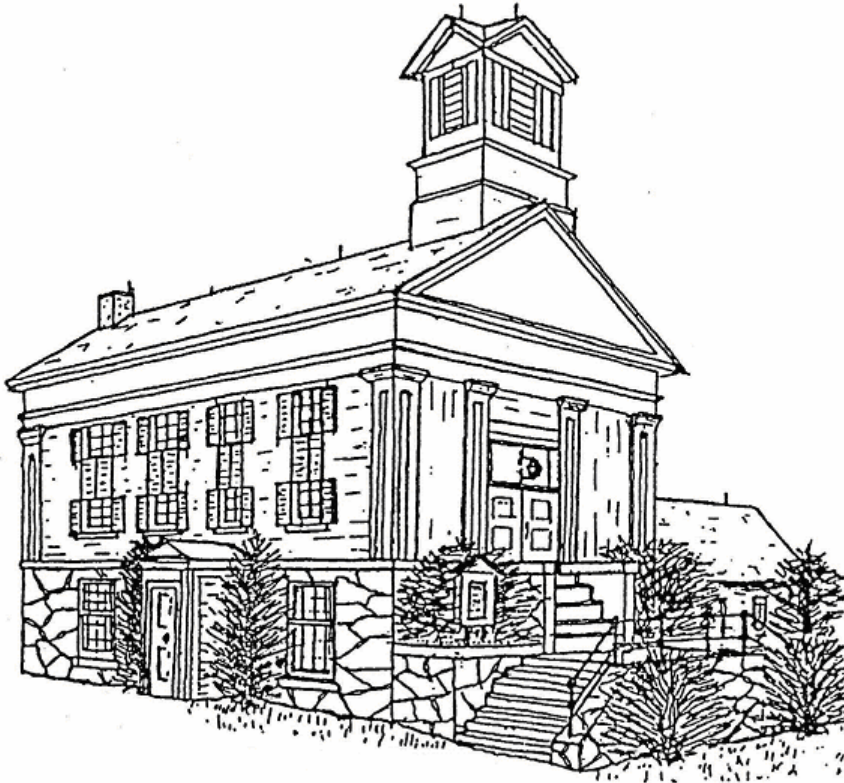


First Congregational Church of Ledyard
United Church of Christ



By-Laws

As adopted at the annual meeting of the Congregation on
January 31, 1993

Amended: January 25, 1998, October 15, 2000, and
June 14, 2009

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LEDYARD

United Church of Christ

Article I. Name

The name of this Church will be First Congregational Church of Ledyard, Connecticut, Inc. (United Church of Christ) *commonly known as the Ledyard Congregational Church.*

Article II. Object

The objective of this church shall be to bind together the followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God and in making His will dominant in the lives of people individually and collectively, especially as that will is set forth in the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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 discipline.

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 the Church is subject to no denominational authority it accepts the obligations of mutual council, comity and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the Congregational Christian Churches and the United Church of Christ and pledges itself to share their common aims and work.

Article IV. Doctrine

This Church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship. Each member shall have undisturbed right to follow the word of God as the Holy Spirit makes it known to him/her, and his/her conscience directs. The Church sets forth the following statement of faith not as a test, but as the Church's interpretation of the Word of God.

FAITH: We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love, and in Jesus Christ, His son, our Lord and Savior, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and lives evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of all.

COVENANT: 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 hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind, exalting the worship of the one true God and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace and the realization of human brotherhood. Depending, as did our ancestors, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

Article V. Membership

The members of this Church shall be persons who have been received by vote of the Church and public acceptance of its covenants,

- (a) on confession of faith and baptism (if not previously baptized);
- (b) on presentation of satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches; or
- (c) if letters are not available, by reaffirmation of faith, on approval of the Board of Deacons.

RECEPTION: Persons approved by the Board of Deacons shall be received at a church service. Any who are unable to attend in public after approval by the Church may be received by the Deacons acting on behalf of the church. The names of the candidates shall be publicly announced before they are received into membership.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP: Members of distant churches who are living in this area may become associate members of this Church without dropping membership in their home churches upon approval of the Board of Deacons. Associate members maintain all rights and privileges of membership, including voting rights.

ACTIVE MEMBERS: Active members shall be considered those members who participate in worship, fellowship activities, or who contribute in some way to the life and mission of the church. An accounting of active members is to be maintained to allow for calculation of a quorum for any all-church meetings (see Article VI, Section 3 (b)).

INACTIVE MEMBERS: Upon approval of the Board of Deacons, persons having become inactive for a period of three (3) years shall be placed on an inactive list. These persons may be reinstated and placed on the active list upon approval of the Board of Deacons. Inactive members lose certain rights and privileges of active membership, including loss of rental fee discounts for ceremonies and social activities, as well as loss of voting rights.

TRANSFER/TERMINATION: The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles and usage of the United Church of Christ, and especially as follows:

- (a) Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of transfer and recommendation to another church, upon request is entitled to receive it by vote of the Board of Deacons.
- (b) If, because of change of faith or for other reasons not involving unchristian conduct, a member in regular standing request, in writing, to be release from his/her covenant obligations, the Church shall patiently endeavor to secure his/her continuance in its fellowship; failing in such efforts, the Church may grant the request and terminate said membership.

- (c) Should a member become an offense to the Church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his/her covenant vows, the Church on recommendation of the Board of Deacons may censure said member, suspend him/her or terminate his/her membership by a two-thirds vote at a duly called membership meeting; but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring said member to amendment in accordance with the law of Christ (Matthew 18:15-17).

- (d) No person's membership shall be terminated, except by letter, at the meeting in which the recommendation for said action is first made.

Article VI. Services and Meetings

The services and meetings of the congregation shall be as follows:

1. WORSHIP/SACRAMENTS:

- (a) Service of worship shall be held at given hours each Sunday, except when suspended by the church membership.
- (b) The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month or at other times as the Board of Deacons may determine. The baptism of adults and children shall be celebrated when determined by the Board of Deacons or Minister.
- (c) Other serviced of worship, inspiration, prayer and study may be held as determined by the Board of Deacons, Minister, or membership.

2. BUSINESS MEETINGS:

Concerned members and Boards should submit agenda items to the chairperson or moderator.

- (a) Annual Meeting: The Annual Meeting shall be held during the last two weeks of January. Due notice shall be posted in the Church at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. The purpose of this meeting shall be to hear yearly reports of officers, boards, committees and organizations, to elect officers, approve budget, transact business and make plans for the next year.

- (b) Regular Services and Business Meetings: The regular Sunday meeting of the Church shall be considered sufficient, in case of necessity, to transact business; except corporate action requiring legal notice and business specifically referred to other meetings.
- (c) Special Congregational Meetings: Special meetings for business shall be called by the Church Clerk at the request of the Minister, the Church Council, or on the written request of five (5) church members.
- (d) Semi-Annual Meeting: To be held as determined at the Annual Meeting.

3. RULES AND REGULATIONS:

- (a) Meeting should generally be facilitated by Roberts' "Rules of Order."
- (b) Quorum: A quorum shall consist of twenty-five (25) active members, or ten percent (10%) of the active membership of the Church, whichever is greater.
A quorum for other boards and committees will be defined as 51% of positions which have been filled.
- (c) Official Year: The official year of the church shall begin at the close of the Annual Meeting and all officers, boards and committees shall assume their duties at that time. The financial year shall be from January 1st to December 31st.
- (d) Reports: All officers, Boards and Church Council shall report at the Annual Meeting and at such other times as may be requested by the Church Council or Church membership. Boards should include a synopsis of reports provided by committees.

Article VII. Officers

All officers with the exception of the Financial Review Officer will be members or associate members of the Church.

The Officers of the Church shall be as follows:

1. MINISTER:

The Minister shall be called for an indefinite time, by a two-thirds vote of the Church membership. However, the Church membership may at any time, by two-thirds vote at a meeting called for that purpose, said meeting having at least 25% of the active members, request his/her resignation with the expectation that it will be presented within sixty days. The Minister shall give sixty days notice should he/she wish to leave of his/her own volition.

The Minister, with the assistance of the Board of Deacons, shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church. He/She shall seek to enlist people as followers of Christ, preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, have under his/her care all services of public worship, and coordinate the activities of the Church in cooperation with the various boards and officers. He/She shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of all boards and the Church Council. He/She is a voting member of congregational meetings.

2. OTHER OFFICERS:

The following officers shall be elected annually in January and all will take office immediately.

- (a) Moderator: The moderator shall facilitate at all congregational meetings of the Church. The Moderator shall be a member of the Church Council.
- (b) Assistant Moderator: The Assistant Moderator shall facilitate at all congregational meetings of the Church in the absence of the Moderator. The Assistant Moderator shall be a member of the Church Council.
- (c) The Church Clerk: The church Clerk shall be a member of the church council. In the absence of both the Moderator and Assistant Moderator, the Clerk may call the meeting to order and a Moderator prop tempore shall be elected for that meeting. The Church Clerk shall:
 - (1) Keep a record of the proceedings of the Church, taking minutes of congregational meetings.
 - (2) Keep a register of the members of the Church, with the dates and manner of their reception, also a record of baptisms and marriages.

- (3) Issue letters of transfer voted by the Board of Deacons.
 - (4) Give legal notice of all meetings when such notices are necessary.
 - (5) Conduct all correspondence so far as this is not otherwise provided by law and is usually pertaining to the office of clerk or secretary of an assembly.
- (d) Treasurer: The Treasurer shall keep accurate account of all receipts and disbursements in accordance with the Financial Manual.
- (e) Assistant Treasurer: The Assistant Treasurer shall act for the Treasurer whenever the Treasurer is absent in accordance with the Financial Manual.
- (f) Financial Review Officer: The Financial Review Officer shall examine the accounts of the Treasurer of the Church and report at the Annual Meeting.
- (g) Historian: The Historian shall be a member of the Church Council and shall, in close cooperation with the Minister and Church Clerk, collect, organize and maintain a history of the Church. The duties of the Historian will include, but not be limited to the following;
- (1) Collect old diaries, histories and documents.
 - (2) Keep chronological record of church events.
 - (3) File copies of church letters, special programs, bulletins and newsletters.
 - (4) Write a brief report for the Annual Report.
- (h) Other officers may be elected as the need shall dictate.

Article VIII. Boards - Council

1. OVERVIEW:

The members of the Church shall elect annually Church Council Members-at-Large, and Board members, all of whom must be members or associate members of the Church. The members of all Boards shall be divided into two classes with one-half of the members elected to terms which expire each year. No member's name shall appear on the Annual Meeting Ballot for re-election after having

served three consecutive two year terms. No member shall sit on more than one Board during their elected term. Annually, each board and Church Council shall elect a chairperson, assistant chairperson, and secretary. Draft minutes of meetings shall be filed with the church secretary within two weeks and made available outside the church library. If a Board determines the need for a supportive committee to accomplish one of the Board's continuing functions, the chairperson of that Board shall provide the following information to the church secretary who shall include this information in the "Committee Booklet."

- (a) Title/obligations/goals/responsibilities
- (b) Membership
- (c) Meetings
- (d) Board it is responsible to
- (e) A description of the committee's expected output and where it can obtain any needed information.

If a Board determines the need for paid staff, they must have approval from the congregation at an all church meeting. The determining Board is responsible for the job description and annual reviews. No person will be allowed to hold more than one paid position at the same time.

2. THE CHURCH COUNCIL AND BOARDS SHALL BE:

- (a) Church Council: The Church Council will consist of the following:
 - 1) Moderator
 - 2) Assistant Moderator
 - 3) Church Clerk
 - 4) Historian
 - 5) two (2) representatives each of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees
 - 6) one (1) representative each of the Board of Christian Education, Board of Missions, and Board of Music
 - 7) four (4)-members-at-large, who shall not be members of any of the aforesaid boards
 - 8) one (1) member of the Women's Fellowship

Each board and the Women's Fellowship shall elect its own representative to the Church Council.

The Church Council shall have the power to fill all vacancies of officers or

boards that shall occur during the year with the aid and recommendations of the Nominating Committee, which shall be a support committee of the Church Council.

It shall be the function of the Church Council to visualize the entire task of the Church. The Council may act for the Church in matters not defined as the function or responsibility of any other board. These matters must be approved by at least two-thirds of the voting members present or be brought before the Church for resolution. Any board or member may call upon the Church Council for assistance. The Council shall submit to the Annual Meeting a comprehensive program involving the chief objectives of the Church for the coming year. All officers, boards, and associate organizations may be requested to present their plans and programs to the Council for its information. The Church Council shall be responsible for maintaining good communications among church members and boards. In performing that responsibility, the Council shall guide and oversee the CHURCH CHATTER, church office secretary, the scheduling of functions and the Council bulletin board.

The Church Council shall meet at least once quarterly. Additional meetings may be called by the chairman at the request of any council member.

Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Assistant Moderator and the four (4) Church Council Members-at-Large. Three (3) members shall constitute a quorum. The Committee shall prepare a ballot nominating one person for each vacancy to be filled at the Annual Meeting and said nominations shall be posted not later than two Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting. The ballot thus prepared shall be the official ballot of the Annual Meeting, provided that any voter may write upon his/her ballot the name of any eligible person and that the right of the members to make nominations from the floor shall be recognized. The Nominating Committee shall also recommend to the Church Council nominees to fill the unexpired terms of all vacancies of offices and boards that shall occur during the year. Boards may request the Nominating Committee to find members for established committees.

(b) Board of Deacons: The Board of Deacons shall consist of fourteen (14) members and shall meet monthly. A deacon who has served ten years may be elected deacon emeritus, and upon such election, shall be entitled for life to all the privileges of an active member of the Board of Deacons.

The Board of Deacons shall cooperate with the Minister in ministering to the spiritual interest of the Church and community. They shall assist in the preparation and administration of the sacraments, and in caring for the needy. The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for the administrative supervision of the Minister. The guidelines for such supervision shall be approved by a congregational meeting. They shall provide for the supply of the pulpit in the absence of the Minister. They shall provide for the beautification of the sanctuary and hospitality.

(c) Board of Trustees: The Board of Trustees shall consist of fourteen (14) members, one of whom shall be a member of the Ecclesiastical Society, and one a member of the Women's Fellowship, and shall meet monthly. The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member. The Board of Trustees shall have the care (maintenance, repair, improvements and custodial services) of the property of the Church and have charge of its financial affairs to include the annual preparation of a budget and to approve expenditures in excess of the budget, and the buying and selling of stocks and bonds. The total of said excess expenditures must not exceed 3% of the total annual budget without approval of the Church membership. They shall draft, approve and administer the Financial Manual which will specify the procedures for the Treasurer's conduct of his/her office, and rules for the use of church property. The Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, encumber, lease or transfer real property without specific authority given by a vote of the Church membership.

(d) Board of Christian Education: The Board of Christian Education shall consist of seven (7) members and shall meet monthly. It may annually hire the Church School Director, who will be an ex-officio, non-voting member of said Board. This Board shall direct the education work of the Church. This Board is also responsible for the administration of the Library guidelines and care of infants during the church service. It shall cooperate in the educational aspects of social service, mission, and stewardship.

(e) Board of Missions: The Missions Board shall consist of seven (7) members, one of whom is a member of the Women's Fellowship, and shall meet

at least once quarterly. The church treasurer shall be ex-officio and non-voting, This Board shall administer the mission expenditures in accordance with the budget, promote giving for special mission offerings and plan the service projects of the Church.

(f) Board of Music: There shall be a Music Board of five (5) voting members. In addition the organist and choir director(s) will be ex-officio, non-voting members. It shall meet at least once quarterly. The Board shall be responsible for the music program of the Church and shall work in cooperation with the Board of Deacons.

Article IX. Ledyard Center Nursery School

1. The First Congregational Church of Ledyard sponsors the Ledyard Center Nursery School in accordance with the applicable State of Connecticut licensing regulations which define the responsibility and authority of the sponsor.
2. A separate set of books and accounts shall be maintained by the Nursery School, which will operate under its own budget. The Nursery School shall be financially self-sustaining, charging tuition and fees necessary to pay all expenses and maintain a modest operating reserve.
3. The Church's primary body for governing the Nursery School and liaison to the parents of students shall be the Nursery School Authority.
 - a. The Nursery School Authority shall consist of four voting members. In addition the Director(s) of the Nursery School will be an ex-officio, non-voting member.
 - b. Of these four members, three will be elected by the Church at its Annual Meeting and they must be members of the Ledyard Congregational Church. The terms of office of these three members shall be three years. The terms shall be staggered so that each year at least one position shall be up for regular election. These members may be but need not be parents of children who are students of the School. These members may NOT serve on other Boards of the Church.
 - c. From the members covered in paragraph (b.), the Authority shall designate one member as Chair.

- d. The fourth member of the Nursery School Authority shall be a parent or legal guardian of a child who is currently a student of the Nursery School, and who may be but need not be a member of the Ledyard Congregational Church. This Authority members' name will not appear on the Annual Meeting ballot for election by the church membership, but will be selected by the other three members of the Authority after consultation with the Director(s) and/or parents of students. This member will be selected at the beginning of the school year and will serve a one year term. If qualified, the member may be re-selected for additional terms.
 - e. The Authority shall meet at least once quarterly. Any three members shall constitute a quorum. In cases of a tie vote, the chair's vote shall carry the question.
 - f. The Authority shall be empowered on behalf of the Ledyard Congregational Church to employ a Director for the Nursery School and to ensure the operation of the School is in compliance with state licensing provisions. The manner and procedures for fulfilling this and other responsibilities shall be laid out in a set of Governing Provisions approved and amended by the Church Council. The Church Council shall approve termination of the Nursery School Director.
4. The Church Council retains the power to bring any Nursery School matter before the Church for resolution.

Article X. Associate Organizations

An Associate Organization is defined as an organization or group with which First Congregational Church of Ledyard has a mutual representation and/or financial tie. The Church Council shall have the authority to form or dissolve a tie with an associated organization after review, discussion and a majority vote.

1. THE LEDYARD ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY:

The First Congregational Church of Ledyard recognizes the articles of incorporation, the by-laws and the assets of the Ecclesiastical Society. The Society holds ownership of and manages some of the real estate of the Church. A representative of the Ecclesiastical Society shall be a member of the Board of Trustees. Each group shall recognize each others' responsibilities and authority. They shall agree to work together for the betterment of both the First Congregational Church of Ledyard and the Ecclesiastical Society.

2. WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP:

The First Congregational Church of Ledyard recognizes the by-Laws of the Women's Fellowship. The Board of Missions and the Board of Trustees shall each have a representative from the Women's Fellowship.

3. LEDYARD FAIR, INCORPORATED:

The First Congregational Church of Ledyard recognizes the articles of incorporation and by-laws of the Ledyard Fair, Incorporated. The Ledyard Fair, Incorporated elects two (2) members from the First Congregational Church to the Fair's Board of Directors as a host Organization, for a three (3) year term each. The Church Council shall approve the two (2) representatives to be elected to the Board of Directors of the Ledyard Fair, Inc.

4. LEDYARD INTERCHURCH EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND:

The First Congregational Church of Ledyard recognizes the articles of incorporation and by-Laws of the Ledyard Interchurch Emergency Assistance Fund. The Nominating Committee shall nominate, and the congregation approve, a lay representative from the First Congregational Church of Ledyard to the Board of Directors of the Ledyard Interchurch Emergency Assistance Fund. The minister of the First Congregational Church of Ledyard is automatically nominated to the Board of Directors of the Ledyard Interchurch Emergency Assistance Fund.

5. UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST:

The First Congregational Church of Ledyard recognizes the articles of incorporation, by-laws and constitution of the United Church of Christ on a national, conference, and association level. The church will nominate and elect each year three (3) lay delegates and alternates to represent the church of the New London Association. The church will nominate and elect each year two (2) lay delegates and alternates to represent the church to the Connecticut Conference. The minister of the church is automatically a delegate to the Association and Conference by virtue of his/her office.

6. BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA:

The First Congregational Church of Ledyard recognizes and affirms responsibility of a sponsoring organization as described in the Troop and Pack Charters. The Church as a sponsoring member of that Charter supports the principles of scouting by providing a safe place for the Troop, Pack, and other organizations of these groups to hold meetings. The Church will help, within its capacity, to provide support to the scouting programs.

7. GIRL SCOUTS OF AMERICA:

As a sponsoring body, the First Congregational Church of Ledyard recognizes and affirms the principles of Girl Scouting at its various levels. The Church will support the scouting programs and leadership training by providing a safe place and environment for the promotion of Girl Scouting. The Church will help, within its capacity, to provide support to the scouting programs.

8. The First Congregational Church of Ledyard shall have the power to form relationships with other organizations as necessary.

Article XI. Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended only by a two-thirds vote at the Annual Meeting or by a special Church meeting called for that purpose. The proposed amendment shall be presented to the Church in writing not less than two months prior to said meeting and announcement of these proposed amendments shall be made to the congregation on three (3) consecutive Sundays prior to said meeting.

Previous Amendments, Summary:

Amended January 25, 1998: To define the Nominating Committee as the Assistant Moderator and the 4 members of the Church Council At Large. To change the terms permitted on Boards and Committees to three consecutive two year teams.

Amended October 15, 2000: To establish Nursery school Authority (Article IX).

Amended June 14, 2009:

1. Article V: Membership defined per Board of Deacons recommendation, on voting rites of inactive members.

2. Article VI: To define a quorum as 51% for each board or committee based upon the number of positions filled, not upon the possible number of positions.

3. Article VIII: To set the time for minutes of meetings to be submitted at 2 weeks for draft minutes.

4. Article VIII: Define Deacon emeritus as ten years from “many” years.

5. Article VIII: Change shall to may for Christian Education hire of a Church school Director.

6. Article X: To update the Bylaws to reflect the revision in the relationship (Host Organization) with the Ledyard Fair.

