



# Tewksbury Congregational Church "How To" Manual

Updated 6/2015

## Thank You for Your Service!

Like any other organization, Tewksbury Congregational Church has a way of doing things that isn't always obvious to a new member. The intent of this document is to provide a basic roadmap as to how to navigate through the many procedures we have to keep our church moving in the right direction. While the goal is to cover all possible needs, that is of course impossible and any time you find a situation where there is a lack of clarity as to how to proceed, please contact the Church Moderator, Church Clerk, the Administrative Assistants, or the Board of Ministries. Should that person or group not have an answer for your particular need, they will be able to point you in the right direction or work with you to find a solution. Suggestions and comments aimed at improving this document, or more generally the way we conduct our work are welcome and encouraged and can be directed to the Board of Ministries.

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## The ABC's of ABC's

The real work of TCC happens at the level of our Boards and Committees, conducted by dedicated volunteers like you. All of the standing committees hold regular meetings, referred to as “All Boards & Committees” or “ABCs,” on the second Tuesday of every month except July and August. The authority to conduct specific tasks and manage particular responsibilities is divided amongst the standing committees and several special committees much like the departments of town or state government. The current committees are as follows:

### Standing Committees

There are a total of eight standing committees provided for in the TCC Constitution & Bylaws whose membership is selected by the congregation.

#### Board of Ministries

Executive body of the church, charged with managing the day-to-day governance of the church as well as longer term vision. It is made up of the Pastor, the Moderator (ex officio), and six at-large members. Each at-large member of the Board acts as a liaison to a standing committee to give them a voice on the Board, and provide a two-way conduit of information. The Board approves fundraisers and new program initiatives.

#### Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons is the primary coordinating body of all matters directly relating to worship services of the Church, but works closely with other appropriate committees in planning services. The Deacons assist in the preparation and administration of the ordinances, in caring for the poor, the sick, the sorrowing, the indifferent, and the stranger.

#### Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees oversees the maintenance and improvements of the real and physical property of the Church and parsonage.

#### Finance Committee

The Finance Committee provides general oversight of the finances of the Church and is authorized and empowered to administer the investment programs of the Church. The Finance Committee makes recommendations for the staff employment agreements and review all said agreements prior to any binding

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signatures taking place. The Finance Committee reviews and makes recommendations on all contracts that financially obligate the Church.

### **The Board of Religious Education**

The Religious Education (RE) Board has supervision and direction of the educational work of the Church. It is authorized to select, hire, and supervise lay and professional leadership, including the Director of Religious Education, Church School teachers, and Youth Group leaders. It also coordinates with other committees regarding overall themes for curriculum topics and participates in the educational aspects of social services and benevolences.

### **Music Committee**

The Music Committee assures that music is provided for regular worship services and that opportunities exist for members of the Church to share their musical talents in worship. They are authorized to hire and supervise a music staff which may include a Director of Music whose duties shall be defined by the Committee, as well as an organist, and vocal and hand-bell choir directors. They also provide for the care, maintenance, and use of musical instruments and related materials belonging to the Church.

### **Membership & Enlistment**

The Membership & Enlistment Committee (M&E) works with the Pastor and the Board of Deacons to promote Christian commitment and provide community outreach efforts for the Church. They see to it that new and prospective members are made to feel welcome in our Church. They encourage active participation in the life of the Church on the part of the enrolled membership. They work closely with the Pastor, Registrar, and with the Board of Deacons to assure accurate and updated membership rolls.

### **Missions Committee**

The Missions supervises and coordinates the benevolent plans of the Church. This committee assists in promoting missionary interest and systematic giving of time, talent, and treasure to benevolences. It cooperates with the Board of Religious Education in missions education programs, and it works with other boards, committees, and groups in organizing service projects that will serve to enhance the environment of Tewksbury Congregational Church.

### **Special Committees**

The special committees of the Church operate without the restrictions placed on the standing boards and committees. Members are permitted to sit on other committees and shall not be subject to the same limit of terms as the standing committees. Members of these committees are selected either through appointment by the Board of Ministries or by election at the Elections Meeting as described in each committee description.

### **Memorial Gifts**

The Memorial Gifts Committee consists of four members who are chosen by the Congregation. They maintain the Book of Remembrance and inventory of gifts. They work with potential donors to assist them in making appropriate donations and ensure that such donations are used for their intended purpose.

### **Pastor-Parish Relations**

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee consists of four members who are chosen by the Congregation. The committee serves as a conduit of communication between the Pastor and the Pastoral family and the various members of the Church staff and the Congregation. They work with the Pastor to ensure that the needs and concerns of the pastor and/or church members are addressed, including enhanced opportunities for spiritual and professional growth.

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### **Nominating & Development Committee**

The Nominating & Development Committee consists of four members appointed by the Board of Ministries prior to each Elections Meeting. The committee recruits candidates for the several offices of the Church and committee assignments. The committee provides assistance to boards and committees to fill any vacancies throughout the church year, as well as identify potential candidates for program coordinator positions that report to individual committees.

### **Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee consists of four members chosen by the Board of Ministries. The Personnel Committee insures that annual staff reviews are conducted by the responsible Board or Committee and that the hiring/termination procedure used by the responsible Board or Committee is appropriate.

### **Stewardship Committee**

The Stewardship Committee consists of four members chosen by the Board of Ministries. The committee draws on the assistance of all Boards and Committees as it works to advocate the sharing of gifts by Church members of time, talent, and treasure. They promote and manage the annual stewardship campaign in consultation with the Board of Ministries and work with other committees, specifically the Missions Committee and the Trustees to enhance the environment of Tewksbury Congregational Church. The committee shall publicly and appropriately acknowledge the contributions of Church members to these ends.

### **Technology Committee**

The Technology Committee is another ad hoc committee formed at the 2013 Budget Session of the Annual Meeting. It is charged with exploring potential technological enhancements to our building to improve the worship experience and the distribution of information to and from our members and friends.

### **Meetings**

As described above, all of the standing committees hold regular meetings (ABCs) on the second Tuesday of every month except July and August with all members of the standing boards and committees gathering in a circle at 7:15. The Church Moderator calls the meeting to order and individual members make announcements, provide updates, or otherwise distribute information of general interest to the lay leadership of the church. At approximately 7:30 the gathering is closed with a prayer and the members of the boards and committees go to their individual meetings. Occasionally the Moderator will call the meeting to begin at 7 pm or to extend to 7:45 for special presentations or other such activities.

Boards and committees may find it necessary at times to meet outside the monthly ABC meetings, and should feel empowered to do so. The use of electronic communication such as email can be a powerful tool for distribution of materials prior to and after meetings, sharing documents for editing, and general information, but should not be used regularly as a substitute for face-to-face meetings.

In addition to the regular monthly meetings of the Boards and Committees, the congregation gathers for two meetings annually to authorize the distribution of resources (Budget Meeting in January) and to elect officers and committee members (Elections Meeting in May) to conduct the business of the church.

### **Running an Efficient Meeting**

While each committee will find a pattern of activity that works for that particular group dynamic, the following represent some suggestions to conduct productive meetings.

- Call the meeting to order on time
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- Determination of quorum (three members); a lesser number may adjourn, recess, or informally discuss, but cannot take formal votes.
- Approval of agenda and minutes – on each, motion, second, discussion, vote; the easiest way to take minutes is that they follow the same outline as the agenda.
- Robert’s Rules – default procedure, though not generally used in our meetings.
- Discussion – fair, but not drawn out
- Minutes – A secretary for each committee should be identified for each committee to keep accurate minutes of all meetings. Once approved, minutes of each meeting should be stored in the appropriate committee binder in the Church Office.
- Voting – question moved, seconded, and discussed; Chair’s determination of no objection counts as a vote; all must be recorded accurately in the minutes.
- Delegate – a quick way to dispense with action for which discussion will no longer get anywhere.
- Adjournment – on time if pre-determined, otherwise two hours following call to order is usually the limit of attention spans and effectiveness.
- Reporting – In an effort to improve communication throughout the church, each committee is asked to submit a summary of their activities to the Church Office after each monthly meeting. These are distributed the week after the ABC’s.

### **Managing your Budget**

Each January at our Budget Meeting the Congregation approves a budget for planned expenditures across all of the ministries of our church (our fiscal year is the calendar year). Each committee has the responsibility of managing their budget to conduct their work with the assistance of the Finance Committee. Once approved, the budget is understood to be a good-faith estimation of the expected expenditures for each individual committee. The individual committees will have jurisdiction over their component of the budget with the authority to manage the actual expenditure levels of each specified line item, or add an additional item so long as they notify the Finance Committee prior to any expenditures under the new line item of their intentions, and maintain their overall budget within the total granted to their committee by the congregation. Modifications to salaries and salary-related items are not permitted under this provision. Individual committee authority will only apply to modifications or additions up to a limit of the lesser of 1% of the total church budget or 25% of the committee budget each fiscal year. For the purposes of this provision, the committee budget will exclude salaries and salary related items. In situations involving larger amounts, congregational approval is required.

During the fall (October – November), each board and committee must review its expenditures and begin to determine its proposed expenditures for the following year. They will work with the Board of Ministries to determine how their programs fit within the larger ministries of the church, and determine areas of emphasis and therefore greater resource allocation.

### **Policy & Procedure Manual**

Each board and committee should maintain a policy and procedures manual to document the details of its work such that incoming members are provided a clear rationale for the work to be conducted, and that institutional memory is maintained.

### **TCC Virtual Office**

Many of the forms required to conduct the business of the church have been generated in an electronic fillable form, and can be accessed on our church website, specifically at the TCC Virtual Office (<http://www.tewksburycc.org/virtualoffice/>). Hard copies of these forms can be found in the church office.

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## The Master Calendar

The master calendar is maintained online through a link on our TCC website, and is the ONLY comprehensive record of the many events at TCC. In order to schedule an event at TCC, a member should go through the following procedure:

1. If the event in question is a fundraiser or might otherwise generate revenue, it should be approved by the appropriate standing committee, forwarded to the Finance Committee for recommendation, and then passed to the Board of Ministries for final approval
2. Review the calendar to determine if potential dates have been previously booked for other events
3. Contact the Master Calendar Coordinator ([tcc.master.calendar@gmail.com](mailto:tcc.master.calendar@gmail.com)) to tentatively schedule the event, securing those dates from subsequent double-booking
4. If specific room usage is required, a Room Rental Form should be submitted to the Board of Trustees, even for church-sponsored events (no cost).
5. Once necessary approvals are in place, confirm with Master Calendar Coordinator that event will go on, and it will be posted on the calendar

## Membership Database

The church currently subscribes to an online database that maintains a list of all of our members and regular attendees. This is accessible online from anywhere, and can be a powerful resource when you need to contact a church member or find a volunteer for a particular event. Based on the responses on the "Time and Talents" survey collected during the annual pledge drive, members are placed into various "ministries" for specific skills or activities. Some of these ministries include painting, baking, clean up, setting up tables, etc. The software allows an email to be sent to every member of the ministry to ask for volunteers. Additional features are available as well and committee members and officers are encouraged to explore them.

## Purchasing Request and Reimbursement Process

In order to conduct the work of the church, it is often necessary to order supplies and services from various vendors. In order for this to happen in an orderly and efficient manner, a process is in place for requesting a check to pay for a service (Purchase Request) or to be reimbursed for the purchase of supplies (Reimbursement Request). The respective form needs to be completed and submitted to the Chair of the Committee with oversight of the particular item. Once approved by the Committee Chair, the form must be passed to the Treasurer for processing.

## Submitting a New Proposal

When a committee, staff member, or other member of the church wants to start up a new program or initiative, there is a process to make sure that it fits within the overall mission of the church and does not duplicate or conflict with other programs. This occurs by submitting a "white paper" to the Board of Ministries for review and approval. The Board will direct the applicant to the appropriate resources within the church, identify potential areas of concern, and finally approve or deny the proposal based on the discernment of the Board with regards to the value and impact of the proposed activity. If the proposed activity falls outside the budget of a standing committee, the applicant may submit their idea through the New Initiative Fund which the congregation enacted at the 2011 Budget Meeting.

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## Submitting an Event Request

Several committees, fellowship groups, and other groups at TCC sponsor events within the TCC community and to the outside community as well. An event, for the purposes of this procedure is any activity, regardless of size, that is available to the entire congregation. All events must follow these procedures. Church meetings as defined by our bylaws, scheduling of a room for the purpose of a meeting, or any other meeting that is not open to the entire congregation are not subject to this procedure. Every event must be sponsored by a board or committee.

In order to provide an appropriate timing and tenor of Event activities at TCC, the following procedure should be adhered to:

1. Group or individual desiring to hold an event seeks initial approval from the responsible board or committee (i.e., youth group presents request to Religious Education).
2. After the Responsible Board/Committee reviews and agrees to the proposal they will forward the request to any staff member, board or committee with potential interest, to the Finance Committee if there is a fundraising component to the event, and then to the Board of Ministries (BOM) for review.
3. The BOM reviews the request and any relevant input from interested committees, and may request a meeting with interested parties, if clarification of the event is needed to determine if the event is warranted
4. The BOM makes a determination of the proposed event, based on its merits with regards to outreach potential, the image of the church in the community, the goals of TCC as a whole, whether it conflicts with other scheduled Events and other such qualitative measures.
5. The BOM will generate a notice to all boards and committees to ensure no conflicts and then gives a written response regarding the reasons for the decision. A written summary of the decision is encouraged for the interest of institutional memory.
6. If the Event is approved a copy of the Proposal Form will be given to the sponsoring board or committee for completion of the follow-up interview.
7. Once an Event has occurred, the sponsoring board or committee shall meet with the contact person or appropriate planners to ascertain the success of the Event and what, if any, improvements should be considered in the future.
8. Once the interview is conducted, the form is forwarded to the BOM for filing.

The entire process for planning and getting approval for an event is outlined on the Event Proposal Form which can be obtained from the TCC Virtual Office (<http://www.tewksburycc.org/virtualoffice>) or the Church Office.

## Submitting a Room Rental/Use Form

While it is not necessary to reserve a room for a committee meeting, any special event should be scheduled with the Board of Trustees and the Master Calendar Coordinator (see above). There is no charge for the use of the room for church-related activities but in order to ensure no conflicts of scheduling with other boards and committees or with our several renters, it is imperative that a room rental form is filled out and submitted to the Board of Trustees.

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## Posting a TCC Flash Article

This past winter, a new and improved method of rapid communication was developed by our webmaster called the TCC Flash. Members are able to immediately post information to our website including attaching documents, email links, and weblinks. The page is managed by the Board of Ministries. Each article has a limit of 200 words, but additional information can be included in an attached document. You are encouraged to post relevant information as needed for your committee work through the following procedure:

1. Go to the TCC Flash on our website at: <http://www.tewksburycc.org/flash>
2. Click on the "Submit an article to TCC Flash" link at the bottom of the page
3. Login with your name and the password (request from the Church Office or the Board of Ministries)
4. Click the "Add an Article" link at the top of the page
5. Fill out the webform as described, making sure to check the security boxes with regards to the use of images and/or peoples last names
6. Set the article to expire after an appropriate amount of time. Flash is designed to convey information for a short period of time and to be regularly updated. Longer articles, or permanent information should be included in the newsletter or elsewhere on the TCC website as appropriate
7. Click "Submit" and then go back to the TCC Flash page and confirm that it looks as you wished
8. You can edit your article by going back to the "Submit an article to TCC Flash" link

## Contributing to the Newsletter

TCC Connections, the newly revised newsletter is published 4 times a year, with quarterly deadlines published by the office staff. The newsletter is managed by the administrative assistants with content provided from several boards and committees, officers, and staff. Questions related to the newsletter should be addressed to the Church Office or the Board of Ministries.

## Submitting a Warrant Article

The business of the church to be conducted at all official meetings must be brought to the congregation through a warrant petition process. The warrants calling meetings of the Church shall be prepared and posted by the Clerk of the Church on at least one Sunday previous to the meeting. Proposed articles for the Warrants shall be submitted to the Clerk in writing by Officers, Boards, Committees, or by written request of three (3) active members. The Warrant Petition Form should be submitted to the Clerk to call a Special Meeting or add an article to the Budget or Elections Meeting.

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