

**A Resolution Authorizing a Trial Run
of new Governance and Ministry Leadership Structures
for the Storrs Congregational Church, Inc., United Church of Christ**

WHEREAS the Storrs Congregational Church, Inc., United Church of Christ (hereafter “SCC”) is a Local Church of the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS each Local Church of the United Church of Christ retains the right to “retain or adopt its own methods of organization, worship and education; to retain or secure its own charter and name; to adopt its own constitution and bylaws;” and otherwise govern “the management of its own affairs” (see *The Constitution of the United Church of Christ*, ¶17); and

WHEREAS being a church of Congregationalist heritage, the ultimate authority for governance of SCC is vested in the gathered membership of the congregation, seeking after the mind of Christ as head of the church; and

WHEREAS the need for change in SCC’s forms of governance and ministry leadership has emerged in various forms for many years; and

WHEREAS the SCC Church Council engaged in an in-depth study of governance issues during its 2013 term, focusing especially on the work of Dan Hotchkiss in the book *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership* (Alban Institute, 2009); and

WHEREAS the Church Council came to strong consensus in 2013 that pursuing governance change along the lines of Hotchkiss’s policy governance paradigm would be a good fit for SCC and would serve well God’s mission and calling for our congregation; and

WHEREAS the Church Council began a process of further educating the congregation on these issues, especially through an interactive congregation-wide workshop with Dan Hotchkiss on February 22, 2014; and

WHEREAS the Church Council appointed at its March 2014 meeting (under the provisions for Ad-hoc Committees in Art. VIII, § 3, ¶ c, of our Bylaws) a Governance Task Force charged with “Develop[ing] a proposal for a governance and ministry structure for the Storrs Congregational Church that clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of the governing body, the ministerial staff, and the congregation in discerning and carrying out the mission of the SCC, as envisioned by the Council in [this] statement[:] ‘A governing body (Council) that represents the membership by articulating mission and vision, evaluating programs, and ensuring responsible stewardship of resources; and a ministerial structure, empowered by the Council to create and administer programs that fulfill that mission and vision, with appropriate delegation of authority to make routine operational decisions, and accountability to the membership through the Council.’”; and

WHEREAS the Governance Task Force has engaged in a wide-ranging process of study, discernment around open questions, proposal development, and proposal refinement over the past 19 months, including close work with the Church Council, extensive information gathering from other congregations that have pursued similar governance changes, numerous educational interactives with the congregation, and extensive communication with the congregation via *The Gist of It* special newsletters; and

WHEREAS the Governance Task Force has developed a comprehensive governance and ministry leadership framework for SCC, embodying a new governance paradigm in a way believed to appropriately fit the culture and context of SCC; and

WHEREAS the Church Council at its May 2015 meeting officially endorsed the overall framework for governance and ministry structures that have been developed by the Governance Task Force; and

WHEREAS the Church Council at its June 2015 meeting received the “Interim Report of the Governance Task Force” and endorsed the proposed timeline therein for implementation of a trial run of the proposals:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Congregation of the Storrs Congregational Church, Inc., United Church of Christ, hereby officially authorize the initiation of a trial run of the overall framework for governance and ministry structures, developed by the Governance Task Force and endorsed by the Church Council, consisting of:

- a philosophy of governance for our congregation;
- the concept of explicit powers reserved for the congregation and the global delegation of all other matters to the governance structures;
- a single directly elected Governing Board of 9 members-at-large of the congregation, 1 UConn student and 1 high school or college-level student;
- a Leadership Discernment Committee structure-and-process for arriving at the nominees for the Governing Board and other offices;
- the concept of global delegation of ministry and operational management from the Governing Board to a ministry structure;
- and a ministry structure headed by the senior minister, employing lead ministry coordinators appointed by the Governing Board, and further filled out by ministry teams and positions “staffed” on a volunteer basis;

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we request any changes to the Bylaws necessary for temporary implementation of the new governance framework be prepared and brought to the Congregation for approval at the Annual Budget Meeting on December 6, 2015; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we request the Church Council to fill-by-appointment current vacancies on the Nominating Committee in accordance with the proposed parameters of the Leadership Discernment Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nominating Committee begin discerning candidates for the proposed Governing Board in preparation for election at the Annual Business Meeting on January 31, 2016; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we authorize the Church Council and Ministerial Staff to transition ministry functions from existing Boards and committees into new ministry structures beginning October 1, 2015, understanding that these transitions are likely to be phased in over many months; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we request appropriate evaluation of the trial run be conducted and preparations be made for a decision at the Annual Business Meeting in January 2017 to either: make permanent the new structures through restatement of our Bylaws, extend

the trial run for up to one additional year, or end the trial and begin reverting to structures and systems in place as of September 27, 2015; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we as a congregation recognize that the process of transitioning between paradigms for governance and ministry leadership is likely to result in moments of confusion or lack-of-clarity, and that throughout this process we commit ourselves to hold each other and our identified leaders in grace and forbearance, and to always seek after the mind of Christ and the furtherance of God's mission through our church.