

The By-Laws
Of the
Orthodox Congregational Church
Of
Mansfield, Massachusetts
A United Church of Christ Congregation

Originally Adopted: January 30, 1977
Latest Revision Adopted: Annual Meeting 2014

17 West Street
Mansfield, MA 02048

508-339-4793

Table of Contents

PREAMBLE	3
ARTICLE 1	NAME	3
ARTICLE 2	COVENANT	3
ARTICLE 3	CHARACTER	3
3.1	POLITY	3
3.2	DOCTRINE	3
ARTICLE 4	MEMBERSHIP	4
4.1	QUALIFICATIONS.....	4
4.2	DUTIES.....	4
4.3	RIGHTS.....	4
4.4	TERMINATION	4
ARTICLE 5	ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH	5
5.1	STANDARDS.....	5
5.2	CHURCH COUNCIL.....	6
5.3	PASTOR	6
5.4	OFFICERS.....	7
5.5	ADMINISTRATION	7
5.6	CORE MINISTRIES.....	8
ARTICLE 6	CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS	12
ARTICLE 7	AMENDMENTS	12
ARTICLE 8	DEFINITIONS	13
ARTICLE 9	DOCUMENTS	13
ARTICLE 10	DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH	13

PREAMBLE

This congregation¹ takes as its mission statement: To be and become the hands and heart of Jesus Christ – reaching out with compassion and love. To that end we are organized as a Discipleship Church with its members², Core Ministries³ and Discipleship Groups⁴ dedicated to serving God.

Article 1 NAME

The name of this Church⁵ is the Orthodox Congregational Church of Mansfield, Massachusetts (OCCM). The OCCM may be referred to as the Congregational Church of Mansfield in general communications such as press releases and newsletters.

Article 2 COVENANT

The covenant by which the OCCM exists as a distinct body, and which every member accepts, is as follows:

We confess our faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, and make Him our example, and take for our rule of life His words: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

We covenant with God and one another to give ourselves unreservedly to His service and take this to be our Church. Ever mindful of the welfare of our fellow members, we promise that, so far as able, we will attend the services of this Church, observe its sacraments, share in its work, support its benevolences, and endeavor to make it a faithful body of Christians.

Article 3 CHARACTER

3.1 POLITY

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Congregational Churches of the United Church of Christ, and it is in fellowship with all Churches which acknowledge Jesus the Christ to be their divine Redeemer and Lord.

3.2 DOCTRINE

This Church receives the Scriptures as its guide in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in accord with the STATEMENT OF FAITH of the United Church of Christ:

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

Article 4 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 QUALIFICATIONS

The membership of this Church shall consist of the present members of the OCCM, and of such persons as have been baptized and confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord, and whom:

- 4.1.1 After consideration by the Deacons or the Pastor as to their Christian experience and Congregational traditions, and if coming from other churches as to their letters of transfer and recommendations or satisfactory substitutes;
- 4.1.2 After announcement of intention by prospective members at a previous Sunday morning service of worship;
- 4.1.3 Enter into the Covenant, subscribe to the By-Laws of the Church, sign the Membership Book, and are formally received into this fellowship at any Sunday morning service of worship.

4.2 DUTIES

Members should pledge themselves to be faithful in all the spiritual duties essential to the Christian life, to attend habitually the services of this Church, to give regularly to its support and its charities, and to share in its work.

4.3 RIGHTS

Members as are in full and regular standing may act and vote in the transactions of the Church.

4.4 TERMINATION

- 4.4.1 Common sense and Christian charity will be exercised by the Deacons in the judgment of each case.
- 4.4.2 Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of transfer to any other church is entitled to receive it upon written request;
- 4.4.3 If a member desires to join a religious body with which this Church is not in fellowship, or which would not receive its letter, the Deacons may, at the member's request, issue a certificate of good standing and terminate membership;
- 4.4.4 If a member in good standing requests to be released from covenant obligations binding members to this Church, such request may be granted and the person's membership terminated after conversation with the Pastor and/or Deacons;
- 4.4.5 The Deacons may remove from membership the name of a person who has been a non-resident or a non-active member only after written request to that person by the Deacons asking that member's intent. If after a period of one year all attempts to locate an individual have failed, the Deacons may vote to remove that individual's name from membership;
- 4.4.6 The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles, usages and covenant of this Church.

Article 5 ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

The organization of this Church consists of a Church Council, Officers, Administration, and Core Ministries in combination with their associated Discipleship Groups.

5.1 STANDARDS

- 5.1.1 The Moderator, Treasurer, Clerk, Pastor, and Deacons will be members;
- 5.1.2 All Officers⁶, the Pastor, and Core Ministry Leaders will provide a written annual report;
- 5.1.3 Officers and Core Ministry Leaders are elected by annual meeting. Vacancies that arise between annual meetings will be appointed by Church Council;
- 5.1.4 Administration personnel will be appointed by Church Council;
- 5.1.5 Core Ministry Leaders serve as coordinators and as communication conduits to the Church Council;
- 5.1.6 Core Ministry Leaders are responsible for recruiting individuals in order to provide adequate execution of the ministries' objectives. Core Ministry Leaders should seek individuals who have particular gifts or 'calling' for to a ministry. Core Ministry Leaders will maintain:
 - 5.1.6.1 A list of active group participants;
 - 5.1.6.2 A document outlining ministry operations;
- 5.1.7 Discipleship Groups wishing to be recognized by the Church should evaluate its objectives in respect to the Church's Preamble and then present their wishes to the appropriate Core Ministry Leader. Once accepted, the Core Ministry Leader will maintain a profile and status for each Discipleship Group within that Core Ministry, and provide guidance, serve as a primary resource, and ensure that Discipleship Group's activities are aligned with the congregations' goals;
- 5.1.8 Unless otherwise noted, meetings for all individual Core Ministries or Discipleship Groups will be at the discretion of the group. It is

- recommended that Core Ministries consider meeting monthly;
- 5.1.9 Unless otherwise noted, the number of members in any given Core Ministry or Discipleship Group is at the discretion of the group. Core Ministries should consider sufficient personnel to provide consistent operations through annual transitions.

5.2 CHURCH COUNCIL

- 5.2.1 Church Council membership is composed of the Pastor, Officers and Core Ministry Leaders with the Moderator as its leader. All individuals in the congregation are welcome to attend and participate in ex-officio⁴ status at Church Council meetings. The Church Council shall:
- 5.2.1.1 Serve as the communication center for all Ministries of the Church;
 - 5.2.1.2 Review approved and existing initiatives, and recommend long range planning initiatives to the congregation;
 - 5.2.1.3 Approve all Memorial Funds with consideration of recommendations of the Core Ministry;
 - 5.2.1.4 Serve as the nominating body for the Church, and present a slate of Officers and Core Ministry Leaders for consideration at the Annual Meeting;
 - 5.2.1.5 Serve as a resource to Core Ministry Leaders in their membership recruiting efforts;
 - 5.2.1.6 Appoint delegates to represent the Church at Conference meetings and similar gatherings;
 - 5.2.1.7 Take action, upon consideration of recommendations from Core Ministries, concerning all Church staff employment;
 - 5.2.1.8 Review, with the Deacons and monitored by the Parish Relations Team, the Pastor's performance;
 - 5.2.1.9 Review, with the Pastor and Trustees and monitored by the Parish Relations Team, the church employees' performance;
 - 5.2.1.10 Review, with the Pastor and Music Core Ministry and monitored by the Parish Relations Team, music employees' performance;
 - 5.2.1.11 Participate, with the Deacons and monitored by the Parish Relations Team, in the selection process which may include a search committee for the purpose of finding a replacement Pastor.

5.3 PASTOR

The Pastor shall:

- 5.3.1 Have charge of the spiritual welfare of the congregation, preach the WORD, administer the sacraments, and assume responsibility for stated services of public worship;
- 5.3.2 Be an ex-officio⁷ member of all Ministries;
- 5.3.3 Review, with the Church Council and monitored by the Parish Relations Team, the church employees' performance;
- 5.3.4 Appoint delegates to represent the Church at Conference meetings and similar gatherings to which the Church Council has not already appointed delegates.

5.4 OFFICERS

5.4.1 Moderator. The Moderator shall:

- 5.4.1.1 Preside over all called Church meetings, regulate proceedings, decide questions of order, and make public declaration of all votes;
- 5.4.1.2 Serve as Church Council Leader and serve as a point of contact other than the Pastor;
- 5.4.1.3 Serve as a spokesperson for the Church. The Moderator may represent the Church at functions which the Pastor is unable to attend or where lay representation is appropriate.

5.4.2 Clerk. The Clerk shall:

- 5.4.2.1 Keep a complete record of the transactions at all business meetings of the Church. The record shall be submitted for approval at the next business meeting;
- 5.4.2.2 Secure the signatures of members in the membership book, listing their names and dates of admission, transfer, death, and baptism;
- 5.4.2.3 Issue letters of transfer, termination of membership, and recommendation;
- 5.4.2.4 Preserve on file all official communications and written reports;
- 5.4.2.5 Give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as required by these By-Laws.

5.4.3 Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. The Treasurer and/or the Assistant Treasurer shall:

- 5.4.3.1 Receive, hold and disburse all church money as authorized by the Trustees and/or Church Counsel, and keep suitable books of accounts;
- 5.4.3.2 Furnish a bond, for which the Church shall bear the cost, and keep the Church funds in such banking institutions as shall be approved by the Operations Ministry. All checks shall be drawn in the name of the Church;
- 5.4.3.3 Deposit trust, endowment, and permanent funds of the Church in banking institutions approved by the Operations Ministry. All securities shall be in the charge and custody of the Treasurer, be placed for safekeeping in such safe deposit box as approved by the Operations Ministry;
- 5.4.3.4 Submit reports as may be required by the Operations Ministry;
- 5.4.3.5 Expend such funds as are necessary for the proper operation of the Church between the end of the fiscal year⁸ and the Annual Church Meeting;
- 5.4.3.6 Be a member ex-officio of the Operations Ministry.

5.5 ADMINISTRATION

5.5.1 Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary and/or the Assistant Financial Secretary shall:

- 5.5.1.1 Keep records of monies received against pledges or otherwise for credit to individual accounts, and shall render quarterly

reports if requested;
5.5.1.2 Provide information requested by the Operations Ministry in its fund raising efforts.

5.5.2 Collectors (minimum of 2 persons). The Collectors shall:

5.5.2.1 Assist the Treasurer and Financial Secretary by collecting all offerings, tallying loose offerings and amounts for credit to numbered accounts or individual names, depositing such monies promptly as directed by the Treasurer, and reporting the tallies to the Financial Secretary in timely fashion.

5.5.3 Auditor. The Auditor shall:

5.5.3.1 Examine all the accounts of the Treasurer after the close of the fiscal year, and report to the congregation at the Annual Meeting as to the condition of these accounts.

5.6 CORE MINISTRIES

5.6.1 The Care of the Congregation and Worship Ministry is the umbrella ministry under which the spiritual and physical needs of the congregation are met and under which worship services are planned and carried out. The Deacon Chairperson leads this Ministry. Deacons serve a flexible two-to-five year term. The Deacons shall:

5.6.1.1 Make arrangements, in coordination with the Parish Relations Team, so that the responsibilities of the Pastor are maintained in the event of the Pastor's absence, vacancy or incapacitation;

5.6.1.2 Participate, with the Church Council and monitored by the Parish Relations Team, in the selection process for the purpose of finding a replacement Pastor. The actual call of the Pastor will be voted by the members at a special business meeting called for that purpose;

5.6.1.3 In the event that the position of Pastor is vacant, or during the incapacity of the Pastor, the Deacon Chairperson shall assume the responsibilities of the Pastor;

5.6.1.4 Review, as monitored by the Parish Relations Team, the Pastor's performance and make recommendation to the Church Counsel concerning employment;

5.6.1.5 Assist in the administration of the sacraments;

5.6.1.6 Administer the reception, continuation and termination of members, in cooperation with the Pastor;

5.6.1.7 Plan, organize and coordinate Sunday worship services and special services in cooperation with the Pastor, organist and choir director;

5.6.1.8 Coordinate the care for the spiritual and physical needs of the congregation, including calling upon the Treasurer for any funds held for these purposes.

- 5.6.2 The Operations Ministry is the umbrella ministry under which the Church property is managed. The Head Trustee leads this Ministry. The Trustees shall:
- 5.6.2.1 Not buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the Church, or undertake any extensive alterations or enlargements, or remodel or rebuild any of the Church buildings, except in accordance with specific vote of the Church authorizing such action;
 - 5.6.2.2 Maintain the organ including minor repairs thereto;
 - 5.6.2.3 Maintain the Church's physical property including any alterations, minor and emergency repairs not provided for in the annual budget voted by the Church;
 - 5.6.2.4 Review, as monitored by the Parish Relations Team, office administration and physical plant employee' performance and make recommendation to the Church Counsel concerning employment;
 - 5.6.2.5 Approve uses of the Church buildings and maintain oversight of groups that use the physical properties of the Church;
 - 5.6.2.6 Oversee stewardship efforts;
 - 5.6.2.7 Have authority to pay monies under its control and to direct the Treasurer as to payment of the same;
 - 5.6.2.8 Maintain an itemized inventory of the cost or value of all the Church's tangible property, which shall be made available to the Church Counsel on request;
 - 5.6.2.9 Maintain over-sight of the Church's day-to-day finances and investment portfolio;
 - 5.6.2.10 Request annual expenditures of Church funds and a statement of needs for the following year from all Officers and Core Ministry Leaders;
 - 5.6.2.11 Present a budget showing in detail the anticipated income and appropriations which it recommends for the ensuing year at the Annual Meeting;
 - 5.6.2.12 Monitor the financial status of the Church and take necessary actions to provide a balanced budget;
 - 5.6.2.13 Maintain proper and adequate insurance on the physical property of the Church.
- 5.6.3 The Education Ministry is the umbrella ministry under which Christian religious education for the congregation is taught and Church history records are maintained. The Education Leader leads this Ministry. The Education Ministry shall:
- 5.6.3.1 Manage children's worship activities in conjunction with the Pastor, as well as communicate with parents of the students;
 - 5.6.3.2 Manage children's Christian education including recruiting teachers and developing curriculum in conjunction with the Pastor;
 - 5.6.3.3 Manage adult Christian education in conjunction with the Pastor;
 - 5.6.3.4 Ensure the maintenance of Church history records for future generations;

5.6.3.5 Perform periodic review of the “Safe Church Policy” and present recommendations to the Church Council as needed.

5.6.4 The Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry is the umbrella ministry under which relationships among the members of the congregation, and between the congregation and the outside community, are built and strengthened. The Fellowship & Hospitality Leader leads this Ministry. The Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry shall:

5.6.4.1 Oversee Discipleship Groups which provide opportunities for relationship building within the congregation and between the congregation and the wider community. Such Discipleship Groups may include, but are not limited to: Men’s Fellowship, Collations after Funerals, May Tea, Veterans Luncheon, Retreats and Outings, Progressive Dinner, Spaghetti dinner and auction, Coffee Hour, Christmas Fair, Prayer Shawl, Friends Ministry, Cider and Carols, and Rally Day.

5.6.5 The Missions Ministry is the umbrella ministry under which the outreach efforts of the congregation are defined and administered. The Missions Leader leads this Ministry. The Missions Ministry shall:

5.6.5.1 Review all requests for aid and support to groups outside the congregation;

5.6.5.2 Seek special collections associated with UCC benevolences and targeted outreach;

5.6.5.3 Manage an annual budget including distributions to external organizations and Discipleship Groups;

5.6.5.4 Be the liaison with Our Daily Bread-Friends Caring and Sharing Food Pantry, which shall operate according to the following mission statement:

“Our mission is to serve the people of Mansfield who need food relief, providing food items at no cost to recipients. We are motivated by our Christian love and will make our interaction with recipients both positive and, if possible, personal. We are a clearinghouse for organized community giving in support of food relief and serve as the community vehicle for that food relief. We make information available about area resources which can lead to self-sufficiency for food recipients.”

All monies collected and disbursed by Our Daily Bread Food Pantry will be kept in accounts separate from the accounts of the church. The Food Pantry Treasurer, a member of the Steering Committee, shall be responsible for holding and disbursing such monies and keeping auditable books of accounts. The Food Pantry Treasurer shall furnish a bond, which cost shall be borne by the Food Pantry. The Food Pantry Treasurer shall report monthly to the Operations Ministry regarding the financial position of the Food Pantry.

The Operations Ministry, or their appointed representatives, shall review the financial records of the Food Pantry. The Food Pantry Steering Committee shall submit a written report at each Annual Meeting of the Church.

- 5.6.6 The Parish Relations Team is the umbrella ministry under which Church communications are developed. The Parish Relations Team Facilitator leads this Ministry. The Parish Relations Team Facilitator serves a three-year term. The Parish Relations Team is comprised of the Facilitator, the Pastor, and a minimum of three additional members. Parish Relations Team members serve two-year terms. The Parish Relations Team shall:
- 5.6.6.1 Recognize that what joins and separates us from each other is how we communicate with one another. It is natural for there to be differences in perspectives as we are all unique children of God, walking on our own faith paths. When we speak with one another, it is a point where our faith paths meet.
 - 5.6.6.2 Encourage the use of the “Suggested Covenantal Dialogue Guidelines” in all Church communications. Promote, offer training, and foster healthy communication practices throughout the congregation;
 - 5.6.6.3 Support the Pastor, the Pastor’s family and the congregation;
 - 5.6.6.4 Provide a communication link between the Pastor and congregation, helping the Pastor and the congregation deal with conflict;
 - 5.6.6.5 Counsel with the Pastor regarding professional development;
 - 5.6.6.6 Assist the Deacons and Church Council in Pastoral transition;
 - 5.6.6.7 Coordinate annual evaluations of Church programs;
 - 5.6.6.8 Monitor annual evaluations of Church employees;
 - 5.6.6.9 Monitor annual evaluations of the Pastor.
- 5.6.7 The Music Ministry is the umbrella ministry under which music is incorporated into the life of the Church. The Music Leader leads this Ministry. The Music Ministry shall:
- 5.6.7.1 In cooperation with the Pastor and Deacons, plan music for worship services;
 - 5.6.7.2 Review, as monitored by the Parish Relations Team, music employees’ performance and make recommendations to the Church Counsel concerning employment;
 - 5.6.7.3 Make recommendations to the Church Counsel concerning personnel candidates for the music program;
 - 5.6.7.4 Oversee maintenance of music-related equipment;
 - 5.6.7.5 Choose appropriate uses of the Lemley fund to support music activities.

Article 6 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

In the absence of the Moderator, meetings can be called to order by an Officer of the Church.

	SPECIAL BUSINESS	ANNUAL	WORSHIP
PURPOSE	To act on any business not specified elsewhere.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive and act upon annual reports; • To elect Officers and Ministry Leaders; • To consider the budget and to appropriate required funds; and • To consider any other article proposed in the warrant. 	To Praise and worship God.
METHOD OF CALL	<p>By reading the Call during two regular worship services beginning at least 14 days prior to meeting; AND</p> <p>By posting the Call near principle entrance; AND</p> <p>By postal and/or electronic mailing at least 10 days prior to meeting.</p>	<p>By reading the Call during two regular worship services beginning at least 14 days prior to meeting; AND</p> <p>By posting the Call near principle entrance; AND</p> <p>By postal and/or electronic mailing at least 10 days prior to meeting.</p>	Regular worship services will be posted outside the church and on electronic posting sites.
FORM OF CALL	The Call shall state the general and specific business which may properly come before it, the need for the meeting, and any proposed actions by the Congregation.	The Call shall state the general and specific business which may properly come before it, the need for the meeting, and any proposed actions by the Congregation.	Occasional religious meetings may be appointed at the Pastor's discretion.
AUTHORITY TO CALL	<p>The Church Council, or The Care of the Congregation and Worship Ministry, or the Operations Ministry; OR</p> <p>Any fifteen (15) members of the Church by petition to the Clerk.</p>	The Church Council	Pastor, or Care of the Congregation and Worship Ministry
QUORUM	A quorum shall be defined as thirty two (32) members present.	A quorum shall be defined as thirty two (32) members present.	

Article 7 AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) votes of the members present and voting at any Annual Meeting of the Church, or at a special business meeting called for that purpose, the proposed amendment being inserted in the call; but no change shall be made in

Articles entitled COVENANT and CHARACTER except at an Annual Meeting, said proposed change having been laid before the Church in writing at a special business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action, and read from the pulpit on the Sunday next preceding such proposal.

Article 8 DEFINITIONS

- 8.1 ¹ Congregation: The members and those who participate in the life of the Church
- 8.2 ² Members: See Article 4
- 8.3 ³ Core Ministries: Permanent groups vital to the operation and mission of this Church
- 8.4 ⁴ Discipleship Groups: Non-permanent groups of specific focus which support the missions of the Core Ministries
- 8.5 ⁵ Church: The organizational entity consisting of the members and physical properties of OCCM
- 8.6 ⁶ Church: See Section 5.4
- 8.7 ⁷ Ex-Officio: A person who may participate in the business discussions of a meeting, but shall not have a vote
- 8.8 ⁸ Fiscal Year: January 1st to December 31st

Article 9 DOCUMENTS

The members consider the following documents as policy definitions and operation manuals, depending on their nature. These documents have been reviewed, and any changes will be approved by the Church Council and adopted by the members through a vote. These By-Laws will prevail in the event of any conflict between the By-Laws and its amendments. The following documents are available at the Church office:

- 9.1 Our Daily Bread Operational Policy
- 9.2 Personnel Manual
- 9.3 Safe Church Policy
- 9.4 Suggested Covenantal Dialogue Guidelines
- 9.5 Open and Affirming Policy

Article 10 DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH

In the event of a vote of dissolution at a duly called Meeting, the members shall nominate from the floor and elect a Trustee Committee of seven members to serve as Administrator. The Committee shall be authorized to file for dissolution under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 180 Section 11 for an orderly dissolution. The Committee shall, with guidance and consultation with the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, provide for the allocation of the assets and payment of liabilities of said Church. The members shall instruct the Trustee Committee to allocate the assets to other churches or charitable organizations that are organized and operated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes provided that Church liabilities are accounted for per a Court Order or by vote of the congregation.

No Officer, member, or employee shall receive any pecuniary profit or benefit from the dissolution of said Church.

The Trustee Committee shall provide to the members a listing of said religious or charitable organizations to be voted upon. The Trustee Committee shall provide to the members a detailed list of assets, liabilities and the allocation thereof.

In the absence of an agreement among the members of the Committee, the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts shall determine under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 180, Section 11 or other applicable section(s) therein and Amendments thereto.