

BCCUCC Congregation Policy

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I) STATEMENTS OF FAITH AND WELCOME

A. Affirmation of Welcome

We believe that all people are blessed and loved equally by God. Following the teachings of Jesus we heartily welcome everyone into God's covenantal community. Whatever your race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic or marital status, variety of thoughts and beliefs, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression – whoever you are and wherever you come from you are welcome into the full life and ministry of our church.

B. Covenant

Before God and these witnesses present, we covenant with God and each other. We dedicate our faith, thought, and actions to love God with all that we are, and our neighbors as ourselves. Relying on the help of God, the unfolding and reconciling Word, and the Holy Spirit, we join ourselves to this church to take part in its worship and activities, and to strive earnestly for its peace and enlightenment. We covenant and agree to devote ourselves to this faith community that worships God, embraces all people, ministers to one another, works for justice and peace, and renders loving service to God's world.

C. Sacraments

In accordance with the practice prevailing among Reformed Christians, we celebrate two Sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion.

II) DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

A. United Church of Christ

This church is amenable to no ecclesiastical authority except that of its Head, which is Christ. Subject to the provisions of its Charter, it is an independent body, having within itself all necessary powers of government and discipline, yet recognizing the expediency and privileges of seeking the fellowship of other Christian churches. As such, on February 19, 1961, this church by its own action became a member of the United Church of Christ.

III) DECISION MAKING

The membership of this church is committed to making decisions by consensus, which requires a spirit of trust and openness in communication. The intent is to achieve a resolution which all will support, even if not in total agreement.

IV) MEMBERSHIP

A. Eligibility

Membership in this church is open to any person who has been baptized, and who either has been confirmed or has affirmed a belief in the mission and faith of this church and the United Church of Christ, without any restriction as to age, race, gender, class,

ethnic background, sexual orientation or expression. See by-laws for definition of membership.

B. Reception

1. New members are received at a Sunday Service, or at some other time as ordered by the Deacons, by committing to the Covenant of this congregation.
2. If any person is unable to attend the public service of Reception of Members, the Senior Minister, assisted by a Deacon, may receive them on behalf of the congregation.
3. Upon reception, every new member is to promptly sign the Register of Members of this church.

C. Duties

Members pledge themselves to attend the worship of the church and the celebration of Holy Communion; to live a Christian life; to share in the life and work of the church; to contribute to its support and benevolence; and with trust and compassion for one another, to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community as guided by the Covenant and Mission Statement.

D. Removal From Active Membership

1. By Letter of Transfer

- a) A letter of transfer from active membership is granted to any member of the church requesting it in writing.
- b) The Clerk issues and forwards such a letter to the church to which the member is transferring, and thereupon all membership connection with this church shall cease.

2. By Revision to Inactive Membership

- a) A member may be moved to the inactive membership list if, for a period of more than one (1) year:
 - i) the member's address has been unknown, or
 - ii) the member has not attended the church's worship or activities, or contributed to its support despite efforts to stimulate that engagement, barring medical or financial constraints.

3. By Termination

If a member in regular standing requests in writing to be released from their membership, the Clerk grants the request and terminates the person's membership.

4. Discipline

- a) It is the duty of all members of this congregation to foster the peace and prosperity of the Church, to be faithful to their Covenant, and in all things to be mindful of the high obligations of church membership.
- b) If any member of the congregation breaches the Covenant, the Deacons may censure such person, or suspend or terminate that person's membership, provided that the Grievance Procedure has been followed.

V) MEETINGS

A. Worship Services

1. Time

Services of worship are held at specified hours every Sunday, unless otherwise provided by a vote of the membership.

2. Holy Communion

Holy Communion is celebrated at such times as the Deacons may designate, after consultation with the Senior Minister.

3. Baptism

- a) Baptism is administered to adults who believe in the mission and faith of the church, or to children whose parents believe in the mission and faith of the church.
- b) The Clerk ensures that the full name and date of birth of all who receive the Sacrament of Baptism are entered into the records of the church.

4. Other Worship Services

Special services of worship may be scheduled by the Deacons or by the ministries of the church. Dates should be coordinated with the ordained ministers to avoid conflict.

B. Business Meetings

1. Notices

- a) Written notices for the Annual Meeting and other meetings of the membership are prepared by the Clerk and announced at the Sunday morning services and published in the church bulletin two (2) Sundays immediately preceding such meetings, except as otherwise required in the By-Laws. In the absence of the Clerk, the Governing Board Chair appoints a Clerk pro tempore for the purpose thereof. Any postponed meeting is held on the next practicable Sunday.
- b) The nature of the business to be transacted shall be included in the written notice.

2. Quorum

Forty (40) active and/or associate members or twenty percent of the active and/or associate membership, whichever is lower, shall constitute a quorum at all meetings of the membership.

3. Presiding Officer

The Governing Board Chair or a designee presides at all meetings of the Membership.

4. Decision Making

a) The goal of all decision making is to achieve consensus. In some cases, voting may be necessary.

b) Elections. Elections are determined by a majority of those members present, entitled to vote, and voting. Elections may be held by ballot if so voted by a majority of those members present.

c) Other Business. Except for elections, an affirmative vote of two-thirds of those members present, entitled to vote, and voting at church meetings, is required for the transaction of business.

d) Eligibility. All active and associate members of the church are entitled to vote at all meetings of the membership.

5. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Barrington Congregational Church is from January 1 through December 31 unless voted otherwise by the church membership.

C. Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is scheduled by the Governing Board. The purpose of the meeting is to:

1. receive the yearly reports of the ministers, selected officers, ministry coordinators, selected ministry teams, and organizations;
2. elect officers, the governing board, ministry coordinators, deacons, and delegates. Vacancies occurring in elected positions after the annual meeting may be filled by the Governing Board in consultation with the Director of Ministries;
3. consider plans for the upcoming year.

D. Other Meetings

1. Other business meetings, the object of which is stated in the notice, may be called by the Senior Minister, the Governing Board, or the Clerk upon written request of seven (7) members of the church.
2. In case of emergency, and upon affirmative vote of a majority of the Governing Board, the notice of any such special meeting may be sent by email and mail to the active membership five (5) business days prior to the date of the meeting.