

*First Church in Marlborough*  
*(Congregational)*  
United Church of Christ  
37 High Street  
Marlborough, Massachusetts 01752



***BY-LAWS***  
**Reissued May 3, 2015**

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## ***NAME, POLITY AND CREED***

### **NAME**

This church was organized in 1666. It was incorporated in 1891 and in 1913 became known as the FIRST CHURCH IN MARLBOROUGH (CONGREGATIONAL). In 1962 it joined The United Church of Christ ("UCC").

### **POLITY AND CREED**

Its polity is Congregational, and its understanding of Christian truth is substantially in accord with the belief of The United Church of Christ of the United States of America as set forth in the Statement adopted by their National Council in the year of our Lord, 1957, as follows:

**FAITH:** "The United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole head, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior. It acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God." In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Reformed Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

**POLITY:** We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul, and the right of private judgment. We bind ourselves together in faith through the Covenant of the Church. We hold to the autonomy of the local church and its independence of all ecclesiastical control. We cherish the fellowship of the churches, united in district, state, and national bodies, for counsel and co-operation in matters of common concern.

**THE WIDER FELLOWSHIP:** While affirming the liberty of our churches, and the validity of our ministry, we hold to the unity and universality of the United Church of Christ, and will unite with all its branches in hearty co-operation; cherish the Christian bond of fellowship with the World Communion of Reformed Churches; and will earnestly seek, so far as in us lies, that the prayer of our Lord for His disciples may be answered, "that they all may be one."

## ***BY-LAWS***

### **ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1: MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA. Any person 18 years of age or older may become a member of First Church through a reaffirmation of their Christian faith after attending pastoral led new member classes. Members can also be received through adult baptism of those previously not baptized or through a transfer of membership from another UCC church or a church in full Communion agreement with the UCC.

Youth, as defined as person(s) under the age of 18 desiring membership shall be become members after completion of the Confirmation class requirements directed by the Pastor or a surrogate appointed by the Pastor.

Section 2: RECEPTION. The reception into actual membership ordinarily shall be upon a Sunday or Sundays agreed to by the Pastor and a majority of the Diaconate. Youth being received into membership shall become members as part of a special Sunday confirmation service lead by the Pastor. Upon new members joining the Church they shall sign and subscribe to its by-laws.

Section 3: DURATION. Membership in First Church in Marlborough, and thus in the Church Universal, is a joy and a responsibility and is an outward sign of each member's vibrant Christian faith. Any changes shall be subject to the following rules:

a) Any active member who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to any church with which this Church is in full Communion is entitled to receive it upon his/her written request. This letter shall be valid as a recommendation for only one year from its date and this restriction shall be stated in the letter.

b) If an active member desires to join a religious body with which this Church is not in fellowship, or which would not receive its letter, the Church may, at his/her request, give him/her a certificate of good standing and terminate his/her membership.

c) If an active member requests to be released from membership, such request may be granted and his/her membership terminated.

d) Any active Church member, who for a period of two years, in spite of kindly approaches, has not communicated with the Church, or contributed to its support, as mutually determined by Pastor, Clerk, Collector, and the Deacons shall have their membership suspended. Such members may re-join the Church at any time, subsequent to the procedures of Article 1 Section 1.

e) Church Discipline shall be administered in accordance with the principles and spirit of the New Testament. Final action shall be taken at a regular meeting of the Church on recommendation of the Diaconate and with the input of the Pastor.

Section 4: RIGHTS. Active members of the church may vote at any meeting held by the Church in its corporate capacity. Only active members of the church, eighteen years of age or older, may vote on disillusion of the church. Only active members of the church, eighteen years of age or older, may be Officers of the Church.

## ARTICLE II - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Section 1: CHURCH OFFICERS, CHURCH COUNCIL AND MINISTRY GROUPS. The core of the church is the congregation. The congregation then participates as Church Officers, on Church Council and the five Ministry Groups. This is a 'Ministry Model' Organization as outlined on page 7.

a) CHURCH OFFICERS. The Officers of the Church shall be: Pastor and Teacher, Members of Trustees, Moderator, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Collector and Assistant Collector. A vacancy of any Church Officer may be filled at any legally called meeting of the Church in its corporate capacity.

b) CHURCH COUNCIL consists of three at-large members, the Moderator, five Ministry Group Facilitators and the Pastor.

c) MINISTRY GROUPS. The five Ministry Groups outlined below each have a facilitator who represents the group at Church Council. The facilitator is a point person for volunteer development and deployment of projects and ministries that fall into their scope. Any congregant wishing to join a ministry group or start a new one should reach out to the facilitator for assistance and guidance.

- i. The PARISH LIFE MINISTRIES GROUP shall consist of those who are called to lead and participate in the Pastoral Care Team (visitation), food related fellowships (coffee hour), whole and small group fellowships, communications (Crier, website), Matchmaking/Nominating, Scholarship, and fund raising ministries. The Parish Life Ministries Group shall be responsible for creating and growing fellowship opportunities as well as community events to open the church to others. The purpose of these activities is to seek ways to foster a caring, friendly fellowship within the life of First Church and to reach out to visitors, newcomers, and members with Faith and Love.

The Parish Life Ministries Facilitator shall represent the group on Church Council.

- ii. The STABILITY MINISTRIES GROUP shall consist of those who are called to lead and participate in Trustees and Pastoral Relations.

The Stability Ministries Facilitator shall represent the group on Church Council.

- iii. The WORSHIP MINISTRIES GROUP shall consist of those who are called to lead and participate in the Diaconate, Audio Visual, Music, Flower, Funeral Hospitality and Bible Study ministries. The Worship Ministries Group shall be responsible for the components of all types of worship and bible study.

The Worship Ministries Facilitator shall represent the group on Church Council.

- iv. The MISSION/OUTREACH MINISTRIES GROUP shall consist of those who are called to create, support or organize outreach and mission projects. These projects and/or

educational opportunities may be global, local or within the church community. Mission and outreach project coordinators shall be responsible for organizing these activities and utilizing the Mission/Outreach Facilitator for any assistance or guidance you may require.

The Mission/Outreach Ministry Facilitator shall represent the group on Church Council.

- v. The SPIRITUAL FORMATION MINISTRIES GROUP shall consist of those called to lead and participate in the Christian Education ministry and the Stewardship Ministry. The Spiritual Formation Team shall be responsible for the organization and maintenance of the Church School, confirmation program, youth programs, adult education programs and shall be responsible for education of the members of the parish on the principles of Christian Stewardship.

The Spiritual Formation Ministry Facilitator shall represent the group on Church Council.

(INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK)



- Diaconate:
  - Lead Welcoming Effort
  - Staff Lay Leadership
  - Support New Members; Baptism; Confirmation Special Services; Deacons Fund
  - Telephone tree
- Audio Visual
- Music (all groups) & Flower
- Funeral Hospitality Team
- Bible Study
- Volunteer Development and Deployment



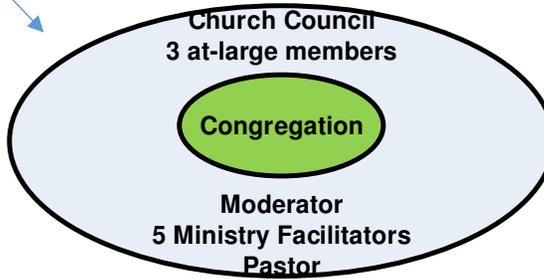
- Our Father's Table
- Food Bank
- Mission Outreach
- Educational opportunities on mission related issues
- Volunteer Development and Deployment



- Sunday Morning CE
- Confirmation Group
- Youth Group
- Adult Formation opportunities
- Stewardship
- Volunteer Development and Deployment



- Pastoral Care Team
- Food related Fellowship (coffee hour)
- Whole and small group Fellowship opportunities (Women's & Men's)
- Communications (Crier, Website)
- Matchmaking/Nominating
- Fund raising events (BBQ, Rewards, Fall Fest)
- Scholarship (Alice Blakeley and Christian camps)
- Volunteer Development and Deployment



- Trustees
  - Building Maintenance
  - Building Use
  - Finance/Audit
  - Personnel Support
- Pastoral Relations
- Volunteer Development and Deployment

Section 2: The PASTOR shall be called by the Church and shall hold his/her office without limitation of time. He/She shall become a member of the Church as soon as practicable after his/her settlement but at the latest on the date of his/her installation. It shall be his/her duty to preach the Word, to care for the stated services of public worship, to administer the Sacraments, and to promote the spiritual welfare of the Church.

He/She shall preside over meetings of the Church, except meetings thereof in its corporate capacity.

He/She may be removed from his/her office by the Church, by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a special meeting called for the purpose, or dissolve the relationship voluntarily, after contract-based notice has been given of such intent, unless a briefer notice is mutually agreed upon.

When the office of PASTOR becomes vacant, the Church shall commission a volunteer search committee of five or more active members, who shall take the necessary initiative steps to fill the vacancy. During the interim the Church shall supply the pulpit.

Section 3: ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND OTHERS. The Moderator, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Collector, Assistant Collector, Trustees, Pastoral Relations, Council members-at-large, and Auditors shall be elected annually at the annual meeting of the Church.

The election shall be by ballot as provided for under the Matchmaking/Nominating Ministry Group Terms of office shall begin on the first of July following said elections.

Section 4: The MODERATOR, being duly elected officer of the Church, shall be a member of Church Council and shall preside at the Annual Meeting of the Church and all other meetings thereof in its corporate capacity. If the Moderator be absent, a Moderator pro-tempore shall be elected. The Moderator is to be elected annually by ballot. After completing four (4) full terms, a Moderator will be ineligible for re-election until after the lapse of one full year.

In the election of Moderator pro-tempore, the Clerk shall preside; if no clerk is present, a Trustee is to preside in the choice of a Moderator. After selection of a Moderator pro-tempore, if the Clerk be absent, a Clerk pro-tempore shall be elected, or if the office be vacant, to fill the office.

Section 5: The CLERK, being duly elected officer of the Church, shall keep complete records of all business meetings of the Church in its corporate capacity and all other records required by law. In addition to any others required, records shall be kept of: active membership, past and present; baptisms, weddings, funerals and deaths. The clerk shall issue letters of transfer, receive letters of resignation, receive and keep on file all reports, give the legal notice of all corporation meetings, administer the oath of office to the Trustees, Treasurer, and Collector. All permanent records shall be maintained in safekeeping in the Church.

Section 6: The TREASURER, being duly elected officer of the Church, shall care for all funds and securities belonging to the Church. The Treasurer shall expend money only as directed by the Trustees or by vote of the Church Corporation. The Treasurer shall be a voting member of Trustees during their term as Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be bonded at Church expense. The Treasurer shall present a report in detail at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall report monthly to the Trustees with written copy to Council Chair. All permanent records shall be maintained in the Church and/or safe

deposit box(es).

Section 7: The COLLECTOR, being duly elected officer of the Church, shall collect all money given to defray current expenses, or for benevolent purposes, and deposit the same, with a proper accounting to the Treasurer. The Collector shall be bonded at Church expense.

Section 8: The AUDITORS shall be three (3) Auditors, who are duly qualified, selected by the Matchmaking/Nominating Ministry Group, and elected by the Church at its Annual Meeting for one (1) year terms. Auditors shall at least once a year, examine the books of the Church Treasurer and Church Collector and any other financial records of the Church including any and all records contained in the safety deposit box at the bank or banks.

Section 9: The CHURCH COUNCIL shall consist of the following: the Pastor(s), the Moderator and the Facilitator from each of the five ministry groups: Mission/Outreach, Parish Life, Spiritual Formation, Worship and Stability. In addition there will be three (3) at-large members from the congregation. The members-at-large shall serve for three (3) years, on over-lapping terms, so that one member is added each year and one retired. These individuals shall serve as Secretary, Vice-Chair, and Chair in that order. Selection of these member-at-large will be by the Church at the annual meeting. Eligibility for a member-at-large is that he/she is not a Facilitator of a ministry group, the Moderator, nor a Trustee during his/her term at-large. A member-at-large, after completing his or her term, will be ineligible for re-election until after the lapse of one year. Facilitators are appointed to the Church Council from within the active membership or the ministry group. Only one person may serve as facilitator from a single ministry group and only one person may represent as facilitator one ministry group. If the ministry group is unable to appoint a facilitator from their membership then that position may be left vacant or the Church Council may at their discretion appoint a member of the Church to fill the vacancy.

The Church Council shall have the authority to make policy decisions for the Church, if not otherwise specified in these by-laws. It shall be the role of the Church Council to:

1. continually assess current needs
2. determine priorities
3. establish Church goals
4. evaluate results
5. formulate required implementation procedures
6. support the five Ministry Groups

It shall be the duty of this Council to visualize the entire task of the church and to advise and assist the Pastor on the general direction of the church's activities, thus having a well-rounded and coordinated program.

Section 10: The DIACONATE shall consist of at least eight (8) volunteer members of the Church called to this ministry with a one-year commitment to group. The Pastor shall also be a member of the Diaconate

In addition, confirmed youth deacons may volunteer for a single term running from September to June. They shall assist the Diaconate in its regular duties, having the power of vote.

The responsibilities of the Diaconate shall be to assist in the preparation and administration of the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism; visit the sick, elderly and shut-ins (as an adjunct to the Pastoral Care Team); be responsible for ushers for all services; help in the preparation of all special worship services and events pertaining to the Diaconate. The Diaconate and Pastor shall decide upon all applications for special collections.

The Diaconate shall, with the Pastor, have general oversight of all the spiritual affairs of the Church.

Section 11: The MATCHMAKING/NOMINATING MINISTRY shall consist of at least three (3) volunteer members called to this ministry with a one year commitment.

The ministry group shall prepare a list of nominations for the church officers as defined in Article II Section 1 a). The ministry group shall also prepare a list of nominations for Trustees, Auditors, One (1) at-large Church Council Member, Diaconate (names supplied by then current Diaconate chair), Pastoral Relations (names as supplied by the Pastor and Pastoral Relations), and delegates to MACUCC and Central UCC. This group shall prepare a ballot nominating one or more persons for each office to be filled at the Annual Church Meeting and such nominations shall be posted not later than two (2) Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting. Any voter may write upon his/her ballot the name of any eligible person. The right of a member to make a nomination from the floor shall always be recognized.

Section 12: The PASTORAL RELATIONS MINISTRY shall consist of four (4) volunteer members of the Church, called to this ministry with a one year commitment to the group. Matchmaking/Nominating Group shall seek input from the Pastor and the congregation in an effort to obtain individuals respected in the congregation and who have the qualities of objectivity and open-mindedness.

The duties of this ministry will include: 1) working with the pastor at the beginning of the year to develop annual goals and objectives for the pastor's ministry; 2) serving as a liaison between the pastor and the congregation; 3) serving the pastor in a support/advisory capacity.

The respective groups for any and all pastors will also meet at least quarterly and shall be responsible for the following duties: 1) approval of the annual goals and objectives for each pastor; 2) conducting an evaluation of the pastor based on the agreed-upon goals and objectives; 3) preparing a pastoral ministry budget recommendation to be submitted to the Trustees in the same manner as all other ministry groups. This recommendation shall consider Conference salary guidelines; pastor's length of service in the ministry and in the community; and the pastor's contributions to the parish, the community, the Association, the Conference, and the Church. In executing their appointed duties, the groups shall actively seek and utilize input from the congregation

Section 13: The TRUSTEES shall consist of the Treasurer (the Treasurer would be excused for any discussions concerning his/her salary) plus up to eight (8) volunteer members of the Church, called to this ministry with a two year commitment to the group. The Trustees shall function as the contractual agents of the Church. They shall be responsible for all Church property, including the acquisition of land, building, and equipment and the disposal of the same as authorized by a vote of the Church. They shall also be responsible for the proper maintenance, repair, safeguard, and alterations of such property.

The Trustees shall administer the financial affairs of the Church not otherwise provided for. This

authority shall include the hiring and evaluating of church staff.

The Trustees shall be charged with the responsibility of long-range planning with the scope and role of their task.

While the Trustees are empowered to act in fiscal and budgetary matters, no principal of endowment funds of First Church may be spent, in whole or in part, without the approval of a two-thirds vote of the congregation at a legally called special meeting or at the annual meeting of the church. Additionally, no capital purchases or investments that fall outside the scope of the First Church Investment Policy Statement and are over fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) shall be made without the approval of a two-thirds vote of the congregation at a legally called special meeting or at the annual meeting of the church.

Section 14: The MUSIC MINISTRY shall be responsible for the Music Ministry of the Church, including the Chancel Choir, The Junior/Youth Choir, Bell Choir, all directors, organists and special concerts. Full and Part-time Music Staff shall attend ministry meetings as members.

The Music Ministry shall recommend candidates for Music Director(s) and Organist to the Trustees.

The Music Ministry will engage special soloists or other musicians with fees as budgeted, as recommended by this group and approved by the Music Director. It shall arrange for musical participation in regular and special services of worship in consultation with the Pastor, Diaconate and Music Director(s). It shall also care for music materials and choir robes.

Section 15: The FLOWER MINISTRY shall be in charge of floral arrangements for all services in the sanctuary. The Flower Ministry shall also direct the distribution of flowers to the sick and shut-ins.

Section 16: The SCHOLARSHIP MINISTRY will be overseen by volunteer members called to this ministry for a one year commitment. It will be the responsibility of this ministry to coordinate the notification and distribution of scholarship applications, collect and verify/validate the applications, notify applicants who are receiving the scholarship, and to present awards to recipients during Sunday morning Baccalaureate Church Service as set by the Worship Ministry Team. This ministry oversees the Alice Blakeley Scholarship and the Christian Education Scholarship for youth attending Christian camps.

The Scholarship Ministry shall make an announcement of the application procedure for the Scholarship Program and the Christian Summer Camp Programs to the congregation by March 1st of each year. (Deadlines for the applications will also be announced at this time). Recipients must be members or children/grandchildren of members attending a full time undergraduate program. There is very specific criteria for all scholarships which will be provided along with the applications that are required to be completed.

Section 17: The CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY shall establish the policies for the Church School, confirmation program, youth programs, adult education programs and shall be responsible for education of the members and friends of the Church. This ministry shall select a staff to do the work, and a budget shall be set yearly by the ministry. Salary recommendations for paid staff, which include youth director, Sunday School superintendent, Sunday school core instructional teacher and nursery aid, and annual CE budget shall be submitted to the Trustees.

Section 18: The STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY shall be responsible for the education of the Church on the principles of Christian Stewardship throughout the year. This ministry group is responsible for the creation and implementation of the annual stewardship campaign resulting in pledges of members and friends to support the Church annual budget.

### **ARTICLE III - MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP**

Section 1: PUBLIC SERVICES of worship of the Triune God shall be held each Sunday, except as mutually determined by the Diaconate and Pastor, and at such other times as shall be determined by the Diaconate and Pastor.

Section 2: THE COMMUNION SERVICE shall be observed at least on the first Sunday of each month, and may be observed at additional times as the Diaconate and Pastor see beneficial for the nourishment and growth of the Christian faith of the Church.

All who share in Christ's baptism or who profess Jesus Christ as their Savior, regardless of age or church affiliation, shall be welcome to participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion.

### **ARTICLE IV - BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Section 1: THE ANNUAL CORPORATE MEETING OF THE CHURCH shall be held on the first Sunday of May in each year at such an hour and place as the Trustees shall determine.

Section 2: THE CALL for the Annual corporate meeting of the Church shall be made by the Clerk or Assistant Clerk, and shall be posted at least seven days before the date of the meeting, in the vestibule of the church, or in any other place which may be determined by vote of the Church, of the Trustees.

ALL SPECIAL MEETINGS of the Church in its corporate capacity shall be called by the Clerk or Assistant Clerk in the same manner and shall be called at the request of the Trustees, or upon written request of ten members of the Church. The call for a special meeting shall state the purpose of the meeting, and may be read from the pulpit in addition to posting the same, and no other action shall be taken except that for which the meeting was called.

Nothing may be acted on at a corporate meeting of the Church unless the subject matter was in the warrant for the meeting. This appertains to the Annual Meeting and Special Meetings in the corporate capacity.

If five or more members of the Church request in writing that any matter be included in the meeting warrant, the Trustees must include said matter in the warrant.

Section 3: NON-NOTICE SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS. At any of the regular meetings

for worship the Church may, without special notice, act upon the appointment of delegates to councils and conferences of the Churches. The Pastor may, and shall when requested by the Diaconate, call from the pulpit special business meetings for such purposes as do not require notification in a manner prescribed by law, or by these by-laws, the particular object of the meeting being stated in the call.

Section 4: QUORUM. At corporate business meetings of the Church, fifteen active members shall be necessary for a quorum.

Section 5: CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS shall establish appropriate detailed ground rules and meet monthly, except in July (August is typically a church calendar planning meeting). Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or Council Chair. All meetings of the Church Council are open to the Congregation. When necessary the Church Council may elect to enter an Executive Session.

Section 6: TRUSTEE MEETING shall occur on a monthly basis (with the possible exception of July and August) to discuss matters related to their duties as outlined by Article 2, Section 13. Special meetings may be called by the Trustees as they deem necessary. All meetings of the Trustees are open to the Congregation. When necessary the Trustees may elect to enter an Executive Session.

Section 7: MINISTRY GROUP MEETINGS. The ministry groups as listed in the by-laws shall meet as the group deems necessary, or at the discretion of the ministry chair or facilitator at a stated time and place to transact the business for which that ministry is responsible. The ministry chair may call special meetings when needed. A majority of the members of any ministry group shall constitute a quorum for that group.

Section 8: OPEN MEETINGS. Church Council and all Ministry Group Meetings are open to any church member wishing to attend the meeting however, you would not be eligible to participate in any vote taken by the group. If the group needs to have a conversation that is confidential they would excuse any guest members and go into Executive Session at the end of their meeting.

## **ARTICLE V - THE CHURCH SCHOOL**

Section 1: CHURCH SCHOOL sessions shall ordinarily be held at a stated hour each Sunday for worship, for instruction in the Scriptures and for inspiration to Christian living.

## **ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS**

Section 1. These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the resident members present and voting at any meeting of the Church in its corporate capacity duly called and a quorum being present. The proposed amendment shall be fully stated in the notice of the meeting and such notice shall be read from the pulpit at least one week before such meeting is held.

Section 2. Should any provision of these by-laws be declared null and void, only such provision

so declared null and void shall be so affected; the other provisions remain in full force and effect.

## **ARTICLE VII - OTHER PROVISIONS**

Section 1: QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS. Duly qualified individuals shall be selected for Church Officer positions from the members of the Church.

Section 2: FILLING VACANCIES. Each ministry group may fill its own vacancies until the next Annual Meeting and in any other elective office the vacancy will be filled by the Church Council or a special meeting of the Church.

Section 3: ANNUAL REPORTING. Each ministry group shall present a written report to the Church office to be included in the annual report of the Church and presented at the Annual Meeting of the Church.

Section 4: PUBLICATION OF BY-LAWS. A complete and current copy of the by-laws of this Church shall be available to all members. A copy of any amendment or amendments shall be available to all members not more than sixty (60) days after enactment.

Section 5: RESIGNATIONS. Any Church Officer, Council-at-large member or Trustee resigning their position shall submit a letter of resignation to the chair of the Church Council in the case of an Officer or Council-at-large member, or chair of Trustees any Trustee members. The letter shall be read at the next meeting of the Council or Trustees and be forwarded to the Church Clerk who shall notify the Matchmaking/Nominating Ministry.

Section 6: EQUIPMENT PURCHASES. The Trustees are to be consulted before the purchase of any equipment requiring connection to Church utilities and/or to be affixed to the building itself. All parts lists, manuals, and any other pertinent data for Church equipment is to be stored in a safe place with or near the equipment where appropriate or turned over to the Trustees.