
Article I Name

This Congregation, its staff, and its property shall be called the North Haven Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Inc. (NHCC). Herein, the voting membership shall be called “the Congregation,” and the fellowship and/or the property shall be called “the Church.”

Article II Mission

Acknowledging Jesus Christ as its head, the mission of the Church is to bind together followers of Jesus Christ in the worship of God, in the nurture of Christian discipleship, and in compassionate service to our community and beyond.

Article III Polity

A The Church is congregational in its polity. The governance of the Church is vested in the Congregation, which exercises the right of control in all its affairs. Through these Bylaws and other actions, the Congregation may delegate its authority between meetings of the Congregation to the Ministry Leadership Board (the Board). Notwithstanding, only the Congregation can:

- 1) establish ordained ministerial positions,
- 2) call or dismiss an ordained Minister,
- 3) adopt the budget,
- 4) acquire or sell real estate,
- 5) approve a mortgage or other indebtedness,
- 6) amend the Bylaws,
- 7) dissolve the corporation.

B The Church is associated with the United Church of Christ (UCC) through the Connecticut Conference. The Church cooperates in the work of the UCC and its regional associations and is represented in its councils.

Article IV Doctrine, Worship, Sacraments

A The Church recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule for faith and practice and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true witness to faith. Members have the undisturbed right to follow the Scriptures according to the dictates of their own conscience, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

B The faith commonly held in the Church is expressed in the historic creeds of Christianity, most particularly the Apostles’ Creed, and the Statement(s) of Faith of the United Church of Christ.

C Public services of divine worship shall be held each Sunday and at other times as the Board and/or the Minister may determine.

D The Congregation observes two sacraments, Baptism and Communion. Baptism is administered according to procedures established by the Board in consultation with the Minister. The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated at least once each month at a Sunday service and at other times as the Board and/or the Minister may determine. All confessing Christians are welcome at the Lord’s Table.

1 E Weddings, funerals, and other special services may be arranged with the Minister under
2 policies established by the Board.
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4 **Article V Membership**

5 A Qualification and Admission

6 Membership in the Congregation consists of baptized persons who publicly confess Jesus Christ
7 as Lord and express a desire to join the Congregation. Persons unite with this Congregation
8 upon confession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or by transfer from another church. Persons are
9 received as members of the Congregation regardless of race, nationality, ethnic background, or
10 sexual orientation.
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12 B Membership Responsibility

13 Members are expected to be faithful to the duties essential to a Christian life and to contribute to
14 the vitality of the Congregation through:

- 15 1) regular worship, residence and health permitting;
- 16 2) sharing in its Mission Teams and its organized work;
- 17 3) support for each other; and
- 18 4) financial support.
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20 C Members are expected to be aware of and live in conformity with the policies adopted by the
21 Congregation and/or the Board.
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23 D Transfer, Termination, and Revision of Membership

- 24 1) The Church will issue a letter of transfer to a member in good and regular standing who
25 wishes to unite with another church. Requests for transfer should be made to the Clerk.
- 26 2) A member may terminate membership in the Congregation by giving written notification
27 to the Clerk.
- 28 3) Upon recommendation of the Board, members who have not participated in the vitality of
29 the Congregation for two years, or whose address has been unknown for two years, may
30 be removed from the active membership roll and be considered inactive. If, after an
31 additional year, such persons do not seek reinstatement, their membership may be
32 terminated.
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34 E Persons whose membership has terminated either by request or action of the Board may
35 request reinstatement by means of a letter to the Clerk.
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37 **Article VI Officers**

38 A Moderator

39 The Moderator is elected by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting for a one-year term and
40 may not serve more than three consecutive terms.

- 41 1) The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the Congregation and the Board.
42 Unless an item is being decided by a ballot, the Moderator may vote only to resolve a tie
43 vote.
- 44 2) The Moderator shall consult regularly with, advise, and otherwise assist the Minister. As
45 necessary, the Moderator shall convey special concerns and needs of the Minister to the
46 Board and the Congregation.

- 1 3) The Moderator shall support and encourage each Board member to work harmoniously to
2 accomplish the Ministry and Mission Plan of the Congregation.
- 3 4) Annually, the Moderator shall appoint a nominating committee to secure nominees for
4 vacant officer and at-large Board seats. The nominating committee shall consist of not
5 fewer than three Congregation members who are not current members of the Board,
6 except that one retiring Board member may serve on the committee.
- 7 5) If the Moderator is unable to attend a meeting of the Congregation or of the Board, the
8 Moderator shall appoint one of the at-large members of the Board to serve as acting
9 moderator *pro tem*. In the event that the Moderator resigns or is incapacitated, the Clerk
10 shall oversee the process of confirming and installing a new Moderator.

11 B Clerk

12 The Clerk shall be elected by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting for a one-year term and
13 may not serve more than three consecutive terms.

- 14 1) The Clerk shall record and maintain minutes of all meetings of the Congregation and the
15 Board. These minutes shall be made available to the Congregation in a timely manner
16 following each meeting.
- 17 2) The Clerk shall give notice of all meetings of the Congregation and of the Board as
18 required by these Bylaws, Article X.
- 19 3) The Clerk shall keep a current roll of members of the Congregation. This record shall
20 include the dates of reception, resignation, or dismissal of members; and the dates of
21 baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and deaths.
- 22 4) Letters of call to an ordained Minister shall be signed by the Clerk after approval by the
23 Board and the Congregation as required.
- 24 5) The Clerk shall conduct all correspondence and perform such other duties as may be
25 assigned to this position by the Board.

26 C Treasurer

27 The Treasurer shall be elected by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting for a one-year term
28 and may be reelected at the will of the Congregation.

- 29 1) The Treasurer shall be responsible for receiving all income to the Church and keeping
30 accurate and timely records of these transactions.
- 31 2) The Treasurer shall be responsible for paying all approved bills, keeping accurate records
32 of the same, and filing required reports with Federal, State, or Church-related
33 organizations. In the event that the Treasurer is not available for bill payment or
34 bookkeeping services, the Board may appoint a person or bookkeeping service to
35 undertake this work. The Treasurer shall receive, review, and report the records of these
36 transactions to the Board.
- 37 3) The Treasurer shall propose an annual operating budget to the Board.
- 38 4) The Treasurer shall submit a written report to the Board at each regular meeting and shall
39 publish an annual financial report prior to the Annual Meeting of the Congregation.
- 40 5) The Treasurer shall be suitably bonded with sufficient surety as determined by the Board.

41 D Financial Agent

42 The Financial Agent shall be elected by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting for a one-year
43 term and may be reelected at the will of the Congregation.

- 1) The Financial Agent shall serve as the business manager of the Congregation.
- 2) The Financial Agent shall sign all agreements and contracts for the Congregation.
- 3) The Financial Agent shall monitor the performance of the endowment in accordance with the Investment Policy of the Congregation, consult regularly with the fund manager, and recommend changes in the Investment Policy to the Board.
- 4) The Financial Agent shall be suitably bonded with sufficient surety as determined by the Board.

ARTICLE VII Ministry Leadership Board

A Purpose and Authority

The Ministry Leadership Board (the Board) provides guidance and oversight for the ministries, activities, and property of the Church. The Board provides guidance, counsel, and support for the Minister. It is responsible to the Congregation and functions only within the authority granted to it by the Congregation.

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B Membership

- 1) The Board consists of the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer, the Financial Agent, five at-large members elected by the Congregation, and the Senior Minister, *ex officio* without vote. Two at-large members shall be elected annually to either a two- or three- year term. At-large members may not serve more than two consecutive terms.
- 2) A vacancy in an elected position of the Board may be filled by the Board until the next annual meeting of the Congregation.
- 3) An officer or at-large member may be removed by the Congregation at any meeting at which such action is announced in the call to the meeting.

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C Duties

- 1) prepare a Ministry and Mission Plan for the Congregation and present it to the Congregation for adoption at the annual meeting;
- 2) prepare, for approval by the Congregation, an annual budget that sustains the Ministry and Mission Plan;
- 3) enter into contracts and conduct business and legal affairs on behalf of the Congregation;
- 4) purchase, sell, transfer, or otherwise dispose of personal property of the Congregation;
- 5) serve as trustees for the real estate and financial assets of the Congregation;
- 6) establish such boards, committees, Mission Teams, or other agencies needed to fulfill the Ministry and Mission Plan and to communicate with, and support, these entities;
- 7) appoint Church officers other than the elected officers specified in Article VI;
- 8) hire non-ordained staff members;
- 9) evaluate the Minister in accordance with Article IX;
- 10) in the event of a ministerial vacancy, nominate a Ministerial Search Committee and present said committee to the Congregation for approval;
- 11) establish policies for the Church and ensure appropriate compliance with such policies;
- 12) establish a Personnel Committee consisting of the Moderator, two at-large members of the Board, and such other non-Board members of the Congregation as may be necessary;
- 13) appoint delegates to represent the Congregation in meetings of the UCC, including its regional instrumentalities, and such other organizations with which the Congregation is

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- 1 affiliated. Delegates are authorized to vote or abstain from voting according to their
2 individual conscience on all matters arising in such organizations;
3 14) perform such other duties required for the well-being of the Congregation and not
4 prohibited to the Board.
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6 D Meetings

7 The Board shall meet at least eight times annually. The time and place shall be fixed by the
8 Moderator. The Congregation shall be informed of all meetings of the Board at least seven days
9 in advance of the meeting. In the event of an emergency requiring immediate action, the
10 Moderator or the Senior Minister may call a meeting without this advance notice. In this event,
11 the Congregation shall be notified of the meeting and its action(s) within seven days following
12 the emergency session. Except for executive sessions in which confidential personal or
13 contractual business is being considered, all meetings of the Board are open to members of the
14 Congregation.
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16 E Quorum

17 Six voting members of the Board, including at least two Officers, constitute a quorum for all of
18 its business. Decisions of the Board shall be determined by a simple majority of those present.
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20 F Prohibitions

- 21 1) The Board shall not buy or sell Church property without authorization of the
22 Congregation.
23 2) The Board shall not hire or dismiss any Ordained Minister without authorization of the
24 Congregation.
25 3) The Board shall not abrogate any recorded decision of the Congregation made in a duly
26 called meeting thereof.
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28 **Article VIII Mission Teams**

29 Except for those duties and activities delegated to the Board, the programs and ministries of the
30 Congregation are carried out by the members and other persons associated with the Congregation
31 through voluntary, self-selecting Mission Teams. These Teams are established through, and
32 recognized by, the Board. Mission Teams are expected to communicate their activities and
33 needs to the Board and the Congregation through occasional reports and other informative
34 means. Mission Teams requiring budget support shall be asked to submit budget requests to the
35 Board as it prepares the annual Ministry and Mission Plan.
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37 **Article IX Ordained Ministers**

38 A Call

- 39 1) The Congregation shall call Ministers to be its pastoral, spiritual, and educational leaders.
40 Ministers also shall share in necessary administration of the Church. Called Ministers
41 shall be ordained and have current standing in the UCC. Upon accepting a call from the
42 Congregation, Ministers shall become a member of the Congregation and a member of
43 the New Haven East Consociation, and shall be duly installed in office by an
44 Ecclesiastical Council.
45 2) A Minister is only called by a two-thirds vote of the Congregation affirming a nomination
46 from the Board.

- 1 3) The relationship between the Congregation and a Minister is formed in a covenant that
2 pledges
3 a) mutual support between the Congregation and the Minister,
4 b) the Minister to execute the goals and objectives of the Congregation, and
5 c) the Congregation to support and compensate the Minister.
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7 A written and signed Call conveys these pledges and commitments and further specifies the
8 terms and conditions under which a Minister serves, and the compensation and other
9 considerations provided by the Congregation.
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11 B In an emergency and in the absence of the Moderator and other Officers, the Minister may
12 act to execute the intentions of the Ministry Leadership Board. Such actions shall be
13 reported at the next meeting of the Board.
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15 C On a schedule established by the Board, but at least biennially, the Board shall evaluate the
16 Minister's performance with reference to the Ministry and Mission Plan and the policies of
17 the Congregation.
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19 D Resignation

- 20 1) A Minister may resign voluntarily by giving a sixty-day notice, in writing, to the Board.
21 2) The Congregation may request a Minister's resignation with the expectation that it will
22 be effective within sixty days. The request for resignation shall be effected only by a two
23 thirds vote of the Congregation at a meeting called by the Board for that purpose. If a
24 Minister loses standing in the UCC, the Call shall be terminated immediately.
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26 E Vacancy

27 When a Ministerial vacancy occurs, the Board shall call a special meeting of the Congregation to
28 approve a Ministerial Search Committee of not fewer than seven members of the Congregation.
29 The Ministerial Search Committee shall recommend a candidate to the Congregation through the
30 Board at a meeting called by the Board for that purpose. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the
31 Congregation shall be required to call a Minister.
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33 **Article X Meetings of the Congregation**

34 A The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

35 B The Annual Meeting of the Congregation shall be held in December or January at a time set
36 by the Board.

37 C The agenda for this Meeting shall include:

- 38 1) approval of the Ministry and Mission Plan submitted by the Board;
39 2) adoption of a budget,
40 3) election of the Officers,
41 4) election of the at-large members of the Board, and
42 5) other appropriate business announced in the call.

43 D Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the Board, or by the Clerk on written
44 petition of fifteen members of the Congregation.

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- 1 E The Clerk shall publish a call and agenda for all meetings of the Congregation seven days
2 before the meeting. If, however, the agenda includes any item requiring a two-thirds vote of
3 the Congregation, the advance notice shall be fourteen days before the meeting.
- 4 F The quorum for all meetings of the Congregation is ten percent of the published
5 Congregation membership as officially reported in its previous annual meeting.
- 6 G Representatives of the United Church of Christ shall be granted voice without vote at all
7 meetings.
- 8 H For each Congregational meeting the Moderator shall appoint a Parliamentarian *pro tem*.
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10 **Article XI Parliamentary Authority**

11 In all matters not covered by these Bylaws and standing rules of the Congregation, this
12 organization shall be governed by the current edition of The American Institute of
13 Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure.

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15 **Article XII Amendments**

16 These Bylaws may be amended at any business meeting of the Congregation for which the
17 required advance call and notice is issued and at which a quorum is present. Amendments shall
18 be proposed by the Board and adoption requires a two-thirds vote of the members of the
19 Congregation present. Unless otherwise specified, the amendment is effective at the
20 adjournment of the meeting at which it is approved.

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22 **Article XIII Dissolution**

- 23 A In the event of a division in the Congregation, that part of the Congregation that remains in
24 the UCC shall retain ownership of the Church and its property.
- 25 B A decision of the Congregation to dissolve the Church or merge with another Church shall be
26 made by a two thirds vote of the Congregation at a duly called meeting of the members.
- 27 C No member, officer, or employee of the Church shall be entitled to share in the distribution
28 of any of the corporate assets upon the dissolution of the Corporation.

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