

Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ
411 South Washington Street
Spokane, Washington 99204-2617
Phone: 509-624-1366



Westminster Congregational Church
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

The Constitution

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Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ

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CONSTITUTION

1 ARTICLE I: NAME

2 This church shall be known as WESTMINSTER CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF
3 CHRIST of Spokane, Washington.

4
5 ARTICLE II: OBJECT

6 The object of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ in covenant
7 relationship for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God and in the proclamation of the good
8 news of the gospel according to the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as set
9 forth in Holy Scripture.

10

11 ARTICLE III: FAITH AND COVENANT

12 Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus
13 Christ, Son of God and Savior. It acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who share in this
14 confession. It looks to the Word of God in Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy
15 Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of
16 the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the
17 Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make the
18 faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in the purity of
19 heart before God. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice of evangelical
20 Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.
21 (From the Preamble to the UCC Constitution.)

22

23 Within this church, the various expressions of the church relate to each other in a covenantal
24 manner. Each expression of the church has responsibilities and rights in relation to the others, to
25 the end that the whole church will seek God's will and be faithful to God's mission. Decisions
26 are made in consultation and collaboration among the various parts of the structure. As members
27 of the Body of Christ, each expression of the church is called to honor and respect the work and
28 ministry of each other part. Each expression of the church listens, hears, and carefully considers
29 the advice, counsel, and requests of others. In this covenant, the various expressions of
30 Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ seek to walk together in all God's ways.

31

32 (Articles of Incorporation were filed on March 23, 1891 as First Congregational Church of
33 Spokane Falls, and amended on April 16, 1894, changing the corporate name to Westminster
34 Congregational Church of Spokane. The congregation joined the United Church of Christ on
35 April 20, 1961.)

36

37 The Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ

38

39 The UCC Statement of Faith was adopted in 1959 by General Synod, UCC.

40

41 We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother and to
whose deeds we testify:

42

43 God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the
44 ways of life and death.

45

42 God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.
43 God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through prophets
44 and apostles.
45 In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and
46 shared our common lot, conquering sin and death, and reconciling the whole creation to its
47 creator.
48 God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding
49 in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.
50 God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the
51 service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers
52 of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.
53 God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in
54 the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and
55 eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.
56 Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.
57 (This adaptation of the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ by Robert V.
58 Moss, Jr. Revised in 1976 by Dr. Moss, president of the United Church of Christ 1969-1976 in
59 the Form of a Doxology was authorized by Executive Council in 1981.)
60

61 Westminster Covenant

62 I covenant with you, members and friends of Westminster Congregational United Church of
63 Christ:
64 To create and hold an open, trusting Christian community where we can each discover our
65 unique relationship with God;
66 To accept you as we seek ways to resolve our differences, and to rejoice as a community of faith
67 and trust;
68 To seek opportunities for expression of faith by sharing talents and resources with our church,
69 community and world;
70 To celebrate with you the power of God's call and God's love.
71 (Adopted by congregation, August 23, 1987.)
72

73 Open and Affirming Statement

74 Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ publicly declares that gay, lesbian,
75 bisexual and transgender people are welcome in the full life and ministry of our congregation.
76 We affirm human sexuality as a good gift of God, and that a person's sexual orientation –
77 whether gay, bisexual, or heterosexual – is no barrier to God's love or full participation in
78 Christ's church. Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ embraces a spirit of
79 hospitality founded in the gospels of Jesus Christ and a willingness to live out that welcome in
80 meaningful ways. As an Open and Affirming Church, our longstanding culture of welcome
81 extends to all people regardless of sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, gender, physical ability,
82 socioeconomic status or faith background.
83 (Adopted by the congregation at Annual Meeting, February 7, 2007.)
84

85 Statement of Mission and Values

86 We are a welcoming faith community who seek to strengthen our relationships with God
87 and each other by exploring, questioning and nurturing our spirituality. Responding to
88 God's unconditional love, and with Jesus as our model, we strive to live out love,
89 compassion, and inclusion.
90 (Adopted at Special Congregational Meeting, November 15, 2009.)

91

92 ARTICLE IV: POLITY

93 This church, as an integral part of the United Church of Christ, acknowledges as its sole head
94 Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Savior of all. Corporately and individually, its members ask
95 and constantly seek guidance through faith, reason and conscience in all affairs of His Church.

96 The government of this church is vested in its members who, with Christ's guidance, exercise the
97 absolute right of control in all its affairs. This church accepts the obligations of mutual counsel,
98 comity and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of the United Church of Christ as
99 represented by the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ and by the
100 General Synod of the United Church of Christ, and pledges itself to share in their common aims
101 and work.

102 This church shall be in fellowship with all others who seek to promote the Kingdom of God to the
103 end that they might be united in so doing.

104

105 ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

106 Section 1. The active membership of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ shall
107 consist of all persons who are baptized and publicly profess their Christian faith, or who present
108 satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches, or, in cases where they come from churches
109 that do not grant letters of transfer, who reaffirm their Christian faith. All persons desiring to
110 become active members of this church shall be considered and recommended by the Diaconate,
111 who in turn shall present to the church the names of such as may be recommended for active
112 membership.

113 Section 2. Duties – Active members shall be, so far as they are able, faithful in all spiritual
114 duties essential to the Christian life and shall attend habitually the services of this church and
115 give regularly for its support and its benevolences and otherwise share in its work. Habitual
116 attendance, for active members under the age of seventy-five, shall be considered at least once
117 per quarter. Regular financial donation or voluntary service, at least once per quarter, shall be
118 considered financial support for the church.

119 Section 3. Rights – The active members of this church shall constitute it as a body ecclesiastical
120 and temporal and each shall share equally in determining its course

121 Section 4. Release – Active or inactive members in good standing, may, upon request to and by
122 the vote of the Diaconate:

- 123 (a) be granted a letter of transfer to any Christian church.
124 (b) be given a certificate of dismissal and his/her name removed from the roll of members if
125 he/she wishes to join a body not in fellowship with this church, or
126 (c) be released from membership if, after due consideration and deliberation, he/she is
127 insistent in the request for such release.

128 Section 5. Inactive membership – Members whose addresses have been long unknown, or who
129 for a period of one year, have not met the threshold for active membership as stated in Section 2,
130 above, may, by vote of the Diaconate, be transferred to the inactive roll. A person who has
131 inactive status shall not have the rights specified for members herein, nor be counted as a
132 member. A member on inactive status may appeal to the Diaconate to have his/her active status
133 reinstated after meeting the threshold for active membership as stated in Section 2, above, for a
134 period of two quarters. Members, whose participation has been disrupted because of illness
135 and/or temporary non-residence, shall be considered active. Such persons shall be granted the
136 right to vote, if they have given notice, in writing, of the cause of their absence.

137 Section 6. Restoration – Any person whose membership has been released in this church may be
138 reinstated in the same manner as a new member. Any inactive member may change his/her

139 status to that of active member by participating in church functions and by request to the
140 Diaconate to change his/her status.

141

142 ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

143 Section 1. General Powers – The membership is the supreme authority of this church with
144 respect to all phases of church life and the conduct of its secular affairs. It hereby delegates such
145 powers and duties to the officers, ministers, Church Council and boards as duly adopted by-laws
146 may provide, and the same may be changed from time to time in accordance herewith.

147 Section 2. Annual Meeting – The annual meeting of the church shall be held on the last Sunday
148 of February each year, unless otherwise provided by the Church Council upon due notice per
149 Section 3 of this Article. At such meeting, forty (40) members shall constitute a quorum
150 necessary for the conduct of business. Conduct of the meeting will be in accordance with
151 Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised.

152 Section 3. Business Meetings – At any regular meeting for worship, the church may, without
153 special notice, act upon the reception of members. Special business meetings shall be called by
154 the clerk at the request of the Church Council or upon written application of twenty-five (25)
155 members specifying the object therefore; the time, place and procedure of such meeting shall be
156 determined by the Church Council, provided however, that such meeting shall be held not later
157 than thirty (30) days after the receipt of such request or application by the clerk. Notice of any
158 special meeting shall be read at all worship services preceding it and shall be published in the
159 church news or otherwise mailed to each member, providing however, that no such meeting shall
160 be held unless the notice be read aloud from the pulpit in at least two successive Sunday services
161 preceding the set date. At such special meeting forty (40) members shall constitute a quorum
162 necessary for the conduct of business. Members may be duly represented by proxy.

163

164 ARTICLE VII: Decision-making power regarding Church property

165 No board or body of the church shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any
166 real property without a vote of the membership so authorizing, provided, however, that the
167 proposed authorization be stated in the call for such meeting; except the Board of Trustees may
168 buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer real property other than the church sanctuary building
169 without such a vote of the membership where the value of the property is \$50,000 or less or the
170 lease term is ten (10) years or less.

171

172 ARTICLE VIII: DISSOLUTION

173 In the event of dissolution of the congregation, the procedure shall be in compliance with state
174 and federal laws regarding non-profit organizations. All assets shall be donated to the Pacific
175 Northwest Conference of the UCC. No funds shall benefit any Member of the Westminster
176 Congregational UCC.

177

178 ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENT

179 This constitution may be amended by a three-fourths affirmative vote of the members present
180 and entitled to vote at any annual or business meeting duly called.

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230 BY-LAWS

231
232 ARTICLE I: SERVICES

233 Section 1. Worship – Public services shall be held on the Lord’s Day at such times as may be
234 designated by the Diaconate for worship.

235 Section 2. Sacraments – The Lord’s Supper shall be celebrated at such regular times as the
236 Diaconate shall designate. Baptism or consecration shall be administered at such times as the
237 minister(s) may designate.

238 Section 3. Other Services – Other services of worship, inspiration, prayer and study may be held
239 as determined by the minister(s) and/or the Diaconate.

240
241 ARTICLE II: THE MINISTRY

242 Section 1. Nature – Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ recognizes that God
243 calls certain individuals to forms of ministry in and on behalf of the church for which
244 ecclesiastical authorization is required. A call to the position of Senior Minister or of Associate
245 Minister shall require ordination. The Call of an Ordained, Licensed or Commissioned Minister
246 establishes a covenantal relationship with both the authorized Minister and the United Church of
247 Christ as represented by Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ.

248 Section 2. Duties – The Senior Minister, with associates and staff, if any, shall administer the
249 spiritual functioning, educational ministry and general welfare of the church with the advice and
250 counsel of the boards of the church. They shall seek to enlist individuals as followers of Christ,
251 preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, provide for the services of worship and assist, as
252 necessary, in the activities of the church and its various bodies. They shall be ex officio advisors
253 to all boards, committees or other church bodies. All church staff and employees shall be
254 responsible to the Senior Minister, subject to personnel policies adopted pursuant to Article IV,
255 Section 3. c.

256 Section 3. Selection – When a vacancy occurs in a position subject to call, a pastoral search
257 committee appointed by the Church Council shall make appropriate canvas of available
258 candidates, select one best suited, introduce him/her to the church and at a business meeting
259 propose his/her calling. The church will act in partnership with its Conference as it seeks, calls,
260 and installs pastoral and other leadership. The Pastor(s) shall have, or show that he/she will
261 obtain, ministerial standing in the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ.

262 Section 4. Tenure and Dismissal –The term of service of a minister may be ended by the
263 minister or by the church acting in business session, upon sixty days notice to the other. In the
264 event any minister loses his/her ministerial standing, he/she shall be forthwith dismissed as
265 minister of this church.

266
267 ARTICLE III: OFFICERS

268 Section 1. Moderator – A Moderator shall be chosen by vote of the members at an Annual
269 Meeting to serve for a term of two years. The Moderator shall preside over Church Council
270 meetings and all regular and specially called business meetings of the congregation. The
271 Moderator, in consultation with the Minister(s) and professional staff, shall have general
272 executive supervisory duties over the affairs of the church with the Church Council and shall be
273 considered an ex officio member of all organizations of the church.

274 Section 2. Clerk – A Clerk shall be chosen by vote of the members at an annual meeting to serve
275 for a term of two years. The Clerk shall be secretary of the Church Council and of all business
276 meetings of the church. The Clerk shall, with the help of church administrative staff, keep full
277 records of the membership and congregation at the direction of the Diaconate, including records
278 of baptisms and marriages; have custody of all official files; give notice of the annual and special

279 meetings of the church; and issue letters of transfer authorized by the Diaconate, notifying the
280 churches to which they are addressed. It shall be his/her duty to assure preparation of the
281 statistics of the church and filing the reports made by the boards, committees, chapters and
282 officers for publication at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting.

283 Section 3. Treasurer or Financial Secretary – A Treasurer shall be chosen by vote of the
284 members at an annual meeting to serve for a term of two years, or a professional Financial
285 Secretary shall be hired. The Treasurer or Financial Secretary shall be an ex officio member of
286 the Board of Trustees without vote and at their direction receive, disburse and account for all
287 monies entrusted to the church. The Treasurer or Financial Secretary shall maintain complete
288 financial records as required for review by the Board of Trustees, the Church Council and the
289 general membership.

290 Section 4. Eligibility and Vacancy – No elected Moderator shall be eligible immediately to
291 succeed him/herself to a full term. A vacancy in the office of Moderator shall be filled by vote
292 of the membership at a business meeting duly called. Any interim vacancy occurring in the
293 office of Treasurer or of Clerk shall be filled for the un-expired term by appointment by the
294 Church Council.

295

296 ARTICLE IV: CHURCH COUNCIL

297 Section 1. Council – The Church Council shall consist of the Moderator, the Clerk, two
298 members-at-large, the Treasurer, the Chair or the designated representative of each board
299 (Diaconate, Trustees, Serving Our Neighbors, Education and Spiritual Growth Board, Music &
300 Arts), and a designated representative of each additional Council recognized committee (for
301 example WestCAT, Women’s Chapters and Personnel Committee. No individual will have more
302 than one vote on any issue before the Council. A quorum shall be seven (7) of its members. The
303 Council shall act as the coordinating body of the church with the duty to formulate policy and to
304 exercise the general interim government of the church between meetings of the membership
305 including the appointment of interim subcommittees as needed.

306 Section 2. Members-at-Large – Two (2) Members-at-large of the Council shall be chosen at an
307 annual meeting to serve for a two year term. One Member-at-Large of the Council shall serve as
308 assistant moderator, in the absence of the moderator, or, in the case of a vacancy in the office of
309 moderator, until the election of the moderator’s successor but not to exceed sixty (60) days. The
310 other Member-at-Large shall serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee. This Member-at-
311 Large shall initiate on-going nominating duties as vacancies on Boards occur during the program
312 year. The Church Council shall approve appointments to Boards and committees that occur
313 between annual meetings.

314 Section 3. Subcommittees of the Church Council –

- 315 a. The Council shall designate an annual stewardship drive committee which shall
316 function as a time limited committee appropriate to the annual pledge drive.
- 317 b. The Nominating Committee shall be formed annually of 3 persons, chaired by one
318 Member-at-Large. The Nominating committee is charged with finding persons
319 committed to serve on the working Boards and leadership positions of the church.
320 The committee is charged to try to achieve a reasonable balance with regard to
321 gender and to age.
- 322 c. The Personnel Committee of not less than three (3) or more than five (5) persons
323 shall be appointed or renewed annually by the Church Council. The Personnel
324 Committee shall conduct an annual salary review no later than November and
325 report these recommendations to the Board of Trustees. They shall oversee an
326 annual performance review of both the professional and support staff of the
327 church no later than November and report on these reviews to the Council. The

- 328 Personnel Committee shall present job descriptions and position qualifications for
329 administrative and support staff positions for approval by the Church Council
330 (Bookkeeper/Office Manager, Publications Secretary, Building Caretaker, Youth
331 and Education Coordinators, musicians). The Personnel Committee shall involve
332 other boards as necessary in the formulation of job descriptions and qualifications
333 to support their programming goals.
- 334 d. A Pastoral Relations Committee may be appointed annually by the Church
335 Council of not less than three (3) or more than five (5) persons to serve on a
336 committee to support the Pastor and facilitate communication between the
337 congregation and the Pastor.
- 338 e. A Leadership Planning Committee may organize an annual workshop or retreat
339 event to facilitate and inspire planning and goal setting for both short and long-
340 term programs of all boards and organizations of the church.
- 341 f. A Technology Committee may be appointed by the Council to design and manage
342 the multimedia needs of the congregation: website, web2 presence, and media
343 presentation opportunities within the congregation.

344 ARTICLE V: BOARDS

345 Section 1. TERMS

346 The terms for membership on the working Boards shall be limited to three consecutive terms.
347 Any action arising from any board or committee of the church requiring a vote of the members
348 shall be received by the Council prior to submission to the membership in a congregational
349 meeting. Each board shall elect from their members a committee chair and secretary.

350 Section 2. **The Diaconate** – The Diaconate shall consist of at least eight (8) members, with half
351 to be elected at each annual meeting to serve for a term of two (2) years. With the clergy and
352 staff, the Diaconate shall assist in ministering to the spiritual needs of the church and
353 community. It shall:

- 354 (a) **assist** in the worship program by preparing the sanctuary for service, assisting in the
355 preparation and distribution of communion, and assisting in a spiritual, orderly, safe and
356 prayerful worship service.
- 357 (b) **administer** the orientation and admission process of new members, and **assist** with
358 their integration into congregational life.
- 359 (c) **oversee** visitation within the congregation, particularly attending to those ill or shut-
360 in, inactive members and the prayer chain.
- 361 (d) **expand and increase** church membership by greeting new visitors with openness and
362 welcoming.
- 363 (e) **work with** Board of Christian Nurture to promote fellowship among the church
364 membership, also work with the Board of Music and Arts for Sunday and seasonal
365 worship.
- 366 (f) **appoint** such special groups from time to time as required to carry out the above or
367 any other matter related to the spiritual life of the church and the community.

368 Section 3. **Education and Spiritual Growth Board** – The Education and Spiritual Growth
369 Board shall consist of at least six (6) members, with at least half to be elected at each annual
370 meeting for a term of two (2) years. The Education and Spiritual Growth Board oversees the
371 educational and renewal programs of the church; specifically the Education and Spiritual Growth
372 Board shall:

- 373 (a) provide opportunities for continued growth in faith by all members and age groups of
374 the church by whatever means are most appropriate;
- 375 (b) provide a program of fellowship for youth and young adults;
- 376

- 377 (c) support a program of guidance in spiritual identification for youth;
378 (d) promote Christian fellowship in coordination with all organizations of the church by
379 means of retreats, conferences, recreational events, all-church activities, special interest
380 groups, community projects, etc.;
- 381 (e) support the welcome and integration of new members;
382 (f) appoint such special groups as necessary, to carry out the above or any other matter
383 related to education, fellowship and renewal in the church.

384 Section 4. **Serving Our Neighbors** – Serving Our Neighbors shall consist of at least six (6)
385 members, half to be elected at each annual meeting to serve for a term of two years. Serving Our
386 Neighbors shall be responsible for furthering the ministry of the church in the community, the
387 nation and the world; continually seeking to direct the church community to the social
388 implications of the Christian faith. Specifically, Serving Our Neighbors shall:

- 389 (a) direct and promote outreach activities;
390 (b) encourage Christian service outside the congregation through, among others, those
391 programs sponsored and endorsed by the instrumentalities of the United Church of
392 Christ;
393 (c) identify and provide opportunities for participation in community/ecumenical projects ;
394 (d) bring to the attention of the congregation areas of concern and public policy to which the
395 Christian faith speaks and calls for responsible action; and
396 (e) appoint such special groups as may seem required to carry out the above or any other
397 matter related to the outreach mission of the church.

398 Section 5. **Music and Arts** – The Board for Music and Arts shall consist of at least six (6)
399 members, half to be elected at each annual meeting to serve for a term of two years. The board
400 shall:

- 401 (a) supervise the music of the church for all public services, and have general supervision of
402 the music department of the church, and
403 (b) recommend to the Church Council for their approval the engagement of a musician and
404 the director of the choir.
405 (c) sponsor from time to time activities by which the performing arts, arts and crafts, and the
406 fine arts may enrich the lives and faith of this church and of the community.
407 (d) recommend to the Church Council and Trustees upgrades and improvements to the
408 appearance of the sanctuary and other public areas of the church.

409 Section 6. **Trustees** – The Board of Trustees shall consist of at least seven (7) members, with
410 approximately one half to be elected at alternate annual meetings to serve for a term of two
411 years. The Trustees shall hold in trust the property of the church and shall have jurisdiction over
412 all business and financial affairs of the church, excepting those specified in the By Laws as being
413 assigned to the Personnel Committee. The Trustees shall:

- 414 (a) oversee the work of the Treasurer and designated employee, to receive, disburse, and
415 account for all funds: operating funds, trusts, estates, program accounts, memorials,
416 and other gifts, including full disclosure of the church's investment portfolio;
417 1. Review monthly reports (P&L, Balance Sheet) at Trustee meetings,
418 2. Review and prepare quarterly budget reports to Church Council,
419 3. Prepare the Annual Financial Report to Congregation, and present at the
420 Annual Meeting. However no budget shall be presented to the congregation
421 without a majority vote of approval by both the Trustees and the Church
422 Council. The Trustees shall facilitate congregational review, discussion, and
423 vote for final approval at a special meeting before year end. Thus the final

424 decision, and therefore the fiscal responsibility, rests on the entire membership
425 of the congregation, not solely, the Trustees or the Council.

426 4. Trustees have primary responsibility for the maintenance and proper
427 utilization of all physical church property.

428 (b) Select the Second Century Endowment Trustees, a committee of 3 including one
429 member of the Board of Trustees, who oversee the management of the church's
430 investments and promote the Second Century Endowment.

431 (c) Oversee the accounting practices of the church in accordance with recognized
432 accounting standards, and periodically selecting an auditor or audit committee to
433 examine all accounts of the church and present audit report to the Council.

434 (d) Promote additional income through rentals, planned giving, grant writing, and other
435 fundraising projects.

436 (e) Appoint special groups or sub-committees as needed to carry out the business and
437 financial affairs of the church.

438 Section 7. Active Non-Members – Active non-members may serve on any Board or Committee
439 of the church. Non-members may not serve as board chairs, voting members of the church
440 council, or as voting delegates to the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the
441 United Church of Christ. Any board must have a majority of church members.

442

443 ARTICLE VI: BY-LAW AMENDMENTS

444 The by-laws may be amended by a simple majority vote of members present in person or by
445 proxy at any annual or business meeting duly called.