

PROSPECT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Of the United Church of Christ

On the Green

Prospect, Connecticut 06712

Founded 1798

BY-LAWS

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BY-LAWS
(Revised 1986)

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this Church shall be The Prospect Congregational Church, Incorporated, of the United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II

Purpose and Covenant

The purpose of this Church is to bring together those who believe in God through Jesus Christ and his teachings and to provide a common fellowship of worship, learning, witness, and service based upon the Bible, as interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

The covenant of this Church is: We covenant with God and with one another to engage ourselves in the sacred obligation to keep the commandments of God, to follow the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, and to bind ourselves in Christian love and fellowship. We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We promise to worship faithfully, to observe the sacraments, to pledge our stewardship of talent and treasure, to support the church and its worldwide mission, and to look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

ARTICLE III

Polity

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

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

While this Church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, it accepts the obligations of mutual counsel, commitment, and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ, and pledges itself to share its common aims, hopes and work.

ARTICLE IV

Faith and Doctrine

This Church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship. All members shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to their own conscience, as guided by the Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit. The following statement of faith, therefore, is not a test, but a testimony of the spirit in which the Church interprets the Word of God:

United Church of Christ Statement of Faith

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 worlds 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 nations and all humanity by the will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of 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 people of all ages, tongues, and races.

God calls us into his 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

1. Reception into Active Membership ...

The members of this Church shall be persons, who have been received by their public owning of its covenant and their acceptance by the congregation: on presentation of satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches; if letters of transfer are not available, by reaffirmation of faith; or on confession of faith and baptism, if not previously baptized.

The offering of the right hand of fellowship shall be at a regular service of worship after due examination by the Pastor and recommendation by the Board of Deacons.

2. Expectations of Active Membership ...

The condition of membership in this Church shall be an earnest intent to live the Christian life and the acceptance of the Covenant and Purpose of this Church, pledging loyalty to Jesus Christ and hearty cooperation with the members of this Church in its worship, witness and service, and to give regularly to its support and missions.

3. Resignation of Membership ...

Any member desiring to leave this Church and join another is entitled to be granted a letter of transfer by the clerk.

4. Inactive Membership ...

Any member who fails to contribute and fails to attend for two years and following review by the Board of Deacons may have his/her name placed on a list of inactive members.

Inactive members shall not be counted in compiling the official roll of members, but they shall be reinstated and given a letter of transfer to another church if they request it, or be reinstated by the Board of Deacons if they subsequently revive their participation in the life of this Church.

5. Associate Membership ...

A person who wishes to participate in the life of this Church while maintaining membership in another church may be received as an associate member by the same process as active members are received. Associate members should fulfill the expectations of active members, with the exception that they would be unable to serve as an officer of the Church or on the Board of Deacons.

6. Any member whose behavior becomes offensive to the name of the church may be dismissed by vote of the church after patient and loving efforts by the Board of Deacons and the Pastor to persuade the member to amend their life have failed.

ARTICLE VI

Officers

The officers of this Church shall be: Pastor, Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Auditor, Assistant Auditor and Historian. All officers must be active members of the Church and attend monthly Council meetings. Except for the Pastor, these officers shall be elected annually by the Church and shall be eligible for re-election.

1. Pastor ...

The Pastor shall be an ordained minister with full and regular ministerial standing in the Association to which this Church belongs or a candidate for ordination within one year. The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church with the assistance of the Board of Deacons; shall seek to enlist persons as followers of Christ, preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, supervise all services of public worship, and administer the activities of the Church in cooperation with the various boards and committees. The Pastor may recommend for employment to the Church Council a Church Secretary, who will be directly responsible to him/her. The Pastor shall conduct an annual review of the Secretary's salary and performance and refer recommendations to the Church Council.

The Pastor shall be an active member of the Church, and shall be a full voting member of the Church Council and shall be a member ex-officio of all boards and committees except meetings during the time when tenure, salary, or pastoral relations is under discussion if the body so votes. The Pastor shall be informed of and entitled to be present at any meeting of any church-affiliated group.

When a vacancy in the office of Pastor shall occur, the Church Council shall nominate a Pastoral Search Committee of no less than seven (7) nor more than ten (10) members to be elected by members of the Church at a Church meeting. After seeking the advice of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, the committee shall nominate a successor at a meeting of the Church called for the purpose of acting on such nomination. Election as Pastor must be by at least a two-thirds affirmative vote by ballot of those members of the Church present and voting.

While the term of the Pastor shall be indefinite, the Church may at any time by a majority vote at a meeting called for the purpose, request a resignation with the expectation that it will be presented within sixty days. Likewise, the Pastor shall give sixty days notice when desiring to leave voluntarily; but in the case of loss of ministerial standing on the part of the Pastor, relations shall cease at once.

2. Moderator ...

The Moderator shall be a member of the Church Council, and shall preside at all business meetings of the Church and the Church Council, and shall perform such duties as required of one holding this official position. In the event of the Moderator's and Vice Moderator's absence, the Pastor or Clerk would call the meeting to order and appoint a Moderator Pro-Tempore.

The Moderator, in consultation with the Pastor, shall have the right to cancel and/or reschedule the monthly meeting of the Church Council.

3. Vice Moderator ...

The Vice Moderator shall be a member of the Church Council and shall preside and act in the absence of the Moderator.

4. Clerk ...

The Clerk shall be a member of the Church Council and shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the meetings of the Church and Church Council. The Clerk shall keep a register of the members of the Church, with dates and modes of their reception and removal; also a record of baptisms, marriages, and funerals. The Clerk shall issue letters of transfer, issue legal notices of meetings, conduct correspondence and perform such other duties as usually pertain to the office of secretary of an assembly. The Clerk may request the services of the office secretary in order to carry out any or all of the duties listed above. The Clerk shall retain copies of all Church records on Church property.

5. Treasurer ...

The Treasurer shall be a member of the Church Council and shall have charge of all money belonging to the Church, including its invested funds. He/she shall affirm the weekly count and will make the weekly deposits. He/she shall disburse, by order of the Church Council, all money required for Church expenses and all money designated for missionary and benevolent purposes. The Treasurer shall attend monthly Church Council meetings and shall give a monthly financial statement to the Church Council and submit a report to be read at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer may be appointed an ex-officio member by the Council of any board or committee dealing with the financial matters of the Church. The Treasurer shall be bonded, the amount of which shall be determined by the Church Council and paid for by the Church. The Treasurer shall also be a member of the Board of Trustees.

6. Assistant Treasurer ...

The Assistant Treasurer shall act in the absence of the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer shall be bonded, the amount of which shall be determined by the Church Council and paid for by the Church.

7. Financial Secretary ...

The Financial Secretary shall be a member of the Church Council; shall receive all payments on current expenses and benevolence contributions; shall take charge of all offerings and special collections; shall keep an accurate account of all traceable contributions; shall account for and transfer all monies to the Treasurer. All collections and/or offerings will be counted by the Financial Secretary along with the first or second Assistant Financial Secretary, or the Treasurer. These collections along with a receipt, signed by both parties, shall be presented to the Treasurer for deposit. Before the count and before the deposit is made, all monies shall be held in a locked safe secured on the church premises. . The Financial Secretary shall furnish contributors with semi-annual statements of accounts. The Financial Secretary shall be bonded, the amount to be determined by the Church Council and paid for by the Church. The Financial Secretary shall make all financial records available for audit purposes. The Financial Secretary shall also be a member of the Board of Trustees.

8. Assistant Financial Secretary ...

The Assistant Financial Secretary shall act in the absence of the Financial Secretary. The Assistant Financial Secretary shall be bonded, the amount to be determined by the Church Council and paid for by the Church. When the need arises, the Council may appoint a second Assistant Financial Secretary to assist in the duties of the Financial Secretary. The second Assistant Financial Secretary shall be bonded and have the same responsibilities as the Assistant Financial Secretary.

9. Auditor ...

The Church will elect an auditor who will be a member of the Church Council. Duties will include an ongoing review of the Church's financial records, systems and procedures and make recommendations as needed to the church council. A written report of his or her findings shall be submitted to the Church Council within thirty (30) days of the end of the Church's financial fiscal year. The Auditor's report will be included with the annual financial report and a copy of the Auditor's report will be kept on record in the church office..

10. Assistant Auditor ...

The Assistant Auditor shall work in conjunction with the auditor in performing the duties required in the position as auditor. The Assistant Auditor will be a member of the Church Council.

11. Historian ...

The Historian shall be a member of the Church Council and shall keep a faithful record of important events in the life of the Church, either writing or causing to be written an account of the ongoing history of the Church.

ARTICLE VII**Boards and Committees**

The Church shall elect the following Boards and Committees, all of whose members must be members or Associate Members of the Church. Each Board or Committee shall be responsible for the active participation of its members, and may request that the Church Council replace a member who does not participate regularly in its work. Each Board or Committee shall submit a proposed budget to the Board of Trustees annually during the month of May, and make a report at the annual meeting of the Church.

The Boards and Committees will meet regularly and report to the Church Council. They shall also make a report at the Annual Meeting of the Church. A copy of their minutes shall be filed in the church office no later than seven (7) days after each of their meetings.

With the exception of the Pastoral Relations Committee, each Board and Committee shall elect its own Chairperson annually and that Chairperson or a designated member of the Board or Committee shall be the representative at the monthly meetings of the Church Council. Also, all Boards and Committees can

continue to function even if that Board or Committee has less than the number of members designated in these By-Laws.

1. Board of Deacons ...

The Board of Deacons shall consist of twelve (12) Deacons, four (4) of whom shall be elected annually to serve a term of three (3) years. To be nominated for the Board of Deacons, a person shall have been an active member of the Church for three (3) previous years. Associate Members are not eligible to serve on the Board of Deacons.

It shall be the duty of the Deacons to assist the Pastor in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in the reception of new members during the designated service, in the care and visitation of members of the congregation, and in the oversight of the spiritual life of the Church. They shall have charge of the supply of the pulpit during the absence or disability of the Pastor or during any interim between pastorates. The Board of Deacons shall recommend to the Church Council their choice for interim pastor for approval.

The Deacons shall conduct an annual review every spring of the Pastor's performance. The proposed contract shall be recommended to the Board of Trustees for approval by October 1.

The Board may appoint persons or subcommittees as required to assist in the worship life of the Church, such as ushers, greeters, acolytes, flowers, etc.

A Deacon who has served many years may be elected a Deacon Emeritus, upon a recommendation of the Church Council and approved by a vote of the Church. A Deacon Emeritus shall not be counted in the quota of twelve (12) Deacons, but shall be entitled for life to all the privileges of an active member of the Board of Deacons, so long as active membership in the Church is maintained.

The Board of Deacons shall review the active and inactive membership lists of the church annually and maintain an active register of members. The Intentional Care Committee shall report to the Board of Deacons as needed.

2. Board of Trustees ...

The Board of Trustees shall consist of twelve (12) persons who are members of the church, four (4) of whom shall be elected annually to serve a term of three years. In addition, the Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall serve on the Board. The Board shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of church buildings and property, make monthly inspections and schedule regular repairs and

maintenance, solicit and accept bids and make recommendations to the Church Council.

The Board shall recommend to the Church Council a sexton or custodial service, and shall assign and supervise the performance of these duties. The Board shall control the use of all church properties and establish and publish rules and regulations for such use.

The Board shall be responsible for reviewing the investments and financial holdings of the church on a timely and regular basis. Based on its review, it is to make recommendations to the Church Council of any changes it feels may help the church practice good stewardship of its financial resources. The Board shall work with the Treasurer to provide an annual report of the status of those resources to the congregation. The Board may be asked to advise funding options available to the congregation for various projects and capital improvements.

The Board shall have no power to buy, sell, transfer, mortgage, alter or encumber the real property of the church, except as it may be specifically authorized to do so by a majority of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the church. Non-budgeted expenditures exceeding one (1) percent of the budget shall be submitted to a meeting of the Church Council for approval. Non-budgeted expenditures exceeding five (5) percent of the budget shall be submitted to the congregation for approval. The Board shall solicit bids on major expenditures exceeding five (5) percent of the budget. All bids shall be available in the church office for review.

The Board shall receive, on behalf of the church, all memorial gifts, bequests and endowed funds.. A fund raising form must be completed and submitted with each gift by the recipient to assure that the gift is administered in accordance with the provisions of the donor.

The Board shall receive budget requests from other Boards and Committees by May 1st, coordinate the preparation of a proposed budget, and submit it to the Church Council for approval by June 1st. If not approved the Budget shall go back to The Board of Trustees for review before being resubmitted to Church Council for approval.

The Board may appoint Budget, Property, Stewardship or any other sub-committees as needed.

3. Board of Christian Education ...

The Board of Christian Education shall consist of nine (9) voting members, three (3) of whom shall be elected annually for a term of three (3) years. Additional individuals may be added to serve on an ad hoc committee as the need arises.

The Board shall recommend for employment to the Church Council a Christian Education Coordinator, who shall report to the Board.

The Christian Education Coordinator will be an ex-officio member of this Board. Other ex-officio members shall include a youth advisor and two (2) youth from the church youth program (at least one (1) youth from the senior high youth group).

The Board shall be responsible for the total program of Christian Education for the children, youth, and adults of the congregation, including, but not limited to Sunday, weekday and vacation church schools, youth ministry, adult classes, and family programs.

Other responsibilities of this Board shall include providing/serving as assistance to the Christian Education Coordinator in carrying out the programs of the church; providing/serving as assistance to the youth advisors in carrying out their programs. This Board shall also work with the Pastor, Christian Education Coordinator and Deacons in preparing young people for church membership. They shall recruit and train teachers, leaders and advisors, and select curriculum and other resources to be used. The Board shall schedule a regular review and evaluation of all programs, projects, and staff performance under its supervision, including the Christian Education Coordinator. The Board shall conduct an annual review of the Christian Education Coordinator's salary following the annual performance evaluation, and refer recommendations to the Board of Trustees by October 1 of each year.

4. Board of Missions and Service ...

The Board of Missions and Service shall consist of nine (9) members elected by the Church, of whom three (3) shall be elected annually for a term of three years.

The Board shall promote and coordinate the missions of the church in the world by informing the congregation about the United Church of Christ's charitable and mission activities, plan the church's participation in these activities, and solicit the necessary support. It shall be responsible for a program of mission education for the entire church, seeking to provide opportunities and experiences of service, action, work projects, and giving within and beyond the local church. It

shall be responsible for the promotion of local missions and the distribution of funds for their support.

It shall coordinate activities and programs related to social issues and the church's participation in issues of justice and peace.

5. Pastoral Relations Committee ...

The Pastoral Relations Committee shall consist of six (6) members, three male and three female, two (2) of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. The Committee shall be made up of a broad representation of this congregation in regards to age with at least one (1) person and no more than three (3) who are members of the Board of Deacons.

The Committee shall meet at least quarterly with the Pastor. The duty of the Committee is to remain in communication with the Pastor and the congregation, mediating their respective needs and concerns.

6. Music Committee ...

The Music Committee shall consist of six (6) members, of whom two (2) shall be elected annually for a term of three (3) years. It shall recommend for employment to the Church Council an organist and/or choir director who shall report to the Committee. The Committee shall encourage and support the organist and/or choir director and shall support and encourage the choir or choirs. The Music Committee shall provide for the care of the organ, the purchase of music, and the provision of other equipment necessary for its program. The Committee shall provide for any vacancy or vacation period and shall conduct an annual review of the organist's and/or choir director's performance and salary and refer recommendations to the Board of Trustees by October 1.

7. Hospitality and Fellowship Committee ...

The Fellowship and Hospitality Committee will consist of six (6) members, of whom two (2) shall be elected annually for a term of three (3) years. The Committee will strive to promote fellowship and growth within the church. It shall be responsible for maintaining contact with present members, enlistment of new members, and outreach and action in the larger community wherever there are social needs that the church can help to meet. The Committee shall assist with church publicity, advertising, brochures, bulletin boards, name tags, etc. The Committee shall also do those things necessary to call attention to the work and witness of our church that others may take part.

8. Nominating Committee ...

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six (6) members, two (2) of whom shall be elected annually for a term of three (3) years. An individual must be an active member of the Church for four (4) years to be eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee. Members of the Nominating Committee can concurrently serve on multiple Boards and Committees but once serving on the Nominating Committee, a member cannot be nominated to serve on additional Boards or Committees. A member cannot serve two (2) consecutive terms on the Nominating Committee.

The Committee shall choose from among the members and associate members of the Church the names of those it deems best qualified to fill the positions among the officers, Boards and Committees, and place them in nomination for election by the Church at the annual meeting. The Committee shall recommend persons to fill vacancies that occur before the terms expire and submit their names to the Church Council for approval. The Nominating Committee has the option to nominate new individuals to replace anyone who has served three (3) years or more in any office, Board or Committee.

Should any Board or Committee have less than the number of members stated in the By-Laws, it is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to make recommendations to the Church Council to fill these vacancies.

9. Scholarship Committee ...

The Scholarship Committee shall consist of four (4) members, three (3) of whom shall be elected by the Church, one (1) annually, for a term of three (3) years. The remaining one position shall be filled by the Treasurer of the Church.

The Committee shall be responsible for the annual distribution of scholarship funds, according to the guidelines approved by the Church Council.

10. Church Council ...

The Church Council shall consist of the Pastor, Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Historian, Auditor and Assistant Auditor, as well as the Chairpersons or the individual Board or Committee designee of all permanent Committees and Boards and four members-at-large to be elected annually. No Church Council member-at-large shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

The Church Council shall be the overall policy and planning board of the church. It shall seek to coordinate the plans and activities of the Boards, Committees and organizations of the church and to plan prayerfully for its future.

The Council shall meet monthly and shall have the following powers of the Church between meetings of the congregation: the authority to elect delegates to installing and ordaining councils and other ad hoc interchurch bodies; the power to fill vacancies on recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the power to appoint temporary committees at any time as the needs arise; and the power to receive and deal with grievances. Special meetings of the Church Council may be called by the Moderator with a least forty-eight (48) hours notice, and with the business limited to the stated purpose.

ARTICLE VIII

Meetings

1. Regular meetings for worship shall be held on the Lord's Day at a time set by the congregation. Special services as well as observances of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, shall be set at such time as the Pastor and the Deacons shall determine.
2. The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held during the month of February each year at a time to be set by the Church Council, for the election of officers, committees and Board of Deacons, and delegates to the Association and Conference to which the Church belongs as presented to the Nominating Committee. Nominations from the floor for any position will be recognized.
3. The financial fiscal year shall run from July 1 through June 30. A semi-annual meeting of the Church will be held in July at a time to be set by the Church Council for the purpose of approving the annual budget and to approve the auditor's report.
4. Special Meetings may be called by the Church Council, or by any five (5) members of the Church, and shall be held within two (2) weeks of the request to the Moderator.
5. The call for annual, semi-annual, or special meetings shall be given from the pulpit of the preceding Sunday, and such notice shall be posted on the bulletin board of the Church building at least one (1) week before such business meeting. The nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in the call.

6. Quorums...Twenty-five (25) members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any annual, semi-annual, or special meeting of the Church. More than half of the members of individual Boards and Committees shall be deemed a quorum at their meetings.
7. Voting...All active members of the Church may vote in its meetings.
8. A fund raising event form must be completed for all fund raising events and presented along with the funds generated to the Financial Secretary to assure appropriate allocation of funds.
9. Robert's Rules...At all church meetings and board meetings, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered in the Church Constitution or By-laws.
10. Records ... All church records i.e. financial, clerical, and historical be kept in a fireproof, locked location.

ARTICLE IX

Dissolution

The Church and its property shall be forever devoted to religious purposes. No officer, member, or employee thereof shall receive any pecuniary profit from the Church, except reasonable compensation for services in effecting one or more of its purposes. In the event of the dissolution of the Church, its property shall become vested in, and its functions as trustee, if any, administered by the Missionary Society of Connecticut or its successor, or, in the event this be impossible, by such church or other organization which is organized and operated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes which the membership of the Church shall designate at a meeting called before the said dissolution, or in the absence of such determination, as the Superior Court of New Haven shall determine.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting at the Annual, Semi-Annual, or special meeting of the Church, provided that the meeting is duly called as ordered by ARTICLE VIII, Section 5 of these By-Laws, and the substance of the proposed amendment is printed in the call.

List of Churches Referred to:

The Church of Christ of Winsted, Inc.

The First Church of Christ, Congregational, Glastonbury

Enfield Congregational Church, UCC

North Canaan Congregational Church, UCC

First Congregational Church of Darien, CT

Hilltop, UCC

Ridgebury Congregational Church UCC

Mill Plain Union Church

Peace Dale Congregational Church, UCC

The Connecticut Conference