

## CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

### SOUTH NEWBURY UNION CHURCH AND UNION CHURCH SOCIETY

June 2020

#### ARTICLE I– NAME

The name of the Church shall be THE SOUTH NEWBURY UNION CHURCH AND UNION CHURCH SOCIETY. (Hereafter referred to as “Church.”)

#### ARTICLE II -- GOVERNMENT AND FELLOWSHIP

The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs. It is under the authority of no other ecclesiastical body, but it accepts the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation involved in a covenantal relationship with the United Church of Christ, and pledges itself to share its work and common aims. This church is affiliated with the United Church of Christ through the Merrimack Association of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ.

#### ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

The purpose of The South Newbury Union Church and Union Church Society (the Church) shall be to offer Christian worship to all who will enter our sanctuary, to promote the Kingdom of God through preaching and teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and through responding in Christian love to those in need.

#### ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Sec. 1. This Church shall be composed of all the members of the Church and The Church Society.

Sec. 2. Persons become members in one of the following ways:

- a. Baptism: Any person confessing his/her faith in Christ, and giving satisfactory evidence of trying to follow Him in word and deed join this Church by Baptism.
- b. Letter of Transfer: Members of any denomination may be admitted to membership upon presentation of a letter of transfer from their respective Church. Transfers from this Church can be made to any denomination the member may desire.
- c. Profession of Faith: Individuals may join this Church by statement of faith and Christian experience if they desire to join the fellowship of the Church.
- d. Associate membership is granted to someone who has full membership at another church and who has professed faith at the South Newbury Union Church. An Associate Member may hold all elected positions.
- e. Society members are active members of the church or persons currently invested in the welfare of the church and participating in the work of the church but who have not professed their faith or who have chosen to remain members of another church. Society membership status will be reviewed yearly by the Diaconate. A person will remain a Society member as long as he/she is vitally interested in the welfare of the church. Society members may hold all elected positions excepting membership on the Diaconate.

Sec 3. Voting Privileges: All active members of the South Newbury Union Church and the Union Church Society shall be entitled to one (1) vote at Annual Meetings and Special Meetings of the Church. Active members shall be defined as those who have attended worship or assisted in activities and affairs of the church since the last Annual Meeting.

**Revised version - Voting Privileges:**

- a. Each active member of the South Newbury Union Church and of the Union Church Society shall be entitled to one (1) vote at Annual Meetings and at Special Meetings of the Church. Active members with voting privileges shall be defined as those who have attained the age of eighteen (18) and have attended worship or assisted in activities and affairs of the Church in the time period since the last Annual Meeting and prior to the current date.
- b. Absentee voting and voting by proxy are not permitted. When video conferencing is being utilized for the Meeting, members attending via this method are regarded as being "present" and retain their default voting privileges.

**ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS AND MEMBERS AT LARGE.**

Sec. 1 OFFICERS: ~~Chairman, Vice-Chairman~~ President, Vice-President, Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary.

- a. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of Church and Society members present at the Annual Meeting. **Revised version - Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of Church and Society Members present and eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting.**
- b. Term of office shall be two (2) years.
- c. The president ~~chairman~~ may not succeed him/herself.
- d. Officers may serve no more than two consecutive terms in a particular position except conditions under section 3

Sec 2. MEMBERS-AT-LARGE: There shall be two (2) Members-at-Large. One shall be elected by majority vote of members at the Annual Meeting for a term of two (2) years.

Sec. 3 If no one is nominated at the Annual Meeting for an officer or member-at-large of the Executive Board, or a member of the Board of Deacons, or if a vacancy occurs between Annual Meetings, the Executive Board may appoint a person to fill the vacancy, including the person occupying that position prior to the annual meeting.

**ARTICLE VI – DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

Sec 1. PRESIDENT; ~~CHAIRMAN~~: to preside at all meetings of the Church and all meetings of the Executive Board,  
to be an ex-officio member of all Standing Committees; to appoint with Board approval persons to fill vacancies until the next Annual Meeting.

Sec. 2. ~~VICE-CHAIRMAN~~ VICE PRESIDENT: to serve in the absence of the President ~~Chairman~~.

Sec . 3. CLERK: to keep minutes of all meetings; to keep all Church records, to keep a Church Register; to prepare all Letters of Transfer; to carry out all necessary correspondence; to post church notices of Church Meetings.

Sec..4 TREASURER: to have charge of all Church funds, **except Diaconate fund**; to disburse same; to keep accurate accounts of receipts and expenditures; to report same to the Executive Board; to prepare in writing, a properly reviewed report at the Annual Meeting; to serve on the Finance Committee.

Sec. -. FINANCIAL SECRETARY: to oversee contributions to **ALL** church funds, **including Diaconate Fund**; to supervise the counting and recording of the offering; to serve on the Finance Committee.

(Note: other than the Financial Secretary, any two (2) ~~Executive Board~~ church or society members approved by the Executive Board may count the Offering.)

**Revised version - To oversee contributions to all church funds; to supervise the counting and recording of the offering; to serve on the Finance Committee.**

**(Note: Other than the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, any two (2) church or society members approved by the Executive Board may count the Offering.)**

## ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

Sec. 1. All meetings shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.

Sec. 2. If circumstances should occur when in-person meetings are inadvisable or cannot be held in a timely manner, church committees, boards and/or Congregational Meetings may employ electronic voting measures as long as the following conditions are met:

- A meeting utilizing telephonic or video conferencing capabilities is called according the requirements for calling a meeting outlined in these By-laws.
- All decision-making members attending the meeting have the ability to communicate with one another.
- The vote can be taken and results announced in a live manner.

Voting in such a manner is not in conflict with any other requirements of these By-laws. Sec .3.

ANNUAL MEETINGS: The Annual Meeting shall be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in June, following the worship service. . Notice of the meeting shall be circulated by appropriate means at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Notice shall contain time, place and purpose of the meeting, including approval of the Annual Budget for the fiscal year (January 1 to December 31) review of the Annual Report, election of officers for the ensuing church year, and any special matters to be considered for vote at such meeting. A quorum shall consist of at least twenty-five percent (25%) of members with voting privileges as defined in ~~Article III. Sec. 3~~ **Article IV. Sec. 4** of this By-Law.

Sec.4. SPECIAL MEETINGS: Special meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor or the Executive Board. Notice of such meeting and the matters for which it is called shall be circulated by appropriate means at least two weeks prior to such meeting. A quorum shall consist of at least twenty-five percent (25%) of members with voting privileges as defined in ~~Article III. Sec. 3~~ **Article IV. Sec. 4** of this By-Law.

## ARTICLE VIII – EXECUTIVE BOARD

Sec. 1. The Executive Board shall consist of all Officers and Members-at-Large, ~~the Chairman of the Diaconate or its representative, and Chairmen of all Standing Committees. The Chairperson of the Diaconate and the chairperson of all Committees shall have voice but not vote at Executive Board meetings. The Executive Board and Diaconate members shall be elected and commence their duties at the Annual Meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in June.~~

The Executive Board shall consist of all Officers and Members-at-Large. The Chairperson of the Diaconate and the chairperson of all committees shall have voice but not vote at Executive Board meetings. The Executive Board and Diaconate members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and commence their duties at the close of that meeting.

Sec. 2. The duties of the Executive Board are as follows: to serve the Church pursuant to the By-Laws; To provide supervision of all Church business affairs, to review the work of the Diaconate and all Standing Committees; to work closely with the Pastor; to schedule use of Friendship House.

Sec. 3. The Executive Board shall meet monthly, and as necessary for decisions needed prior to the next regular meeting. Four (4) members shall constitute a quorum.

## ARTICLE IX – THE DIACONATE

Sec. 1. The Diaconate shall consist of six (6) persons who are active members of the church. Three (3) shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of two (2) years. The Diaconate shall elect a Chairman and Secretary. Deacons shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Sec. 2. The Diaconate shall meet monthly. Three deacons (3) shall constitute a quorum. Special Meetings may be called by the Chairman upon due notice.

Sec. 3. The duties of the Diaconate are as follows: to assist the Pastor in providing worship and responding to human need; to maintain membership rolls and membership status; to provide greeters and hospitality; to concern themselves with the spiritual, educational, and healthy well-being of the Congregation; to conduct the mission programs of the Church.

**Sec. 4. The Diaconate fund are referenced separately for all financial records of the Church.**

**Sec. 5. MEMBERS-AT-LARGE: There shall be two (2) Members-at-Large. Both shall be elected by majority vote of members at the Annual Meeting for a term of two (2) years.**

## ARTICLE X – STANDING COMMITTEES

Sec. 1. Standing Committees reporting to the Executive Board shall include Building, Publicity, Finance, Nominating and Pastor-Parish Relations Committees. Other committees may be appointed and dissolved by the Executive Board or Diaconate as each deems necessary for the convenient undertaking of its respective work. All Standing Committee Chairmen shall be appointed by the Executive Board and serve for a term of one year. The Executive Board may fill any vacancy in the Chairmanship of a Standing Committee.

Sec. 2. Standing Committee ~~Chairpersons~~ ~~Chairmen~~ shall report to the Executive Board at their monthly meetings and make recommendations regarding their committee responsibilities and activities.

Sec. 3. Standing Committee ~~Chairpersons~~ ~~Chairmen~~ shall choose members who may include members of the Church and the Union Church Society. Committee members shall be approved by the Executive Board.

Sec. 4. The duties of the Standing Committees are as follows:

- a. BUILDING COMMITTEE: responsible for the maintenance of the Church, the land, and Friendship House.
- b. PUBLICITY COMMITTEE: responsible for all Church publicity.
- c. FINANCE COMMITTEE: consists of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, a member of the Diaconate, and at least one at-large member. They shall plan and direct the annual Giving Campaign and prepare an Annual Budget to be presented to the Executive Board prior to the Annual Meeting.
- d. NOMINATING COMMITTEE: to consist of at least three (3) members who shall convene, as necessary, to select candidates for elective office at the Annual Meeting. They shall prepare a list of candidates, after first securing the consent of each nominee, and present same to the Executive Board at least one (1) meeting before the Annual Meeting. Nominations from the floor may also be received, with prior approval of the nominee.
- e. PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE: to consist of from three (3) to five (5) members. Members shall be selected by the Executive Board with the consent of the pastor. They shall have staggered terms of three years each, and be limited to two successive terms. They shall meet with the Pastor- twice annually, and at such other times as necessary. They shall strengthen Pastor-People relationships; channel congregational reactions to the Pastor, address the Pastor's reactions to his leadership; provide an annual review of the Pastor; make recommendations regarding the Pastor's Compensation; counsel with the Pastor regarding a continuing educational program; function as a Search Committee.

#### ARTICLE XI – ~~AUDITORS~~ FINANCIAL REVIEW

Sec. 1. ~~A person~~ ~~There~~ shall be ~~an auditor~~ appointed by the Executive Board to review all financial records of the Church and the Diaconate and make a written report on the correctness thereof to the Executive Board. Such report shall be prepared as soon after the end of the fiscal year of the Church (January 1 to December 31<sup>st</sup>.) as is feasible. The ~~auditor's~~ report of the review shall be available to the Executive Board prior to the Annual Meeting and shall be included in the Annual Report of the Church provided to the members at the Annual Meeting in June.

Sec.2. ~~No person handling church funds shall qualify as Auditor..~~ ~~The Executive Board may appoint a member of the Church or of the Church Society or may employ an outside person with no affiliation to the Church to perform the review.~~

Sec.3. Officers of the Congregation, Officers of the Diaconate, the Finance Committee Chairperson and the Pastor are not eligible to be appointed to review the finances, but may be called upon to provide additional information to the reviewer.

## ARTICLE XII – THE PASTORATE

Sec. 1. DUTIES: The Pastor and the Diaconate will be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the Church. The Pastor shall enable the Church to enlist persons as followers of Christ and to increase the membership of the Church; preach the Gospel; administer the Sacraments and rites; have under his/her care the services of public worship; give guidance; work cooperatively in effecting the mission of the Church; serve as an ex-officio member of all Boards and Committees.

Sec. 2. CALLING A PASTOR: When the Pastorate is vacant, **the Executive Board will form a Search Committee with the assistance of the Pastoral Relations Committee.** They shall take the necessary steps to secure names of prospective candidates. They shall request full information about the record and qualifications of those names submitted. The candidate must be eligible for standing in the Association of which the Church is a member. When a suitable person is found the Committee shall recommend him/her to the Church for its consideration, at a specially called meeting. The nominee shall preach at a Sunday service prior to the meeting. Only one (1) candidate shall be presented at a time. ~~A quorum of ten (10) members who are eighteen or older shall be necessary to consider a call. A majority vote of such members present shall be necessary to extend a call.~~ **A quorum shall consist of at least twenty-five percent (25%) of active Church and Society members having already attained the age of eighteen (18) and having voting privileges as defined in Article IV, Section 3. A majority vote of such members present shall be necessary to extend a call.**

Sec. 3. CONCLUSION OF PASTORATE: -The pastor shall give sixty (60) days notice, upon resignation. Other arrangements may be made as shall be agreed upon by Pastor and Executive Board. Termination- of office shall be voted on at a specially called meeting of the Church and Society, ~~with notice of such meeting having been read from the pulpit on two (2) successive Sundays, and circulated by with notice of such meeting circulated by appropriate means at least two weeks prior to such meeting. simultaneously posted on the Church and Friendship House.~~ ~~A quorum of ten (10) members who are eighteen or older shall be necessary to consider the termination of a call.~~ **A quorum shall consist of at least twenty-five percent (25%) of active Church and Society members having already attained the age of eighteen (18) and having voting privileges as defined in Article IV, Section 3. A majority vote of such members present and qualified to vote shall make valid a termination of said office.**

A majority vote of such members present and qualified to vote shall make valid a termination of said office.

## ARTICLE ~~IX~~XIII– AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS

These By-laws may be amended at the Annual Meeting or a specially called meeting of the Church by a two-thirds vote of the members present **and eligible to vote**, provided the Amendment(s) has been submitted in writing at any previous Executive Board meeting. Proposed amendments will be printed and available at least two (2) weeks prior to the Annual Meeting or Special Meeting, and available in the Church and Friendship House. **Unless otherwise provided for in the text of a proposed amendment, approved amendments will take effect at the conclusion of the meeting at which they are accepted.**