

Keene Valley Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Structure and How We Operate

In 2002 KVCC changed its Constitution and By-Laws to better reflect the current Congregation, its needs and its desired method of governance. All Boards and Committees were dissolved and a structure was formed that recognized and enabled the interests, gifts and talents of individual members. Members are encouraged to serve in areas that bring them life. This model has worked well for us. The following is a brief description of how we operate.

CONGREGATION

The Congregation is affirmed as the primary decision making body and holding the most authority. We have a minimum of four Congregational meetings each year, one during each quarter. Everyone connected to the church is welcome and encouraged to attend Congregational Meetings. We grant voice to all attending, however voting at this level requires membership in the church. Please note that we have a broad and inclusive definition of membership that is described lower on this page. Congregational meetings are festive and usually last less than ninety minutes.

CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council oversees the month to month operation of the church and develops the agenda for quarterly meetings of the Congregation. The Council is designed as a triage body, steering items to the correct person or body within the church for action. The Council is elected by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting in February. Council positions include: Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and at least three Members At Large. The Ministers and Music Director are ex officio with voice but not vote. Council meetings usually last less than one hour. Anyone is welcome and encouraged to attend Council meetings. Check out online calendar for the schedule.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee is the only standing committee in the Church. It deals strictly with the budget, income, expenses and investments of church funds. It consists of the Treasurer and at least three members elected by the Congregation. Finance Committee meetings usually last less than one hour. The Finance Committee meets in the fall to develop a budget for the coming year. The proposed budget is reviewed by the Council, Interest Groups, and Staff. It is placed on the agenda of our Annual Meeting for congregational vote. In addition there is a Investment Task Force, appointed by the Finance Committee, that meets to review our investments and make recommendations to the Finance Committee.

INTEREST GROUPS

Interest Groups are the ongoing bodies that meet to share ideas and concerns about a specific area. Active Interest Groups include: Mission and Social Action, Buildings, Grounds, Music, Worship, Education, and Fellowship. The heart of the Interest Group model is that membership is self-selected. All members and friends of the Congregation are encouraged to serve on one or more Interest Groups. Our philosophy is that we should put our time and energy into areas that interest us, concern us and bring us life. Additional Interest Groups may be formed at the discretion of the Congregation or Council.

Interest Group Facilitators - The role of facilitator is not to be confused with the traditional role of chairperson. An Interest Group Facilitator is a liaison between the Interest Group, Congregation and staff. The facilitator hosts the Interest Group meetings and draws up the agenda with input from others. In addition, the facilitator sees that information flows between the Interest Groups, other groups, staff and Congregation. The Facilitator is *NOT* responsible for (1) recruiting, (2) getting a task finished, (3) cheerleading or using guilt to move people into action.

Task Forces

The Task Force is the single most active group within our model. A Task Force may be formed by an Interest Group, Council, staff member or the Congregation. A Task Force is bound both by time and task. It is required to dissolve once a task is completed. A Task Force reports its progress to the assigned Interest Group. A Task Force can consist one or more people who agree to complete a designated task within a specified time. A Task Force may break into smaller groups to divide a task into more manageable units. A Task Force *may not* continue onto another task nor expand its responsibilities.

Membership

We offer two types of membership; Full Member and Shared Member

Full Member: One who uses this region as their primary residence or recognizes KVCC as their primary faith community.

Shared Member: One who lives in this region part of the year, regularly visits our region for longer stays, is a member of another faith community, or desires this form of membership. The rights and responsibilities of both types of membership are the same. Non-members are always welcome to participate at all levels of our church with the exception of voting at Congregational meetings.

How Funds Are Spent

Who decides who can spend money and how much? We operate on a model of faith and trust here. There is no specific amount that needs approval, yet the question is always before each body, *“Do we need to collaborate with or seek permission from any other body in the church to spend these funds?”* In general, small expenditures may be made by any Interest Group, Task Force or staff member. Discussion should take place with the Council and Finance Committee for more expensive items. Big ticket items should come before the Congregation through the Council. All expenditures of any size must be reported to the Treasurer and to the Congregation. This encourages feedback and is an excellent check and balance for us.