk
- b. Treasurer
- c. Treasurer of Missions
- d. Collector
- e. Three (3) elected members of the Board of Trustees
- f. Diaconate
- g. Chairperson of Christian Education

ARTICLE 9 MEETINGS

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the Church shall be held on the First (1st) Sunday in March, unless adverse weather then the second Sunday to receive annual written reports of Church Officers and to transact other pertinent business.

A REGULAR MEETING shall be called on the fourth (4th) Thursday of October to receive, through the Board of Trustees, projected budgetary proposals for the ensuing year. The congregation will elect officers and members of committees and transact any other pertinent business at this time.

SPECIAL MEETINGS of the congregation may be called by the Clerk, upon written request of ten (10) voting members; or by the Clergy, the Diaconate, or the Church Council. The object of the meeting must be stated in the call.

NOTICES OF MEETINGS are required to be given at least four (4) days prior to the date with one Sunday announcement from the pulpit.

MODERATOR shall be the deacon or deaconess next in line to their seniors present.

A QUORUM to transact business shall be twenty-five (25) voting members. A smaller number may call another meeting at a fixed date.

ARTICLE 10 ELECTION

1. AT THE REGULAR MEETING, when terms of office so require, there shall be elected FOR A TERM OF THREE (3) YEARS the following:
 - a. Clerk
 - b. Treasurer
 - c. Assistant Treasurer

ARTICLE 10 ELECTION (continued)

d. Treasurer of Missions

Collector

Assistant Collector

g. Superintendent of Christian Education

h. Church Statistician

i. Two (2) members to the Stewardship Committee

j. Two (2) members to the Missions Committee

k. One (1) member to the Nominating Committee

l. Two (2) members to the Christian Committee

Discipleship

m. One (1) member to the Board of Trustees

n. One (1) member at large to the Church Council

o. Two (2) members to the House Committee

p. One (1) Chairperson of Seating

q. One (1) Auditor except in 1988 when there will be elected one (1) Auditor for a one year term, one (1) for a two year term and one (1) for a three year term.

r. One (1) Historian

s. One (1) member to the Scholarship Committee

For a Two (2) year term:

a. Two (2) members to the Music Committee with members in 1987 completing their term.

For a Term of Six (6) years there shall be elected:

a. One (1) Deacon

b. One (1) Deaconess

2. All terms of office begin on January 1st. All ordinary duties for each office end on December 31st of the last year of each term except the preparation of the report(s) required for the Annual Meeting which will be the responsibility of the member who held that office for the year the report is to cover.

3. All officers and Committee Members, after having served six (6) continuous years, shall wait an interval of three (3) years until eligible for re-election to the same office. These restrictions shall not apply to the Historian.

4. Members At Large shall be chosen so that various organizations may have representation.

5. Vacancies in these offices or committees shall be filled, on the advice of the Nominating Committee, by majority vote of the Church Council until the next Annual Meeting.

6. Vacancies in the Diaconate will be filled as soon as possible after the vacancy occurs, under the following procedure:

If a member has to be replaced during his or her term, a new member will be referred to the Nominating Committee and must receive a majority vote of the Church Council for election. This new member will serve the six (6) year term, and the other members of the Board of Deacons will move up one term, if the occasion requires it.

7. A staff member or his/her spouse cannot serve on the Diaconate or Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE 11 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES
 CHURCH COUNCIL

It shall consist of:

- a. Clerk
- b. Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer
- c. Collector or Assistant
- d. Representative of Missions
- e. Representative of Christian Discipleship
- f. Music Committee Representative
- g. Representative of Nominating Committee
- h. Seating Chairperson
- i. Representative of Board of Trustees
- j. Four members of the Diaconate, one of whom must be the Moderator.
- k. Three (3) elected members at large
- l. Minister of Music
- m. Stewardship Committee Representative
 - n. Pastoral Assistant for Christian Discipleship
 - o. House Committee Representative
 - p. Historian
 - q. Connecticut Conference Delegates
 - r. Central Association Representative
 - s. Statistician
 - t. Chairperson of Scholarship Committee
- u. Chairperson of all special committees as appointed by the Church Council

It shall:

- a. Hold a minimum of six (6) regular meetings a year chaired by the Moderator. Other meetings may be called by the Clergy or Clerk, the latter upon request of five (5) members. At such meeting, the Chairperson or representative of a committee shall present a report to the Clerk about their respective activities.
- b. Be the official policy-making board of the church.
- c. Select officers for emergencies and unexpired terms on advice of the Nominating Committee.
- d. Appoint committees for special tasks.
- e. Have authority to spend two percent (2%) in total of the Annual Operating Budget for causes not provided for in the Budget.

A QUORUM shall consist of nine (9) members.

THE DIACONATE

It shall:

- a. be the duty of the Diaconate to provide for the Lord's Supper;
- b. assist the Clergy in their ministry to the Church and its spiritual outreach;
- c. with the Clergy, recommend candidates for Church Membership;
- d. approve letters of transfer or dismissal;
- e. in case of vacancy, provide for the supply of the pulpit and institute, with the congregation, proceedings for the calling of the Clergy. Candidates for the ministry will be interviewed by a committee consisting of the Diaconate and Two (2) representatives each from the Christian Education Committee, Board of Trustees, and Two (2) Youth selected from elected officers, all with an equal vote. Any Church Member may be present at the interviews. The Committee will then recommend a candidate to the Congregation.

ARTICLE 11 THE DIACONATE (Continued):

- f. assist in caring for the sick, the poor, the sorrowing, the indifferent, the stranger;
- g. have sole authority to disburse funds accruing from the O.B. Arnold Fund or from announced collections at Communion Services;
- h. have sole authority to disburse funds from the Ida Flint Scholarship Fund in accord with the intent of the fund;
- i. present to Clergy an outline of duties expected, and privileges granted, and keep signed copies on file;
- j. select delegates to the Central Association, State Conference, Ecclesiastical Councils and similar gatherings;
- k. The four senior members of the Diaconate are members of the Church Council with one fifth-year member serving as Moderator. The positions of moderator and representative on the Robert Wharton Scholarship Committee will be a fifth-year Diaconate member to be decided by the fifth-year Diaconate members.

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE

The committee shall be constituted as follows:

- a. Superintendent of Christian Discipleship to be elected to serve for a three (3) year term.
- b. Six (6) elected members to serve for three years, two to retire each year.

A Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and representative(s) to the Church Council shall be chosen by the elected members by January 30th.

The Committee shall direct and supervise all educational work for the Church, except Church Membership instruction. They shall have the authority to appoint and relieve persons necessary to carry out the programs. They shall supervise the youth activities.

ARTICLE 11 MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Committee shall consist of the Treasurer of Missions, six (6) members, two to be elected annually. They shall receive all offerings of a benevolent nature and disburse them annually, or more often if required, through a Missionary and Social Action Program. They shall make audited reports of their transactions. A Chairperson, Secretary and representative(s) to the Church Council shall be chosen by the Committee members by January 30th.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

It shall consist of:

- a. Three (3) elected members
- b. Treasurer
- c. Assistant Treasurer
- d. Collector
- e. Assistant Collector
- f. Chairperson, or designee, of Stewardship Committee

The Chairperson and a representative(s) to the Church Council shall be chosen from the three elected members by January 30th. The Chairperson shall appoint a member of the Board to serve as Recording Secretary.

MEETINGS shall be called by the Chairman or by request of any five (5) members. A quorum shall consist of three (3) members, one (1) of whom shall be an elected member of the Board of Trustees.

The BOARD, subject to the direction of the Church Council, shall have full charge of building and properties of the Church. They shall:

- a. determine the duties of the Sexton;

ARTICLE 11 THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (Continued):

- b. solicit and prepare contracts for repairs or renovations for submission to the Church Council and the congregation and supervise completion of such contracts;
- c. approve payment of bills submitted for the general operation of the Church;
- d. at the Church meeting in October, submit, through the Church Council, an annual budget for expected expenses in the next year.

The Treasurer and/or Chairperson of the Board is authorized to sign contracts and legal documents after Council approval. Authority to do so can be delegated otherwise by the congregation or Church Council.

MUSIC COMMITTEE

It shall meet at least six (6) times a year and shall advise and evaluate the performance of the Minister of Music and make recommendations to the Church Council. It shall include four (4) elected members, two (2) members to be elected annually to serve two years. A Chairperson and representative(s) to the Church Council must be elected by the committee members by January 30th. The Minister of Music and the Handbell Choir Director are members of the Music Committee.

It shall have supervision of all choirs (Bell, Sanctuary, Carol and any other newly organized choirs), secure the services of an Organist in case of vacancy, illness or vacation and care for the proper maintenance of the organ, all pianos, handbells, chimes or any other musical instruments purchased by the Church.

It shall contact and recruit new members for all choirs and act as liaison between the Minister of Music and parishioners.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

It shall consist of three (3) elected members, one member to be elected annually to serve three (3) years. They shall select a Chairperson and representative(s) to the Church Council by January 30th.

When called upon by the Church Council, they shall submit to them nominations for various offices. Nominees are to consist of confirmed members of Center Church.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

It shall consist of six (6) members, two to be elected annually to serve three (3) years. The Chairperson, or designee, will represent the committee on the Board of Trustees.

They shall devise ways and means to secure funds for the general operation of the Church, and to encourage the commitment of time and talent by members through their active participation in the affairs of the church.

The Assistant Collector is a member.

HOUSE COMMITTEE

It shall consist of six (6) members, two (2) to be elected annually to serve three (3) years. They shall appoint a member as Chairperson. They shall see that the kitchen is maintained in a clean and orderly fashion and review the needs of the parsonage annually.

ARTICLE 11 SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The Scholarship committee serves as fund trustees and provides oversight of awards of the CCC Scholarship.

1. The members are:
 - a. A fifth-year Diaconate member (if a substitute is needed, the Diaconate will select one from the Diaconate).
 - b. Three members from the church membership, one member elected each year for a three-year term.
 - c. A representative from the Christian Education Committee, chosen by the C.E. Committee.
2. The chairman is the third-year member.
3. No one may be a member of the Committee if he/she has an immediate family member eligible for the scholarship during his/her term.
4. The Committee is responsible to the Church Council.
 - a. Report to the Church Council
 - b. The assistant treasurer, who is in charge of special funds, will submit quarterly financial reports, to the Church Council.
5. The Committee selects the Scholarship recipients (number of awards, amount of awards, and timing of awards).
6. Funding:
 - a. \$30,000 is transferred from general church investments as an original deposit into a segregated account to establish the fund's principal.
 - b. The Scholarship Committee will submit to the Trustees by September 1st of each year an amount of money to be added to the Scholarship principal as part of the Church budget.

SCHOLARSHIP (Continued):

- c. The principal may be augmented by donations and bequests.
8. Amount of Awards:
 - a. Annual awards will never exceed the annual income earned by the funds principal.
 - b. No Scholarship award will exceed the annual cost of the recipient's educations (defined as tuition, room and board, fees and books.
9. Eligibility:
 - a. The recipients are members of the Center Congregational Church community.
 - b. The awards provide financial assistance with the cost of post-secondary education.
 - c. The recipients should maintain satisfactory academic and social standing.
 - d. The Scholarship Committee may determine other specific restrictions regarding eligibility.
 - e. The incumbent minister's dependents have a "limited preference" calculated as follows:
 1. For each full year of Center Congregational Church service, the incumbent minister shall receive 1% of the amount available for awards in any given year before other awards are made.
 2. The maximum percentage received is 15% in any given year.
 3. This percentage shall not increase if more than one of incumbent minister's dependents is eligible in any given year.
 4. This preferred percentage must be used in the year the incumbent minister's dependents are eligible--it does not accumulate ("use or lose").
 5. The incumbent minister's dependents are eligible for equal consideration of remaining award amounts after the preferred percentage is calculated.

ARTICLE 12 EXPLICIT DUTIES OF OFFICERS

CLERK

The Clerk shall:

- a. keep a record of the proceedings of the Church and the Church Council;
- b. sign credentials of delegates chosen; issue letters of dismissals and/or transfers granted by vote of the Diaconate; send notice of such dismissals and/or transfers to the church addressed;
- c. keep a record of all baptisms and marriages if a secretary is not employed.
- d. keep a register of all Church members, showing dates and modes of their reception and removal; if a secretary is not employed.
- e. give legal notice of meetings when necessary.
- f. The Clerk is a member of the Church Council.

TREASURER

The Treasurer shall:

- a. receive and have charge of all income to the Church, except benevolences, but including invested funds and endowments, and shall disburse them under the supervision of the Board of Trustees or the Church Council or, where specifically indicated, by the Diaconate.
- b. give receipts for monies received and obtain receipts for disbursements.
- c. accept contributions for specified purposes and transfer them to their authorized agents.
- d. be the custodian of all financial documents and secure bonds for the treasurers and collectors of the Church.
- e. annually, or more often if required, make duly audited reports of the transactions of the office.
- f. assign powers not conflicting with the duties of the Treasurer, as required.
- g. the Treasurer may, with the consent of the Church Council, contract with some financial institution to invest endowments, legacies, trust funds and securities.
- h. the Treasurer may apply, if required, the income from the invested funds to the Church operating account.
- i. The Treasurer, or Assistant Treasurer, is a member of the Church Council.
- j. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are members of the Board of Trustees.

TREASURER OF MISSIONS

The Treasurer of Missions shall receive all offerings of a benevolent nature and transfer them at the direction of the Missions Committee, annually or more often if required, making audited reports of the Committee's transactions. The Treasurer of Missions is a member of the Missions Committee.

THE COLLECTOR

The Collector shall:

- a. have charge of all offerings and special plate collections, except benevolences and other funds for which a special collection has been appointed, keep an accurate account with each contributor, pay all monies received to the proper treasurers, take receipts for them and furnish financial statements to contributors as needed.
- b. annually make duly audited reports of all transactions.
- c. assign duties of the Collector to the Assistant Collector as required.
- d. The Collector, or the Assistant Collector, is a member of the Church Council.
- e. The Collector and the Assistant Collector are members of the Board of Trustees.
- f. The Assistant Collector is a member of the Stewardship Committee.

ARTICLE 12 HISTORIAN

The Historian shall keep a journal of all occurrences of interest to the Church and be Curator of memorabilia for the Church.

SEATING CHAIRPERSON

The Seating Chairperson shall recruit and supervise ushers for regular and special services of the Church and keep attendance records of these services.

Seating Chairperson is a member of the Church Council.

CHURCH STATISTICIAN

The Church Statistician will collect and analyze those figures already compiled by the Clerk, Seating Chairperson, Treasurers, Collectors and other Committees and Boards within the church, that reflect the growth of Center Church, i.e.: church attendance, Sunday School attendance, baptisms, marriages, new members, transfers, deaths. The Church Statistician will prepare and present a quarterly report to the Church Council and an annual report to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE 13 ALTERATION OF BY-LAWS

These by-laws may be altered, amended or repealed by a two-thirds vote of qualified members in attendance at any regularly called meeting or special meeting called for that purpose, the changes having been read at a previous meeting and the object of the meeting being stated in the call.

ARTICLE 14 PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Parliamentary procedure to be adhered to by ROBERTS REVISED RULES OF ORDER.