

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

Article 1: Name and Corporation

The name of this Church shall be the Trinitarian Congregational Church, United Church, Christ, of Northfield, Massachusetts. The Church was organized on November 18, 1825, and was incorporated under the laws of Massachusetts on March 11, 1899.

Article 2: Statement of Purpose

to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ
(Ephesians 4:12)

The mission of our church is to live and to teach the Word of God as shown to us through the ways of our Lord Jesus Christ. We hold every member in covenant. We also hold our covenant with the United Church of Christ through the Franklin Association of the Southern New England Conferences. We are a covenantal community belonging to God in Jesus Christ and therefore to one another in Jesus' name.

We encourage participation in the activities and programs of this congregation, the Franklin Association, the Southern New England Conferences and the national offices of the United Church of Christ, as well as ecumenical endeavors and the wider community beyond the wider church.

As this body of Christ we:

- Are an Open and Affirming Congregation in the United Church of Christ
- Seek to glorify God through our worship, prayer, study, service, and play
- Seek to be a caring community of Christian disciples strengthening one another in faith, building up one another in Christian love, making the most of our individual differences, and using our spiritual gifts to serve our community and the world
- Seek to provide an educational ministry so that each person can continue to grow in faith and discipleship in order to respond to our changing world
- Seek to be an inclusive community regardless of age, gender, gender identity and preference, ethnic and cultural identity, race, physical capability, or mental capability.
- Seek to provide a spiritual home for all people, acting as an agent of reconciliation among all people, breaking down the barriers that separate and alienate us from God and one another.
- Seek to be an instrument of God's love in the world, working for shalom. We believe in justice rooted in God's love and grace for all people.
- Seek to be stewards of God's creation, caring for the earth and all its people.

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

Article 3: Membership

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

(1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

We believe everyone has spiritual gifts. We use our gifts together to build up the body of Christ. We encourage every person to discern their spiritual gifts and to use them to serve this congregation. As such we believe that everyone who regularly participates in the life of this congregation through regular worship, financial support, and spiritual gifts are covenanted members of the congregation.

People who wish to affiliate with the ministries of this congregation can pursue membership standing.

Covenanted Members

People who participate regularly in the ongoing life of this congregation will be considered covenanted members. Standing is automatic and requires no notification to the clerk.

Covenanted Membership includes:

- An expectation of congregational support through their life’s celebrations and sorrows
- Participation in the congregation’s activities and in its areas of ministry
- Voice without vote in congregational meetings and discussions

Covenanted members maintain their status by participating and supporting the ongoing life of this congregation through their presence in worship, financial support, participating in various ministries of the church.

Covenanted members can voluntarily terminate their status by notifying the clerk of their desire to withdraw their covenanted relationship with the congregation.

In order to become a voting member, the covenanted member formally requests voting member status in order to join the church.

Voting members

Voting members will be reported to the United Church of Christ for its statistical purposes. Voting members have responsibilities for the life and ministry of the congregation beyond participating as a covenanted member.

Voting Membership includes:

- An expectation of congregational support through their life’s celebrations and sorrows
- Participation in the congregation’s activities and in its areas of ministry

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

- Voting privileges in congregational meetings and discussions
- Serve the congregation in the following elected offices:
 - Moderator
 - Treasurer
 - Assistant Treasurer
 - Clerk
 - Auditor
 - Chairs for each of the five ministry areas

Becoming Voting Members

- Makes a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ in any of the following ways:
 - Confirmation
 - Affirmation of Faith
 - Letter of Transfer (from another congregation)

Reevaluating Voting Membership

When a voting member is no longer fulfilling his or her responsibilities for the life and ministry of this congregation and is no longer participating in congregational meetings and decisions, his or her voting membership may be evaluated. Evaluating voting membership does not end a member's covenanted membership.

A voting membership can be terminated by one of three procedures:

1. Voluntarily notifying the Clerk of their desire to resign as a voting member.
2. When the voting member has not been actively engaged with the congregation for several consecutive years, the Clerk can begin a process to contact the member to determine his or her wishes regarding membership.
3. The Cabinet will be informed of any member wishing to withdraw from membership.

Article 4: Ministries

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

We hold fast to our ecclesiastical tradition, the ministry of all believers. God called all people to serve one another and the world. Baptism sealed in us the Holy Spirit, which animates us and leads us in our ministries. By the Spirit, we have been equipped with spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ.

We invite and encourage all covenanted members to use their spiritual gifts to participate in one or more of the ministries of this body of Christ.

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

Defining the Ministries

The work of the Church is accomplished by five Ministries with the support and guidance of the Cabinet as needed. The Ministries shall consist of “Trustees of Property, Finance, and Administration”, “Worship and Music”, “Community Engagement and Mission”, “Faith Development”, and “Congregational Life and Care”. Covenanted members of the congregation support the ministries with their time and talent and funds.

Purpose of the Ministries

The ministries organize the work and service of this congregation in its worship, administration, and engagement with the wider community and the world. The ministries also encourage and nurture each member’s faith formation and development.

Organization and Operation of the Ministries

- Each ministry will review and evaluate its purpose annually to ensure that it serves this body of Christ and contributes to its health and vitality.
- Each ministry will meet at least every other month to fulfill its role and responsibility to this body of Christ and make necessary decisions and take necessary actions to affect its ministry.
- The congregation should receive meeting notices at least one week in advance. Such notices can be posted prominently in the church or sent through regular church communications. Minutes for each meeting shall be posted prominently and generally accessible in the church for the benefit of the congregation.
- Actions taken and decisions made in a ministry meeting shall be passed by a majority of the ministry team in attendance.
- Each ministry team should designate a representative to the Cabinet. This representative must be a voting member. The representative’s term on the Cabinet should be no less than one year and should not exceed three years. A ministry team’s representative to the Cabinet cannot be an elected officer of the congregation
- Each ministry team will prepare and submit a report of its activities and decisions for the congregation’s annual report.

Authority of the Ministries

- Ministries can make decisions and take actions consistent with their respective areas of ministry for the health and vitality of the body of Christ. These decisions and actions should be ethically consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ. When their decisions affect activities and organizations beyond the congregation, they must be affirmed by the Cabinet.
- Ministries are responsible for the administration of the budgeted funds specified for their respective Ministry. Expenses in excess of the amount budgeted for that Ministry shall be brought to the attention of the Cabinet for approval, before making the expenditure.

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

- Income received by the Treasurer from dedicated endowment funds shall be administered by the Ministry responsible for the activities that fall within the stated purposes of that fund.

Responsibilities of the Ministries

- Worship and Music
 - Work with the pastor to plan, support, and sustain the congregation's worship life. Planning and support includes selecting service music and musicians, securing greeters, candle lighters, and ushers as well as offertory collectors, preparing rituals, such as communion and baptism, and other worship elements. In addition to weekly worship, this ministry team will also schedule and plan worship to celebrate significant dates on the liturgical calendar, and to mark significant events in the life of this congregation, such as weddings and funerals. This ministry team will assist the pastor to administer the sacraments, baptism and communion. In the event the pastor is unable to fill the pulpit, this ministry team has the authority to engage a lay person or an ordained pastor to substitute for up to four consecutive weeks. If the substitute is not authorized by standing in the United Church of Christ or authorized by communion agreements with the United Church of Christ, this ministry team can authorize this substitute to administer the sacraments. This ministry team will have responsibility for music and decorating the sanctuary space to enhance worship, including, but not limited to, flowers and banners. Additionally, this team can produce music programs, such as concerts, to enhance congregational life.
- Community Engagement and Mission
 - Oversee the disbursement of the congregation's mission budget, including raising funds to cover special one-time mission initiatives. Listen for mission needs in the wider community of Northfield and Franklin County and bring them to the attention of the entire congregation. Lead the UCC wider church offering campaigns. Evaluate the efficacy of the congregation's missions in order to make them more responsive to the needs in the wider community. This includes ending missions if they are unnecessary in this community or are unsustainable.
- Faith Development and Evangelism
 - Foster, nurture, and support a ministry of faith development for this congregation. This ministry should serve people of all ages. This is a teaching ministry in order to deepen this congregation's engagement with and understanding of this world through the teachings of Jesus Christ. It should also develop programs appealing to people in the wider Northfield community. As such, this team will also develop, promulgate, and foster communications with the secular community through social and traditional media.
- Congregational Life and Care
 - Strengthen and thicken the ties covenanted members have with each other.

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

Plan and organize congregational events to nurture fellowship within the congregation. Organize receptions for weddings, funerals, and post-worship hospitality. Work with the pastor to ensure covenanted members who physically cannot attend worship or other church functions are cared for by this congregation. This can include organizing, leading, and operating a formal or an informal congregational care program. This ministry will also include recording and maintaining the history of the congregation.

- Trustees of Property, Finance, and Administration
 - Entrusted with the stewardship of property, finance, and church administration. Ensure the congregation's property is properly maintained, including repairs and improvements. Create the budget and working with the Treasurer to keep the Cabinet informed of each month's revenues and expenditures. Oversee the management of the endowment and gift funds. Responsible for the annual pledge campaign and preparing a slate of officers every year for the annual meeting. Approve requests by outside groups to use church facilities, including rental fees. Develop, evaluate, and adjust internal administrative procedures to ensure the congregation's operation. Evaluate the administrative assistant and sexton. The chair of this ministry will be the designated contact when issues arise between formal meetings.

Participation in Ministries

All covenanted members can participate in any area of ministry as they believe the Holy Spirit leads them. Covenanted members are not limited to one ministry. Furthermore, covenanted members, who do not wish to be part of a particular ministry but choose to offer their gifts to a ministry on a limited basis can do so without being a member of the ministry.

Article 5: The Cabinet

Purpose

The Cabinet is the executive and administrative body of the congregation. It ensures the coordination of the five ministries, seeks to nurture and sustain the vitality of the congregation's ministry, and promotes the movement of the Holy Spirit in this body of Christ. The Cabinet has responsibility to set the overall direction of this congregation's ministries.

The Cabinet has the authority to make decisions affecting the congregation between congregational meetings. It has the authority to enter into contracts and agreements on behalf of the congregation for its ministries. It has the authority to approve contracts for church personnel. It has the authority to assume tasks and responsibilities for the congregation which are not covered by any ministry area.

Membership

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

The membership of the Cabinet will consist of the following elected officers: Moderator, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Clerk. Membership will also include one representative from each of the ministries. All members of the Cabinet must have voting member status in the congregation. Cabinet members shall not include paid staff.

Executive Committee of the Cabinet

The Executive Committee of the Cabinet shall be the Moderator, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and the Clerk. The Executive Committee of the Cabinet has the authority to make decisions or authorize actions on behalf of the congregation between Cabinet meetings when such decisions or authorizations are time critical and cannot wait until the next Cabinet meeting.

Authority and Responsibilities

Fulfilling the Cabinet's purpose specifically entails the following:

1. Discern the movement of the Holy Spirit and in close collaboration with the pastor to set the overall direction of this congregation's ministries. Promote cooperation and collaboration between ministries. Evaluate and decide whether particular ministries can sustain the congregation's mission and ministries.
2. Has the authority to enter into contracts and agreements on behalf of the congregation with organizations and entities outside of the congregation. It can act upon recommendations by a ministry or it initiate agreements on its own.
3. Facilitate and ensure communication between ministries and between leadership and congregation. Coordinate the church calendar of events and special worship services.
4. Manage the finances of the congregation in consultation with the Administration, Finance, and Property Ministry. The Cabinet has authority to amend the budget as warranted between annual meetings.
5. Approve the receipt of special gifts of property, financial assets, or cash per the recommendation of the Administration, Finance, and Property Ministry.
6. Has the authority to call special congregational meetings to consider matters of importance. Circumstances for congregational approval could include, but are not limited to: extraordinary expenditures, approval of a pastoral call, dismissal of a pastor, or major changes to the church's property.
7. Appoint delegates to represent the church at wider church functions, including activities of the Franklin Association, such as meetings, ecclesiastical councils, and ordinations. Delegates will also represent the congregation at the Annual Meeting of the Southern New England Conferences of the United Church of Christ.
8. Work closely with the pastor to ensure the health and vitality of the congregation and its ministries. This will entail:

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

- a. Forming a pastoral relations committee. It shall consist of four representatives from the congregation each appointed by the Cabinet for two-year terms. One member each year shall be selected by the Cabinet and one member each year shall be selected by the pastor. The pastoral relations team will serve as a liaison between the pastor and the congregation. The relationship between the pastor is dialogical. It shall advise the pastor, but it has no authority to make decisions. It shall not evaluate the pastor. The proceedings are confidential. This committee shall meet at least every other month.
- b. Form a staff evaluation committee to evaluate the administrative assistant and the sexton annually. It shall consist of the pastor, the representative of the Administration, Finance, and Property Team to the Cabinet and three representatives appointed by the Cabinet for two-year terms. Two representatives shall be appointed in even-numbered years and one representative shall be appointed in odd-numbered years. They shall evaluate each employee according to the respective job description. They have the authority to amend the respective job descriptions prospectively as circumstances warrant. They shall report their evaluations to the Cabinet.
- c. Form a musician evaluation committee to evaluate the choir director and the pianist annually. It shall consist of the pastor, the representative of the Music and Ministry Team to the Cabinet and three representatives appointed by the Cabinet for two-year terms. Two representatives shall be appointed in even-numbered years and one representative shall be appointed in odd-numbered years. They shall evaluate each employee according to the respective job description. They have the authority to amend the respective job descriptions prospectively as circumstances warrant. They shall report their evaluations to the Cabinet.
- d. Form a pastoral evaluation committee consisting of the congregation's elected officers. It shall evaluate the pastor's effectiveness and leadership annually. It will provide the pastor with guidance to ensure effective ministry. Consulting with the pastor, they can change the pastor's duties and responsibilities prospectively as circumstances warrant. The committee has the authority to increase or decrease the pastor's contracted hours. If the committee recommends a decrease in hours, it will take effect after one year has elapsed. It shall report its evaluation to the Cabinet.
- e. Conduct an annual evaluation of the congregation's ministry. This evaluation will be designed with the pastor. It should assess the congregation's vitality and sustainability. It should critically assess its missions and elicit the congregation's perspective on its ministry.
- f. Organize a pastoral search. In the event of a pastoral vacancy, the Cabinet shall organize and gather a pastoral search committee. It should comprise

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

a broad cross section of the congregation reflecting age, tenure, gender, gender identification, and ministries. The committee should consist of six to eight members. They do not need to be members of the Cabinet. The team's membership should be affirmed by the Cabinet. The team shall organize itself. Particularly when searching for a settled pastor, the team should seek input from the congregation and keep the congregation informed of its progress.

Operations

- The head of the Cabinet is the Moderator. The Moderator shall preside over Cabinet meetings. In the event the Moderator cannot preside over a meeting, the Moderator will appoint another member of the Cabinet for this responsibility.
- The Cabinet shall meet at least every other month. Meetings are open to all covenanted members of the congregation. The congregation should be notified of the time and location of Cabinet meetings at least one week in advance.
- A quorum for Cabinet meetings is two-thirds of the Cabinet. A majority vote of the members present at the meeting will pass a motion, unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.
- Cabinet meeting minutes will be posted prominently in the church and become part of the church's permanent record.

Article 6: Officers and Delegates

Voting members of the congregation will elect officers and delegates. Officers must be voting members of the congregation.

Election and Term of Office

Officers and delegates will be elected at the congregation's Annual Meeting. A majority vote of those present at an Annual Meeting shall affirm the appointment. Upon their election, they will assume their responsibilities at the close of the Annual Meeting.

The terms of office shall be as follows:

Moderator – two years

Treasurer – two years

Assistant Treasurer – two years

Clerk – two years

Auditor – two years

Officers can serve up to two consecutive terms. After serving two consecutive terms, the officer must wait at least one year before assuming another elected office.

The Moderator's and Assistant Treasurer's terms will begin in even-numbered years. The Treasurer's, Clerk's, and Auditor's terms will begin in odd-numbered years.

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

Should a vacancy occur between annual meetings, the Administration, Property, and Finance ministry shall put forth a voting member of the congregation to fill the vacancy pending approval from the Cabinet. The appointment shall continue until the next Annual Meeting at which time the voting members of the congregation can affirm the appointment to continue for the balance of the term.

Officers and Their Duties

Moderator – The Moderator shall preside over all business meetings of the Church and the Cabinet. The Moderator is the senior lay officer of the congregation and will work closely with the pastor to ensure church administration and function, to cast and implement a vision, and to address other concerns affecting the life and ministry of the congregation. The Moderator shall submit an annual report to the congregation summarizing the year's activities and decisions as well as articulating a vision for the congregation to guide it for the next twelve months. The Moderator is an alternate signatory for checks and other disbursements in the event the Treasurer is unable to fulfill this function.

Treasurer – The Treasurer is the church's chief financial officer. The Treasurer has the authority to sign checks. The Treasurer's job may be shared by a Co-Treasurer with equal responsibilities. The Treasurer shall allocate revenues and disbursements according to the budget as approved by the congregation at its Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall prepare budget reports for the Cabinet and an annual budget report for the congregation. The Treasurer is the custodian for all legacies, memorial funds, trusts, and other invested funds. The Treasurer shall administer the church's endowed funds in accordance with the Endowment Policy. The Treasurer is custodian of the church seal and has the authority to affix the same to documents requiring it. The Treasurer shall provide the financial records to the Auditor for review at least 14 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Assistant Treasurer – The Assistant Treasurer shall receive and record all income and bank deposits and provide documentation to the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer shall provide quarterly statements to people who pledged to the church. The Assistant Treasurer will record pledges received during the annual pledge campaign. The Assistant Treasurer shall acknowledge gifts given to the church. The Assistant Treasurer will help the Treasurer administer the endowed funds in accordance with the Endowment Policy. The Assistant Treasurer has the authority to affix the church seal to documents in the event the Treasurer cannot fulfill this task.

Clerk – The Clerk shall record the proceedings of Congregational meetings and those of the Cabinet. The Clerk shall provide minutes of the Annual Meeting for the Annual Report of the church and shall provide Minutes of each Cabinet meeting to the Cabinet. The Clerk shall also maintain the membership records of the church including Baptisms, Confirmations, Weddings, Deaths, Births, Transfers and the roster of voting members.

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

The Clerk will periodically evaluate the status of the voting membership by contacting members who have not been part of the membership for several years to determine their wishes regarding their membership. The Clerk will report findings to the Cabinet. The Clerk shall certify a quorum at congregational meetings. The Clerk shall provide a membership report to the congregation for the Annual Report. The membership report will include the current number of voting members, the number of baptisms, confirmations, weddings, deaths, and transfers in and out of the congregation. The Clerk shall attend to the correspondence relative to letters of transfer. The Clerk shall submit reports on behalf of the congregation to the Franklin Association and the United Church of Christ.

Auditor – The Auditor shall make an annual audit of the financial records of the Treasurer. The Auditor shall submit a report to the Annual Report. The Auditor is not a member of the Cabinet.

Delegates – Shall be appointed by the Cabinet. The Delegates shall represent the church at meetings and functions of the Franklin Association and the Southern New England Conferences of the United Church of Christ. Delegates have the authority to cast votes, but their votes do not necessarily have to reflect the sentiments of the congregation. Delegates shall provide a report of their activities to the congregation after each meeting. Delegates shall keep the congregation abreast of initiatives instituted by the Franklin Association, the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, and the national setting of the United Church of Christ. The Delegates are not members of the Cabinet. There are two delegates.

Indemnification and Settlements

Indemnification for elected officers and members of the ministries. To the extent legally permissible, the Church shall indemnify each present or former officer or member of a ministry against all liabilities, costs and expenses, including but not limited to amounts paid in satisfaction of judgment, in settlement or as fines and penalties, and counsel fees and disbursements, reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the defense or disposition of our otherwise in connection with or resulting from any action, suit or other proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, before any court or administrative, legislative, or investigative body, in which such person may be or may have been involved as a party or otherwise, or with which such person may be or may have been threatened, while in office or thereafter, by reason of his or her being or having been such an officer or member of a ministry team, or by reason of any action taken or not taken in any such capacity, except with respect to any matter as to which such person shall have been finally adjudicated by a court of competent jurisdiction not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that his or her action was in the best interest of the church. Expenses, including but not limited to counsel fees and disbursements, so incurred by any such person in defending any such action, suit or proceeding, may be paid from time to time by the church in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding upon receipt

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

of an undertaking by or on behalf of the person indemnified to repay the amounts so paid if it shall ultimately be determined that indemnification of such expenses is not authorized hereunder which undertaking shall be accepted without reference to the financial ability of such person to make payment.

As to any matter disposed of by settlement by any such person, pursuant to a consent decree or otherwise, no such indemnification either for the amount of such settlement or for any other expenses shall be provided unless such settlement shall be approved as in the best interest of the church, after notice that it involves such indemnification,

- a) by a vote of a disinterested majority of the Cabinet then in office, or
- b) by a vote of the majority of the Cabinet then in office, but only if the Cabinet shall have been furnished with an opinion of independent legal counsel to the effect that such settlement is in the best interests of the church and that such person appears to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that his or her action was in the best interest of the church.

Article 7: Congregational Meetings

The authority of this congregation lies with its voting membership. Final decisions affecting the congregation rest with the voting membership. The Cabinet can make decisions on behalf of the congregation. This authority is implicitly granted by the voting membership to facilitate church operations between congregational meetings.

Annual Meeting

The church must hold an Annual Meeting every year. The meeting shall be held between mid-January and the end of February as determined by the Cabinet. The Annual Meeting shall:

- Elect officers from a slate submitted by the Finance, Property, and Administration ministry team.
- Pass the annual church budget as submitted by the Treasurer.
- Accept ministry reports presented to the congregation in the church's Annual Report.
- Conduct other business coming before the congregation

Notice for the Annual Meeting must be announced to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. The announcement shall be in the form of a meeting warrant noting the date, time, and place of the meeting as well as the items of business coming before the congregation. The warrant shall be read to the congregation for two consecutive worship services no less than one week apart prior to the meeting and posted prominently in the church.

The Annual Report to the congregation must be distributed to the congregation at least one week prior to the Annual Meeting.

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

A quorum for the Annual Meeting shall be at least 20 voting members of the congregation. Approval will require a majority of the voting members present at the meeting, unless a higher threshold for approval is required as stipulated by the Cabinet prior to the meeting.

Other Congregational Meetings

Though the Cabinet has the authority to make decisions on behalf of the congregation between Annual Meetings, situations may arise in which a congregational vote may be appropriate.

Other congregational meetings can be called by the Cabinet.

Notice for a congregational meeting must be announced to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the meeting date. The announcement shall be in the form of a meeting warrant noting the date, time, and place of the meeting as well as the items of business coming before the congregation. The warrant shall be read to the congregation for two consecutive worship services no less than one week apart prior to the meeting and posted prominently in the church.

A quorum for a congregational meeting shall be at least 20 voting members of the congregation. Approval will require a majority of the voting members present at the meeting, unless a higher threshold for approval is required as stipulated by the Cabinet prior to the meeting.

The minutes for these congregational meetings shall be included in the next Annual Report.

Rescheduling a Congregational Meeting

In the event circumstances force a cancellation of a congregational meeting, including an Annual Meeting, it can be rescheduled no less than two weeks after the original meeting date. The rescheduled meeting date shall be announced to the congregation at least one week prior to the rescheduled meeting date and a notice of the rescheduled meeting's date, time, and place should be posted in the church.

Lack of Quorum

In the event a duly called congregational meeting lacks a quorum, items requiring a congregational vote cannot be affirmed. The voting members present, however, can set a new date and time for a congregational meeting no less than one month after the meeting. The new meeting date shall be announced to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the new meeting date for two consecutive worship service no less than one week apart and posted in the church. Should a second congregational meeting lack a quorum, a third congregational meeting can be set with a new date no less than two weeks after the meeting. The third meeting date should be announced to the congregation and posted in the church. Quorum for this third meeting shall be at least twelve voting members. An affirmative vote on behalf of the congregation shall require a two-thirds majority of the members present to pass.

Article 8: The Pastor and Teacher

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

Description of the Ministry

Though our tradition believes in the priesthood of all believers, some people are set apart and through prayer, study, and service are called to authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ.

“In ordination, the individual makes a lifetime commitment to God in Jesus Christ and to the Church, relying upon the Holy Spirit. As Ordained Ministers enter the apostolic ministry, they continue the witness of Christ’s followers from New Testament times.

Ordained Ministers are authorized to serve and lead on behalf of the United Church of Christ and the Church Universal, a ministry that encompasses the full range of leadership ministries: priestly and prophetic, representative and servant.”¹

Ordination authorizes its clergy to perform the two sacraments in the United Church of Christ, baptism and communion. The pastor and teacher should be able to demonstrate or affirm the capability to reflect the **Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ**² in pastoral leadership.

Authorization

By the rite of the laying of hands, ordained clergy are part of the apostolic succession of church leaders going back to the earliest days of the church. The United Church of Christ refers to its ordained clergy serving churches as Pastor and Teacher.

The pastor and teacher should be authorized by the United Church of Christ. Authorization to serve this congregation can be in several forms:

- Member in Discernment approved by an ecclesiastical council for ordination pending call.
- Ordained clergy authorized by the United Church of Christ
- Ordained clergy from other denominations who through formal ecumenical agreement with the United Church of Christ can serve. Ministerial partners: Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Canada. Formula of Agreement: Presbyterian Church (USA), Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and Reform Church in America.
- Clergy from other denominations can serve this church through an ecclesial authorization. This authorization can be Privilege of Call or Dual Standing. Such authorization is granted by the Franklin Association.

Responsibilities

The Pastor and Teacher shall have charge of the spiritual welfare and development of the congregation. As such the Pastor and Teacher shall:

¹ United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry. 2018

² Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers in the United Church of Christ.

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

- Prepare and lead worship services throughout the year, including administering the sacraments
- Provide counsel and support for covenanted members seeking comfort and Christ's presence through their illness and personal trials.
- Nurture, sustain, and deepen Christian discipleship within the congregation through teaching and leadership
- Work with ministry teams and the Cabinet to implement the congregation's direction and vision.
- Represent the congregation to the community in various public settings.
- Supervise staff to maintain the administrative tasks and functions for the congregation

The congregation pledges its support of its pastor and teacher through the following:

- Pastor and teacher's freedom of the pulpit
- Affirm its responsibility to support the ministry of this church through its time, talent, and treasure
- Honor the boundaries with respect to privacy, family needs, and time committed to serving this congregation
- Provide compensation consistent with clergy compensation guidelines as established by the Southern New England Conferences of the United Church of Christ.

Calling a Pastor and Teacher

Authorized ministers who serve a congregation for an extended period of time, exceeding two months, form a close relational bond. Thus, the congregation should follow a formal process to ensure this relationship will generate a fruitful ministry. Furthermore, the relationship will be such that a formal agreement specifying terms and conditions, including financial terms, be prepared. The relationship between the pastor and teacher and the congregation can be for a limited time or prescribed circumstances, otherwise known as transitional ministry. An indefinite relationship between the pastor and teacher and the congregation is known as settled ministry. The processes differ.

A. Settled Pastor and Designated Term Pastor

- a. The Cabinet will form a search committee
- b. The search committee will prepare a church profile. Upon its completion forward the profile to the appropriate judicatory official.
- c. Interview candidates and select one to put forward to the congregation
- d. The candidate will lead and preach at a congregational worship service. Following the service the congregation will vote to call the candidate. Passage will require a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members in attendance.
- e. The pastor and teacher becomes a voting member of this congregation.
- f. The Clerk will notify the Franklin Association of this call to begin the process of transferring the authorized minister's records to the Franklin Association and then scheduling an installation service.

B. Interim Pastor

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

- a. The Cabinet will form a search committee
- b. The search committee will prepare a church profile. Upon its completion forward the profile to the appropriate judicatory official.
- c. Interview candidates and select one

Pastoral Termination

Pastors and teachers who have a formal written agreement to serve the congregation have the following process to end the ministry. The termination can be voluntary initiated by the pastor and teacher or involuntary initiated by the congregation.

- A. Initiated by the settled pastor or designated term pastor
 - a. The pastor submits a resignation to the Clerk no less than 60 days prior to termination date seeking to end the relationship with the congregation.
- B. Pastoral Termination for an Interim Pastor
 - a. The end date for an interim pastor is mutually agreed upon by the Worship and Music Ministry Team and the interim pastor.
- C. Involuntary Termination
 - a. A pastor and teacher can be terminated for any of the following reasons:
 - i. Cannot execute the responsibilities of the position
 - ii. Violation of the congregation's trust or the ministerial code of ethics
 - iii. Can no longer provide effective pastoral leadership to the congregation
 - b. The Cabinet after working with the pastor and teacher believes that the pastor and teacher can no longer fulfill the leadership responsibilities to the congregation shall by a two-thirds majority vote of the Cabinet members present at a Cabinet meeting to recommend terminating the pastor and teacher.
 - c. The Cabinet's recommendation to terminate the pastor and teacher shall be voted upon by two-thirds of the voting members present at a duly convened congregational meeting.
 - d. Termination becomes effective immediately following the congregational vote.

Article 9: Amendments and Review

Amending Bylaws

Amendments to these bylaws require a congregational vote at a congregational meeting.

Proposed bylaw changes shall be distributed to the congregation for its review at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting during which the proposed bylaw changes will be voted.

The language of the proposed bylaw change can be amended during the congregational meeting.

Final language for the proposed bylaw change shall be affirmed by a majority vote of the voting members present at the congregational meeting.

Trinitarian Congregational Church Bylaws

Bylaw Review

The bylaws should be reviewed by the Cabinet at least every five years from the adoption of the last full bylaws revision. Should the Cabinet believe a full revision of the bylaws are in order, it shall appoint a committee of the voting members of the congregation to recommend the revisions. The size of the committee will be left to the Cabinet.

Acceptance of revised bylaws is subject to a congregational vote at a duly constituted congregational meeting.