

**Pawtucket Congregational Church of Lowell  
United Church of Christ**

**BY-LAWS**

**ARTICLE I: NAME:**

Pawtucket Congregational Church of Lowell

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE:**

*The purpose of this church shall be the promotion of the worship of God, and service to all humankind under the inspiration and leadership of Jesus Christ, and according to the custom and usages of the United Church of Christ.*

**ARTICLE III: GOVERNMENT**

The government of this church in its congregational policy is vested in the body of believers who compose it, and who exercise the right of control in all its affairs subject in legal matters to the Articles of Incorporation granted to it by the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are characteristic of churches in covenantal relationship.

**ARTICLE IV: DECLARATION OF FAITH**

*We welcome into fellowship all who believe in and truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, who recognize in His person, teaching, death, and resurrection, the divine way of salvation of individuals and the world, and who seek, as best they can, the advancement of the kingdom of God, which He founded.*

**ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1 – Active Members**

Members of this church are persons who are presented to the church at a public service of worship after having been properly instructed in the Christian faith to the satisfaction of the Pastor and the Board of Worship and Education, and, who join under one of the following categories: (a.) by transfer on presentation of a satisfactory letter of transfer from another church as received and reported by the Clerk; (b.) by reaffirmation of faith if a letter is not available from the church of previous membership; (c.) by confirmation and baptism, or, (d.) by confession of faith and baptism if not previously baptized. The service of reception shall be held in the presence of the worshipping congregation, preferably at a service of Holy Communion, following the liturgy contained in the United Church of Christ "Book of Worship" (pages 157-165) published in 1986 (or any subsequent revision).

**Section 2 – Associate Members**

Any regular financial contributor, 18 (eighteen) years of age, or over, may be elected to Associate Membership at any regular or special meeting of the church, with the privilege of vote on financial

questions only, except in relation to any actions pertaining to the reduction of the pastor's salary or the alienation of church property.

**Section 3 – Inactive Members**

Any member residing beyond commuting distance who after two years has not taken a letter of transfer or dismissal or any member who for a period of two years, in spite of spiritual care, has not attended the church's worship or contributed to its support, unless sufficient reason for that neglect appears, shall be enrolled on an "inactive list." Any member at his/her request with the recommendation of the Pastor and Board of Worship and Education may also be enrolled upon an "inactive list," however, such a person may be restored to active status at any time upon both his/her request and the recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Worship and Education.

**Section 4 – Termination**

Members of this church who desire to sever their connection may make application for a letter of transfer or dismissal to be granted by the Clerk upon the recommendation of the Pastor and Board of Worship and Education.

**ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS**

**Section 1 – Annual Meeting**

The church Annual Meeting will be conducted by the Moderator on the second Sunday of February. Notice stating the nature of the business of the meeting shall be posted by the Clerk at one of the main entrances of the house of worship at least 7 (seven) days before the date of the meeting. It shall also be announced from the pulpit on the preceding Lord's Day.

**Section 2 – Special Meetings**

Special Meetings may be called by the Clerk upon written request of ten members, 18 years of age or older or upon the request of the Cabinet. The same notice shall be given as provided for the Annual Meeting.

**Section 3 – Order of Business**

1. Prayer
2. Reading of the warrant for the meeting
3. Approval of meeting minutes not previously approved
4. Reports of officers, boards, and committees
5. Old business
6. New business
7. Presentation and action of the proposed budget(s)
8. Nominations and election
9. Adjournment

**Section 4 – Procedures**

All business meetings of the church shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, with voting members only.

**Section 5 – Quorum**

Fifteen (15) members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at the Annual Meeting or any special meetings.

## **ARTICLE VII: SACRAMENTS**

### **Section 1 – Baptism**

The sacrament of Baptism shall be administered to adults on their confession of faith, if not previously baptized; and to children presented by believing parents or friends. The mode of baptism is left to the preference of the believer. The name and date of those baptized shall be recorded by the Clerk in addition to which the date of birth and names of the parents shall be recorded for a child who is baptized.

### **Section 2 – Lord’s Supper**

Communion shall be celebrated ordinarily on the first Sunday of each month, except for September when it will be celebrated on the second Sunday.

## **ARTICLE VIII – ORGANIZATION**

### **Section 1 – Authorization**

- a. Permanent Components** - All elective positions, the Cabinet, and the three Boards (Worship and Education, Fellowship & Outreach, and Stewardship & Finance) are permanent structural components for which eligibility, terms of office, constitution, procedures, and general responsibilities are defined in the By-laws. They can be modified or changed only by amendment of these By-laws.
- b. Non-Permanent Components** – All other positions and committees are non-permanent structural components. They are appointed by and accountable to the church, the Cabinet, or the Boards by which they were authorized. They may be modified or changed in any way by the authorizing component.
- c. Component Membership Status**
  - a. Regular Member** – A regular member has voice and vote, assumes full membership responsibility, and is accountable to the chair or group leader.
  - b. Ex-officio Member** – An ex-officio member has voice and vote (unless otherwise noted) and is a member by virtue of holding a particular office. The ex-officio member is not expected to assume additional responsibilities beyond those related to the office from which he/she derives ex-officio membership.
  - c. Co-Opted Member** – A person serving in an appointive or staff position may be designated a co-opted member by the authorizing component which defines the level of participation of that member. Co-opted members are designated for purposes of communication, coordination, or decision-making related to the position to which he/she has been appointed.

### **Section 2 – Elections**

All persons serving in elective positions are elected at the Annual Meeting of the church for the following terms: Officers and Cabinet Members-at-large – 1 (one) year; Board Members – two (2) years. All are eligible for re-election, since there are no tenure restrictions.

### **Section 3 – Requirements**

The Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Board Chairpersons, and Cabinet Members-at-large must be members of the church. All “Officers” as defined in the By-laws must be of majority age (18 years). The Clerk must be a legal resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. No person may serve concurrently as a member of more than one commission. Vacancies are filled by action of the Cabinet.

### **Section 4 – Appointments**

All persons appointed to functional positions or to sub-committee membership by the church, council, or commissions are appointed or re-appointed after the Annual Meeting to one (1) year terms and are eligible for re-appointment. All persons appointed to project positions or ad-hoc committee

membership by the church, Cabinet, or Boards service until the task for which they were appointed is completed.

## **ARTICLE IX – OFFICERS**

### **Section 1 – Moderator**

The Moderator is the chief executive officer of the church, presides at all meetings of the church and chairs the Cabinet.

### **Section 2 – Clerk**

The Clerk records the proceedings of all official meetings of the church and of the Cabinet of which the Clerk is an ex-officio member, compiles the annual reports of the Pastor, Officers, Boards, and Committees for submission to the Annual Meeting and maintains the church's membership and historic records and archives.

### **Section 3 – Treasurer**

The Treasurer maintains accounting records, prepares financial reports, and disburses and manages church funds in accordance with policy established by the Board of Stewardship & Finance.

### **Section 4 – Financial Secretary**

The Financial Secretary receives, counts and deposits all funds, of which a record is provided to the Treasurer; maintains records of contributions reports of which are made upon request to individual contributors, and, in the absence of the Treasurer assumes the responsibilities of that office.

### **Section 5 – Board Chairpersons – 3**

The Board Chairpersons chair their respective Boards and serve as ex-officio members of the Cabinet.

### **Section 6 – Auditor**

The auditor reviews annually the financial records of the church to assure that accounts are in balance and that the system is adequate to the church's needs.

## **ARTICLE X – STAFF**

### **Section 1 – Pastor**

- a. Pastoral Call** – A pastoral candidate (either ordained or prepared for ordination) is called to the position at an official meeting of the church for which notice for a vote to extend a call has been given. The candidate is called to an indefinite term by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting. When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the Cabinet becomes responsible for selecting an interim pastor, if needed, and/or recommends to the church an ad-hoc Search Committee of 5 to 7 (5-7) members whose duty it shall be, with the cooperation of denominational officials, to make a survey of available candidates, to settle upon the one whom in their judgment should be called to the pastorate, to introduce the candidate to the church,; and to propose at an official church meeting that a call be extended to the candidate.
- b. Authorization** – A candidate who accepts a call to this church is to become – at the first opportunity – a member of the church. The new Pastor and the church join in requesting the denomination in which the pastor holds ministerial standing to arrange for a service of installation or recognition.
- c. Termination** – While the term of the Pastor is indefinite, the church may at any time by a majority vote at a meeting called for the purpose, terminate the services of the Pastor within sixty (60) days, but, in the case of loss of ministerial standing on the part of the Pastor, or in the case of unethical conducts, relations may cease at once. The Pastor is required to give sixty (60) days notice of intention to leave the pastorate.

- d. Responsibilities** – The Pastor cares for, and is concerned for, the guidance and nurture of those who are banded together as a self-conscious congregation of Christians. The Pastor normally serves in the following roles: preaching and teaching, leading in worship and administering the rites and ordinances/sacraments of the church; caring for people in need; providing pastoral counseling; overseeing the work of the church; and working in community, denominational, and ecumenical settings. The Pastor is an ex-officio member without vote of the Cabinet, and serves as an advisor to all Boards and Sub-committees.

### **Section 2 – Other Staff**

Other staff are contracted by the Cabinet with recommendation from the Board to which their function is related. Position descriptions outlining responsibilities, expectations and accountability are considered a part of their contracts. Financial compensation is authorized by the church through its budgeting process.

## **ARTICLE XI – CABINET**

### **Section 1 – Composition**

The Cabinet consists of the Moderator (Chair), four (4) members-at-large serving as regular members, and, serving as ex-officio members: the Pastor (without vote); the Clerk (Secretary), the three (3) Board Chairpersons, and a person representing both the Women’s Association and the Friendly Circle.

### **Section 2 – Procedures**

The Cabinet meets in October, February, and June, and at such other times as may be necessary. Special meetings may be called on one week’s notice to members. A quorum consists of five (5) regular and ex-officio members. The Cabinet may appoint, as necessary, to one (1) year terms individuals or sub-committees to carry out particular functions of the Cabinet and/or ad hoc committees to carry out special projects related to the work of the church or Cabinet, but which are not related to the work of the Boards. They are accountable to the Cabinet.

### **Section 3 – General Responsibilities**

The Cabinet serves as the coordinating and executive body of the church. It coordinates and oversees church evaluation and planning, including the development of church goals and priorities as well as annual and long-range planning and scheduling, provides for communication, publicity and public relations; nominates persons to serve in elective positions, encourages and provides for leadership development; oversees the management of conflict; maintains pastoral relations; recommends to the church during a vacancy in the pastorate the hiring of an interim pastor who will be accountable to it, and the appointment of an ad-hoc Search Committee of five to seven (5-7) members, and, negotiates contracts with all candidates for employment.

## **ARTICLE XII – BOARDS**

### **Section 1 – Composition (amendment adopted 11/11/2007 – by unanimous vote)**

Each of the Boards consists of the Board’s Chairperson elected to one (1) year term and four (4) regular members elected to two (2) year terms.

With the exception of the Board of Stewardship and Finance, that will consist of the Board’s Chairperson elected to one (1) year term and six (6) regular members, consisting of four (4) at-large members. The Chair of the Fundraising Committee or his/her designate and The Chair of the Windows of Faith or his/her designate each elected to two (2) year terms.

With the exception of the Board of Worship and Education, that will consist of the Board’s Chairperson elected to one (1) year term and six (6) regular members, consisting of four (4) at-large

members, The Superintendent of Sunday School or his/her designate and the Choir Director or his/her designate each elected to two (2) year terms.

The Pastor serves as advisor to the Boards.

## **Section 2 – Procedures**

Each Board is to meet six (6) times per year in odd-numbered months and at such other times as may be necessary. A quorum consists of three (3) regular members. A Board may appoint as necessary to one (1) year terms individuals or sub-committees to carry out particular functions of the Board, and/or ad-hoc committees to carry out special projects related to the work of the Board. They are accountable to the appointing Board.

## **Section 3 – General Responsibilities**

Each Board assesses needs of the congregation and community in the area of its concern; plans programs and activities based on the Board's goals and objectives and responsive to identified needs; develops strategies to implement these programs and the criteria by which to evaluate them; determines financial needs and makes budget recommendations; provides resources and training to assure the effectiveness of persons and programs, recommends to the Cabinet staff positions to fill its staff needs, oversees the work of staff members who are accountable to it, and, interprets the work of the Board to the church.

## **Section 4 – Functions**

### **a. Board of Worship & Education**

The Board of Worship and Education oversees and supports and worship and spiritual life of the church; plans and/or promotes programs that encourage spiritual development, assists in planning worship services and in the preparation and administration of the sacraments; determines policies related to baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other special services; provides for music, flowers, worship supplies, and aides (greeters, ushers, lectors, child care coordinators, etc.); and, procures pulpit and pastoral supply during pastoral absences. Also, the Board guides the educational ministry of the church in accordance with the church's educational and theological principles, provides for and coordinates the Sunday School, adult education, youth programs, and child care; offers confirmation education and a program for new member orientation; recruits and offers training and support for teachers and leaders, and, supervises the use and maintenance of worship and educational resources.

### **b. Board of Fellowship & Outreach**

The Board of Fellowship & Outreach plans and oversees the church's ministry of service and caring for church members,; organizes and maintains a ministry of pastoral care and lay visitation; and, provides for weekly coffee hours following worship; and for other events to foster fellowship. Also, the Board gives guidance to the church's mission in the community and the world; provides for the means of mission education; schedules and promotes special mission offerings; appoints delegates to designated denominational, ecumenical, community church related agencies; develops policies and plans for relating church and community in ministry and mission; and fosters programs to encourage church membership and growth.

### **c. Board of Stewardship & Finance**

The Board of Stewardship & Finance provides for the care, maintenance and improvement of church property, buildings, and equipment; determines policy for the use of facilities and equipment; and, maintains necessary insurance coverage. Also, the Board oversees the church's finances including development of the annual budget(s), its management, and the handling of loans and invested funds; provides for stewardship education and interpretation; plans and conducts an annual appeal for funds in support of the budget; establishes or maintains a church endowment policy; and, solicits, selects, accepts and maintains records of memorial and designated gifts.

## **ARTICLE XIII – OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Section 1 – Auxiliary Groups**

All groups or organizations whose By-laws define a relationship to this church are accepted by this church as auxiliary groups (e.g., Women's Association and the Friendly Circle) are regarded as integral parts of the church. Such groups are encouraged to appoint a representative (a church member) to serve as an ex-officio member of the Cabinet.

### **Section 2 – Sponsored Groups**

All groups or organizations whose existence is dependent upon their relationship with the church and are accepted by the church as sponsored groups (e.g., a Boy Scout unit) are regarded as integral parts of the church. The Board of Fellowship & Outreach is encouraged to appoint a church member to serve as a church liaison advisor to each such an organization or group.

## **ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS**

Additions and amendments to the By-laws may be made at the annual or any special meeting of the church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present and voting, providing that the nature of the intent to amend is stated in the notice of the meeting.