

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF
HANCOCK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

NAME

This church shall be called Hancock United Church of Christ. It is an incorporated church located at Lexington, in the county of Middlesex and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

ARTICLE II

POLITY

This church shall be congregational in polity, but while self-governing, as a member of the United Church of Christ, it will join with its sister churches in mutual counsel and cooperation, and desires to be in fellowship with all churches.

ARTICLE III

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

Section 1.

We believe in God, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love, known to us in the person, life, death, and ever living presence of Jesus Christ, in the Bible and through the continuing creative activity of God in history and experience.

Section 2.

We covenant together in our purpose to worship God, to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the sacraments, to develop a consciousness of our relationships and duties to God and the human family, and we commit ourselves to the fulfillment of these objectives.

Section 3.

Covenant of Welcome

Hancock United Church of Christ of Lexington, Massachusetts welcomes all who seek to know God. We believe that, although we are many members, we are one body in Christ. We have been called as well as challenged by God to respect and reconcile our differences.

We recognize and love each individual as a child of God. We welcome, respect, support and lovingly encourage people of every race, ethnicity, creed, class, gender, sexual orientation, age and physical and mental ability to join us on our journey of faith.

This faith journey indeed calls Hancock members not to be silent in the face of prejudice, injustice, and exclusion, but to express our faith, in word and deed, for justice and inclusiveness for all humanity. As Paul wrote to the Galatians, "In Christ there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one..."

ARTICLE IV

AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any annual meeting or special meeting called for that purpose, provided the notice states therein the proposed amendment. A three-fourths affirmative vote of those present and voting shall be necessary to effect any such amendment.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Requirements for Membership: The church will welcome into membership any person affirming agreement with the Constitution of Hancock United Church of Christ.

Section 2 Admission to Membership: On recommendation by the Board of Deacons, any person may be received into membership at any worship service of the congregation (preferably a service of Holy Communion), by Baptism and Confession of Faith, by Confirmation or Reaffirmation of Faith, or by Letter of Transfer, providing the name of any such person has been presented to the members of the congregation at a worship service not later than the Sunday preceding the reception. Members will be received into fellowship according to such form as may be prescribed by the Board of Deacons, and by signing the registry of church membership. The Senior Minister and all Associate or Assistant Ministers must become members of the church.

Section 3 Rights of Members: All active members shall have the right to vote and hold church office.

Section 4 Duties of Members: Members are expected to participate regularly in the worship services of the church; to seek through study and prayer to grow in knowledge of the Christian life; to give systematically and sacrificially for the church's support and its benevolences; to share in its organized work; and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of their fellow members.

Section 5 Termination of Membership: A member may, on request, and by vote of the Board of Deacons:

- 1) Be granted a letter of transfer to any Christian church, but the particular local church shall be named in the letter of transfer, and a general letter without such specification shall not be granted.
- 2) Be released from membership if, after due conference and deliberation, the member is insistent in the request for such release.
- 3) Members whose addresses are unknown, or who for a period of one year have not responded to communication for the church or contributed to its support, may, by vote of the Board of Deacons, be transferred to the Inactive List. From the date of such transfer, such persons shall cease to be reported on the Active Membership Roll.

Section 6 Restoration to Active Membership: Any inactive member may request to be restored to active membership and, by vote of the Board of Deacons, be transferred back to the

Active Membership Roll. This transfer may be acknowledged at any worship service of the congregation.

ARTICLE II MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Section 1 Annual Meeting: The annual business meeting of the church shall be held on the third Sunday of May in each year, unless otherwise ordered by the Standing Committee. At this meeting, the congregation will receive committee reports, approve the budget for the next fiscal year (which shall run from July 1 through June 30 of the following year), receive the report of the Nominating Committee, and elect officers and committee members, with new terms beginning June 1. Notice of this meeting shall be communicated to the membership at least seven days before such meeting, and shall state briefly the matters to be considered at the meeting.

Section 2 Special Meetings: Special meetings of the members of the church shall be held when called by the Standing Committee, or on the written request to the Standing Committee signed by twenty members. Notice of any special meeting shall be posted in the church and mailed to each member as least ten days before such meeting, and shall state briefly the matters to be considered at such meeting.

Section 3 Quorum: At any meeting of the church, seventy-five members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. In the absence of a quorum, a meeting shall be adjourned by a majority vote of those present. When a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority of members present shall decide any questions brought before such meeting unless the question is one upon which by express provision of law or these by-laws a different vote is required.

ARTICLE III THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

Section 1. The Senior Minister

a. Election and Dismissal. The Senior Minister shall be called by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a special meeting called for that purpose, and shall serve until dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a special meeting called for that purpose, or by resignation in accordance with the letter of call. When the office of the Senior Minister becomes vacant, a special meeting of the members shall be called for the purpose of electing a search committee representative of the church membership. The Standing Committee shall make a recommendation of five or more members for approval and election. A supply committee shall be appointed by the Moderator in consultation with the Standing Committee to supply the pulpit during the vacancy.

b. Duties. The Senior Minister shall:

- 1) Bear the primary responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the congregation as its pastor and teacher.
- 2) In consultation with the Board of Deacons, be responsible for the conduct of public worship and the administration of the Sacraments.
- 3) In co-operation with the officers and staff of the church, oversee all departments of the church's life.
- 4) In consultation with the appropriate committees of the church, be responsible for the supervision of all staff and employment of the non-ordained staff.

c) Review:

The work of the Senior Minister shall be the subject of an annual review, conducted by a committee appointed for that purpose by the Standing Committee.

Section 2. Other Ministers: In addition to the Senior Minister, the ministry of Hancock Church may include other duly ordained clergy whose services the Standing Committee shall enlist. The fluctuations and responsibilities of these other ministers shall be specified by the Standing Committee, in consultation with the Senior Minister. The work of the other ministers shall be the subject of an annual review conducted by committees appointed for that purpose by the Standing Committee.

**ARTICLE IV
OFFICERS**

Section 1. Enumeration. The Officers, in addition to the Senior Minister, shall be a Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, one or more Assistant Treasurers, Collector, and one or more Assistant Collectors, Auditor, Deacons and Members-at-Large of the Standing Committee. There may be such other officers as the Standing Committee may from time to time determine. All officers shall be church members.

Section 2. Election and Term of Office. Except as hereinafter otherwise provided, all officers shall be elected by ballot at the annual meeting held on the third Sunday in May, assume their offices on June 1, and hold their offices until their successors are elected and qualified. The two Moderator/Vice Moderator officers shall serve overlapping three-year terms and shall be elected by ballot at either the annual business meeting in May or at a special meeting called for that purpose in January.

At any election of officers, nominations may be offered from the floor, and the meeting upon motion, may direct the Clerk to cast a single ballot for any office for which there is only one nominee or for the entire slate of officers if there is only one nominee for each office on the slate. The length of term and maximum number of consecutive terms permitted shall be as follows:

Office	Length of Term	Terms Permitted
Moderator/Vice Moderator	3	1
Moderator/Vice Moderator	3	1
Clerk	3	2
Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers	3	2
Collector, and Assistant Collectors	3	3
Auditor	3	1
Deacons	3	1
Members-at-Large of the Standing Committee	3	1

No officer shall be eligible for re-election until one year after the expiration of the term of terms specified above, but a partial term after appointment or election to fill a vacancy shall not be considered for this purpose.

Section 3. Resignations and Vacancies

a. Resignations Any officer may at any time resign the office by delivering a letter of resignation to the Clerk. Such resignations shall be effective upon receipt, and acceptance thereof shall not be necessary to make it effective unless it so states.

b. Vacancies. If a vacancy occurs in any aforementioned office other than that of Senior Minister, the Standing Committee may, by a majority vote, fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting, at which time a successor shall be elected to hold office for the unexpired term.

Section 4. Moderator. The Moderator shall:

- 1) Preside at all business meetings of the church.
- 2) Be the Chairperson of the Standing Committee.

In the absence of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator or the Clerk shall preside until a temporary Moderator is chosen.

Section 5. Clerk. The Clerk shall:

- 1) Issue the call for and attend all annual meetings and special meetings of the church and keep accurate records thereof.
- 2) Attend all meetings of the Standing Committee and keep accurate records thereof.
- 3) Duly notify all officers and delegates of their election.
- 4) Keep on file all important communications and reports of officers and the permanent committees.
- 5) Oversee maintenance of the membership rolls of the church and the registries of baptisms, marriages and deaths, issue letters of transfer and certificates of membership, and submit a detailed written report on these matters at each annual meeting.

In the absence of the Clerk from any meeting, a temporary Clerk shall be appointed.

Section 6. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall:

- 1) Receive from the Collector and from all other sources all money or property which may be paid to or contributed to the church.
- 2) Deposit all cash and convert to cash other personal property received for current expenses using a depository or financial institution or in such accounts as approved by the Finance Committee.
- 3) Account for all money received for current expenses and for budgeted benevolences and disburse this money in accordance with the annual budget as approved by the annual meeting, or as approved by the Finance Committee and the Standing Committee when budgeted funds are transferred between departments and committees.
- 4) Keep a separate account of all money and property received in escrow for all non-budgeted purposes. All cash funds raised or contributed for a special purpose, including designated memorial funds, and all special collections for designated gifts shall be dispersed for the purposes intended.
- 5) Invest and disburse all other memorial funds and legacies as directed by the Finance Committee.
- 6) Disburse restricted or special purpose endowment funds to carry out the wishes of the donor, all as directed by the Endowment Committee.
- 7) Be authorized to sell, assign, and endorse for transfer, certificates representing stocks, bonds and other securities now registered or hereinafter registered in the name of Hancock

Church and deliver a copy of this authority, certified by the Clerk, Moderator or chairperson of the Finance Committee to any broker or transfer agent who may request such certification. The Treasurer is also authorized to purchase securities and other properties on behalf of the church, open brokerage accounts and transaction accounts with any bank or financial institution to facilitate all transfers of securities or property as provided under this section.

- 8) Hold all securities or accounts in the name of Hancock United Church of Christ. All securities and property may be transferred when duly endorsed by the Treasurer and no transfer agent shall be held responsible for making any such transfers of securities when properly endorsed by the Treasurer and presented for transfer.
- 9) Make a detailed written report at each annual meeting.
- 10) Be responsible to see that a Fidelity Bond is in force for the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurers, Collector, and Assistant Collectors, the expense of which is to be paid by the church.

Section 7 Assistant Treasurers

The Assistant Treasurers shall assist the Treasurer in his various duties as directed by the Treasurer, but the Treasurer shall remain responsible for the proper performance of the duties of their offices.

- 1) One Assistant Treasurer shall be designated as First Assistant Treasurer. In the absence or incapacity of the Treasurer, the First Assistant Treasurer shall have the authority to act in all matters and exercise all authorities granted or described in Section 7.
- 2) One Assistant Treasurer shall serve as Treasurer of the Endowment Committee as an Ex-Officio member of the Committee without a vote and shall:
 - a) Report to the Treasurer all actions and decisions under the jurisdiction of the Endowment Committee which require implementation by the Treasurer.
 - b) Keep a record of all investments, receipts and disbursements for the Endowment Committee which require implementation by the Treasurer.
 - c) Prepare a report for each annual meeting.

Section 8. Collector.

The Collector shall:

- 1) Work under the direction of the Treasurer.
- 2) Be responsible for the collection of money pledged for support of the church.
- 3) Give the money collected to the Treasurer or deposit it in such bank account as directed by the Treasurer.
- 4) Keep a full accounting of all pledge payments and prepare individual statements thereon as may be required from time to time.
- 5) Be responsible for and direct the Assistant Collectors.

Section 9. Assistant Collectors. The Assistant Collectors shall:

- 1) Be responsible to the Collector.
- 2) Assist in the duties of the Collector.

Section 10. Auditor. The Auditor shall:

- 1) Make an annual examination of the accounts of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurers and the Collector.
- 2) Report to the annual meeting of the church.
- 3) Report at such times as may be directed by the Standing Committee.

Section 11. Deacons

The Deacons are the primary support to the ordained staff in the pastoral and sacramental ministry and shall:

- 1) Be available to any church member for consultation, comments and questions concerning the worship services of the church and administering of the sacraments.
- 2) Be available to consult with and assist the ordained staff in any matter involving the worship services and pastoral care.

Section 12. Members-at-Large of the Standing Committee

Members-at-Large of the Standing Committee shall serve as representatives of the congregation. They shall:

- 1) Be available for questions and comments concerning the church operations and organizations, and report accordingly to the Standing Committee.
- 2) Assume specific functions and responsibilities within the framework and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

ARTICLE V THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Section 1 Membership. The Standing Committee shall consist of the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Members-at-Large, Chairperson of the Board of Deacons, and the Chairpersons of the committees on Christian Education, Christian Service, Endowment, Finance, Membership Growth, Music and the Arts, Nominating, Parish Life, Prudential, and Stewardship. The Senior Minister and all associate and assistant ministers shall be ex-officio members of the Standing Committee but shall not have a vote.

Section 2 Power and Duties. The Standing Committee shall:

- 1) Have the powers of a board of directors, and act on behalf of the members of the church in regulating between the annual and any special meetings, subject to the review by the church membership.
- 2) Have the power to call and dismiss associate and assistant ministers in accordance with their letters of call.
- 3) From time to time establish special committees with such powers as it may determine; appoint or authorize the Moderator or some other officer to appoint, the members of such special committees; and to dissolve such special committees when it is deemed expedient to do so.
- 4) Appoint delegates each year to represent the church at ecclesiastical and ordaining and installing councils, meetings of the Metropolitan Boston Association, the Massachusetts Conference, and such other denominational and ecumenical bodies as may request representation. Such appointments shall be made in conformity to the standing rules of each organization.
- 5) Appoint a Church Historian.
- 6) Received from the Endowment Committee all requests for transfer or disbursement of the principal or parts thereof of the unrestricted endowment funds of the church. Prepare such requests for action at the next annual or special meeting of the church together with a report of its

recommendations thereon. Approval for such transfer or disbursement is required by two-thirds of the church members present at such annual and special meeting.

**ARTICLE VI
THE BOARD OF DEACONS**

Section 1 Membership. The Board of Deacons shall be composed of approximately equal numbers of women and men. The number of Deacons shall be set by the Standing Committee. Members shall serve one three-year term and will be eligible for re-nomination one year after completing a term.

Section 2 Duties. The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for:

- 1) The spiritual life of the church, including worship services, pastoral care and visitations.
- 2) Orientation and welcome of new members, and voting on members' status when required.
- 3) Working with and assisting the ordained staff in carrying out the above-mentioned functions and responsibilities, and other related pastoral work.

Section 3. Chairperson. The Board of Deacons shall choose annually its Chairperson who shall be a voting member of the Standing Committee.

**ARTICLE VII
ELECTED PERMANENT COMMITTEES**

There shall be eight elected permanent committees of the church. The length of term and the maximum number of consecutive terms of members shall be as follows:

Name of Committee	Length of Term	Terms Permitted
Christian Education	2 years	2
Christian Service	2 years	2
Endowment	3 years	2
Finance	2 years	2
Membership Growth	2 years	2
Music and the Arts	2 years	2
Parish Life	2 years	2
Prudential	2 years	2
Stewardship	2 years	2

The Elected Permanent Committees shall be responsible and accountable to the Standing Committee. The Chairperson of each committee shall be a voting member of the Standing Committee. The committees may from time to time establish sub-committees, appoint members to such sub-committees, and assign to them the responsibility for various aspects of the work of the permanent committee. Each permanent committee shall choose annually its chairperson at its next meeting following the annual meeting of the church. No member shall serve for more than two consecutive terms on the same permanent committee, nor shall a member who has served two consecutive terms be eligible for re-election to the same permanent committee until one year after the expiration of the second term. All members of permanent committees and sub-committees shall be church members.

The memberships and duties of these committees shall be as follows:

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Section 1. Membership. The number of Christian Education Committee members shall be determined by Standing Committee., Two members may be High School Students nominated by the High School Youth Group.

Section 2. Duties. The Christian Education Committee shall be responsible for the planning, directing, and carrying out of the Christian Education Program of the Church.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Membership. The number of Christian Service Committee members shall be determined by Standing Committee.

Section 2 Duties. The Christian Service Committee shall:

- 1) Be responsible for planning, directing and carrying out the entire mission and outreach program of the church.
- 2) Make recommendations annually to the Standing Committee as to the distribution of that portion of the church budget allocated to benevolences.
- 3) Address social concerns from a Christian viewpoint providing for education of members and proposing courses of action where appropriate.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Section 1 Membership. The number of Endowment Committee members shall be C determined by Standing Committee. In addition, an Assistant Treasurer of the church shall serve as Treasurer and be Ex-Officio member of the committee without a vote.

Section 2 Duties. The Endowment Committee shall:

- 1) Develop, prepare and execute plans for increasing the Endowment funds of the church.
- 2) Be responsible for management of all Endowment funds of the church including bequests, gifts and funds given for restricted and non-restricted use.
- 3) Formulate an investment policy in accordance with the prudent man investment rule applicable to Trustees and Fiduciaries investing charitable Endowment Funds; to be responsible for the planning and carrying out of this investment policy commensurate with the goals and objectives of the church.
- 4) Establish guidelines for the acceptance of restricted gifts to the Endowment Fund of the church.
- 5) Advise the Standing Committee if a request for funds from a restricted fund is in keeping with the donor's wishes.

- 6) Implement their decisions through the Treasurer of the church by disbursement or in the purchase, sale, transfer or assignment of securities and other properties, all on behalf of the church.
- 7) Prepare an annual report for presentation at the annual meeting.
- 8) Report to the Standing Committee and to the Finance Committee by December 1 of each year the estimated total income to be received from the unrestricted Endowment Funds, together with its recommendation of the amount available for use in the ensuing year's budget.
- 9) Receive all requests for transfer or disbursement of the principal or parts thereof of the unrestricted Endowment Funds of the church. Prepare said requests for forwarding to the Standing Committee, together with the Endowment Committee's recommendations thereon.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Section 1 Membership. The number of Finance Committee members shall be determined by Standing Committee. One member shall be the Treasurer of the church.

Section 2 Duties. The Finance Committee shall:

- 1) Oversee the annual operating budget and other financial affairs not otherwise assigned to the Endowment Committee.
- 2) Coordinate the receipts and disbursements of such other funds made available for the annual operating costs.
- 3) Recommend to the Standing Committee for approval at its April meeting the total budget intended to be submitted at the annual meeting for appropriations for the various departments, committees and activities.
- 4) Direct the Treasurer to invest and disburse undesignated memorial funds and legacies.

Section 3 Authorization. The Finance Committee may, with the approval of the Standing Committee, transfer such portions of the appropriations of any committee, department or activity to another committee, department or activity needing additional funds. All expenditures not provided for in the above-mentioned annual budget shall be limited to such transfers unless approved by the church at a special meeting.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH COMMITTEE

Section 1 Membership. The number of Membership Growth Committee members shall be determined by Standing Committee. At least three members shall have joined Hancock Church within five years of their election to the committee.

Section 2 Duties. The Membership Growth Committee shall be responsible for:

- 1) Working with the ordained staff in identifying, and nurturing the church's relationship with newcomers, those expressing an interest in church membership, and inactive members.
- 2) Overseeing the task of making the activities and programs of the church visible in the community, primarily for the purpose of reaching out to those who may be looking for a church home.

MUSIC AND ARTS COMMITTEE

Section 1. Membership. The number of Music and Arts Committee members shall be determined by Standing Committee. The Director of Music and other lay or professional leaders of groups in Music and the Arts shall participate in committee meetings, as required, but only elected committee members are eligible to vote on motions brought before the committee.

Section 2. Duties. The Music and Arts Committee shall:

- 1) Work with the clergy, the director of music and other professional and lay leaders to plan and execute a music and arts program that will enhance the worship, fellowship and outreach activities of the congregation through music and other methods of artistic expression.
- 2) Prepare a proposed annual budget to support Music and Arts activities and submit to the Finance Committee and Standing Committee for consideration.
- 3) Work cooperatively with the deacons and other permanent committees as required to accomplish these objectives.

PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

Section 1 Membership. The number of Parish Life Committee members shall be determined by Standing Committee.

Section 2 Duties. The Parish Life Committee shall be responsible for the promotion and supervision of the social and fellowship activities and organizations of the church.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Section 1 Membership. The number of Prudential Committee members shall be determined by Standing Committee.

Section 2. Duties. The Prudential Committee shall be responsible for:

- 1) The maintenance and security of church-owned property.
- 2) Administration of the building use policy as promulgated by the Standing Committee.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Section 1 Membership. The number of Stewardship Committee members shall be determined by Standing Committee.

Section 2 Duties. The Stewardship Committee shall:

- 1) Develop and implement a total Stewardship Program to support the life and ministry of the church.
- 2) Be responsible for raising money for the annual operating budget.
- 3) Seek and gain assistance from the other permanent committees to accomplish these objectives.

**ARTICLE VIII
CHURCH HISTORIAN**

The Church Historian shall be appointed by the Standing Committee. The Church Historian shall be charged with the care of all historical documents of the church and shall be responsible for the maintenance of a general history of the church as directed by the Standing Committee. The Historian shall submit a report at the annual meeting.

**ARTICLE IX
NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Section 1 Membership. The number of Nominating Committee members shall be determined by Standing Committee con. Each member will serve a term of three years, and be elected by the church membership at the annual meeting. No member who has served a full term shall be eligible for reelection until one year after the expiration of the term.

Section 2 Duties. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to report to each annual meeting of the church its recommendations as to:

- 1) Nominations for those officers and members of elected permanent committees then to be elected.
- 2) Nominations for three persons to be elected to the Nominating Committee.

Section 3 Notice. At least seven days prior to each annual meeting, the report of the Nominating Committee shall be posted in the church or mailed to the members.

Section 4 Vacancies and Sub-Committees. The Nominating Committee shall, upon request by the Standing Committee, make recommendations for the filling of vacancies occurring between annual meetings, and shall provide to the permanent committees, recommendations for filling positions on sub-committees.

Section 5 Records. The Nominating Committee shall keep permanent records of job descriptions, service by members in various capacities, and other data relating to the filling of church positions, for the purpose of recommending members for positions and preparing slates of nominees.

**ARTICLE X
AMENDMENTS**

These By-Laws may be amended at any annual meeting, or special meeting called for that purpose, provided the notice states therein the proposed amendment. A two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting shall be necessary to effect any such amendment.