

WAITSFIELD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BY-LAWS

The Waitsfield United Church of Christ (the “Church”) recognizes Jesus Christ as the head of our Church and the congregation as the ruling body. This congregation is organized and governed by its Constitution. These By-Laws are the description of the organization of the congregation and its ministry teams.

CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council acts on behalf of the congregation between meetings of the congregation.

The Church Council is the coordinating body for all Ministry Teams in the Church. The Church Council is the primary source for leadership and guidance in all issues that pertain to policies and procedures.

The Church Council is responsible for making and approving financial decisions and financial matters not expressly delegated to the Ministry Teams or covered by the Ministry Teams’ annual budget. The Church Council works closely with the Ministry Teams in envisioning and goal setting for the good of the broader church.

The Moderator will be the Chief Lay officer and Chairperson of the Church Council.

The Church Council is responsible for appointing a Pastoral Search Committee, when necessary, and will appoint two people to sit on a Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC), one an officer of the Church and the second one a Church Member. The PRC will be made up of one Member of the Pastor’s choosing, and the two members appointed by the Church Council. The PRC will meet quarterly and will report directly to the congregation no less than annually.

The Church Council will also deal with any other personnel issues that arise and that may require a change in employee status.

The Church Council may also charter organizations and provide a liaison to those organizations.

The Church Council will consist of the following Church Members: the Minister, the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, the Ministry Team chairpersons, including: Spiritual Life, Mission and Outreach, Christian Education, Administration, Finance, and two Members-at-large. If any Church Council position becomes vacant, the Church Council may appoint a person to fill the remaining term.

A quorum shall consist of the majority of the sitting Church Council members. The Council will meet on a monthly basis and is accountable to the congregation.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

The terms of the Church Council Members shall be arranged so that one half of the members shall be elected each year, except the Minister.

Minister

The Minister shall (1) be the spiritual leader of the Church in all matters relating to its spiritual welfare and growth, and shall enter into the life of the wider community as a Christian witness, (2) be an ex-officio, non-voting member of all Church ministries and teams, except the Church Council, of which the Minister shall be a voting member, and (3) shall participate in the different ministries as s/he wishes and as needed. The Minister's Letter of Call and Contract shall include, but not be limited to, the particular duties of the Minister, procedures for conflict resolution and the policy for termination of call as defined in the Constitution.

Moderator

The Moderator, elected at the annual meeting from the active Church Membership for a term of two years with no restrictions on succession, shall (1) serve as an Officer of the Church, (2) be the chief lay officer, (3) serve as chairperson of the Church Council, (4) preside at the annual Church meeting, Church Council meetings and any special Church meetings, and (5) not hold any other elected position.

Clerk

The Clerk, elected at the annual meeting from the active Church Membership for a term of two years with no restrictions on succession, shall (1) serve as an Officer of the Church, (2) be the chief record keeping officer of the church, (3) keep the official minutes for all Church Council meetings, and Annual and special meetings, and (4) participate in the Administrative Ministry.

Treasurer and Financial Secretary

The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be the primary financial officials, elected at the annual meeting from the active Church Membership for a term of two years with no restrictions on succession. The Treasurer shall serve as an Officer of the Church. The Treasurer will handle the disbursements of the Church and the Financial Secretary will handle receipts of the Church. They will work together in maintaining written financial records and will work in collaboration with the Church Council in preparing an annual budget. They will be members of the Church Council and participate in the Finance Ministry. These two jobs are separate positions and cannot be held by one person.

Members-at-Large

The Members-at-Large shall be lay persons from the congregation to the Church Council, elected at the annual meeting from the active Church membership for a term of two years with no restrictions on succession.

Ministry Chairpersons

The Chairpersons of Spiritual Life Ministry, Christian Education Ministry, Administration Ministry, Mission and Outreach Ministry, and Finance Ministry shall be members of the Church Council, selected by the

committee members but voted on by the congregation. They will be elected for a two-year term with no restrictions on succession.

MINISTRY MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Each year the congregation will have the opportunity to participate in any Ministry or Team of their choosing. The Church Council will provide a mechanism, such as a ministry fair, or work collaboratively with the Nominating Team, to encourage congregational participation. Non-members may serve on Ministries or Teams, but may not serve as chairperson or sit on the Church Council. The Teams are accountable to their respective Ministries and the Ministries to the Church Council.

MINISTRY TEAMS

The Ministry Teams may meet in a variety of forms. This may include face-to-face, email, or conference calls as it meets the needs and is effective in fulfilling the duties therein. Minutes or records will be kept of all meetings. These ministries will report to the Church Council a minimum of quarterly and are ultimately accountable to the Church Council.

A. Spiritual Life Ministry:

The Spiritual Life Ministry shall be comprised of the Board of Deacons and the Arts Team. It shall have general charge of the spiritual life of the church. The Chair of the Board of Deacons shall be the representative from the Spiritual Life Ministry to the Church Council.

1. Board of Deacons. Working collaboratively with the Minister, this Board is responsible for the spiritual life and well-being of the congregation, including the enhancement of worship through the use of spoken word, music, and, in collaboration with the Arts Team, the arts. This may include creative enhancements to the worship space, over which the Board of Deacons has sole authority.

The ministry of the Board of Deacons shall include, but not be limited to:

Coordinating volunteers or worship assistance with reading, communion, ushering, greeting, and all forms of hospitality, including fellowship hour.

Maintaining regular contact with church members and friends through calls, visits, cards, etc. to determine if they have any spiritual needs. With permission, sharing those needs with the Minister for follow-up, if necessary.

Obtaining supply pastors, supply organists/pianists, or supply choral directors, as needed.

Responsibility for the recording and/or broadcasting of the worship service with the purpose of reaching church members and friends who cannot be here in person, as well as reaching out to the wider community through local, and social, media.

Coordinating meals for those who may be in crisis.

In the event of a vacancy in the position of Organist/Pianist and/or Choir Director, in consultation with the Minister, the Board of Deacons shall secure a candidate for such position(s) and recommend suitable candidate(s) to the Church Council.

As is spoken of in 1 Timothy 3:9, Deacons must "keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience."

Membership: The Board of Deacons will consist of, but is not limited to, the Choir Director, Church Organist/Musician, a representative from the Christian Education Ministry, and representatives from the congregation. The Chairperson will be chosen by the Board from its members. The Board of Deacons shall consist of no more than twelve (12) persons, serving two-year, renewable, terms.

Meetings and Reporting: This Board will meet monthly and will provide written

reports to the Church Council as needed, along with an annual report to the congregation.

2. Arts Team. The Arts Team will be responsible - in consultation with the Board of Deacons and Minister - for any art shows or any other special art-related projects in the church, subject to approval by the Board of Deacons, and will provide assistance for the artwork for worship services in the church.

B. Christian Education Ministry: This Ministry will focus on developing, supporting, and implementing a well-rounded education program for persons of all ages in the congregation. Additionally, opportunities will be sought to involve and invite the broader community into the learning process. The educational programs will include, but are not limited to, adult education, children's education, youth groups and confirmation classes, nursery care, vacation Bible school sessions and other Bible study and prayer group opportunities. Educational programs are not limited to a Christian focus, but will provide opportunities to broaden and enrich our Christian faith.

Membership: This Ministry will consist of, but will not be limited to, one representative from the children's programs, youth group, adult education program, and a member at large from the congregation. The chairperson will be chosen by the Ministry from its members.

Meetings and Reporting: This Ministry will meet quarterly at a minimum and will provide oral or written reports to the Council as needed, along with an annual written report to the congregation.

C. Administration Ministry: This Ministry serves as a support group to the Church Council and other Ministries by overseeing Church records (both current and historical), communication with our local Church community and the broader UCC community, and several smaller Teams.

- The Communication Team will oversee and produce the newsletter and weekly email updates, keep the website current, and communicate with the wider community as needed.
- The Support Team will work collaboratively with the Church Council on record keeping, preserving historical documents, keeping policy and procedure manuals updated and maintaining records such as the calendar, Team reports and other material associated with the Annual Report. They will keep current contacts and job descriptions organized and available. The Support team will organize and distribute the Annual Report.
- The Nominating Team will assist the Ministry Teams as needed, and will search for congregational members for a slate of nominees to fill any open expiring positions on the Church Council, using the Member's talents and spiritual gifts to find an effective place within the Church or the use of these gifts. The slate of nominees will be given to the Church Council for presentation at the Annual Meeting

Membership: This ministry will consist of, but not be limited to, a representative of each of the Teams and the Church Clerk. The Chairperson will be chosen by the Ministry from its members.

Meetings and Reporting: This Ministry will meet quarterly at a minimum and will provide oral or written reports to the Council with an annual report to the congregation.

D. Mission and Outreach Ministry: This Ministry will work with the congregation, the Church Council, and the Minister to provide outreach opportunities to our church family and the greater community.

- Mission projects may include, but are not limited to: PINS (Partners in Service), Heifer Project, International Children's Fund, the Community Service Team (CST), Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), the Mad River Valley Interfaith Council (MRVIC), mission trips, and all mission projects related to the United Church of Christ denomination such as CROP Walks, Blanket Sunday, Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church, etc. An annual plan of projects will be developed and submitted to the Council each summer in order to promote advanced communication and participation by the whole congregation.

Membership: This Ministry will be made up of congregational Members interested in mission and outreach. The chairperson will be chosen by the Ministry from its members.

Meetings and Reporting: This Ministry will meet quarterly at a minimum and will provide oral or written reports to the Council as needed with an annual report to the congregation.

E. Finance Ministry: This Ministry will provide financial counsel and advice to the Church Council. This is an advisory and support Ministry to the Church council. It will be made up of the following individuals or Teams.

The Treasurer will handle disbursements of the Church. S/he will work with the Financial Secretary on financial record keeping and billing issues. The Treasurer will work in collaboration with the Financial Secretary and the Council to prepare an annual budget.

The Financial Secretary will collect and deposit all receipts, including offerings and gifts, and acknowledge those gifts. The Financial Secretary will provide updated reports on giving and income to the Church Council and will work collaboratively with the Stewardship Team, the Treasurer, and the Church Council, on financial matters and in preparing an annual budget.

The Facilities Team will oversee and update the Finance Ministry Chairperson on all issues concerning the building and grounds of the church and the Parsonage. They will work to develop long range plans, including repairs and projects. They will manage, in collaboration with the Chairperson and the Church Council, any immediate needs or expenses for repairs and improvements.

The Fundraising Team will work with the congregation, the Church Council, and the Minister, to raise money to support the Church's mission and ministries aside from contributions from church Members and friends. Fundraising projects may include, but are not limited to, the Chicken Pie Supper, the Holiday Bazaar and annual Christmas wreath sale, the Voices Across the Valley concert, the Town Meeting Day luncheon, the baking of Hot Cross Buns, the Spring Foliage Festival, and pie sales. They will update the Finance Ministry Chairperson as needed.

The Stewardship Team will help make our personal response to God's blessing tangible through the congregation's generous gifts of time, talents, and treasures. They will promote an awareness of the responsibility and opportunity for stewardship in our Church by managing an annual pledge campaign, and on-going education about the meaning and purpose of stewardship.

The Memorial Gifts Team will oversee the Memorial Scholarship Fund that originated as memorial gifts for the purpose of helping students further their education. It is available for post-high school students for use at colleges, universities, or trade institutions as a one-time gift with a given dollar limit. All students with a connection to the church may apply.

The Investment Team purpose is to receive, invest, and manage all investment funds with the intention of being socially responsible in the investment fund choices. The goal is to add the return to the annual budget for use within the limits of the bequest restrictions. The members of this Team are the Trustees, as described in the Constitution.

Membership: This Ministry will be made up of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and a representative from each of the Teams. The chairperson will be chosen by the Ministry from its members.

Meetings and Reporting: This Ministry will meet quarterly at a minimum, and will provide oral or written reports to the Council as needed, with an annual report to the congregation.

AMENDMENTS OF BY-LAWS

These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those Church Members present and voting at any annual meeting or at any special meeting called for that purpose. The proposed amendments shall be inserted in the warning of such meeting.

Ratified on: September 21, 1997

Effective date: June 1, 1998

Amended on:

April 26, 1998 (Article VIII - Committees: Change name of Educational Loan Fund to Memorial Scholarship Loan Fund)

January 17, 1999 (Article IX - Meetings: Change date of annual meeting from the third Sunday in January to the first Sunday in February of each year)

February 4, 2001 (Article V - Church Council: add two Members-at-Large, delete Men's Club representative; Article VII - Ministries: add three Members-at-Large to Ministry of Spiritual Life)

July 8, 2007 (Article V - Church Council: add two members to the Pastoral Relations Committee)

February 7, 2010 (All articles amended for new ministries and the previous creation of a Constitution)

September 19, 2021 (Creation of Spiritual Life Ministry and the Board of Deacons, reassigning roles from Mission and Outreach)