

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE DEERING COMMUNITY CHURCH DEERING, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Revised, Adopted in Full

June 27, 2021

## Article I – NAME

The name of the church shall be the Deering Community Church, United Church of Christ Deering, New Hampshire.

## Article II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is captured in its Mission Statement:

COMPASSIONATE, OPEN TO ALL, WHERE CHRIST’S TECHING LEADS TO  
SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND ACTION

Its tasks shall be to maintain public service for the worship of God, preaching and discerning the Gospel, to promote interest in the Living Spirit as manifest in all of creation, and to experience Christ-Love in both Jesus teachings and the Community of faith.

## Article III – POLITY

The government of this church shall be vested in its members, subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted by the State of New Hampshire. It accepts the obligations of cooperation involved in the fellowship of the United Church of Christ churches in the Hillsborough Association, the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, and with all other churches which seek to promote the values of Christian Faith. This constitution shall serve as the governing document of the Church; its provisions, unless they conflict with the Articles of Incorporation, shall be understood to represent the will and authority of the whole Church membership.

## Article IV – FAITH

This church grants to all persons the right to their individual interpretation of the principles of the Christian religion, and respects them in their honest conviction. The following United Church of Christ statement of faith, therefore, is not a test but an expression of the spirit in which this church interprets the Word of God.

“We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify:

God calls the world into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through the prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man from Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its creator.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful peoples of all ages, tongues and races.

God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at His table, to join Him in His passion and victory. God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God. Amen."

## Article V – MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1 – MEMBERSHIP DESIGNATIONS

#### (a) FULL MEMBERSHIP

All persons who, on confession of faith, on re-affirmation of faith and having been baptized, or upon presentation of letter of transfer from another church, assent to the faith and covenant of this church, shall be full members of this church.

#### (b) ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Members of other churches who retain that membership, and who affirm their Christian faith and assent to the faith and covenant of this church, may be associate members with all the privileges and rights of the full members of this church.

FULL or ASSOCIATE Members who move away, but still desire to maintain their membership in this church, will be expected to communicate at least once a year and to make a financial contribution toward the support of this church. If any member neglects to do this for a period of two years, upon recommendation of the Church Council, his/her name shall be removed to the inactive list and no longer counted in the statistics.

### Section 2 – DUTIES

All members are expected to be faithful in the spiritual duties essential to the Christian life, to attend the services of the church, to give regularly for its support, and to share in its organized life and work.

### Section 3 – PRIVILEGES

All ACTIVE Full and Associate members in good standing may act and vote in all business transactions of the church.

### Section 4 – TERMINATION

Church membership shall be terminated

(a) By death

(b) By letter. Any member in good standing who desires a letter of transfer to any other church is entitled to receive it upon request.

## Article VI – MEETINGS

### Section 1 – WORSHIP

(a) Public services of worship shall be held regularly on Sunday mornings except when otherwise determined by the Deacon Ministry in conjunction with the Pastor.

(b) The Lord's Supper shall be commemorated ordinarily on the first Sunday of each month.

(c) Other services shall be determined by the Deacon Ministry in conjunction with the Pastor.

### Section 2 – MEETING OF THE CHURCH

(a) The Annual Meeting of the Church shall ordinarily be held on the fourth Sunday in January coinciding with a fiscal calendar year of January 1 through December 31, or on a more convenient date set by the Church Council, to hear the annual reports of officers, organizations, and committees, to elect officers, to adopt a budget, and to transact any other business which may properly come before it.

(b) At any regular meeting for worship the church may, without special notice, act upon the appointment of delegates, but not upon other business.

(c) Special meetings for business may be called by the Pastor or the Church Council, and may be called by the Clerk upon written request of eight adult members. A written and verbal notice given to the members of the church at least one week before the date of the meeting shall constitute an official notice of any business meeting. The purpose of any meeting shall be stated in the written and verbal notice.

(d) The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the church or, in the absence of the Moderator, any person designated by the Moderator.

(e) When advisable for health and safety reasons, Deering Community Church meetings and voting may occur via electronic methods.

### Section 3 – QUORUM

Twelve members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the church.

## Article VII – OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

### Section 1 – ELIGIBILITY

Coordinators and Officers elected to the following positions must be members or associate members of the Deering Community Church, U.C.C.: Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Archivist, Resource Ministry Coordinator, Deacon Ministry Coordinator, Christian Education Ministry Coordinator, Outreach Ministry Coordinator, Pastor Parish Relations Ministry Coordinator, and Delegates.

### Section 2 – REMOVAL

Any elected official may be removed by two thirds vote of the members present at a Congregational Meeting called for that purpose.

### Section 3 – OFFICERS

(a) PASTOR shall be chosen and called by a majority vote of the members present at a duly convened congregational meeting; to hold his/her office with terms mutually agreed upon by the Pastor and the Church, and may be installed as Pastor when he/she and the Church agree. It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach the Word, to care for the stated services of public worship, to administer the sacraments and promote the spiritual welfare of the Church and those whom it serves. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member, without a vote, of all boards and committees. When a vacancy occurs, the Church Council shall establish an Interim or Designated Term Minister (DTM) Search Committee in consultation with the NHCUC. An Interim or DTM, if deemed necessary, will be called and established to guide the congregation through the Developmental Tasks of this period. Once accomplished, a regular Search Committee is established in consultation with the Conference and elected by the Congregation to search for a new Pastor, unless the congregation has elected the Designated Term Minister to continue as the Settled Pastor.

(b) MODERATOR shall be elected at an Annual Meeting to serve a term of two (2) years. After serving two successive terms, the Moderator shall not be eligible for re-election until one term has elapsed. Absent the ability to find an individual willing and able to serve as Moderator, the Moderator may continue to serve in that capacity. Fulfilling a predecessor's remaining term does not restrict the individual from serving an additional full two year term.

(c) CLERK shall be elected at an Annual Meeting to serve a term of two (2) years. After serving two successive terms, the Clerk shall not be eligible for re-election until one term has elapsed. Absent the ability to find an individual willing and able to serve as Clerk, the Clerk may continue to serve in that capacity. Fulfilling a predecessor's remaining term does not restrict the individual from serving an additional full two year term.

The Clerk shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the church. The Clerk, in conjunction with church office personnel, shall keep a register of the members of the Church with date of their reception and removal, record Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths, and make a full report to the Church at its Annual Meeting. In conjunction with Church office personnel, the Clerk shall oversee issuing letters of transfer and the preservation on file of all communications, documents and written official reports. The Clerk shall give legal notice of all meetings when such notice is necessary, report all communication intended for the Church and conduct, as may be necessary, its correspondence.

(d) TREASURER shall be elected at an Annual Meeting to serve a term of two (2) years. After serving two successive terms, the Treasurer shall not be eligible for re-election until one term has elapsed. Absent the ability to find an individual willing and able to serve as Treasurer, the Treasurer may continue to serve in that capacity. Fulfilling a predecessor's remaining term does not restrict the individual from serving an additional full two year term.

The Treasurer shall be custodian of all funds of the Church. The Treasurer shall receive receipts and summary reports from the Financial Secretary of all monies deposited to Church accounts. A record of all receipts, income and expenditures shall be kept by the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks for payments on all budget items, special accounts and funds, for amounts less than Five Thousand dollars. Checks greater than Five Thousand dollars shall require two signatures, based on procedures established by the Resource Ministry. The Treasurer shall be an ex- officio member, without vote, of the Resource Ministry. The Treasurer's accounting shall be certified by the Auditor/s and the Treasurer shall make a full report at the Annual Meeting of the Church.

(e) FINANCIAL SECRETARY shall be elected at an Annual Meeting to serve a term of two (2) years. After serving two successive terms, the Financial Secretary shall not be eligible for re-election until one term has elapsed. Absent the ability to find an individual willing and able to serve as Financial Secretary, the Financial Secretary may continue to serve in that capacity. Fulfilling a predecessor's remaining term does not restrict the individual from serving an additional full two year term.

The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining financial records of pledges, weekly and special offerings and all other monies. The Financial Secretary shall collect and arrange for deposit of same, reporting to the Treasurer. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary shall be authorized to sign checks under the same conditions as the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary shall be certified by the Auditor/s and the Financial Secretary shall make a full report at the Annual Meeting of the Church.

(f) ARCHIVIST shall collect, preserve and process for ready accessibility those Church records and other resources which contain evidential value necessary for the Church to continue its operations, meet its legal requirements and provide for its historical continuity and which help Church officers, pastors, members and others understand the history, operations, and goals and objectives of the Church. The Church Archivist shall develop, with the approval of the Church Council, an archival policy which defines records of archival or historical value and which requests officers, pastors and members to deposit such records in the Church archives.

#### Section 4 – MINISTRY AREAS and STANDING COMMITTEES

The five (5) Ministry Areas, as noted below depend on volunteers for time limited participation in various activities. Each Ministry Area shall recruit volunteers to carry out the vision and mission of their ministries. Volunteers may come and go as they wish without any limitations.

The Ministry Areas shall each consist of Coordinator/s, elected at an Annual Meeting serving a two (2) year term. After serving two successive terms, a Coordinator shall not be eligible for re-election until one term has elapsed.

Each Ministry Area shall designate a representative to the Church Council. It shall be encouraged that all Ministry Areas and Committees work closely with each other and with the Pastor for the general benefit of the Church and its stated mission.

(a) RESOURCE MINISTRY (heretofore known as TRUSTEES) shall report to the Church Council. This Ministry Area shall have general charge of all funds, including Endowment Funds, receipts and expenditures of the Church, subject to conditions and directions of the donors, the Church Council, or the Church. In cooperation with all other Ministry Areas, they shall prepare an annual budget for presentation to the Church at each Annual Meeting. They shall have the care and custody of the property of the Church, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer property without specific authority by vote of the Church. They have oversight of the administrative business of the church such as: Building Rentals, Administrative Personnel, Endowment, Safety, Insurance and Stewardship.

[a 1.] STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY is a sub-group of the Resource Ministry. Members will be appointed by the Moderator and the Church Council. It shall be responsible for a year-round, ongoing stewardship program that encourages generous individual and corporate use of the time, talents and gifts that God has given us all. The Stewardship Ministry will incorporate in its program a specific process for the commitment of money to provide for the ministry and mission of the Deering Community Church, UCC. The Stewardship Ministry shall prepare annually a budget for submission to the Resource Ministry [Trustees] as well as an annual report.

[a 2.] SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE is a subgroup of the Resource Ministry, and shall report to the Church Council. Members will be appointed by the Moderator and the Church Council. The Safe Church Committee shall be responsible for a year-round, ongoing and evolving safe-church program that promotes individual and group safety for all persons while participating in church ministries and activities. The Safe Church Committee shall prepare annually a budget for submission to the Resource Ministry [Trustees] as well as an annual report.

(b) DEACON MINISTRY shall report to Church Council. Members shall assist the Pastor in worship, in the administration of the sacraments, in ministering to the spiritual needs of the Church and community, and in caring for the general well-being of the Church and community. In cooperation with the Music Director and the Pastor, the Deacon Ministry shall address the music in worship and special events in the church. In cooperation with the Pastor, the Deacon Ministry shall direct the distribution of the Deacons' Fund. The Deacons shall prepare annually a budget for submission to the Resource Ministry (Trustees) as well as an annual report.

[b 1.] MUSIC Committee shall work to provide general oversight of the musical instruments owned by the church, recommend to the Resource Ministry the appointment of an organist and choir director, and generally promote the ministry of music in the Deering Community Church. As part of the Deacon Ministry, the Music Committee shall report to Council and prepare annually a budget for submission to the Resource Ministry [Trustees] as well as an annual report.

(c) CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY shall report to Council. – The duties of this Ministry Area shall be to embrace the overall supervision and guidance of the Christian education activities of the Church as they pertain to children, youth and adults. This Ministry shall be responsible for recruitment of teachers, the functional aspects of the Church School, and nursery care. The Christian Education Ministry shall prepare annually a budget for submission to the Resource Ministry [Trustees] as well as an annual report.

(d) OUTREACH MINISTRY – Shall report to Council. This Ministry Area incorporates the work of social action and missions. It may begin specific mission projects in consistency with the vision and mission of the Deering Community Church, UCC in an on-going basis as determined as appropriate, and

direct the way in which the church carries out these projects. The Outreach Ministry shall recruit support to carry out the various mission projects, including the church's Ukama Partnership and the Open and Affirming initiative. The Outreach Ministry shall prepare annually a budget for submission to the Resource Ministry [Trustees] as well as an annual report.

(e) PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS MINISTRY shall report to the Church Council while holding the confidentiality of sensitive matters. This committee shall consist of a minimum of three [3] members to be appointed annually in consultation with the Church Council. While not elected, the members of this committee shall be noted on the slate of officers voted at the Annual Meeting for the information of the congregation. The duty of this committee is to address educational issues around good practice and boundaries between the Pastor and the Congregation, and to support best practice communication between all parties needing to address issues and concerns brought to it by the Pastor or member(s) of the congregation.

Other officials – elected annually to a two [2] year term:

(a) DELEGATES – There shall be three- four (3-4) delegates, one of whom shall be, if possible, 25 years of age or younger (per NH Conference requirements) to represent and vote on issues on behalf of the Deering Community Church, UCC at yearly Hillsborough Association Meetings and the Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ. The delegates are to inform the congregation of issues expected to be brought before such meetings so that they may vote our collective conscience and then report back the outcome of such votes and other issues and decisions made at the meetings.

(b) AUDITOR/S – shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to audit the accounts of the Church and of subsidiary organizations, should they have separate accounts. The Auditor/s shall prepare a report for presentation at each Annual Meeting.

## Section 5 – CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council represents the Congregation, the ultimate authority and decision-making body of the Church. It carries out the business ministry between Congregational annual meetings. It shall be comprised of the Pastor, Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and one officially designated representative from the five Ministry Areas and each standing elected committee and recognized fellowship group. The Moderator shall serve as the chairperson of the Church Council. The Church Council shall have charge of the general conduct of the affairs of the church. It shall be responsible for reviewing plans presented by the Ministry Areas and supporting Boards & Committees in their efforts, but shall be recognized as the ultimate authority to assure that all public services, music, ways and means of financing, collection and distribution of benevolences, nominations of elected officials, the filling of vacancies and contact



with other organizations is in accord with the stated purpose and mission of the Deering Community Church, UCC. The Church Council itself may initiate projects and may create ad hoc committees with specific functions, reporting to it and subject in all manner to the stated purpose and mission of the Church. It is the duty of the Church Council to request the resignation of any officer or Ministry Coordinator negligent or inactive in respect to obligations of their office and to declare the office vacant and proceed to fill the vacancy. Quorum for Church Council meetings shall be four (4) members.

#### Article VIII – FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Meeting regularly for fellowship at times other than scheduled worship services is to be encouraged. Incidental, occasional gatherings, such as pot luck suppers, are welcomed. An established recognized group with

- (a) A specific membership (i.e. youth, women, etc.) and
- (b) Regularly scheduled meetings shall select a representative to the Church Council. This representative will have voice but no vote. Membership in the fellowship group may be open to any in the community. An annual report shall be filed for presentation to the Annual Meeting of the church.

#### Article IX- AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended at the Annual Meeting, or at a special meeting of the Church by two thirds vote of the members present, provided that notice of the proposed amendment is given in full in the call for the meeting.