

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

of

THE ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY FOR THE FELLOWSHIP OF CONNECTICUT CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

PREAMBLE

Certain Congregational Christian Churches which desire to maintain and extend their witness as free churches, by delegates assembled, have associated themselves in a Connecticut Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches, and this Corporation is associated in its purposes and activities with that Fellowship.

Congregational Christian Churches agree in believing that the right of government resides in local churches which are responsible directly to the Lord Jesus Christ; the one Head of the Church Universal and of all particular churches.

Congregational Christian Churches believe, in particular, that each local church is a gathered company of believers free to determine its own covenant, basis of membership, statement of faith (if any), forms of worship, programs of religious education, ownership and administration of property, choice of minister or other leadership, programs of community service, fellowship, music, pastoral work, and all other religious and civic activities.

Congregational Christian Churches are governed exclusively by their own members and are entirely free from external control. They are gathered companies of believers who have pledged themselves to follow the life and teaching of Jesus, and because they seek to order their lives and works in the service of God as He is made known to them in Jesus Christ, they cannot accept as authoritative or agree to hold in regard, the advice, decisions or other actions of any other body, since to do so would avoid their responsibility of seeking God's will by their own action and in their own right.

Congregational Christian Churches, in their wider relationships, recognize that all churches that worship and serve the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ are parts of Christ's catholic church and have mutual duties subsisting in the obligations of fellowship. Therefore, while establishing this Corporation for the furtherance of their common interests, these churches do maintain the scriptural and inalienable right of each church to self government and administration; and covenant that this Corporation shall never exercise legislative or judicial authority, nor consent to act as a council of reference.

Congregational Christian Churches and individuals are related to one another and to their wider agencies in a responsible, free fellowship. The local churches voluntarily elect delegates to meetings of wider bodies, and take responsibility for the work undertaken by those delegates, with the usual Congregational reservation, namely, that whatever is undertaken must win the support of their members. The wider bodies are expected to be sensitive to the wishes of the churches, and to the wishes of individuals in non-member churches.

Congregational Christian Churches join with all other churches which worship and serve God as He is made known to us in Jesus Christ, on the basis of mutual respect and free co-operation.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this corporation shall be the Ecclesiastical Society for the Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Christian Churches, Inc., a/k/a Connecticut Fellowship, a/k/a The Fellowship.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purposes for which said Corporation is formed are:

1. To continue the historic fellowship and promote the work and well-being of Connecticut Congregational Churches, that is, those churches which follow the Congregational polity, the system of church organization which recognizes the equal rights of all believers, the complete independence and autonomy of the local church, and the association of the churches through voluntary organizations devised for fellowship and co-operation, but without ecclesiastical authority.
2. To co-operate with, assist and carry out the purposes of the Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Christian Churches.
3. To perform as deemed necessary or desirable, all functions customarily performed by Associations or State Conferences of Congregational Churches, and/or corporations associated therewith for the purpose of holding, administering or managing real or personal property.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

After the time of the organization meeting of this corporation, its members shall be those churches or individuals who are members of the Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Christian Churches.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

1. The elected officers of this Corporation shall be: a President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, an Executive Secretary, a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, a Treasurer, an Assistant Treasurer, and such other officers as may be provided for in the By-Laws. These elected officers of this Corporation will be the same as the Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Second Assistant Moderator, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary of the Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Christian Churches. This Corporation shall have a Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer who will be different from those of said Fellowship.
2. The officers and Board of Trustees designated in this Article IV shall be elected by the incorporators at the organizational meeting of the Corporation to serve until the Annual Meeting in May, 1965, and until their successors are elected and qualified. The terms of office of such officers and trustees, beginning with the Annual Meeting in May, 1965, shall be in accordance with the provisions of this Article. Terms served by the Officers and Trustees of the Corporation in such positions before the Annual Meeting held in May, 1965, shall not be counted in determining their eligibility for re-election.

(a) The President shall be elected for a term of one year, and shall not be eligible for re-election for at least a two-year period. He shall preside at all meetings of the Corporation and Board of Trustees. He should work in close co-operation with the Board of Trustees, counseling with it as to time and place of all trustees and Membership Meetings. Upon the conclusion of his year as President, he shall become, ex-officio, a member of the Board of Trustees for one year.

(b) The First Vice-President shall be elected for one year, and shall preside at any meeting of the Corporation or the Board of Trustees when the President is absent or shall have requested the First Vice-President to preside. In the event of a vacancy to the office of the President, the First Vice-President shall serve as President and fulfill all the duties of that office until a new President is elected at the next Annual Meeting.

(c) The Second Vice-President shall be elected for one year, and shall preside at any meeting of the Membership of Board of Trustees in the absence of the President or First Vice-President.

(d) The Secretary shall be elected for a term of three years and shall keep a full and accurate record of the proceedings of Membership Meetings and Meetings of the Board of Trustees. He shall keep a record of the membership and attendance and receive official communications, send notices, and take care of all correspondence as directed by the Membership or the Board of Trustees.

(e) The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of three years and shall be the custodian of the funds of the Corporation. He shall receive all contributions and disburse funds under the direction of the Board of Trustees to which he shall report upon request, and of the Membership of the Corporation to which he shall report at its Annual Meeting. The Board of Trustees shall require a sufficient bond to be posted by the Treasurer and shall require that his books be annually audited.

(f) An Executive Secretary shall be elected by the Members for a term of three years. The Executive Secretary shall represent the Corporation in the churches of the Membership of the Corporation, and elsewhere, as directed by the Board of Trustees. He shall work in close co-operation with the Board of Trustees. At each Board of Trustees Meeting, he shall give a report of his activities since the previous meeting, and make recommendations of projects to be considered.

3. The officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Corporation.

4. The composition of the Board of Trustees shall be the same as the Executive Committee of the Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Christian Churches.

(a) The Board of Trustees shall meet at the call of the President, or at the call of the Executive Secretary with approval of the President, or at the call of any five Members of the Board of Trustees.

(b) The Board of Trustees shall act for the membership between its meetings but the Board's actions shall be subject to ratification and review by the Membership. Minutes of the actions of the Board of Trustees shall be kept and presented to the membership for ratification and review at the next regular meeting, or at a special meeting called prior to the next regular meeting.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

1. The Annual Meeting of this Corporation shall be held in May of each year, the exact time and place to be fixed by the Board of Trustees unless otherwise ordered by the Membership. Announcement of such meetings shall be made by written notice mailed to each member church at least thirty days in advance.

2. Special meetings of the Members shall be convened upon the call of the Board of Trustees, or when three member churches request such a meeting. Announcement of such Special Meetings shall be made by written notice mailed to each member church at least thirty days in advance.

3. For business other than amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws, a quorum shall consist of the DELEGATES present representing ten per cent of the churches holding membership in the Corporation.

ARTICLE VI – BY-LAWS

The members of the Corporation may from time to time, make, alter, amend, or repeal By-Laws consistent with, and to carry out but not augment, the purposes and functions set forth herein.

ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS

At any duly called and held meeting of the Membership, if a majority of the members of the Corporation are represented by delegates present at such meeting, this Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by the two-thirds vote of the member churches represented at such meeting through their delegates, provided notice of the meeting containing full statement of the action proposed to be taken at such meeting is mailed to each member church at least thirty days before such meeting.

BY-LAWS

I – VOTING

1. In all matters submitted to the Membership for consideration, voting representation shall be determined on the following basis: a member church shall be entitled to one voting DELEGATE for every twenty-five members, or part thereof, up to one hundred members and thereafter, one DELEGATE for each additional one hundred members, or part thereof, with a maximum of twelve DELEGATES from any member church.

2. Any other church, or individual, interested in this Corporation may attend any meeting without vote.

II – TERMS OF OFFICE

The terms of office for all the officers of the Corporation shall begin immediately following the meeting at which they are elected, and shall continue for one year or until their successors take office, provided, however, that the officers elected at the organization meeting of the incorporators shall take office immediately upon their election.

III – BOARD OF TRUSTEES & COMMITTEES

1. The Board of Trustees may make rules for its own guidance not inconsistent with the Constitution and these By-Laws. Due notice having been given to all members of the Board of Trustees, seven shall constitute a quorum at any meeting.

(a) The Board of Trustees shall transact such business as it may deem to be in the interests of the Corporation. It shall not contravene or exceed the authorization implied, inferred or explicit in the acts and votes of the Membership itself. In the intervals between meetings of the Membership, it shall represent that body in all matters not otherwise provided for, but shall in no case exceed the prerogatives of the Membership itself.

(b) The Board of Trustees shall have authority to contract for all necessary expenditures for carrying out policies authorized under the Certificate of Incorporation and Constitution or authorized by the members, and to approve claims therefore, but not to an extent beyond what the finances of the Corporation as certified by the Treasurer, will permit. It shall make a full report of all its doings, the consideration of which shall be part of the order of business at the next regular meeting of the Membership.

(c) The Board of Trustees may fill any vacancy occurring in its own number, or in any committee or office, in the interval between meetings of the Membership; the person so appointed to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

(d) The Board of Trustees shall appoint any committee or commission ordered by the Membership and not otherwise appointed.

(e) The Board of Trustees shall serve as the Business Committee for the meetings of the Membership. It may appoint other committees to deal with phases of work not covered by other agencies, as the need arises.

2. A Nominating Committee consisting of five members, shall be elected by the Incorporators at the Organization meeting, and thereafter at each Annual Meeting after nominations from the floor. The Committee shall prepare nominations for officers to be voted upon at the next Annual Meeting. The Committee's nominations shall be transmitted to the Secretary of the Corporation who shall transmit such list of nominees to all member churches and individual members at least thirty days prior to the Annual Meeting. In addition to any nominations so made, nominations for any elective office may be made from the floor of the meeting. The President shall in every instance call for such nominations from the floor.

3. A seven member Budget and Investments Committee interlocking the Ecclesiastical Society and the Fellowship for which it is formed, shall include the two Fellowship Treasurers and the two Ecclesiastical Society Treasurers, having its three other members appointed by the Board of Trustees, one of whom shall be a representative of the Fishers Island Committee. This Committee shall elect its own chairman, it being the duty of this Committee to oversee both the day-to-day financial operations of the Fellowship, including the preparation of complete budgets, oversight of fundraising efforts, and monitoring expenditures, as well as to oversee and steward the various long-term financial holdings and instruments of the Fellowship's Ecclesiastical Society.

IV – ELIGIBILITY

Any member in good standing of any church which is a member of this Corporation or any individual member of this Corporation shall be eligible to hold office or to be a member of any committee.

V – FINANCES

The expenses of the Corporation shall be met by voluntary contributions solicited from churches and individuals in response to recommendations from the Membership of the Board of Trustees, and also from such receipts as may come to the Corporation at its meetings, or through special gifts.

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be from May 1 through April 30 of each year.

VI – INCORPORATORS

The incorporators for this Corporation, following its organization meeting shall be members of the Board of Trustees as that Board shall from time to time be constituted.

VII – STANDING RULES

Standing Rules for the Corporation may be adopted from time to time by a two-thirds vote of the Delegates present and voting at any meeting of the Membership. Meetings shall be conducted in a Christian Spirit according to generally accepted rules of parliamentary procedure.

VIII – ADDITIONAL OFFICERS

An Assistant Treasurer shall be elected for a term of three years, upon request of the Treasurer or Board of Trustees. He shall assume any or all of the duties of the Treasurer as outlined in Article IV, Section 2 (e) of the Constitution of this Corporation. The Board of Trustees may require him to post a sufficient Bond if and when he is assuming duties.

An Assistant Secretary shall be elected for a term of three years. Upon request of the Secretary or the Board of Trustees, he shall assume any or all of the duties of the Secretary as outlined in Article IV, Section 5 (d) of the Constitution of the Corporation.

As adopted by vote of the membership
October 22, 2006