

CONSTITUTION AND COVENANT
OF THE
NEW IPSWICH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(Conservative Congregational Christian Conference)

Approved at the Annual Meeting January 26, 2020
As Amended June 30, 2024

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this Church is the New Ipswich Congregational Church (also known as The
Congregational Church of New Ipswich, New Ipswich, NH) located at
156 Main St.
New Ipswich NH
hereafter noted as “NICC” throughout the remainder of this document.

ARTICLE II

AFFILIATION

NICC as a fully autonomous church is affiliated with the Conservative Congregational Christian
Conference (hereafter noted as “CCCC” throughout the remainder of this document) 8941 Highway 5
Lake Elmo Minnesota, its New England Congregational Christian Fellowship and in fellowship with all
churches which acknowledge Jesus as Christ to be their divine Redeemer and Lord. The following
affirmation of faith, adopted by the CCCC is a testimony of things believed among us:

We believe in the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the only inspired, inerrant,
infallible, authoritative Word of God written. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in
three persons- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ, in his virgin birth,
in his sinless life, in his miracles, in his vicarious and atoning death through his shed blood, in his
bodily resurrection, in his ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in his personal return in power
and glory. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is
absolutely necessary. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling power
and fullness, the Christian is enabled to live a godly life in the present fallen world. We believe in the
resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they
that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation. We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in
Christ.

ARTICLE III

The purpose of NICC is to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20) locally and
globally, drawing non-Christians and the un-churched to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and
Lord, to disciple Christians to become obedient followers of Jesus Christ and well-equipped ministers
for Him and to exalt and worship God in all things. (Colossians 3:15-17)

ARTICLE IV

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

1. POLITY- Under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15-20) the government of NICC is vested in the body of members (I Corinthians 12:27) and their appointed representatives; hereafter identified as the Church Council, (I Corinthians 12:28) who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but recognizes and sustains the covenant of mutual council cooperation with the CCCC.
2. NICC is subject to the Articles of Incorporation granted by the State of New Hampshire on October 30, 1934. It is a qualified non-profit Church under the provisions of section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Code.
3. If NICC should conclude its ministry and be dissolved, none of its assets remaining after meeting all responsibilities and payment of all obligations shall inure to the benefit of any individual member of the Church, its officers, or other private individuals. Such assets, if any, shall in the event of dissolution be assigned by action of its members, at a properly called meeting, to such other organizations which are in harmony with the objectives of the Church, and which are exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERSHIP

THE RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

By salvation and baptism

Any person recommended by a member of NICC, who, giving evidence of a changed heart and who publicly professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ may present themselves in a worship service to be received by the Church family. Upon acceptance of the NICC Affirmation of Faith, Church Covenant and believers' baptism by immersion, a confirming vote by the congregation will be held the following week.

By Transfer of Letter

Persons who are members of other churches, who upon their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ having been previously baptized, accepting the NICC Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant maybe accepted by virtues of their letters duly granted by said churches and by a confirming vote of the congregation.

By Restoration.

Former members of this church who have been excluded "for cause" who give evidence of repentance, may upon recommendation by the Church Council be restored to membership by a confirming vote of the congregation. Members whose name has been placed on the Inactive Membership list who renew relationship with the church may be restored to active membership by a vote of the Church Council.

THE RECEPTION OF MEMBERS (cont.)

Associate Membership.

Any person who desires to cooperate in the ministries of this church, who have not committed to believers' baptism by immersion, including those who would retain membership in another church may become an Associate Member upon recommendation by the Church Council, public profession of faith, NICC Affirmation of Faith and the Church Covenant and upon a confirming vote by the congregation. Associate Members have all the rights and privileges in the conduct and fellowship of NICC with the exception of:

- a. Associate Members have no voting privileges.
- b. Associate Members may not hold any office which requires a confirmation vote by the congregation.

DUTIES OF MEMBERS

All members are expected to be faithful in spiritual duties essential to Christian life; to be loyal to the church, supporting it by prayers, tithes, gifts, and talents; and to attend worship faithfully. All members also have the duty to familiarize themselves with the Church Covenant and the Code of Ethics for Churches of the CCCC (included as an addendum to this document) and to endeavor with all earnestness to practice the same. Members are expected to attend congregational meetings as duly announced and scheduled. Members of the church whose names appear on the list of active members may act or vote in all transactions of the church.

REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

a. Members may be removed from membership by recommendation of the Church Council for the following reasons:

1. By death.
2. By request of the member, including letter of transfer.
3. By Resignation: When a member of the church requests their name be dropped from the church membership roll or when a member has been inactive for a period of one year without showing interest by attending services, communicating with the church, or contributing to its support, the Church Council may transfer that person's name to the INACTIVE Membership list. Consideration for such action shall only be made after a reasonable number of calls have been made to encourage and assist in a renewal of Covenant responsibilities.
4. By Revocation. For church discipline in regard to violation of Biblical principles and failing to repent and humbly accept correction.

DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

When a member who has been inactive for a period of one year without showing interest by attending services, communicating with the church, or contributing to its support the NICC Council may move their name to the Inactive Members List after a reasonable number of attempts have been made to restore the relationship.

ARTICLE VI

MEETINGS

FOR WORSHIP

Public services of worship shall be held regularly each Sunday. Additional worship services are at the discretion of the Deacon of Ministries and the Worship Ministry Team.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be included in the worship service on the first Sunday of each month or rescheduled as necessary within the same month as determined by the Worship Ministry Team. The Lord's Supper will also be delivered by the Pastor or Deacons to those members who are physically unable to be present provided they live within a reasonable distance and if it can be served on the same day as the congregation has received it.

FOR BUSINESS

Rules of Order:

Philippians 2:3-4 Hebrews 13:17 Ephesians 4:29

The Behavioral Covenant will be provided as the header with the roll call at the start of congregational business and special meetings. (see Appendix)

The Annual Congregational Business Meeting shall be held in January each year at a time and date determined by the Church Council. The purpose of this meeting shall be to adopt an annual budget and to elect church officers as required by this Covenant and/or applicable State laws. Requests for matters of business to be brought before the Congregation must be presented to the Church Council by a voting member at least four weeks prior to the Annual Congregational Business Meeting. A business item presented by this procedure will be added to the Agenda of the Annual Congregational Business Meeting if a majority of the Church Council deem it is ready for the congregation's consideration. All financial and other reports for this meeting will be made available one week prior.

Auditor: The auditor will be appointed at the annual meeting to serve a term of three (3) years, shall audit the accounts of the treasurer each year and will report the results of the audit at the annual meeting. The auditor will not be involved in the disbursement of church funds and cannot simultaneously serve as a trustee, **nor as recording secretary.**

The **Chairperson(s) for the Children's Fair Executive Ministry Team** will be appointed at the annual meeting to serve a term of one (1) year. Said Chairperson(s) may appoint up to ten (10) but no fewer than six (6) members of the community to serve on the executive ministry team along with the chairperson, a majority which must be members of the NICC; one (1) member will be appointed as its treasurer. The team will hold meetings as are necessary for the purpose of planning, implementing, and finalizing plans for the Fair to be held on the third Saturday in August or an alternate date as necessary.

As soon as the financial report is received relative to the net proceeds of the Fair, but no later than October 1, the chairperson will call a meeting of the team for the purpose of submitting to the Trustee Ministry Team, for their approval, a report of the disposition of the proceeds for the church budget and various service and benevolence projects and to transact any other business that may be brought before the meeting.

FOR BUSINESS (cont.)

Special meetings for any purpose may be called at any time by the Church Council, the Senior Pastor or by 25% of the voting members of the congregation. Meetings will be scheduled by the Moderator within 30 days of the request by public announcement 2 weeks prior to the scheduled date and by written notification to all eligible voting members 1 week prior provided the Church Council deems it necessary.

Church Council members will be required to attend regular meetings. A committee member may attend as a substitute if conditions warrant it.

Quorum: Fifty one percent (51%) of active members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business brought before the church.

In the event of a physical barrier such as seasonal residence in another state, military service or sickness/ailment that prevents or hinders an active members ability to attend a meeting where a congregational vote is required, the Clerk shall contact the member either by phone or email at least 2 days prior to the congregational vote and record either a "yes", "no" or "abstain" vote. Proxy ballots will not be utilized under any circumstances.

Voting- Unless otherwise stated in these By-laws, decisions of the congregation shall be by simple majority of the votes cast by the voting members of the congregation. Roll Call- A sheet will be provided for all active members to sign in as present during business and special meetings.

ARTICLE VII

FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall be January 1 through December 31.

ARTICLE VIII

SENIOR PASTOR

Being guided by God's Word, NICC will seek and call a Senior Pastor with a track record of Christian maturity, who is to serve and provide the leading pastoral role in the church and a calling to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Since he is also considered a Church Council member, he must also reflect Titus 1:6-9. He is the ministerial leader and working in conjunction with the Church Council, has responsibility for overseeing the development, communication and administration of the vision and mission of the church.

HIRING OF A SENIOR PASTOR

In the absence of a Senior Pastor, a five (5) member Senior Pastor Search Team shall be formed. This team shall make recommendations to the church regarding the potential calling of a Senior Pastor and will consist of the Moderator who will serve as chairman and two (2) council members who together will appoint two (2) congregational members to serve. The Senior Pastor Search Team will be presented to the congregation for recognition, approval, and prayer. While the search for a new Senior Pastor is in process the Church Council will seek an interim minister to lead worship services and provide basic pastoral care.

REMOVAL OF THE SENIOR PASTOR

Recommendation of discharge of the Senior Pastor may be brought to the Church Council by 25% of the active members in a private meeting to discuss the issue before bringing it before the congregation in a special meeting. Discharge of the Senior Pastor requires a 2/3 vote cast by active members of the congregation participating in the meeting.

ARTICLE IX

CHURCH COUNCIL

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Acts 6:1-5

Romans 16:1

Micah 6:8

The Senior Pastor, and the Members of the Diaconate will serve as the Church Council whose purpose will be to support the work of the church, serve communion, promote unity among its members and coordinate efforts across all ministries. Working in concert they will be responsible for overseeing and/or mobilizing the church making decisions after prayerful consideration in a spirit of humility regarding the congregation before themselves.

The Church Council serves as the spiritual and temporal leaders of the church. All matters affecting the regular work and policy of the church shall be subject to the supervision and direction of its members. The Church Council will be responsible for the overall vision and future direction of the church to see that the church remains on a scriptural course, creating policies to clearly define church values and biblical operating procedures. They are to ensure the church's teachings and practices reflect accurate biblical theology. They are to provide avenues for pastor care, strong relationships, discipline and restoration.

The Church Council may choose at any time and on any matter to seek the affirmation of the congregation. These affirmations may be formal or informal. The purpose of affirmation from the congregation, church council or any other group of the church is the wisdom of seeking the godly counsel of many as taught in scripture. This type of counsel can be helpful to the council in the determining of God's will in a matter. The Church Council will meet monthly to review the work of the church. All church members are welcome to attend Church Council meetings but will have not vote at such meetings.

The Council will seek the formal approval of the congregation when the following decisions are being made:

1. The calling or removal of the pastor
2. The church's annual budget
3. Expenditures involving new/existing property or new/existing buildings and related indebtedness.
4. The selection of Church Council Members.
5. Any changes or amendments to the constitution or covenant

ARTICLE X

Church Council Members and Duties

The NICC Church Council shall consist of

The Pastor	The Moderator	The Clerk	The Treasurer	Trustees (3)
Deacon of Worship	Deacon of Caring	Deacon of Communications		
Deacon of Christian Education	Deacon of Ministries	Deacon of Women's Ministries		

Moderator: A nominee for Moderator who has been an **active member for the previous year** will be presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The term of office will be 4 years with sequential terms allowed. The Moderator shall organize the agenda for, call and preside at meetings of the Church Council, Business Meetings, and any Special meetings, hear motions and recommendations and ensure rules of order and ethical conduct are followed. The Moderator will advise newly elected council members and shall be responsible for the transfer of records and equipment between successors in office during their tenure and at its close.

Clerk: A nominee for Clerk **who has been an active member for the previous year** will be presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The term of office will be 4 years with sequential terms allowed. The Clerk with the cooperation and support of the church council, shall keep a faithful permanent record of the proceedings of NICC, issue letters of transfer, preserve on file all official documents and reports, maintain an accurate roster of church members.

Treasurer: A nominee for Treasurer **who has been an active member for the previous year** will be presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The term of office will be 4 years with sequential terms allowed. The Treasurer, with the cooperation and direction of the Church Council except for the Discretionary Fund, will keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements; have custody of all the monies of the church; keep an account of all receipts and expenditures.

A Recording Secretary will be **appointed by the Church Council**. With the cooperation and supervision of the Treasurer/Trustees will receive and record all pledges and all monies from all sources for church purposes, shall deposit the receipts to the credit of the church each week, make a report when called upon by the Treasurer/Trustees and send statements of accounts to each contributor of record.

The Treasurer will receive from the Financial Secretary evidence of all monies deposited to accounts of the church and shall pay all obligations incurred by the church in accordance with the adopted budget, or upon special authorization of the Church Council. The Treasurer will be empowered to execute all bonds, notes, deeds, and other instruments in the name of, and on behalf of the church as directed by vote of the church or the Church Council.

The Treasurer will keep an account of all receipts and expenditures in conformity with accepted bookkeeping practices, will report in writing at the meetings of the Church Council and will report at the annual meeting on all monies received and expended.

Trustees: Nominees for Trustee who have been active members for the previous year will be

presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The three Trustees will appoint one of their members to serve as **Head of the Trustees**. The term of office will be 3 years with staggered terms with sequential terms allowed. The Head of the Trustees, with the cooperation and supervision of the Church Council will have general charge of all funds, receipts, and expenditures of the Church, subject to the conditions imposed by the donors or membership of the Church. It shall have the care and custody of all Church Property but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer property without specific authority by vote of the Church membership. It shall with the Treasurer, prepare a proposed budget to the Church members at least one (1) week prior to the annual meeting. It shall be responsible for the employment of Church employees other than the Pastor and Associate Pastor.

Deacon of Christian Education: A nominee for the Deacon of Christian Education who has been an active member for the previous year will be presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The term of office will be 3 years with sequential terms allowed. The Deacon of Christian Education with the cooperation and direction of the Church Council will be responsible for the direction and supervision of the educational programs of the Church, will study and approve the curriculum of the Children's Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, advise and encourage Adult and Youth bible studies, camps, and any additional classes, and will also serve as, recruit and approve teachers.

Deacon of Worship: A nominee for the Deacon of Worship who has been an active member for the previous year will be presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The term of office will be 3 years with sequential terms allowed. The Deacon of Worship with the cooperation and direction of the Church Council will have the care of the Sanctuary, Altar, Sunday Worship and Special Worship Services, aid in the acquisition of pulpit supply as needed and special event speakers, oversight of the Worship Committee including choir director, music leader, pianists and other participants, prepare communion and schedule deacons, arrange baptisms, schedule Call to Worship readers and arrange for special music. He/She will also have oversight of the Flower Committee, Music Committee and other committees as needed.

Deacon of Caring: A nominee for Deacon of Caring who has been an active member for the previous year will be presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The term of office will be 3 years with sequential terms allowed. The Deacon of Caring with the cooperation and direction of the Church Council will oversee the physical and mental welfare of the church, advising members in regard to health and safety, have oversight and control of the Discretionary Fund, aid and assist members/others as needed on an emergency basis and will recommend short term benevolences to the Church Council

Deacon of Communications: A nominee for Deacon of Communications who has been an active member for the previous year will be presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The term of office will be 3 years with sequential terms allowed. The Deacon of Communications with the cooperation and direction of the Church Council will monitor and utilize social media, the church website, Zoom meeting to establish and maintain NICC's online presence and communications promoting outreach education, event announcements, opportunities for worship and special programs, and fundraising and member services updates. Oversee communications of missions and outreach ministries. The Deacon will serve on the board of the Children's Fair Committee as the primary representative for NICC and provide reports and statements regarding such to the Church Council.

Deacon of Ministries: A nominee for the Deacon of Ministries who has been an active member for the previous year will be presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The term of office will be 4 years. The Ministry Chair with the cooperation and direction of the Church Council will serve as Asst. Moderator, and in the absence of the Moderator will have the rights and duties of the Moderator, will advise and encourage educational programs, aid in the acquisition of pulpit supply as needed and special event speakers, oversee outside ministries of the church, annually review and recommend changes to the membership roll and serve as a “deacon at large” for any ministry in need of short term aid or support. This position will be held by a male member of the congregation.

Deacon of Women Ministries: A female nominee for the Women's Ministry chair who has been an active member for the previous year will be presented and confirmed by majority vote at the annual meeting. The term of office will be 4 years with a two-year stagger from the Deacon of Ministries. The Deacon of Women Ministries with the cooperation and direction of the Church Council can serve if needed as Asst. Moderator, and in the absence of the Moderator will have the rights and duties of the Moderator, will advise and encourage educational programs, aid in the acquisition of, or provide pulpit supply as needed and special event speakers, oversee outside ministries of the church, annually review and recommend changes to the membership roll and serve as a “deacon at large” for any ministry in need of short term aid or support.

Nominating Committee: Members in good standing of the Church Council will also serve as the Nominating Committee recommending candidates after review of their qualifications and with input and consideration from the Church Membership to the Church Council who will provide their recommendations to the Church Membership at the Annual Business Meeting

Church Council Vacancy: In the event of a vacancy on the Church Council, the members in good standing of the Church Council will appoint someone to serve in the position until a nominee can be presented to the church membership at the next annual meeting.

ARTICLE XI

AMENDMENTS

1. Amending

This covenant may be amended by approval of at least a fifty percent (50%) vote of the active members to approve such amendments. Voting to amend this covenant may take place at any meeting of the Church, provided that the notice of the amending vote has been provided by the Church Clerk at least two weeks prior to such a meeting.

2. Review

This covenant shall be reviewed at least every 5 years after its adoption by an ad hoc committee appointed by the Church Council for that purpose. Upon review by the Church Council the recommended changes will be presented to the Membership for a 30-day review after which time a meeting of the Church shall be held to accept any revisions.

3. Taking Effect

This Covenant will become effective at the Annual Business Meeting of the Church in January 2020 and shall supersede all previous By-Laws. As Amended June 30, 2024.

APPENDIX

BEHAVIORAL COVENANT

FOR RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION AND MAINTAINING COMMUNITY

(to be included as a header for the roll call at all meetings)

We will communicate openly, honestly, and directly (using “I” language about our concerns, feelings, and opinions.)

We will respect and accept all persons as people of God.

We will practice the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) by treating other people as we would like to be treated.

We will respect the right of others to hold different views, although we may or may not agree.

We will use legitimate means and channels to pursue needs and interests.

We will separate people and relational issues from substantive issues.

We will take responsibility for the successful implementation of any actions decided.

We will communicate the merit of another person's idea before addressing its weaknesses.

We will focus on persuasion and reason instead of coercion.

We will repeat what the other person has said to confirm that we have understood them and ask them to do the same if we feel misunderstood. Specifically, we will try to clearly reflect the thoughts and feelings of the other person through our own words, tone of voice, body posture and gestures. We will repeat the pattern to assure the person is being listened to and understood.

We will not jump to conclusions, affix blame, find fault, or criticize others in a destructive manner.