

BYLAWS OF



April 2021

A member church of the
Conservative Congregational Christian Conference



P. O. Box 727
29 High Road
Southwest Harbor, Maine

**BYLAWS OF
SOUTHWEST HARBOR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**
29 High Road
Southwest Harbor, Maine

I. NAME

The name of this church shall be Southwest Harbor Congregational Church. This church cherishes and continues the history of the Mount Desert Congregational Church of Tremont and later Southwest Harbor, which in 1792 was the first Church of Christ organized on Mount Desert Island. The church building which serves as the home of the congregation, known formerly as the Union Church, North Side, Southwest Harbor, will always bear the plaque designating it as "First Church of Mount Desert Island Congregational, organized October 17, 1792."

II. PURPOSE

Into a world where people hurt from spiritual, emotional, social and physical ills, God calls His Church to bring forth healing through the Gospel. It is for this purpose that this congregation is gathered. Therefore, the members of this congregation see themselves as ministers to the world around them; the congregation stresses the importance of gathering weekly for worship, fellowship, and the preaching and teaching of the Gospel; it celebrates the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; it encourages personal spiritual growth; it recognizes the importance of equipping and educating all members, young and old, to serve God in the world; it rejoices in the power of the Holy Spirit which supports and strengthens the fellowship and communion of this congregation.

III. COVENANTS

We confess our faith in the triune God, our heavenly Father, our savior Jesus Christ and our counselor the Holy Spirit. We promise* to walk together as Christian brethren, to participate regularly in the worship and communion services of this congregation, to pray continually for one another and the ministry of this church, to support the work of this church with our time, talent and treasure, to be obedient to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, and to submit to the government and discipline of this church until we are regularly dismissed. We covenant* with the Lord and with one another, and bind ourselves in the presence of God to live together in all His ways, as He reveals them to us through His Word. We do this for the glory of God, for our mutual growth, and for the good of our fellow men, through the enabling grace and power of Jesus Christ.

** See Policy: Membership Affirmation (Appendix 1 below)*

IV. FAITH AND BELIEFS

A. Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth,

morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Southwest Harbor Congregational Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elder Board and the aggregate membership of the church are the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Statement of Faith

- i. We believe the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments¹, to be the only inspired², inerrant³, infallible⁴, authoritative⁵ Word of God written⁶, and it is sufficient for all faith and living a Christian life⁷.
- ii. We believe there is one God⁸, eternally existent⁹ in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit¹⁰. We believe that this triune God created the universe from nothing and upholds it by His power.¹¹
- iii. We believe in the full deity of Christ¹², His virgin birth¹³, His full humanity¹⁴, His sinless life¹⁵, His substitutionary¹⁶ and atoning death¹⁷, His burial¹⁸, His bodily resurrection¹⁹, His bodily ascension to the right hand of the Father²⁰, His intercession on behalf of all believers²¹, and His personal return in power and glory²².

¹ 2 Pt 3:15; Lk 16:29 & 31; Lk 24:27 & 44; Jn 5:46-47

² 2 Tm 3:16; 2 Pt 1:19-21; Jn 10:34-36; Heb 6:18

³ Heb 6:18; Jn 17:17; Nm 23:19; 2 Sm 7:28

⁴ Ps 33:4; Is 55:6-9; Heb 11:16; Mt 22:29; 2 Pt 1:19; 1 Tm 1:15

⁵ 2 Pt 3:16; 2 Tm 3:16; Heb 6:18

⁶ Jn 20:30-31

⁷ Heb 11:1-4; Rom 10:14 & 17

⁸ Dt 6:4

⁹ Ex 3:14-15; Dt 33:27; Rv 1:8, 4:8, 21:6, 22:13

¹⁰ Gn 1:1-3; Mt 3:16-17, 28:18-19; Mk 1:10-11; Acts 1:4-5; 2 Cor 13:14

¹¹ Gn 1:1; Job 38:4; Ps 146:6; Is 42:4; Jn 1:1-3; Col 1:15-17

¹² Mt 1:23, 26:63-64; Lk. 23:42-43, 67-71; Jn 1:1, 14 & 18, 6:39, 10:27-30; Phil 2:6; Col 2:9

¹³ Is 7:14; Mt 1:18-23; Lk. 1:26-34

¹⁴ Lk. 3:21; Jn 1:1&14; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:7-8; Col 2:9; Heb 2:14

¹⁵ Mt 4:1-11; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 2:17, 4:15; 7:24-26; 1 Pt 1:19, 2:22

¹⁶ Is 53:5; Mk 10:45; Rom 5:19; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; Heb 2:9; 1 Pt 2:24, 3:18

¹⁷ Rom 3:25; 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10

¹⁸ Mt 27:57-61; Mk 15:42-47; Lk 11:29-30, 23:50-56; Jn 19:38-42; 1 Cor 15:4a

¹⁹ Mt 28:5-6; Mk 16:6; Lk. 24:33 & 39; Jn 20:24-28; Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:4b

²⁰ Mk 16:19; Lk. 22:69, 24:50-51; Jn 20:17; Acts 1:9-10, 5:30-31; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:19b-21; 1 Tm 3:16; Heb 4:14; 1 Pt 3:21b-22

²¹ Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24; 1 Jn 2:1-2

²² Mt 16:27, 24:30, 25:31-33; Jn 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 1Thes 4:15-17; Rv 11:15, 19:11-16, 21:3

- iv. We believe that because of the sin of the first man, Adam²³, we are depraved, corrupt by nature²⁴, dead in sin²⁵, and subjected to the wrath of God²⁶.
- v. We believe God calls sinners to repent and justifies them by grace²⁷ through faith²⁸ in Christ alone²⁹, based on His righteous life, atoning death and glorious resurrection. As such, we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit³⁰ and become new creatures³¹, delivered from condemnation³² and receive eternal life³³.
- vi. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit³⁴ by whose indwelling power³⁵, the Christian is enabled to live progressively a godly life³⁶ in this present evil world³⁷.
- vii. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost in the final judgment; those who are lost unto the resurrection of damnation, and those who are saved unto the resurrection of life.³⁸

B. Statement on Marriage, Gender, Sexuality

- i. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
- ii. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no

²³ Gn 3:6; Rom 5:12

²⁴ Ps 51:5; Is 53:6; Jer 17:9; Jn 3:6; Rom 3:23, 5:12, 19; Eph 2:1-3a; 1 Jn 1:8

²⁵ Ez 37:1-10; Rom 3:23, 6:23, 7:9-11; Eph 2:1, 12

²⁶ Mt 25: 31-46; Rom 1:18-20, 2:5, 5:9; Eph 2:3b; Rv 20:11-15

²⁷ Ps 103:8-12; Is55:7; Rom 3:21-24, 6:11; Cor 5:21, Gal 2:21; Eph 1:7-8, 2:8-9; Col 1:12b, 14, 2:13-14

²⁸ Hb 2:4; Jn 8:11; Acts 2:27-28; Rom 6:1-2; Gal 2:16-20, 3:11, 3:21-25; Eph 2:8-9; 1Jn 1:9

²⁹ Jn 14:6; Acts 4: 12; Rom 5:19

³⁰ Jn 3:5-8; Acts 2:1-4, 38-41; iCor 2:10-14

³¹ Jn 3: 5-8; Rom 6:4-6; 2 Cor 5:17

³² Jn 5:24; Rom 3:21-22, 8:1-2, 35-37

³³ Jn 3:15-16,36, 4:14, 5:24,10:27-30;Rom 6:23;1Tm 1:16; 1Jn 5:11-13; Rv 22:1-5

³⁴ Jn 7:38-39, 14:16, 16:7&8,12-15; Acts 2:17-18, 38; 1 Cor 2:10-14; Eph 4:3; Ti 3:5-7; 2 Pt 1:19-21

³⁵ Jn 16:7-8, 20:22; Acts 1:8; Eph 5:18-20; 1 Pt 1:10-11

³⁶ Jn 16:13-15; Rom 8:14-16, 26-27; 1 Cor 2:13-14, 12:7; Gal 5:16, 22-26

³⁷ Gn 6:5, 8:21; Mt 4:8-9; Jn 12:31; Rom 12:2; Eph 2:2, 6:10-13; Col 3:7; Jas 3:2&8

³⁸ Mt 12:36-37, 25:31-46; Jn 5:28-29; Acts 17:31, 24:15; Rom 2:5-8; 2 Cor 5:10; Phil 3:21; 2 Thes 1:8-9; Jude 5; Rv 20:11-15

intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

- iii. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)
- iv. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Southwest Harbor Congregational Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Southwest Harbor Congregational Church as staff agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)
- v. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)
- vi. We believe Scripture dictates that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.)

V. GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATION

A. This congregation recognizes Jesus Christ as the only head of the Church and understands Jesus vested final earthly authority to the assembled congregation³⁹. Concerning officers, this congregation recognizes two Biblical offices given to the church: Elder (also referred to as pastor or bishop) and Deacon. Their qualifications and duties are outlined in Section B. In addition, this congregation has identified three administrative officers provisioned under this constitution: Clerk, Treasurer, and Chairman of the Trustee. Their duties are outlined in Section C. All officers must be members of this congregation prior to assuming their responsibilities.

B. Elders & Deacons

i. Elders

As mandated in 1 Timothy 4:14 and 5:17, and Titus 1:5, this congregation recognizes a plurality of elders and interprets that to mean more than one elder. As such, the body of Elders shall consist of the Pastor (or teaching elder) and at least one overseeing elder. However, for practical reasons, it is strongly encouraged that the body of Elders be maintained at three or more.

An Elder must be a man who is mature in his Christian faith and in his walk with the Lord. He must be knowledgeable of the Scriptures, dedicated to prayer, and able to teach⁴⁰. Those selected to be elders must be proven⁴¹, before the congregation, to meet the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3: 1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Elders are to actively shepherd the flock of God in at least the following ways:

- equip the membership for the work of the ministry;

³⁹ Matt 16:16-20, 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:4

⁴⁰ 1 Tim 3:2; James 5:14; Acts 6:4 (cf. 2 Tim 2:24; 1 Tim 4:13)

⁴¹ Cf. 1 Tim 3:10, 5:24-25

- protect the congregation against the teaching of false doctrines;
- provide for the spiritual welfare of the congregation;
- provide spiritual oversight for the work and programs of the church;
- serve as stewards of the congregation's resources;
- encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error
- decide theological issues;
- oversee Corrective/Formal church discipline issues;
- oversee the worship service;
- preside over the Lord's supper and baptism;
- arrange for pulpit supply;
- oversee the use of the sanctuary;
- organize and oversee membership classes;
- examine and recommend new members to the congregation
- ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions;
- hire and oversee all staff of the church;
- nominate the Clerk, Treasurer, Deacons, and additional Elders;
- oversee the work of the Deacons, administrative officers, and all appointed church agents and committees

(a) Pastor

The Pastor, being "first among equals" (1 Timothy 5:17), is the elder primarily responsible for the preaching and teaching of God's Word, and the administration of the sacraments. We believe that the Pastor is called to this church by the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the same work, the congregation gives voice to that call by a 90% written vote of the members present at the congregational meeting called for that purpose. The Pastor shall become a member of this congregation at the time he accepts the call. The Pastor shall serve the congregation as long as he and the congregation agree that the call remains. The Pastor's service to this congregation may be ended with a sixty-day notice by the church or thirty-day notice by the Pastor. The church and Pastor shall affect any separation in the best interests of both.

(b) The Overseeing Elders

Overseeing Elders with the Pastor shall provide pastoral care to the congregation. The congregation should strive to have no fewer than two serving Overseeing Elders. New Overseeing Elders shall be selected by the current elders of the church and shall be presented to the congregation for confirmation. Confirmation shall require a 90% written vote of the members present at the congregational meeting called for that purpose. Overseeing Elders shall be such so long as they remain a member of this congregation. Sabbaticals shall be provided as are deemed appropriate by the elders. The Overseeing Elders will nurture the relationship between the congregation and the Pastor and propose the Pastor's compensation package.

(c) Associate Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching. He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the bylaws, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

(d) Term of Office

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and I Timothy 5:17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church.

(e) Search Committee

The Search Committee shall be constituted by the elders when the need arises. The Search Committee shall be responsible for discerning the will of the Holy Spirit in identifying new pastoral staff. The Search Committee shall consist of: two elders appointed by the elders and five members-at-large selected by the Nominating Committee and confirmed by the congregation. No member of the pastoral staff may serve on this committee. It shall report directly to the congregation. The committee shall elect its own chairman.

ii. Deacons

(a) Overview and Qualifications

A Deacon or Deaconess (hereafter referred to collectively as Deacon) shall be a church member who satisfies the qualifications and description of the office set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. Subject to the direction and oversight of the elders, Deacons serve the congregation by caring for members, tending to the accommodations for public worship, managing assets, and assisting the elders as needed. In these ways the Deacons are servants, working to foster and preserve the unity of the church, and promote the ministry of the Word.

(b) Electing Deacons and Creating or Dissolving Positions

Each diaconate position shall serve a particular need of the church; thus, the number shall vary as the church has need. Each position shall be overseen by an elected Deacon. Both Deacons and Diaconate positions shall be recommended by the Elders to the congregation and will be elected, created, or dissolved (respectively) following a 2/3 approval by the members present and voting on the

question at any members' meeting. Diaconal recommendation can come from any member of the congregation, but will not be presented before the congregation for a vote until the nominee has been adequately tested by the elders, in keeping with 1 Timothy 3:10, and subsequently accepted the responsibility.

(c) **Term of Office**

A Deacon's term of office may end by resignation, dismissal, or end of term. Deacons shall be elected to a three-year term, after which they can be renominated by the Elders for additional terms. In the event a diaconate position becomes vacant, the elders may appoint a person to fill that position and assume its responsibilities, until such time as a person can be duly recognized by the church as a Deacon pursuant the above process. However, an expectation of each elected Deacon is to train, develop, and prepare a successor to follow at the conclusion of their term, or early resignation. In doing so the Deacon aids their ministry to the church by fostering a seamless transition and avoiding such a scenario.

(d) **More Information**

The current diaconate positions and responsibilities are maintained in The Diaconate, the church's Deacon Ministry portfolio, and are updated by the overseeing ministry.

C. Administrative Officers

The officers of the church are the Chairman of the Trustee ministry, the Clerk (a.k.a. Deacon of records) and Treasurer. The officers shall serve as the legal representatives of the church in civil matters. Officers must be members of this congregation. Vacancies created by the early resignation of an officer shall be filled by election by the Trustees for their chairman, and election by the congregation for the Treasurer or Clerk.

i. **Chairman of the Trustee Ministry**

The Trustee Ministry shall oversee the real property of the church. The Trustee Ministry is responsible for the care and maintenance of all real property, the use of the facilities, except the sanctuary, and maintenance of an insurance program. The Trustee Ministry does not have the power to sell, mortgage or transfer any real property of the church valued in excess of \$5000.00 without the specific vote of the congregation. The Trustee Ministry shall hire and supervise the Sexton.

ii. **The Clerk**

The Clerk shall perform such duties as usually pertain to the office of clerk of an assembly under the guidance of the elders. The Clerk shall take the minutes of the congregational meetings. The Clerk shall keep a register of the members of the church, with dates and modes of their reception and removal and a record of baptisms. The Clerk shall issue notices of congregational meetings. The Clerk shall prepare the appropriate statistics pertaining to membership, baptisms and any other topics deemed important by the elders for inclusion in the church's annual

report. The Clerk shall serve an unlimited number of one year terms.

iii. The Treasurer

The Treasurer shall perform the usual duties incumbent upon that office under the guidance of the elders. The Treasurer shall prepare financial statements for the elders as requested and a statement for the annual congregational meeting. The Treasurer shall prepare a draft budget for the coming year and present it to the elders. The treasurer shall serve an unlimited number of one year terms.

VI. **MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

A. This congregation shall have at least one regular member meeting each year. At the year-end meeting, the agenda shall include the receiving of written reports from all officers, ministries and committees; the election of officers and ministry members; the adoption of the budget; and the setting of goals for the coming year. Election as an officer shall require a majority vote of the members present at the meeting at which the election is held. At least seven days before the meeting is to be held, it must be announced from the pulpit. In addition, at the Elders choosing, a written notice must be posted in a conspicuous place."

B. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the elders, or by any six members of the church. Such members must submit to the elders, in writing, the purpose of the special meeting and sign and date it. The elders shall then set a date for the meeting as soon as possible to allow for the attendance of the elders, and a quorum of the membership. Special meetings shall be preceded by seven days written and posted notice wherein the time, date, and purpose of the meeting are stated.

C. General Information

- i. The fiscal year shall be from January 1 to December 31.
- ii. Non-members representing organizations outside of the church may not attend congregational meetings unless invited by the elders.
- iii. All members of the church shall have full voting power in the affairs of the church, except in the case of buying and selling property or mortgaging of same or other matters where civil law requires, voting privilege shall be restricted to those eighteen years of age or over.

VII. **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

By baptism one becomes a member of the church invisible/universal. As this church recognizes both infant (paedo) as well as adult (credo) Baptism, infants and children may be baptized, providing one parent is a baptized Christian.

A. Membership Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized publicly in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in obedience to Christ and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for initially determining each person's qualification for membership (see section (i) below as well as elder responsibilities section V. C. i.). In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, and such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

B. The Process of joining SWHCC whether initially confessing faith or reaffirming your faith is as follows:

Persons wishing to join this church must participate in a membership class and be examined by the elders. If the elders determine that a person understands the Gospel and has a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, the person shall be required to publicly confess their faith either by a) giving their personal testimony in a worship service or b) publishing their testimony in the Sunday Bulletin. The person will then be recommended for membership to the congregation at a subsequent member meeting. The congregation shall accept persons into membership by a simple majority vote.

C. Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the time, gifts, and material resources (Time, Talent and Treasure) each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation. Non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

D. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated by the congregation by a 2/3 vote if any of the following reasons exist:

- I. Death of a member.
- II. Request of a member.
- III. Notification that a member has joined another church.
- IV. Failure to respond to correspondence.

- V. Unknown address.
- VI. Formal/Corrective Church discipline

E. On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or unrepentant conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17.

Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20 20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

The purpose of such discipline should be for:

- a. The repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11; Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1: 22);
- b. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25);
- c. For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);
- d. (b) For the good of our corporate witness to non–Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10);
- e. (c) And Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1:4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

F. Restoration of Membership:

The elders may restore the membership of any person whose membership has previously been terminated.

VIII. **FISCAL REVIEW**

With a majority vote of the congregation in a congregational meeting, the congregation may request for a review of the accounts and accounting practice of the Treasurer by an auditor. The auditor shall submit the review report to the congregation at the next called meeting of the congregation.

IX. **AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at any duly called and convened special or regular meeting of the church. Copies of the proposed amendments will be posted with the notice of the meeting.

X. **QUORUMS**

Unless otherwise designated in these bylaws, a quorum shall refer to a simple majority. Shut-ins and seasonal members when absent should not be considered as the base of the quorum.

XI. **BYLAWS**

These bylaws supersede all other bylaws of this church

Appendix 1.

MEMBERSHIP AFFIRMATION

Date established: April 15, 2021

By: The Elders

Approval date: April 2021

Ownership: The Elders

Last revised on:

By:

Background:

There are brothers and sisters in Christ who believe that the best practice to follow Jesus' teaching in *Matthew 5: 34-37* and *James 5:12* is not to take any oath at all. As a result, there are a couple membership affirmation questions whose wordings are constituted like an oath would pose a conflict to their conviction. Recognizing the differences in conscience to follow Christ's teachings (*Romans 14: 5b-6, 13-14, 20a & 23*), this policy provisions alternate wordings for those membership affirmation questions.

Reasoning behind this policy:

1. Covenant language is not required by the Bylaws of this church for membership affirmation.
2. There should not be any unnecessary obstacle for membership. Membership into Christ's church include; an understanding of the gospel, evidence of gospel transformation in their life, baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, submission to the teaching of the Church, agreement with statement of faith, commitment to live in committed relationships in the church.

Policy:

Brothers and sisters in Christ who prefer not to use covenant language in the membership affirmation ceremony may choose to answer the following questions:

- ❖ Do you confess your faith in the triune God, your heavenly Father, your savior Jesus Christ and your counselor the Holy Spirit?
- ❖ Do you **agree** to walk together as Christian brethren, to participate regularly in the worship and communion services of this congregation, to pray continually for one another and the ministry of this church, to support the work of this church with your time, talent and treasure, to be obedient to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, and to submit to the government and discipline of this church until we are regularly dismissed?
- ❖ **Do you commit** to live together with the body of Southwest Harbor Congregational Church in the presence of God and in all His ways, as He reveals them to us through His Word?
- ❖ Will you do all this for the glory of God, for our mutual growth, and for the good of our fellow men, through the enabling grace and power of Jesus Christ?

¹ The word "agree" is used to replace the word "promise".

² The original question is: "Do you covenant with the Lord and with the body of Southwest Harbor Congregational Church, and bind ourselves in the presence of God to live together in all His ways, as He reveals them to us through His Word?"

