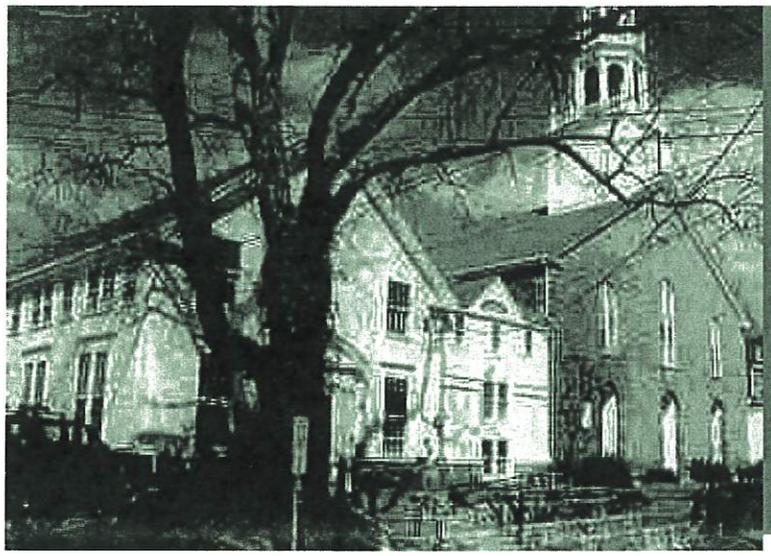


BY-LAWS
Of
THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN
MARBLEHEAD, INC.
(Old North Congregational Church)
United Church of Christ
Marblehead, Massachusetts
As Revised February 8, 2026



Gathered 1635

Bylaws

Approved at Annual Budget Meeting on February 8, 2026

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MARBLEHEAD, INC. (Old North Church)

United Church of Christ, Marblehead, Massachusetts

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PREFACE

In 2017, the organization structure of The First Church of Christ In Marblehead, Inc. (Old North Church) was changed from having a Church Council as an overall governing body, and 12 active Committees involving over 90 people, to the structure described herein having a governing Leadership Board and 6 program-oriented Ministry Boards. The Officer positions were not changed. The new structure requires half as many volunteers for shorter, more flexible terms of service. The old structure served well for decades, but was getting difficult to sustain because the congregation is a little smaller and people have less time to commit to church. Also, the leadership board is expected to be more nimble than the former Council.

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(Membership continued)

d. **MEMBERSHIP DISTINCTIONS.**

- i. Active Members may attend all meetings of the Church, vote in Meetings of the Church Membership, and serve, if elected, in any formal or informal capacity in the Church.
- ii. Members who have not fulfilled their duties and responsibilities as described in the Covenant, or who have not supported the Church financially for at least two years, may, upon the vote of the Worship Ministry Board, be placed on the Inactive Roll. Inactive Members are not eligible to vote at Meetings of the Church Membership, or serve as an officer or on the Leadership Board, but are welcome in all other aspects of Church life.
- iii. Friends & Supporters of the Church may not wish to make the deep commitment involved in formal membership for personal reasons. However, their financial support and participation in worship and as a volunteer furthers the vision of ONC. Friends & Supporters are not eligible to vote at Meetings of the Church Membership, or serve as an officer or on the Leadership Board, but are welcome in all other aspects of Church life.
- iv. Active Members are entitled to receive all life rites in the Church. Inactive Members and Friends & Supporters may receive life rites with approval by the Worship Ministry Board.

e. **TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP.** Membership in the Church may be terminated by:

- i. Written request of the member addressed to the Clerk
- ii. Letter of Transfer granted by the Minister or the Worship Ministry Board
- iii. Continued inactive status for more than five years and by a vote of the Worship Ministry Board. Notification of this action will be made by the Clerk to last known addresses.

4. GOVERNMENT

- a. **CONGREGATIONAL** This Church's government shall be vested in its members according to Congregational tradition. Although controlling its own affairs, this Church shall cultivate the fellowship of other religious institutions and cooperate in the larger work of the UCC and its related conferences and associations.
- b. **FISCAL YEAR** - closes on December 31st.
- c. **MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH.**
 - i. The Annual Program Meeting of the Church shall be held in May or June as determined by the Leadership Board for the purpose of endorsing newly nominated Officers, Leadership Board, and Ministry Board members: to approve the reports of Officers, Boards and Committees; and to conduct other necessary business.
 - ii. The Annual Budget Meeting of the membership shall be held within 45 days of the start of each Fiscal Year for the purpose of approving the budget and other necessary business. Special Meetings of the Church may be called by a Minister, Moderator, Clerk, or any five Active Members of the Church for any reasonable time.
 - iii. Notice of these meetings and any unusual business to be conducted will be announced two weeks in advance. Notice shall be given in the Sunday bulletins , e-newsletter, and letter mailings.
 - iv. Thirty (30) members shall constitute a Quorum at any annual or special Meeting of the Church.

(Government continued)

- d. **OPEN MEETING POLICY.** The above Meetings of the Church are open to all. However, unless a person is an Active Member, permission to speak must be obtained from the meeting chairperson. Members and supporters of the Church may attend meetings of the Leadership Board, Ministry Boards, and other committees except in the case of executive session. Executive sessions shall be held after all other business is concluded.
- e. **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES.** "Robert's Rules of Order" shall apply to the above Annual, Budget, and Special meetings of the Church. Boards and Committees should follow these rules as well.

5. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

- a. **OVERVIEW.** The formal work of the Church shall be conducted as described below by the Ministers, Officers, a Leadership Board, and six Ministry Boards, all of whom are nominated in advance, or nominated "from the floor", and voted into their positions by active members of the congregation. Additionally, there are numerous informal volunteer committees and interest groups relating to the Ministry Boards. All Officers, Boards, and Committees shall summarize their yearly work for the Annual Report of the Church.

b. OFFICERS

- i. **MINISTERS.** One or more Ministers shall be called for an indefinite time by a two-thirds vote of a Meeting of the Church. The duties of each Minister shall be those which usually pertain to that office, namely preaching of the Gospel, administering the Sacraments, conducting public worship, the care and spiritual welfare of the Parish, and the day-to-day oversight of the Church.

The specific duties and titles all Ministers shall be as set forth in their Call Agreement, or subsequently updated in writing and mutually agreed upon by such Minister and the Leadership Board.

Soon after accepting the call, a Minister shall become a member of the Church and shall be installed or recognized by an Ecclesiastical Council of the Northeast Association in such a manner as the Minister and the Worship Ministry Board shall agree.

The call of a Minister may be terminated by a majority vote of a Meeting of the Church or by that Minister under mutually agreeable terms.

- ii. **MODERATOR.** The Moderator shall be the Chairperson of the Leadership Board and shall preside over Meetings of the Leadership Board and Meetings of the Church.

The Moderator shall be an active member elected at an Annual Program Meeting of the Church for an initial term of two years renewable in one-year increments for up to a total of five years.

In the event of the absence of the Moderator at a Meeting of the Church or a Leadership Board Meeting, a substitute shall be called from the other lay members of the Leadership Board.

(Organization Structure continued)

- iii. CLERK. The Clerk shall record and file the proceedings of the Church and the Leadership Board. The Clerk shall issue such credentials as may be required of delegates to other bodies or required of agents of the Church.

The Clerk shall be an active member elected at an Annual Program Meeting of the Church for an initial term of two years, renewable in one-year increments or until a successor is elected.

- iv. TREASURER. The Treasurer shall receive funds from the Financial Secretary, have custody of all funds of the Church, and disburse them under the direction of the Leadership Board and Prudential Ministry Boards. Benevolence general funds are to be disbursed either to the Treasurer of the Outreach Ministry or as directed by the Outreach Ministry Board.

The Treasurer shall be an active member elected at an Annual Program Meeting of the Church and shall serve an initial term of two years renewable in one-year increments or until a successor is elected.

The Treasurer shall report the financial condition of the Church at meetings of the Leadership Board at least twice a year.

The Treasurer shall obtain the annual insurance policy for the Church in such amount as the Prudential Ministry Board shall determine, the premium for which shall be paid by the Church.

The Treasurer will be an ex-officio member of the Prudential Ministry Board.

The Treasurer shall be informed by all ministry boards, all subcommittees, and all interest groups operating in connection with the Church of bank accounts or funds maintained by them and of cash flows, which occur in their activities in an annual report. If any group dissolves, they shall donate their remaining funds to the Church Treasurer.

- v. TREASURER OF OUTREACH MINISTRY. The Treasurer of Outreach Ministry shall receive funds from the Treasurer, have control of benevolence funds of the Church and other contributions to the Outreach Ministry Board, and disburse them under the direction of the Outreach Ministry Board.

The Treasurer of Outreach Ministry shall be elected at an Annual Program Meeting of the Church and shall serve an initial term of two years, renewable in one-year increments or until a successor is elected.

The Treasurer of Outreach Ministry shall report the financial condition of the benevolence funds and disbursements to both the Outreach Ministry Board and the Leadership Board at least twice a year.

The Treasurer of Outreach Ministry shall be an ex-officio member of the Outreach Ministry Board.

(Organization Structure continued)

- vi. **FINANCIAL SECRETARY.** The Financial Secretary shall receive and record all revenue on behalf of the Church, keep detailed records of all pledges and receipts against them.

The Financial Secretary shall be an active member elected at an Annual Program Meeting of the Church and shall serve an initial term of two years, renewable in one-year increments or until a successor is elected.

The Financial Secretary shall provide pledge envelopes and quarterly statements to those who have made pledges, and turn over copies of all receipts to the Treasurer.

The Financial Secretary shall report at meetings of the Leadership Board at least twice a year.

- vii. **HISTORIAN.** The Historian shall be responsible for the safekeeping of the historical records of the Church and shall add such data of events taking place during each calendar year which may have relevance for future historical interest and which are not normally included in the minutes of the Clerk or the Annual Report.

The Historian shall be an active member elected at an Annual Program Meeting of the Church and shall serve an initial term of two years, renewable in one-year increments or until a successor is elected.

The Historian shall work with the Leadership Board and the Minister(s) to develop ways of integrating ONC History into current life.

- viii. **SENIOR DEACON.** The Senior Deacon shall provide leadership for the Deacons who assist the Ministers in the conduct of worship. The roles for the Deacons shall be determined by the Ministers and the Worship Ministry Board.

The Senior Deacon shall be an active member, nominated by the Diaconate and elected at an Annual Program Meeting. The Senior Deacon shall serve an initial term of two years, renewable in one-year increments or until a successor is elected.

The Senior Deacon shall be a member of the Worship Ministry Board and the Diaconate.

In the event of the absence of the Senior Deacon at a Worship Ministry Board meeting, another member of the Diaconate shall take his or her place.

- ix. **MINISTER OF MUSIC / DIRECTOR OF MUSIC.** The Minister of Music / Director of Music has a leadership role in worship services and the broader music programs of the Church. The title "Minister of Music" is an honorary one, and it also makes the Minister of Music an honorary Church officer. The honors shall be awarded to a Director of Music by recommendation of the Worship Ministry Board with approval by the Leadership Board.

The Minister of Music / Director of Music is an employee of the Church and need not be a member of the Church.

The specific duties of the Minister of Music / Music Program Director shall be defined in the job description written by the Music Committee under the direction of the Worship Ministry Board and approved by the Leadership Board.

The Minister of Music / Director of Music shall be an ex-officio member of the Worship Ministry Board.

(Organization Structure continued)

- c. **LEADERSHIP BOARD.** The Leadership Board shall have supervision of the entire work of the Church, according to the annual budget of the Church. It will act upon those matters, which are broader in scope than one Ministry Board, and which do not require the action of the whole Church. It shall establish and communicate policies, annual goals or priorities, and long-range plans for the Church, consistent with the Church's purpose and vision; and, it shall work with the Ministry Boards to achieve these. It shall advocate for the Ministry Boards, and help coordinate and communicate their work.

Membership. The Leadership Board shall consist of eight active lay members of the church, including the Moderator and Clerk, plus the Senior Minister and any full-time Associate Minister. The lay members shall be elected at an Annual Program Meeting of the Church for an initial term of two years renewable in one-year increments for up to a total of five years. Additionally, the Leadership Board may, at their discretion, elect as temporary members part-time Associate Ministers, the Minister of Music, the Church Office Manager, and one or two other Church Program Leaders.

Organization. The Moderator and Senior Minister jointly plan the Board meetings and the Moderator chairs meetings. The Leadership Board shall meet at least five times per year. Meeting dates and agenda shall be announced in the Church bulletin and e-newsletter. At least five members must be present to achieve a quorum. Members may recruit substitutes from the Ministry Boards to participate in their absence.

Additional responsibilities include:

- i. Maintaining a file of Leadership Board policies and procedures, plus a Safe Church Policy.
- ii. Appointing Association and Conference delegates, and the Safe Church Advocate.
- iii. Establishing committees as needed for nominating for Officer and Board openings, supporting the Ministers in their work (pastor-parish relations), providing helpful feedback to the ministers (written annual reviews), updating ministerial compensation, filling a Minister vacancy, and managing the Gifts & Memorials Fund.
- iv. Approving nominations for vacant Ministry Board and Officer positions until the next Annual Meeting of the Church.
- v. Reviewing and making recommendations on matters requiring the action of the whole Church such as the Annual Budget, covenants, by-law revisions, real-estate transactions, heritage silver, etc.
- vi. Approving all staff hiring, and major expenses within the budget, and major expenses outside the budget.
- vii. As a general rule applying to all matters affecting income, expenses, hiring, and how the congregation and community actually sees the Church, the Ministry Boards, committees, and interest groups shall make recommendations and the Leadership Board shall decide whether to approve.

(Organization Structure continued)

- d. **MINISTRY BOARDS.** There will be Six Ministry Boards: (1) Christian Formation, (2) Community Life, (3) Worship/Deacons, (4) Music, (5) Outreach, and (6) Prudential, which shall manage the programs and responsibilities that are essential to the vital life of ONC, as directed by the Church Vision and with oversight from the Leadership Board.

The Ministry Boards shall have the following common elements:

- i. Up to eight members per Board (Two people shall be allowed to share one position if necessary)
 - ii. Terms of service of two years, renewable in one-year increments.
 - iii. A chairperson to be chosen by the Board to plan and schedule meetings, encourage Board member participation, ensure that minutes are taken and shared and write an annual report.
 - iv. Meetings announced in advance to the congregation.
 - v. Handbooks of policies and procedures for the board, including requirements mandated by the Safe Church Policy.
 - vi. Budgets to be managed, and in some cases staff people or paid helpers to be hired and managed, as authorized by the Leadership Board.
 - vii. Freedom to establish new and maintain existing volunteer committees to aid the ministry. Help to recruit volunteers as needed for committees. (Interest groups may form themselves.)
 - viii. A mandate to advocate for and work with their related committees and interest groups.
- i. **CHRISTIAN FORMATION MINISTRY BOARD.** From infants to elders, this ministry shall lay the foundation for empowering all to share their journeys and grow in the understanding of their spiritual and religious life, and challenge all to live their faith beyond the walls of the Church. Planning, managing, evaluating and continually improving opportunities for faith formation and all other aspects of this educational ministry belong to Christian Formation. Additional responsibilities include:
1. Assessing needs and setting objectives for religious / spiritual education for children through confirmation and high school.
 2. Planning for and implementing a Sunday School or Children's Church, Confirmation, Youth Fellowship programs, and adult education programs.
 3. Approving educational materials and Christian outreach experiences like youth group trips according to a budget created by the ministry board and authorized by the Leadership Board.
 4. Hiring, managing, and evaluating any staff or paid helpers authorized by the Leadership Board.
 5. Providing for infant and toddler care (to age 3) during Fall, Winter, and Springtime Sunday 10 AM worship services, planning for this together with the Worship Ministry Board.

(Organization Structure, Ministry Boards continued)

- ii. **COMMUNITY LIFE MINISTRY BOARD.** The Community Life Ministry shall extend the welcoming hospitality of Old North Church and attend to enriching the membership and greater community in the current context. Through planning, hosting and facilitating a broad variety of activities and events designed to promote hospitality, shared care, fellowship, and a sense of belonging, it will unify our faith community and its relationships with the wider community. In service to seekers and members, this Ministry will nourish and enrich relationships by communicating, promoting and supporting programs and events of their own design, or in collaboration with others. Additional responsibilities include:
 1. Maintaining a volunteer membership committee to welcome visitors and potential new members or friends, familiarize them with Church programs and opportunities, and shepherd them through the process of becoming an Active Member.
 2. Advocating for interest groups like the Women's Group, Men's Fellowship, Parish Caregivers, Church Fair, music concerts, etc., plus any adult education programs that may arise.
- iii. **OUTREACH MINISTRY BOARD.** The Outreach Ministry shall embody God's love and compassion for those in need beyond ONC. It inspires and empowers the community in service of those in need locally and around the world. Through education, organization, and funding, it identifies and communicates opportunities to all to serve together in direct volunteer service as examples of ONC's vision brought to life. Additional responsibilities include:
 1. Directing benevolence funds to deserving causes.
 2. Advocating for programs like Lifebridge, Marblehead Food Pantry, Reilly II, Pholela, Heifer, OCWM, Welcome the Stranger, grants, partnerships
- iv. **PRUDENTIAL MINISTRY BOARD.** The Prudential Ministry shall support ONC's vision as an inclusive Christian community through stewardship of the financial, physical, and human resources of the Church as authorized by the Leadership Board and that are not the specific responsibility of another ministry. It nurtures a culture of generosity in keeping with our highest values, and educates the community on the power of stewardship. Additional responsibilities include:
 1. Directing the annual stewardship campaign and planned giving interests.
 2. Preparing the annual budget and managing Church expenses according to the budget.
 3. Managing the Church investments
 4. Hiring and managing all office and property related staff and contractors in collaboration with the ministers.
 5. Planning for on-going church property maintenance.
 6. Administering compensation for all church staff in collaboration with the Ministers.
 7. Safekeeping of the Heritage Silver and the policy for its use.

(Organization Structure, Ministry Boards continued)

- v. WORSHIP MINISTRY BOARD (AKA BOARD OF DEACONS). The Worship Ministry Board shall facilitate the services of the church, coordinating with the ministers, minister of music and others. Deacons offer welcome, prepare and serve communion, handle weekly and special offerings, read or coordinate reading of the scriptures and coordinate special services such as life rites. Additional responsibilities include:
 - a) Assessing trends in worship attendance and working together with Ministers, and the Music Ministry Board to meet the evolving worship needs of the congregation.
 - b) Providing for worship leadership during the temporary absence of the Ministers, including the selection of an Interim Minister if needed.
 - c) Developing and delivering programs for building and deepening community on its own and in a spirit of service and collaboration with the other ministries and other faith community.
 - d) Hiring, managing, and evaluating any staff or paid helpers authorized by the Leadership Board such as the Sunday Sexton
 - e) Helping worship service attendees with seating (ushering)
 - f) Managing the Deacons Fund.
 - g) Ensuring for flowers for worship
 - h) Maintaining the membership rolls of the Church
 - i) Counting and recording attendance at regular and special services (not including life rites)
 - j) May recruit former Deacons to participate in worship services.

- vi. MUSIC MINISTRY BOARD shall plan and implement programs for the performance of music in support of worship services, life rites, and community ministry. Additional Responsibilities include:
 - a) Assessing trends in worship attendance and working together with Ministers and Deacons to meet the evolving worship needs of the congregation.
 - b) Maintaining all musical instruments, materials, and supplies owned by the Church.
 - c) Hiring, managing, and evaluating any staff or paid helpers authorized by the Leadership Board.
 - d) Managing expenditures of assigned accounts within the budget (all funds will be held by Church Treasurer).
 - e) Managing the Music Patrons Fund for enrichment of the music programs.
 - f) May provide additional music programs (such as Festival Chorus) for which it may sell tickets or raise funds.

(Organization Structure, Committees and Interest Groups Continued)

- vii. OTHER COMMITTEES. Numerous other committees and interest groups exist under the umbrella of the formal Organization Structure described above. Large and small, old and new, all committees and Interest Groups shall self-identify under one of the above ministries, and operate using many of the “common elements” of the Ministry Boards in section 5-d-i, especially the requirements for open meetings and adherence to budgets, annual reports, and the Safe Church Policy.

6. MISCELLANEOUS REQUIREMENTS

- a. The Church shall live out its mission by giving at least a tenth of its income to share Christ’s love and justice in the world. Of the church’s annual income (excluding restricted funds): 7% shall be distributed by the Outreach Ministry Board to support nonprofit organizations 4% shall be distributed by the Church Treasurer to the Southern New England Conference of the UCC for Our Church’s Wider Mission.
- b. Resignations. Any person holding an elected position in the above Organization Structure who feels they must step down from their position before their term has expired may do so. Resignations shall be made in writing to the appropriate Board chairperson. The vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible by the Leadership Board or their nominating process.
- c. Amendments. These by-laws may be modified by a vote of two-thirds of the Active Members present at an Meeting of the Church, provided that a statement of the proposed amendment(s) is included in the notice of the meeting.

