

Community Church of Huntington

Organizational Structure, & Constitution and Bylaws

Approved by Voting Members at the Annual Meeting on
September 22, 2024

Article I – Name

The name of this church is “The United Baptist Church of Huntington and Huntington Center” doing business as “Community Church of Huntington” – also known as “CCH.”

Article II – Document Purpose

This document establishes guidance for the Pastor, the Leadership, and the Congregation as a whole on organizational and governance matters of the CCH.

Article III – Guiding Principle

We at CCH believe that Jesus’ own teachings, His attitude towards the total truthfulness and supreme authority of God’s inspired word, the Bible, make the Scriptures our final rule for faith and practice. As a community, we endeavor to manifest the universal church locally. We rely on the guidance of God the Holy Spirit to ascertain His will in all matters and decisions regarding the affairs of the CCH.

CCH is a member of the American Baptist denomination and affiliated with the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire.

Article IV – Membership

Section I: Admission of Members

The Pastor and the Church Board will consider all requests for Church membership according to the individual’s demonstration of faith as listed below prior to submitting their recommendations to Voting Members for their approval at any regularly scheduled worship service. The CCH will welcome members:

- A. By baptism. Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and who is in essential agreement with the doctrine (Statement of Faith) of CCH and the American Baptist denomination, will be welcomed into the fellowship of the Congregation following their baptism by immersion. Baptism by other than immersion will be accepted where health or other considerations preclude immersion; or
- B. By letter. A person who is in substantial accord with the doctrine and practice of CCH will be welcomed by a letter of transfer from another church; or
- C. By profession of faith and intent, a person who ascribes to the CCH Statement of Faith following individual consultation with the Pastor and upon the Pastor’s recommendation, may be welcomed.

Section II: Voting Membership Roll

Voting Members are those who the CCH has welcomed into the church as outlined above and are actively participating in the service and support of CCH. In order to responsibly conduct Church business by maintaining accurate requirements for a voting quorum, the CCH Board will review the Voting Membership List annually to ensure accuracy, prior to the Annual Business Meeting. The Board will make the final determination of the criteria for establishing the voting privilege, and for determining who complies. Criteria for consideration:

- A. The member is actively involved in the life of the church through attendance at weekly services and participation in church related activities. Special consideration shall be given to those members who are unable to attend due to conditions beyond their control; or
- B. The member supports the life of the Church financially and/or through in-kind services.

Section III: Non-Voting Membership Roll

The CCH Board will transfer members who no longer meet the requirements for Voting Membership to the Non-Voting Membership Roll.

- A. Persons who are no longer actively participating in CCH functions and/or activities will be removed from the Voting membership role at the discretion of the CCH Board or by the request of the individual.
- B. The Church Board will restore persons on this list to Voting Membership upon compliance with the criteria identified in Section II.

When practical, the Church Board and/or Pastor shall reach out to Non-Voting Members who have not participated in any church activity for over one year to invite them back into active participation in Church life, or to inquire if they would like to remove/transfer their membership from the CCH.

Section IV: Removal of Membership

Persons who wish to remove/transfer their membership with CCH may do so in the following ways:

- A. By letter or email. Any member in good standing may request a letter of transfer and recommendation to any other church. This to be handled by the Board Clerk.
- B. By written notice. Any member may initiate their removal in writing to the Church Board.
- C. Dismissal. Any member displaying abusive, offensive and disrespectful behavior towards the Church and/or its Pastor may be removed from membership by a unanimous vote of the Board.

Article V – The Pastor and Officers

Section I: Pastor (Permanent)

In consultation with the Church Board, the Pastor will lead the Church in all of its activities and will preach the gospel, take charge of the stated services of public worship, and direct the spiritual welfare of the CCH as well as lead outreach and support activities to the community. Voting Members of the CCH will elect the Pastor upon recommendation of the Pastoral Search Committee as provided in Article VII, Section I.

Section II: Clerk (Annual)

Voting Members of the CCH will elect a Clerk at each Annual Meeting from the Board Membership to serve for a term of one year, with no limitation on the number of terms that an individual may serve. The Clerk will:

- A. Keep a complete record of the transactions of all business at the meetings of the Church and the Church Board. The Church Board must approve all records at the next Board meeting.
- B. Keep a record of the names and addresses of members, with dates and manner of welcome or removal from membership as well as a record of baptisms performed by the church.
- C. Preserve on file all communications and written reports.
- D. Give legal notice of all such meetings as required by this constitution.
- E. Assist in preparing denominational reports and submit to the denomination.
- F. Immediately after selection of a successor, deliver to the new clerk all books and records for which they have been responsible.

Section III: Treasurer (Annual)

Voting Members of the CCH will elect a Treasurer from the Board Membership at each Annual Meeting to serve for a term of one year, with no limitation on the number of terms that an individual may serve. The Treasurer will:

- A. Have custody of the funds of the Church and all deposits made in the name of the Church, and will draw all checks in the name of the Church.
- B. Keep separate accounts of all funds raised or contributed for particular purposes, and will not disburse any funds except for the purpose for which they were raised or contributed.
- C. Have custody of the trust funds, securities, investments, title papers and valuable documents of the Church.

- D. Have charge of the receipt and disbursement of all missionary and benevolent funds including Neighbor Helping Neighbor funds.
- E. Present to the Church an itemized report showing the actual financial condition of the Church, at each annual meeting, this report to have been audited previously as arranged by the Church Board.
- F. Provide a financial status report at regular Church Board meetings.
- G. Make such other financial reports as requested by the Church or the Church Board.
- H. In no case shall the treasurer expend funds beyond budgeted allocations without a vote by the Church Board and/or Congregational Meeting.
- I. Shall deliver immediately to their successor all books and records pertaining to the office.
- J. The Treasurer may request the Board appoint an Assistant Treasurer who will perform duties under the direction and supervision of the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer must be a Voting Member of the Church and may, if so elected, also serve on the Church Board.

Section IV: CCH Neighbor Helping Neighbor Administrator (Permanent)

The Neighbor Helping Neighbor Administrator shall serve as a voting member of the board as part of their duties and responsibilities, as delineated in the Neighbor Helping Neighbor Charter.

Article VI – The Board

Section I: Membership of the Board

The Church Board will consist of the Pastor, the two officers of the Church (the Clerk and the Treasurer), the NHN Administrator and six members elected at large at the CCH Annual Meeting. All must be members of the church. The at-large board members are elected to three year terms. The terms are staggered such that two members will be elected/re-elected each year at the annual meeting. There are no limits to the number of terms an individual may serve.

Section II: Duties

The Board will serve in the capacity of legal trustees of the corporation, holding in trust all property belonging to the Church, taking all necessary measures for its protection and upkeep. The Board will also constitute themselves as a typical Board of Deacons: assisting the Pastor in their work, promoting ministry to the Church and community, preparing and administering the Lord's Supper, as well as assisting the Pastor during baptisms and dedications. The Board will also organize and administer the educational and mission program(s) of the Church. In the

absence of the Pastor, the Board will obtain and supply preachers and/or interim pastors.

Section III: Chair

Voting Members of the CCH Board will elect a Chair of the Board from the Board Membership to serve for a term of one year, with no limitation on the number of terms that an individual may serve. The Chair has no special authority over the Pastor, other Officers or Board members.

The Chair will:

- A. Serve as the primary Point of Contact between the Church Board and the Pastor, as well as between the Church and the Church Board.
- B. Facilitate the scheduling of all Board and Special Meetings.
- C. Construct meeting agendas in consultation with the Pastor, other Officers and Board members.
- D. Facilitate Board meetings, Special Meetings and the Annual Meeting.
- E. Recommend an auditor of Church finances prior to each Annual Meeting and report all findings at the Annual Meeting.

Section IV: Budget

The Board will develop an annual budget and will present it to the Church for action at its Annual Meeting.

Section V: Committees

The Board may appoint additional committees to assist them in their duties.

Section VI: Meetings of the Board

The Board will meet at least once each calendar quarter at meeting times of its own determination. Six Board members constitute a quorum.

Article VII – The Pastorate

Section I: Calling a Pastor

When the pastorate is vacant, the Church Board will recommend a representative Pastoral Search Committee to the Voting members of the CCH for election. The Pastoral Search Committee will take the necessary steps to secure the names of prospective pastors, working in full consultation with the executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire. The committee will request full information about the record and qualifications of those whose names are submitted for their consideration and the Church will not call a minister without this information.

The Pastoral Search Committee will prayerfully consider the merits of each person under consideration in regard to personal character, education, doctrine, ministerial record, and

preaching ability. When a potential pastor is identified with unanimity, the committee will extend an invitation for the person to preach a sermon to the Church. The committee will recommend only one candidate to the Church at a time.

The call of a pastor shall be considered by the CCH voting members at a warned congregational meeting. Notice of such meeting, and its purpose, will be read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays and through two electronic communications sent by the Clerk following the Sunday services listed above.

The Pastoral Search Committee will extend a call upon a supportive vote of three-fourths of the Voting members present or via proxy at the meeting.

Section II: Termination Process

The Church may consider the question of dissolving the pastoral relationship at any time upon:

- A. The presentation of the pastor's resignation; or
- B. The majority recommendation of the Church Board; or
- C. Petition signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the voting membership.

In the event of items above, the Board is strongly encouraged to seek mediation from the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire before subsequent action is taken.

When the Chair ascertains that one of these requirements have been met and no resolution is achieved through mediation, the Clerk will issue a written notice of a special meeting to each voting member at least thirty days prior to the date to vote for dissolution. Passage shall require three-fourths of the eligible members present or by proxy, as long as a quorum exists. When termination of the relationship is contemplated by either party, the other will receive a notice of not less than thirty days.

Article VIII – Elections

Section I: Time and Attendance

The Church Board will establish an Annual Meeting for the election of officers and board members as well as consideration of the Church budget as prepared by the Treasurer and accepted by the Board. The Annual Meeting is open to all interested people and designed for voting members to make decisions regarding church business. The Board will make every effort to schedule the Annual Meeting between September and October annually.

Section II: Qualifications

Members on the non-voting membership roll, who meet the criteria of Article IV, Section II must request reinstatement to the voting roll at least two Sunday's prior to the Annual Meeting Date, in order to cast an eligible vote. Non-voting members are welcome to attend and participate in the Annual Meeting.

Section III: Procedure

Voting members will elect via a voice-vote all Officer and Board positions by simple majority. Upon the request of at least five voting members, elections will take place by paper ballot. Voting members unable to attend may cast their vote by proxy by mail or email. The proxy voter must submit their vote in writing to the Clerk prior to the beginning of the meeting, and the Clerk must have a copy in hand at the meeting.

Section IV: Vacancies

The Board will temporarily approve interim Officers and Board members for any vacancies occurring between annual meetings.

Article IX – Meetings

Section I: Worship Services

Regular worship services will occur each Sunday morning for the congregation and members of the community. The Pastor and Church Board will serve the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month unless the Church Board determines otherwise.

Section II: Annual Meeting

The Church Board will host the Annual Meeting:

- A. At a time as determined and properly announced by the Church Board.
- B. For the purpose of receiving the annual reports of individual Officers, the Church Board and committees of the Church and its auxiliary organizations.
- C. The transaction of necessary business.
- D. The adoption of a budget for the ensuing year.
- E. The discussion of issues vital to the life and witness of the Church.
- F. The election of Officers and Church Board members.

Section III: Special Business Meetings

Special meetings, except one regarding the dissolution of the pastorate (see Article VII, Section II) may be called at any time by the Pastor or by the Chair. The Clerk will provide notice of such a meeting and will state the purpose from the pulpit at least one week in advance of the date of the meeting at any of the regular meetings of worship. However, the Church may, without notice, act upon the appointment of delegates to councils or conventions, the reception of members, and business which the Church Board feels may require immediate attention, but not upon extraordinary business.

Section IV: Quorum

Forty percent (40%) of the Voting membership will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Church meeting.

Article X – Church Year

The fiscal year of the Church extends from 1 October to 30 Sept.

Article XI – Audit

The Chair will initiate an annual audit of the Church books, the results of which the Chair will report to the Church Board and at the Annual Meeting. The auditor may be a church member, but cannot be a member of the board. The Chair may contract an external auditing service. The Chair will recommend an auditor to the Church board 90 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Article XII – Amendment

Voting members may amend this constitution by a two-thirds voice-vote of those present at any annual or special business meeting. The Clerk must send written notice of the proposed amendment to all voting members at least thirty days in advance of any vote for study or advice.

Article XIII – Dispersal of Benevolent Fund (NHN)

Prior to dissolution of CCH, CCH will disperse the Benevolent Funds (NHN) and either give it to the Town of Huntington to be used to help those in need following the example of NHN or donate it to one or more nonprofit groups serving the local area.

Article IX – Amendment-Dissolution Clause

Should the Community Church of Huntington vote to dissolve as a congregation, or if the building and assets are abandoned, the Town of Huntington shall have the option to purchase the building and grounds for the price of \$1. Should the Town choose not to do so, the building and grounds will revert to the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire (ABCVNH). Additionally, all monetary assets shall revert to ABCVNH as the successor entity of the Community Church of Huntington. The ABCVNH Board has approved this change at a regular scheduled meeting in February 2024. This requires a Quit Claim Deed to be drawn up and signed by the executive director of ABCVNH at the time of dissolution and recorded by the Town of Huntington. Should the town refuse the offer, the property and all contents and assets become the property of ABCVNH following Vermont State Statute of Laws: Title 27: Property, Chapter 7: Property Held for Religious Purposes, Subchapter 3: Baptist Churches of Vermont