

MAYFLOWER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH BYLAWS

REV: 5/17/26



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Council Approved Date: April 2026
Membership Approved: May 2026

MAYFLOWER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH BYLAWS

These Bylaws were approved at a Special Congregational Meeting, May 29, 1985, to go into effect at the close of the Annual Meeting, January 29, 1986. These Bylaws were amended on January 25, 1989, August 6, 1989, January 19, 1992, February 7, 1996, February 2, 1999, February 5, 2002, December 7, 2003, June 6, 2010, and March 14, 2022. These Bylaws are hereby further amended and restated as follows:

Article I

NAME AND INCORPORATION

Section 1. The name of this Church is Mayflower Congregational Church under Act 53 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1901, as amended.

Article II

COVENANT

Section 1. We acknowledge our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and take for our rule of life His own words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbor as thy self."

Article III

POLITY

Section 1. The government of this Church is vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject to its Articles of Association, its Bylaws, and the laws of the state of Michigan.

Section 2. This Church is amenable to no outside ecclesiastical authority.

Section 3. This Church will participate in the mutual council, comity, and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the Congregational Christian Churches to the extent that the membership shall from time to time determine.

Section 4. This Church may seek and continue relationships with Congregational and/or Congregational Christian associations, conferences, and other cooperative organizations and send delegates and representatives thereto, so long as the same are in fact agencies of the local churches.

Section 5. It is the policy of this Church to cooperate with other denominations, ministerial associations, councils of churches, and other joint efforts in such ways and at such times as the membership may determine.

Section 6. In all cases where lay members or ministers of this Church are delegates to organizations in the free association of Congregational Christian Churches or are officials in such organizations due to membership in this Church, they shall represent, vote, and speak for the policies of this Church whenever such have been established.

Section 7. This Church shall not merge with any non-Congregational church or denomination. In case of doubt as to the meaning of the word "Congregational," the Bylaws of this Church shall be accepted as setting forth the basic principles of Congregationalism.

Section 8. This Church shall support Christian outreach projects. The support of any Christian outreach project shall be in keeping with the intent of the Articles of Association and Bylaws of this Church and shall not compromise the purely Congregational nature of this Church.

Article IV

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Section 1. While granting every member the freedom to interpret the truths of God, we use as a statement of faith, but not as a creed.

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness and love; and in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Savior, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and lives evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of humanity.

We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us.

We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all humankind; exalting the worship of the one true God; and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human kinship.

We depend, as did our forefathers, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth; we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness, and the life everlasting.

We believe faith is a journey; God is good; Jesus saves, and the spirit leads us to faith, hope, and love as we honor the dignity of all God's people.

Article V

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. This Church shall have three classes of members: Active Member, Inactive Member, and Associate Member.

Section 2. An Active Member of this Church shall be a person twelve (12) years of age or older who has accepted its Covenant, and who has been received by this Church upon recommendation of the Council:

- (a) upon presentation of a satisfactory letter of transfer from another church;
- (b) by reaffirmation of faith; or
- (c) upon confession of faith and baptism if not already baptized or by confession of faith only if external baptism is exempted by the Council because of conviction.

Section 3. An Inactive Member shall be a member who has been transferred to inactive status according to Section 11 of this Article.

Section 4. An Associate Member shall be a person who is a member of another church but who desires to affiliate with this Church. An Associate Member shall be received in the same manner as an Active Member. An Active Member may become an Associate Member upon request to, and by vote of, the Council. An Associate Member shall not vote or be counted for quorum requirements. An Associate Member may serve on a Church Committee upon approval of the Senior Minister and the Moderator.

Section 5. A Charter Member shall be a person who became an Active Member or Associate Member on or before September 7, 1958.

Section 6. An Active Adult Member shall be a member eighteen (18) years of age or older.

Section 7. This Church shall educate prospective members of the main themes of the Christian faith and the basic history and principles of Congregationalism, including an opportunity to participate in the activities of the church. To become an Active Adult Member, a prospective member must satisfy the Senior Minister and the Council as to their understanding of the Christian faith, knowledge of basic Congregational principles, and desire to promote Christ's kingdom on earth through this Church.

Section 8. A person shall be received into membership upon recommendation of the Council and upon their assent to the Covenant at a church service designated by the Council. A person unable to attend the designated church service may be received into membership by the Senior Minister and one or more Council members acting on behalf of this Church.

Section 9. An Active Member or Associate Member shall have the following duties:

- (a) To live in all of their day-to-day relationships according to the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- (b) To share and counsel with other members in the fellowship and programs of the Christian Church.
- (c) To attend services of worship as regularly as possible.
- (d) To promote in the world at large the welfare of the Church by enthusiastic and loyal affection for its principles.
- (e) To contribute toward the financial support of this Church according to their ability.

Section 10. A membership may be transferred or terminated as follows:

- (a) Letter of transfer shall be given upon the written request from a member or the church the member desires to join. Their membership shall end when the letter is sent.
- (b) If the church or religious body the member wants to join will not receive the letter of transfer, the Senior Minister may, at the member's written request, give a letter certifying their membership. Their membership shall end when that letter is sent.
- (c) A member may terminate their membership at any time upon written request to the Council. Their membership shall end when the request is received.
- (d) If the Senior Minister determines that a member has become a member of another church or religious body, their membership may be terminated by vote of the Council.
- (e) The Senior Minister shall give a letter of transfer only to a specific church or religious body.

Section 11. A member may be placed on the Inactive Membership Roll by vote of the Council if the member has not attended worship regularly and has not contributed toward the financial support of this Church according to their ability during the two most recent calendar years. The Council shall take into consideration any extenuating circumstances which may prevent the member from attending worship regularly or from contributing toward the financial support of this Church according to their ability. The member may be placed on the Inactive Membership Roll according to the following procedures:

- (a) On or before April 15 of each year, the Council shall direct the Senior Minister to send a letter to the member in question at their last known address advising them that the member may be placed on the Inactive Membership Roll. The letter shall refer to this Article V, a copy of which shall be included in the letter.
- (b) If, on or before the following May 10, the member does not attend or contribute toward the financial support of this Church according to their ability or explain in writing any extenuating circumstances that prevent them from doing either, the member may be placed on the Inactive Membership Roll by vote of the Council before the next Annual Meeting of this Church.

- (c) An Inactive Member shall be so designated in the church directory. The Inactive Member shall not vote, hold office, or be counted as an Active Member for quorum requirements.
- (d) An Inactive Member may become an Active Member by the vote of the Council, provided the Inactive Member has attended worship regularly, has pledged to contribute financially according to their ability, or has satisfactorily explained in writing to the Council the extenuating circumstances that prevent them from doing either.
- (e) On or before April 15 of each year. the Council shall direct the Senior Minister to send a letter to each Inactive Member at the their last known address, advising them that the member will be dropped from the Membership Roll of this Church on the following May 31 unless they indicate in writing their interest in remaining on the Inactive Membership Roll, or takes steps to become an Active Member.

Article VI

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

- Section 1. Public worship services shall be held each Sunday. The Council shall designate the times for the celebration of the Communion and other services of worship.
- Section 2. The Sacrament of Christian Baptism may be administered at the time of or before admission to membership.
- Section 3. Weddings and funerals shall be conducted by the Senior Minister, or their designee, in accordance with such policies as may be determined from time to time by the Council.

Article VII

OFFICERS

- Section 1. The officers of this Church shall be Active Adult Members. Associate Members and Inactive Members shall not be eligible for election.
- Section 2. The officers of this Church shall be the Moderator, the Vice Moderator, the Treasurer, and the Senior Minister.
- Section 3. The Moderator shall serve for a one (1) year term. The Moderator must be an Active Adult Member of this Church and must have served as a Council member for at least one (1) year. The Moderator shall be the lay leader of this Church. The Moderator shall act as chair of the Council and ex officio of the various internal committees as provided in Article VIII.
- Section 4. The Vice Moderator shall be elected to a one (1) year term, at the conclusion of which the Vice Moderator shall become Moderator for a one (1) year term. The Vice Moderator must be an Active Adult Member and have been a Council member for at least one (1) year. The Vice Moderator shall act as deputy lay leader of the Church, vice chair of the Council, Chair of Nominating, and of the various internal committees as provided in Article VIII.
- Section 5. The Treasurer shall be elected to a two (2) year term. The Treasurer must be an Active Adult Member and have been as Council member for at least one (1) year. Subject to the direction of the Council, the Treasurer, in conjunction with the church's business manager or bookkeeper, shall be responsible for the supervision and oversight of the financial matters of the church and shall receive all monies of the church and account therefore, deposit church funds in such depositories as the Council selects, have custody of all documents relating to the property of this Church, pay the bills of this Church, keep accurate account of all receipts and disbursements, provide a financial report to the members at least annually, and be bonded at the expense of the Church.

- Section 6. If any officer resigns or ceases to be an Active Adult Member qualified to be an officer, their office shall be declared vacant. The Council shall elect a successor who is qualified to hold the office until the next Annual Meeting, at which time the vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term by election. If the unexpired term is one year or less, the officer may serve for an additional full three (3) year term. If the unexpired term is longer than one year, the officer shall be ineligible for reelection or appointment to the same office for a period of one (1) year.
- Section 7. After completion of one (1) full term of office, no officer, except the Treasurer, shall be eligible for reelection or appointment to the same office for a period of one (1) year.
- Section 8. No Active Adult Member shall hold more than one (1) office at the same time.
- Section 9. Each officer shall assume their duties immediately after the adjournment of the Annual Meeting at which the member is elected. The member shall continue to perform their duties until: (1) their successor is elected, or (2) the acceptance of their resignation, or (3) the member ceases to be a member qualified to hold office. As soon as practical after each Annual Meeting, the Council shall organize such internal committees and standing committees as it deems necessary and appoint a Council member to be its liaison to each auxiliary organization.
- Section 10. Each officer of this Church, in such manner and at such installation ceremonies as established from time to time by the Council, shall acknowledge their belief in and their willingness to uphold the Bylaws of this Church while acting in such capacity.

Article VIII COUNCIL

- Section 1. The Council shall consist of the Moderator, Vice Moderator, the Treasurer, and at least twelve (12) and no more than eighteen (18) elected Active Adult Members.
- Section 2. At least four (4) and no more than six (6) Council members (at least one (1) of each gender) shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to three (3) year, non-succeeding terms. Council members must be Active Adult Members of this Church. Members of the same household may not be Council members at the same time.
- Section 3. A Council secretary may be elected by the Council from its members.
- Section 4. Subject to the authority of the Active Adult Members, the Council shall envision, coordinate, direct, and manage the overall life and program of this Church; have responsibility for church discipline; direct, advise, and assist the Senior Minister as the head of the staff; employ and dismiss professional staff other than ordained ministers; dismiss ordained ministers other than the Senior Minister; and have charge of all church properties.
- The Council shall have all the duties, responsibilities, and powers of a board of trustees of a Congregational church as provided in the Michigan statutes governing Congregational churches. In accordance with the statutes, the Council shall not call or dismiss the Senior Minister or fix their salary, or buy, convey, or encumber real estate or any right thereto or interest therein, unless instructed to do so by the Active Members at a duly called meeting.
- The Council may publish and update a "Practice and Procedures Manual", which may include such rules, practices, and procedures that are consistent with and not contrary to these Bylaws.
- Section 5. The internal committees of the Council and their duties shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (a) The Executive Committee shall advise the Council and the Senior Minister on church matters. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator, the Treasurer, and three (3) Active Adult Members appointed by the Nominating Committee. Each of the three (3) Active Adult Members shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years, but their terms

shall be staggered, so in 2024, one (1) Active Adult Member shall be appointed for a term of one (1) year, one (1) Active Adult Member shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years, and one (1) Active Adult Member shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years. Thereafter, each year, one (1) Active Adult Member shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years beginning in 2025. The three (3) Active Adult Members shall communicate with all the other three (3) members of the Executive Committee on a regular basis, and must do so at least once every sixty (60) days.

- (b) The three (3) Active Adult Members appointed by the Nominating Committee other than the Moderator, the Vice Moderator, and the Treasurer shall comprise the Subcommittee for Advocacy, which shall communicate regularly, either individually or as a group, with Active Adult Members about matters of concern and shall have the power, by a vote of at least two (2) of its members, to call a meeting of the Active Adult Members pursuant to Article X, Section 3 after notifying the Council in writing of their intent to call a meeting.
- (c) The Nominating Committee shall nominate for election by the Active Adult Members, the church officers, the Council members, three Active Adult Members to serve on the Nominating Committee, and the Pastoral Search Committee (when it exists) ~~members~~. The Nominating Committee shall nominate for election by the Council the members of the standing committees and other committees as may be determined by Council. The Nominating Committee shall consist of no more than seven (7) persons: the Vice Moderator as Chair, and no more than six (6) Active Adult Members nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Active Adult Members at the Annual Meeting.
- (d) Any other committees that the Council may from time to time find necessary.

Section 6. The standing committees, unless the Council otherwise determines, shall be:

- 1) Christian and Youth
- 2) Christian Outreach
- 3) Congregational Care
- 4) Congregational Events
- 5) Finance
- 6) House and Grounds
- 7) Membership
- 8) Worship and Music
- 9) Personnel
- 10) Nominating

Section 6a. A Board of Deacons may be established to assist with pastoral care needs.

Section 7. At least one Council member shall serve on each standing committee. The standing committee chair, appointed by the Council, shall serve a one (1) year term, and may be appointed to more than one term. In addition to the chair, each standing committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) and no more than twelve (12) Active Members of this Church, as the Council may from time to time direct. The members of each standing committee shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and shall be appointed by the Council to three (3) year terms. By a two-thirds (2/3) vote, the Council may eliminate a standing committee, or remove individual members from a standing committee. Each standing committee may appoint such subcommittees as it from time to time deems necessary.

Section 8. The Council shall meet at least quarterly and shall determine regular meetings. Special meetings of the Council shall be called by giving at least twenty-four (24) hours' notice personally, electronic mail or United States Postal Service. Notice of a special meeting may be given by the Moderator, the Senior Minister, or by any three (3) members of the Council. A special meeting of the Council may be held without notice by unanimous written consent of the Council members. The Moderator shall vote at a Council meeting only to create a tie vote or break a tie vote by the other Council members.

Article IX

MINISTERS AND STAFF

Section 1. This Church shall have a Senior Minister, and such Associate, Assistant, or other ministers as the Council may determine. All ministers shall be ordained. All ministers shall be called by this Church with the exception of ministers provided by the Council for interim supply of the pulpit or pastoral services in the event of vacancy, absence or disability. In the event that there is an absence of a Senior Minister, the Council may, on an interim basis, appoint an interim Minister, current Minister, or staff member to fulfill the role as executive head and director of the entire staff.

Section 2. Ministers shall be called for an indefinite term. When a vacancy occurs in the position of Senior Minister, a meeting of the Active Adult Members shall be called by the Council for the purpose of electing a Pastoral Search Committee to find, present, and recommend to the Active Adult Members the calling of a new Senior Minister. At the meeting, the Nominating Committee shall present a slate to fill the Pastoral Search Committee.

Section 3. All ministers, other than the Senior Minister, shall be called by the same procedure as the Senior Minister in consultation with the Senior Minister. All ministers other than the Senior Minister may be dismissed by the Council.

Section 4. All other professional staff members including but not limited to Director of Music, Business Manager, Office Manager, or Choirmaster shall be employed by the Council in consultation with the Senior Minister. All such staff members may be dismissed by the Council.

Section 5. All other staff members such as paraprofessional, clerical, and custodial shall be employed and dismissed by the Senior Minister within budget and policy guidelines and in consultation and with the concurrence of the Personnel Committee.

Section 6. Subject to the authority and with the assistance of the Council, the Senior Minister shall have in their charge the direction of the spiritual welfare of this Church and all services of worship. The Senior Minister shall be accorded the privileges of membership, ex-officio and without vote, on the Council and all committees of the Church, provided, however, that the Senior Minister may be excused from all or any portion of any Council or committee meeting at the direction of the chair, or by vote of a majority of the members, thereof. Subject to the authority and with the assistance of the Council, the Senior Minister shall administer the activities of this Church with the assistance of the other ministers, except as their duties are specifically limited by these Bylaws.

Section 7. The Senior Minister shall be the executive head and director of the entire staff. The Senior Minister shall have the authority to delegate to the staff such duties as the Senior Minister deems necessary. The staff of this Church shall consist of all full or part-time personnel compensated by this Church, including those assigned to ministerial, educational, musical, administrative, secretarial, clerical, communications, IT, or custodial responsibilities. It shall be the duty of the Senior Minister to direct the staff in implementing Church policy as the same is established by the Church Council.

Article X

BUSINESS, MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS, NOTICES, AND QUORUM

Section 1. The Annual Meeting shall be held each year on a day designated by the Council between May 15 and June 15. All officers and the Council shall provide a written report at the Annual Meeting.

Section 2. Except as otherwise provided herein, all business meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 3. The Council, the Moderator, the Subcommittee for Advocacy or the Senior Minister may call a meeting of the Active Adult Members. The Moderator shall call a meeting of the Active Adult Members upon receipt of the written request of twenty-five (25) or more Active Adult Members.

Section 4. The notice of a meeting of the Active Adult Members shall specify the time and place of the meeting and the business to be conducted.

The notice of a meeting shall be read from the pulpit on the three (3) successive Sundays preceding the meeting, one of which may be the day of the meeting if the meeting is to follow the Sunday church service. The notice of a meeting shall also be printed in the three (3) successive Church bulletins immediately before the meeting, one of which may be the bulletin printed for the day of the meeting if the meeting is to follow the Sunday church service.

If the meeting is called to consider an amendment to the Articles of Association or the Bylaws, in addition to the notice required above, the proposed amendment shall be mailed to all Active Adult Members at least ten (10) days before the date of the meeting.

Section 5. Except for the special quorum requirements provided in Article X, Section 6, and Article XIV, fifty (50) Active Adult Members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business at any lawfully convened meeting of the Active Members.

Section 6. The quorum for a meeting called for purpose of calling or dismissing the Senior Minister shall be one hundred (100) Active Adult Members present at the meeting (or participating remotely if such remote attendance was authorized by Council).

Section 7. The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the Congregation and the Council. In their absence, the Vice Moderator shall preside. If both the Moderator and Vice Moderator are absent, another lay member selected by the members present shall preside.

Section 8. Only Active Adult Members may vote. The current Membership Rolls of the Church shall be the authority for the eligibility of Active Adult Members to vote at a meeting. Proxy voting shall not be allowed at meetings of members.

Section 9. All elections of officers and Council shall be by majority vote of those present at the meeting or participating via remotely as authorized by Council; provided, however, if a candidate is opposed the vote shall be taken by written ballot.

Section 10. All elections of officers (other than the Senior Minister) and the Council shall be a majority vote of the Active Adult Members present at the meeting or participating remotely (if such remote attendance was authorized by Council). The calling of or dismissal of the Senior Minister shall be by the vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Active Adult Members present at the meeting called for such purpose or participating in the meeting remotely (if such remote attendance was authorized by Council).

Twenty (20) percent of the Active Adult Members present at a meeting called for the purpose of amending the Articles of Association or Bylaws or for calling a minister or dismissing the Senior Minister may require a vote by mail ballot which shall be conducted as soon as practicable after the meeting.

Section 11. Participation in Meeting by Remote Communication. An Active Adult Member may participate in a meeting by a conference telephone or by other means of remote communication through which all persons participating in the meeting may communicate with the other participants, if (a) the Council authorizes such participation; (b) all participants are advised of the means of remote communication and the names of the participants in the meeting; (c) the reasonable measures are implemented by the Council to verify that each person considered present and permitted to vote at the meeting by means of remote communication is an Active Adult Member; (d) reasonable measures are taken to provide each Active Adult Member a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting and to vote on matters submitted to the Active Adult Members, including an opportunity to read or hear proceedings of the meeting substantially concurrently with the proceedings; and (e) if any votes are taken or other actions at the meeting by means of remote communication, a record of the vote or other actions is maintained by Council. Such participation in a meeting constitutes presence in person at the meeting.

Section 12. Electronic Council Meetings. Unless otherwise restricted by the articles of incorporation or these bylaws, the Council may hold its meetings solely by means of remote communication if the requirements of Section 11 are met.

Article XI EDUCATION

Section 1. This Church shall conduct a Church School. As part of Christian training, the students will be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the expenses of the Church.

Section 2. This Church may permit a preschool nursery school to make use of the church property subject to the approval of the Council. The preschool nursery school shall be open to the community as a whole.

Article XII AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. An auxiliary organization is an organization affiliated with this Church, using this Church's name or property; adopting its own constitution, rules, and regulations; electing its own officers; and raising, holding, and distributing its own funds. Subject to the ultimate control of the Council and the Active Adult Members, an auxiliary organization may conduct its own affairs. Auxiliary organizations are regarded as integral parts of this Church, and an annual report of all financial transactions and accounts shall be submitted to the Council and the members.

Article XIII FISCAL YEAR

Section 1. The Fiscal Year of this Church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 in each year.

Article XIV AMENDMENTS

- Section 1. Article II and Article IV may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those voting Active Adult Members present at a meeting called for that purpose. An abstention will not be considered to be a vote.
- Section 2. Article III, Sections 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8, and Article XIV, Section 2, may be amended only by the unanimous written vote of the Active Adult Members of this Church voting on the amendment; provided, however, at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Active Adult Members of this Church must vote on the amendment. An abstention will not be considered to be a vote.
- Section 3. All other Articles of the Bylaws may be amended by simple majority of the Active Adult Members voting at a meeting called for the purpose of amending the Bylaws, provided that fifty (50) Active Adult Members are present at the meeting.
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These Bylaws were approved and adopted at a Congregational Meeting held at 11:30 a.m. on May 17, 2026.

Shari Graham, Moderator

We believe: Faith is a journey,
God is good, Jesus saves, and the Spirit leads
us to faith, hope and love as we honor
the dignity of all God's people.



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