

# **Franklin United Church Bylaws**

## **Franklin, Vermont**

(Amended by Congregational Vote, September 9, 2007)

*“United to Glorify Christ.”*

# FRANKLIN UNITED CHURCH BYLAWS

(Amended September 9, 2007)

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As members of the United Methodist Church and the Congregational Church of Franklin, Vermont, we the people of these bodies affirm our commonality of purpose and desire. While maintaining denominational affiliation with the United Methodist Church through the Burlington District of the Troy Conference, and the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, we declare by the witness of this document that we are one Church. For the sake of more fully advancing the Kingdom of God, we unite in the strength, purpose, and resolve of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this Church shall be the FRANKLIN UNITED CHURCH.

## **ARTICLE II – STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We acknowledge that we know God only through His self-revelation to us which has come to us in the Person of Jesus Christ, the living Word of God; the Bible, the written and inspired Word of God; and the Holy Spirit, Who now lives among us. We assert humanity's need to be utterly dependent upon God for fulfillment in this life and the next, and that humanity finds this fulfillment only in a personal encounter with the living Christ.

## **ARTICLE III – OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this Church is to glorify God in knowing Christ, and making Him known.

## **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

### Section 1. Purpose of the Fellowship

The congregation of Christian believers who have been received into membership shall constitute a spiritual body, united for the spiritual purposes of glorifying and serving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

### Section 2. Active Membership

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, sharing their testimony, and having accepted the aims and ideals of Franklin United Church as expressed in its Statement of Faith and Bylaws may, after baptism, become a candidate for membership.

### Section 3. Requests for Membership

All requests for membership shall be made to the pastor or a council member. Upon making such a request, the person shall complete a church membership class where the beliefs and practices of the church are clearly communicated. Once a candidate has completed the membership class, he/she will meet with the pastor and at least two council members and share his/her testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. After this, the church council will vote to approve or disapprove membership. Approval of membership requires a simple majority vote of the church council. If the candidate is approved, he/she will participate in a reception of new members' ceremony during a weekly worship service where he/she will make membership promises to the church and the church publicly promises to uphold the new member.

### Section 4. Denial of Membership

If, upon review of an application for membership or after meeting with a prospective member, the church council determines that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior, or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership shall be denied.

The decision made by the council shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.

#### Section 5. Voting Privileges

Voting privileges are restricted to active members who are in good standing, who are not under any disciplinary action.

#### Section 6. Responsibilities of Members

Members shall seek to exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body. It is the responsibility of all members to contribute to the support of the church with their time, talent, and treasure.

#### Section 7. Transfer of Members

A letter of transferal shall be granted upon request of any member who wishes to unite with another church.

#### Section 8. Conditions of Membership

Any member of this church who has not attended, contributed to, or communicated with the church during a reasonable period shall be contacted by at least two council members. If such a member could have been active but was not, and continues to remain inactive for a period of one (1) year, he or she shall be deprived of voting privileges; and shall be moved to the inactive membership roll. He/she may be restored to membership upon presentation of their testimony and a vote by the church council, and upon showing renewed activity in the church. This action shall not apply to a member who is physically unable to attend the services of the church.

#### Section 9. Associate Membership

A person who is a member of another church, who wishes to retain such membership, may become an Associate Member by reaffirmation of faith. An active Associate Member shall be entitled to all the privileges given to those who hold regular active membership.

## **ARTICLE V – DECISION MAKING**

The well being and growth of the church depend upon timely and appropriate decision-making. Areas of the church that require continual oversight include denominational relationships, proprietary issues, and governance procedures. In order to ensure that decisions regarding these areas reflect the wishes of the church as a whole and are dealt with efficiently, the following procedures will be followed in all decision-making.

<b><u>Area of concern</u></b>	<b><u>Issue<sup>1</sup></u></b>	<b><u>Decision-makers</u></b>
Denominational Relationships	Denominational Affiliation Doctrinal/Faith Concerns	Whole membership Whole membership
Proprietary Issues	Acquisition, Use, and Disposal of realty and possessions <sup>3</sup>	Less than (\$250) - Appropriate committee (\$251) to (\$5000) - Church Council

		More than (\$5000) - Whole membership <sup>2</sup>
	Maintenance and renovation of realty and possessions <sup>3</sup>	Less than (\$500) - Appropriate committee (\$501) to (\$5000) - Church Council More than (\$5000) - Whole membership <sup>2</sup>
Church Governance	Election of Church Council members	Whole membership
	Election of committee members	Whole membership
	Annual Budget	Whole membership
	Hiring, retaining or releasing of pastor (and associate)	Whole membership <sup>4</sup>
	Bylaw changes	Whole membership

<sup>1</sup> Relevant issues include, but are not limited to, those listed below.

<sup>2</sup> Associate members not included.

<sup>3</sup> Realty and possessions are the land, buildings and contents of those buildings that constitute the “real property” of the church. Antiques, dishes, furniture and other gifts may not be permanently removed or sold without approval of the congregation.

<sup>4</sup> To include members of the East Franklin Union Church.

## ARTICLE VI – GOVERNMENT

The management of the Franklin United Church shall rest in the CHURCH COUNCIL. Council members will be Trustees as they look over the material affairs of the Church. Council members will be Deacons as they will co-operate with the Pastor in addressing the spiritual needs of the Church.

The Church Council will be made up of no more than nine members of THE FRANKLIN UNITED CHURCH having an earnest desire to serve. They will be elected at the Annual Meeting. Initially the members will be elected, three members for a one-year term, three members for a two-year term, three members for a three-year term; thereafter all terms shall be for three years. After the completion of two consecutive elected terms, no person shall be re-elected to the Council until at least one year has elapsed.

The responsibilities of the Council are as follows:

1. To elect its own officers in this order: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer\*, and Assistant Treasurer.
2. To meet approximately two weeks after the Annual Meeting and a minimum of ten meetings annually. Special meetings will be called as needed by the Pastor or the

- Chair. The Council will determine the day, and hour of these meetings. Any five members will constitute a quorum of the Council.
3. To oversee the calling of a Pastor, part-time or full-time as the need arises.
  4. To establish a budget for the Church, handling the receipts and expenditures of the Church.
  5. To oversee the properties of the Franklin United Church.
  6. To create Committees as needed.
  7. To oversee the programs and the Committees of the Church.
  8. To fill vacancies on the Council of unexpired terms as they arise.
  9. To fill vacancies on the Committees of unexpired terms when requested.
  10. To appoint one Council member to serve on each Committee.
  11. To see that Church records are maintained by the Pastor and the Administrative Assistant (Baptism, Marriage, Death, Etc.).
  12. To draw up Church Policies and practices and present them to the congregation for approval.

\*Treasurer does not need to be a member of Council and can serve an unlimited term.

## **ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES**

A committee of the Church shall consist of at least three members. At least one Church Council member shall be on each Committee. Committees will meet quarterly beginning in January. Each Committee can meet more than this, and can meet less than this under special consideration. Each Committee will elect its own Chairperson. Each Committee will present a budget request and submit a report at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. Members of Committees will be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year.

1. *Christian Education Committee*: shall be responsible for but not limited to:
  - A. The education program of the Church for all ages.
  - B. Selecting Sunday School teachers.
  - C. Selecting the curriculum for the educational programs.
  - D. Vacation Bible School.
  - E. Youth Group(s), their leadership, promotion, etc.
  - F. Selection of summer camp scholarships.
2. *Worship Committee*: shall be responsible for but not limited to:
  - A. Selecting people to fill these positions: Offering Collectors; Greeters; Communion Stewards, preparation and distribution; Flower Committee; Altar Care, replacing candles, polishing brass, etc.
  - B. To periodically review, make suggestions, encourage, etc., to the appropriate persons concerning: the worship service, the music program, with the intention of assisting and enhancing the worship of the Church.

3. *Property Committee*: shall be responsible for but not limited to:
  - A. Maintenance of the properties, including: improvements, repairs, janitorial obligations, care of grounds.
  - B. Monitoring the insurance of Church properties.
4. *Nominating Committee*: shall be responsible for but not limited to:
  - A. Bringing nominations to the Annual Meeting to fill the vacancies of the Church Council.
  - B. Bringing nominations to the Annual Meeting to fill the vacancies of the Committees.
  - C. At the request of any Committee to present nominations to the Church Council to fill any vacancies that may occur during the interim between Annual Meetings.
5. *Auditing Committee*: shall be responsible for but not limited to:
  - A. Examining the books involving all Church transactions, and the books of the Treasurer.
  - B. Neither Treasurer nor Assistant Treasurer can be on this committee
6. *Membership Committee*: shall be responsible for but not limited to:
  - A. Maintaining a current roll of membership in the Church.
  - B. Submitting to the Church Council for action, those changes in the status of members.
  - C. Contacting and inviting new families to worship.
7. *Missions Committee*: shall be responsible for but not limited to:
  - A. Reviewing all denominational offerings, determining which to respond to.
  - B. Review missionary giving requests that come to the Church.
  - C. Bring to the attention of the Council how the Church might respond to local and global social concerns.
8. *Stewardship Committee*: shall be responsible for but not limited to:
  - A. Raise the awareness of opportunities to serve through the use of one's time, talents and abilities.
  - B. Raise awareness of biblical teaching on tithing, special offerings and fundraising by educating the congregation.
  - C. Organize and delegate to others within the church the formulating of fundraising events.
  - D. All new Fund Raising events require approval by Council.

## **ARTICLE VIII – PASTOR**

The Pastor shall serve as a resource person to any board, Council or Committee, and as such will not be a voting member at any time.

The Pastor will initially hold office for three years. At the completion of these initial years the situation will be reviewed and if the Church and Pastor are mutually satisfied, the Pastor will be retained for an indefinite period of time.

When a pastoral vacancy occurs, the church council shall appoint a search committee that will be representative of the congregation. The search committee needs to be unanimous in their choice and bring one candidate forward for a vote. The Pastor shall be called by 2/3-majority vote of voting members.

The resignation of the Pastor may be requested only by a vote of the membership of the Church. It shall be the responsibility of the Church Council to call a Church business meeting of the purpose, only after the Council receives a petition requesting such a meeting carrying the signatures of at least 25% of the active regular membership.<sup>2</sup> In the absence of such a petition the Church Council may, following an affirmative vote of the total Council, call a Church business meeting to vote on such a request. If requested, the Pastor's resignation must be presented and effective within 90 days.

At any point during the Pastor's term of office, he shall give 90 days notice if he wishes to leave of his own volition.

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<sup>2</sup> To include East Franklin Union Church members

## **ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS**

The ANNUAL MEETING shall be held in January or February at a time and place to be determined by the Church Council. The Chairperson of the Council shall preside at this and every other Church meeting. At the Annual Meeting, reports shall be presented by the Committees of the Church. The election of all Council members and Committee members shall be held.

A meeting of the Church must be announced at least two Sundays in advance of the meeting. Unless otherwise specified, a simple majority shall carry all votes of a Church meeting.

A special meeting of the church may be called by church council or by any 15 active members of the church who submit a petition to the council. The purpose of the meeting must be clearly stated and announced. The meeting must deal only with announced purpose.



## **ARITCLE X – AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by a simple majority vote of the members present at any business meeting of the Franklin United Church, provided notice and text of the proposed amendment(s) has been given in accordance with Article IX.

## **ARITCLE XI – DISSOLUTION**

Dissolution of the Franklin United Church requires a two-thirds vote of the active membership. In the event of dissolution, all assets belonging to the congregation will be distributed to religious non-profit organizations as the congregation determines. No member of the congregation shall personally benefit financially from the distribution of assets.

Note: Amended, February 9, 1989  
Amended, December 4, 1994  
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Amended, TBD