



PLYMOUTH POLICY BOOK

AS APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON DECEMBER 19TH, 2023

AS AMENDED THROUGH DECEMBER 2025

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1 **200 Membership**

2 **220 Members**

3 **220.2 Inactive Status**

4 **220.2.1 Determining Inactive Member Status**

5 Bylaws define “inactive status” and “participates actively in the life of Plymouth.” Those definitions
6 are incorporated into this policy.

7 **A. Placing a Member on Inactive Status**

- 8 1.) The Senior Pastor or designee working with the Membership Board shall annually
9 review the membership roll to determine if there are members who meet the definition
10 of inactive status.
- 11 2.) Members meeting the definition of inactive status shall be contacted to determine if
12 they are interested in remaining listed as members. Great leniency and grace shall be
13 given. Their request shall be honored.
- 14 3.) If a member cannot be contacted or states that they no longer wish to be a member,
15 they will be placed on the Archival Roll.
- 16 4.) If the member does not wish to terminate their membership, they shall be offered to
17 be placed on inactive status. They shall be told this status entails neither the rights nor
18 the responsibilities of membership.

19 **B. Removing a Member from Inactive Status**

20 A request to be removed from inactive status shall be given to the Senior Pastor or designee
21 for consideration, stating the inactive member's intention to participate actively in the life of
22 Plymouth. The Senior Pastor shall determine the best means to reactivate the membership.

23 **230 Termination of Membership**

24 **230.3 Removal**

25 **230.3.1 Removing the Membership of a Member**

- 26 1.) Council may remove the membership of members on inactive status for at least two
27 years.
- 28 2.) Before removal, the Senior Pastor or designee, working with the Membership Board,
29 shall contact a member on inactive status periodically to determine the member's
30 interest in remaining on inactive status. If the inactive member requests to remain on
31 inactive status, the request shall be honored.
- 32 3.) If a member on inactive status for at least two years cannot be reached after attempts
33 to contact them, the Senior Pastor or designee shall place their name on a list to present
34 to Council for its consideration.
- 35 4.) Council shall review the list and consider each individual as to whether to retain them
36 on inactive status or to remove their membership.
- 37 5.) Council shall direct the Senior Pastor or designee to place the name on the Archival Roll
38 of any former member whose membership they have voted to remove.
- 39 6.) The Bylaws allow that someone who has been placed on the Archival Roll may again
40 become a member by either Letter of Transfer or Reaffirmation of Faith.

1 **500 Governance**

2 **510 Officers**

3 **510.6 Treasurer**

4 **510.6.1 Treasurer Duties**

The Treasurer shall:

- 5 1.) Disburse the funds of the Church as directed by Council;
- 6 2.) Give an account to Council of all the Treasurer's transactions on a regular basis or as
7 requested by Council;
- 8 3.) Give an account of the financial condition of the Church on a regular basis or as
9 requested by Council;
- 10 4.) Be adequately bonded; and
- 11 5.) Receive disbursements from the Plymouth Congregational Church Endowment Fund
12 and deposit the funds into accounts in such a manner so as to honor the donors' intent.

13 **510.6.2 Deputy Treasurer**

The Treasurer may recommend a Deputy Treasurer to be appointed by Council. The duty of the Deputy Treasurer is to assist in carrying out the duties of the office of Treasurer. A Deputy Treasurer is not a member of Council. A Deputy Treasurer may serve up to six consecutive years before a break of at least one year.

14 **510.6.3 Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year is the calendar year although the Treasurer may close the books at such time as directed by Council.

15 **510.6.4 Gift Acceptance**

16 **Section 1. General**

17 **A. Purpose**

Plymouth encourages the solicitation and acceptance of gifts to enable Plymouth to fulfill its mission:

"In the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of all."

18 **B. Gift Definition**

- 19 1.) A gift is any contribution to Plymouth except:
 - 20 a.) Planned receipts in the annual budget;
 - 21 b.) Special offerings or collections initiated by Council or the Senior Pastor; or
 - 22 c.) Events or fundraisers for Plymouth and its programming.

23 **C. Acceptable Gifts**

- 24 1.) The following gifts are acceptable but not intended to represent an exclusive list of
25 acceptable gifts:

- 1 a.) Cash or Cash Equivalent;
- 2 b.) Securities;
- 3 c.) Remainder Interests in Property;
- 4 d.) Oil, Gas, and Mineral Interests;
- 5 e.) Life Insurance;
- 6 f.) Charitable Gift Annuities;
- 7 g.) Charitable Remainder Trusts;
- 8 h.) Charitable Lead Trusts;
- 9 i.) Retirement Plan Beneficiary Designations;
- 10 j.) Bequests;
- 11 k.) Life Insurance Beneficiary Designations.

12 2.) Donors should consult Plymouth and its Gift Guidelines for specific categories of gifts.

D. Administration

- 14 1.) Gifts may be solicited, received, or both from any entity, including but not limited to
15 individuals, corporations, foundations, and federal, state, and local governments. Such
16 gifts are deemed accepted upon deposit unless action to the contrary is taken by or on
17 behalf of Council.
- 18 2.) The Treasurer or their designee shall review all proposed gifts and bring to Council any
19 that require Council's consideration.
- 20 3.) Council or its designee shall only accept gifts that are legal and consistent with
21 Plymouth's Mission, Bylaws, and policies.
- 22 4.) Council or its designee may reject any gift it finds too restrictive in purpose or too
23 difficult to administer, or inconsistent with Plymouth's mission.
- 24 5.) Council shall seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to acceptance of gifts
25 when appropriate and any costs of this analysis may be covered by the gift revenue.
- 26 6.) Gifts that conflict with the mission of Plymouth as determined by Council will not be
27 accepted.
- 28 7.) All gifts shall be liquidated into cash and cash equivalents for investment and use
29 according to the Gift Utilization Policy, unless a two-thirds majority of Council waives
30 liquidation of a gift, in whole or in part, and sets conditions for future liquidation.
- 31 8.) Plymouth does not provide tax or accounting advice to donors or their representatives.
32 It is the sole responsibility of donors or their representatives to make those
33 determinations.

E. Compliance

Plymouth shall comply with all state and federal law including Internal Revenue Service regulations and reporting requirements.

Section 2. Gift Funds

A. Greater Plymouth Fund

The Greater Plymouth Fund is a collection of unrestricted gifts, each of which is less than \$10,000.

B. Council Restricted Fund

The Council Restricted Fund is a collection of unrestricted gifts, each of which is \$10,000 or more.

C. Board Restricted Funds

Each Board Restricted Fund is a collection of restricted gifts, each of which is less than \$10,000. These funds include:

- 1 1.) Children and Youth;
- 2 2.) Facilities;
- 3 3.) Fellowship;
- 4 4.) Music and Fine Arts;
- 5 5.) Service and Justice;
- 6 6.) Worship; and
- 7 7.) Other

D. Named Restricted Funds

These funds are non-endowed but restricted gifts of \$10,000 or more.

E. Plymouth General Unrestricted Endowment Fund

This fund contains gifts of any amount that the donor or grantor wishes to be endowed but for which the donor or grantor does not place any restriction on the use of the income.

F. Named Endowed Funds

These funds are endowed gifts of \$10,000 or more. The use of the income may be restricted by the donor or grantor.

Section 3. Gift Classifications

A. Unrestricted Gifts

These are gifts without donor restriction. They are made without any constraints on the specific use or purpose of their use. All gifts are considered unrestricted by default, unless expressly designated and documented and otherwise meeting Plymouth's requirements for a restricted gift.

B. Restricted Gifts

These are gifts with donor restriction. The use or purpose of such gifts is constrained by donor or grantor request. These can be Non-Endowed or Endowed.

- 16 1.) Non-Endowed Restricted Funds are gifts, the use or purpose of which is constrained by donor or grantor request but with the understanding that the principal will be spent.
17 This category includes gifts to Plymouth given in memory of a deceased individual which
18 are directed to support a specific ministry area of the church.
- 20 2.) Endowed Funds are gifts that the donor or grantor requests to be treated as endowed
21 or with the understanding of the donor or grantor that the principal will be invested and
22 not spent. These gifts shall be administered according to the policies of the Plymouth
23 Congregational Church Endowment Fund. The use of income from endowed funds may
24 be restricted or unrestricted.
- 25 3.) Endowed Funds may be either:
 - 26 a.) Unrestricted Endowed Funds are restricted in that the principal will not be spent but
27 unrestricted as to the use of the income by Plymouth; or
 - 28 b.) Restricted Endowed Funds are restricted in that both the principal may not be spent
29 and the income is to be spent for a stated purpose.

Section 4. Gift Allocation

The Treasurer or their designee shall review and allocate gifts into accounts under the following gift fund categories. Council may make exceptions to dollar minimums in appropriate situations. There are five broad fund categories:

- 1 1.) Greater Plymouth Fund;
- 2 2.) Council Restricted Fund:
- 3 3.) Board Restricted Funds;
- 4 4.) Named Restricted Funds; and
- 5 5.) Endowed Funds

6 **B. Unrestricted Gifts**

- 7 1.) Unrestricted gifts of less than \$10,000 shall be allocated to the Greater Plymouth Fund.
- 8 2.) Unrestricted gifts of \$10,000 or more shall be allocated to the Council Restricted Fund.

9 **C. Restricted Gifts**

- 10 1.) Non-Endowed Restricted gifts less than \$10,000 shall be allocated to the appropriate
Board Restricted Fund.
- 11 2.) Non-Endowed Restricted gifts of \$10,000 or more shall be set up as a new named
restricted fund.
- 12 3.) Endowed Unrestricted gifts shall be allocated to the Plymouth General Endowment
Fund.
- 13 4.) Endowed Restricted gifts less than \$10,000 shall be either allocated to the general
Plymouth General Endowment Fund or treated as a non-endowed restricted gift. If
possible, the donor shall be asked for their preference.
- 14 5.) Endowed Restricted gifts of \$10,000 or more shall be set up as a new named
endowment fund.

21 **510.6.5 Gift Utilization**

22 **Section 1. Annual Reporting**

Council shall annually report non-budgeted receipts and disbursements made to or from a gift fund. Amounts of \$500 or more shall be itemized.

23 **Section 2. Funds**

24 **A. Greater Plymouth Fund**

- 25 1.) This fund and its expenditures are directed by Council.
- 26 2.) Expenditures should be for one-time expenses.
- 27 3.) Any balance greater than \$10,000 at the end of a fiscal year may be transferred to the
Council Restricted Fund at the discretion of Council.

29 **B. Council Restricted Fund**

- 30 1.) This fund is to be managed as any other endowed fund except that Council may reverse
the restriction designation on all or part of the fund at any time should needs or
opportunities arise that would benefit the Church from the use of the funds.
- 31 2.) Council may:
 - 32 a.) Spend the funds;
 - 33 b.) Place the funds in one or more Board Restricted Fund,
 - 34 c.) Deposit the funds into an endowed fund, or
 - 35 d.) Some combination of any of the above.
- 36 3.) The earnings of the fund will be transferred annually to the Church to be recorded in
Greater Plymouth Fund.

1 a.)

2 **C. Named and Other Restricted Funds**

3 1.) These funds and their expenditures are directed by the Senior Pastor or designee in
4 consultation with the relevant Board, if any.

5 2.) An expenditure of \$1,000 or more from any fund requires Council approval unless the
6 expense is included in the current annual budget.

7 3.) Restricted funds shall be spent in accordance with donor restrictions except:

8 a.) If future circumstances become so altered that the purposes and conditions under
9 which a restricted fund is established and administered no longer pertain, or become
10 a violation of current law, then Council may use the gift for another purpose within
11 Plymouth that is as nearly as possible in keeping with the original intent of the
12 donor(s).

13 b.) If the balance of the fund declines to a point that it becomes impractical or
14 uneconomical to continue administering it as a separate fund, Council may add the
15 balance to a different fund with a similar purpose or move it into an unrestricted fund
16 account.

17 **D. Endowed Funds**

18 Endowed funds shall be utilized according to the policies of the Plymouth Congregational Church
19 Endowment Fund.

510.6.6 Plymouth Congregational Church Endowment Fund

Section 1. Purpose

The Plymouth Congregational Church Endowment Fund (hereinafter the "Endowment") shall exist to enable individuals to be faithful stewards of God's gifts during and beyond their lifetimes and to enhance and expand the ministry and mission of Plymouth Church as expressed in the vision and hope of the Plymouth Covenant.

Endowed funds are gifts that the donor or grantor requests to be treated as endowed or with the understanding of the donor or grantor that the principal will be invested and not spent.

Section 2. Management

1.) The assets of the Endowment shall be segregated from other assets of Plymouth Church and be under the control and direction of Council and managed by Council's Finance Committee.

2.) The Finance Committee shall provide Council with a quarterly report of Endowment assets.

3.) Council shall provide the Congregation an annual report of Endowment assets and distributions.

4.) Records of the assets shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted methods of fund accounting. Separate accounts shall be kept for separate funds within the Endowment. Funds may, however, be commingled for investment purposes.

5.) The terms of each gift and of each fund shall be faithfully observed in their classification and in their management and disbursement except in extenuating circumstances.

6.) Donors are encouraged to recognize that over the many years following the establishment of a restricted gift, the needs, policies, and circumstances of Plymouth

1 can change in unforeseen ways. Council must have the flexibility to make use of funds in
2 the best interest of Plymouth and yet in accord with donor interests and specifications.
3 Thus, donors are advised to describe the specific purposes of their gifts as broadly as
4 possible and to avoid detailed limitations and restrictions. Donors considering bequests
5 for a specific purpose are encouraged to consult with Plymouth.

6 Section 3. Donor Intent

7 Income from endowed funds shall be spent in accordance with donor restrictions except:

- 8 1.) If future circumstances become so altered that the purposes and conditions under
9 which an endowed fund is established and administered no longer pertain, or become a
10 violation of current law, then Council may use the income from the fund for another
11 purpose within Plymouth that is as nearly as possible in keeping with the original intent
12 of the donor(s);
- 13 2.) If the balance of the fund declines to a point that it becomes impractical or
14 uneconomical to continue administering it as a separate fund, Council may add the
15 balance to a different fund with a similar; or
- 16 3.) If Council wishes to remove funds from endowed status, it shall ask for approval by a
17 vote of the Congregation at a Called Congregational Meeting.

18 Section 4. Investment Policy

- 19 1.) The investment objectives for the Endowment shall be to preserve the inflation
20 adjusted value of the Endowment and to maximize total returns.
- 21 2.) Aside from cash balances, the Endowment's funds will be invested with the United
22 Church Funds of the UCC in accordance with its current stated investment policy. Funds
23 may be invested in a different designated fund management entity as approved by
24 Council.
- 25 3.) The Finance Committee shall regularly review the returns for the invested Endowment
26 funds and any changes in the investment policy. The Finance Committee shall
27 recommend appropriate changes to Council.

28 Section 5. Disbursements

- 29 1.) Annually, Council's Finance Committee shall:
 - 30 a.) Calculate an amount of up to 4% of the Endowment fund average market value on
31 September 30 of the current and the two prior years;
 - 32 b.) Recommend the appropriate amount to Council;
 - 33 c.) Provide information on the amount of income in each endowed account; and
 - 34 d.) Any restrictions which apply to the use of the income in each account.
- 35 2.) Council will decide the appropriate amount.
- 36 3.) Disbursement of funds shall be by the Treasurer or otherwise as directed by Council.
- 37 4.) Council may submit a written request to the Finance Committee for endowed funds to
38 meet special needs. The proposed use must be consistent with donor intent and may
39 not reduce the original principal. The Finance Committee will consider the request and
40 provide Council with its recommendation on the appropriateness of the request. Council
41 must approve the use for special needs by a two-thirds vote.

1 **510.6.7 Operating Reserve**

2 **A. Definition**

3 An operating reserve consists of unallocated dollars set aside for the future needs of the church. A healthy balance of operating reserves is necessary for the church to be able to withstand sudden drops in income or for extraordinary expense items.

4 **B. Goal**

5 It is the goal of Plymouth Congregational Church to maintain, at a minimum, an operating reserve fund in an amount equivalent to three months of operating expenses. Funds in excess of the goal may be transferred to the Council Restricted Fund by a majority vote of Council.

6 **C. Process**

7 To achieve the goal, a percentage of any operating surplus funds will be added to the reserve each year until the designated amount is attained. The reserve may also be increased by budgeting a portion of each year's operating income to the reserve.

8 **D. Use**

9 Council may, with a positive vote of seven (7) members, vote to expend funds from the operating reserve for a sudden drop in income or extraordinary expense items.

10 **520 Council**

11 **520.3 Council Operation**

12 **520.3.1 Board Communication**

13 1.) The agenda for any regular meeting shall include a period for the chair, or a designee of the chair, of a Board to address Council.

14 2.) An at-large member of Council shall be assigned by the Moderator as a liaison for each Board to promote communication with Council.

15 **520.3.2 Planning and Coordinating Sessions**

16 1.) Council shall annually hold at least three planning and coordinating sessions with the chairs of Boards as well as representatives from any other appropriate church organization.

17 2.) These sessions are an opportunity for a free exchange of the activities, plans, and goals of Council and represented groups.

18 3.) The sessions may be held in conjunction with a regular Council meeting.

19 **520.4 Council Duties**

20 **520.4.1 Contract Approval**

21 1.) Any contract for an expense not included in the current budget, the value of which is \$5,000 or more, requires review and approval by a majority of voting members attending a Council meeting with a quorum; and

22 2.) Any project not included in the current budget, the total cost of which is \$5,000 or more, requires review by the Finance Committee and then review and approval by a majority of voting members attending a Council meeting with a quorum. A budget listing the project's expected revenue sources shall be included with the request for Council approval.¹

1 520.4.2 Council Member Expectations

2 It is the expectation of Plymouth that each member of Council will:

3 1.) Prepare for meetings;

4 2.) Attend all meetings regularly;

5 3.) Participate actively in meetings;

6 4.) Make themselves familiar with Plymouth Constitution, Bylaws, and policies;

7 5.) Invest the necessary time to understand the basic financial operation of Plymouth; and

8 6.) Engage with the membership to provide information and gather feedback and input.

8 520.4.3 Communication and Transparency

9 Council shall encourage active communication with the membership and transparency in its
10 actions in order to maintain the Congregation's understanding and support of our governance
11 structure. This includes:

12 1.) Maintaining an active process throughout the year for encouraging and receiving the
13 views of members on church affairs;

14 2.) Keeping the membership informed of Council activity; and

15 3.) Ensuring that the Constitution, Bylaws, Policy Book, and Council activities are easily
16 available to the membership.

14 520.4.4 Goal Setting

15 The Moderator-Elect shall annually lead an effort to develop proposed priority goals for the
16 upcoming year for Council's consideration and approval.

17 520.5 Council Committees

18 520.5.1 Overview

19 **A. Composition and Procedures⁷**

20 1.) Unless otherwise stated in Bylaws or policy, membership and the chair² of Council
21 committees shall be limited to members of Plymouth but otherwise determined and
22 appointed by Council.

23 2.) The Nominating Committee shall nominate members for available Council-appointed
24 positions at the Council meeting prior to the Annual Meeting. The nominees should
25 represent the diversity of Plymouth.

26 3.) The Council-appointed members shall be reported to the Congregation at the Annual
27 Meeting.

28 4.) Unless otherwise stated, Council committees should have a member of Council as a
29 member.

30 5.) No Council-appointed committee member may serve more than seven consecutive
31 years on the same committee.

32 6.) Each Committee shall keep appropriate records and documents, such as attendance
33 and minutes, which shall be transmitted to the Moderator. Committees' meeting
34 minutes shall be distributed to Council members prior to Council meetings.⁸

35 **B. Creating a Committee**

36 Council shall approve a policy for each new standing committee or a Memorandum of
37 Understanding (MOU) for each ad hoc committee. The policy or MOU shall state the purpose
and membership of the committee. For ad hoc committees, the MOU shall state its expected
duration.

1 520.5.2 Annual Appeal and Fundraising Committee

2 **A. Membership**

3 The Annual Appeal and Fundraising Committee shall have six members who shall each serve
4 three years. Two shall be appointed each year on a staggered schedule.

5 **B. Duties**

6 The Annual Appeal and Fundraising Committee shall:

- 7 1.) Assist Council in developing and updating an ongoing strategic plan to enhance revenue
8 with recommended action steps to meet the needs of Plymouth's purpose and mission;
- 9 2.) Coordinate all fundraising efforts;
- 10 3.) Consult with the Finance Committee to establish an annual fundraising target;
- 11 4.) Coordinate and conduct an ongoing program for planned giving;
- 12 5.) Develop and lead the Annual Appeal for pledges for the following year including:
- 13 6.) Reviewing and evaluating the pledge system, communicating with members regarding
14 the status of the pledges, and reporting regularly to Council on the status of pledge
15 receipts;
- 16 7.) Maintaining records from past years for use in making seasonal projection and
17 comparisons;

18 **C. Subcommittees**

19 The Committee may create such subcommittees as it finds necessary for various duties.

20 **D. Pledge Confidentiality**

21 The amount pledged and given by individuals to Plymouth is confidential. Specific donor
22 information is only available to the:

- 23 1.) Chair of the Annual Appeal and Fundraising Committee unless a subcommittee has
24 been created for the purpose of conducting the Annual Appeal then the Chair of that
25 subcommittee;
- 26 2.) Treasurer;
- 27 3.) Senior Pastor and their designees; and
- 28 4.) Any person or entity approved by Council.

29 520.5.3 Facilities Committee

30 **A. Membership**

31 The Facilities Committee shall have six members who shall each serve three years. Two shall
32 be appointed each year on a staggered schedule. The staff Facilities Manager or such other
33 staff as appointed by the Senior Pastor shall serve as an ex officio member.

34 **B. Duties**

35 The Facilities Committee shall:

- 36 1.) Develop and update a long-range maintenance plan to maintain and improve buildings
37 and properties of the Church;
- 38 2.) Recommend to Council a policy on use of facilities and properties;
- 39 3.) Evaluate periodically the decor of the Sanctuary and other church spaces to advise
40 Council about the aesthetics of church space.

41 520.5.4 Finance Committee

42 **A. Membership**

1 The Finance Committee shall have five members. The Treasurer shall serve as chair. The
2 Immediate Past Moderator shall serve as vice chair. The remaining three members shall be
3 appointed by Council in consultation with the Treasurer and serve staggered three-year
4 terms. The Senior Pastor shall serve as an ex officio member without vote and may appoint
5 an additional staff person to serve as an ex officio member without vote.

6 **B. Duties**

7 The Finance Committee shall:

- 8 1.) Oversee the preparation of and present accurate, timely, and meaningful financial
9 statements to Council;
- 10 2.) Help Council in its understanding of Plymouth's finances, including an annual tutorial
11 explaining church finances and reporting and Council's fiduciary responsibilities;
- 12 3.) Work with staff to develop and present initial draft budget to Council;
- 13 4.) Ensure proper internal controls and accountability policies and procedures;
- 14 5.) Recommend appropriate amount of surety bond to be paid by the Church for the
15 Treasurer and any other volunteer or staff;
- 16 6.) Review the adequacy, costs, and performance of the insurance program on an annual
17 basis;
- 18 7.) Ensure Plymouth's compliance with federal, state, and other reporting requirements;
- 19 8.) Recommend appropriate audit or review;
- 20 9.) Advise Council on any proposed adjustments to the budget as allowed by Bylaws
21 before Council votes on such a motion;
- 22 10.) Assist Council with the management of the Plymouth Congregational Church
23 Endowment Fund as outlined in policy;
- 24 11.) Recommend appointment by Council of additional Deputy Treasurers as needed; and
- 25 12.) By majority vote of the committee, may determine to establish a new banking
26 relationship with any FDIC or NCUA insured financial institution. The Treasurer shall
27 inform Council at its next meeting following the establishment of a new banking
28 relationship.³

29 **520.5.5 Governance Committee**

30 **A. Membership**

31 The Governance Committee shall have five members. The Immediate Past Moderator shall
32 be a member for one year. The remaining four members shall be appointed by Council and
33 serve staggered three-year terms.⁴

34 **B. Duties**

35 The Governance Committee shall:

- 36 1.) Advise Council on developing, maintaining, and updating appropriate governing
37 documents and practices;
- 38 2.) Assist in drafting proposed changes to the Bylaws or policies or other governing
39 documents;
- 40 3.) Assist in making governing documents easily available to the membership;
- 41 4.) Provide an annual introduction of Plymouth's governing documents to new members
42 of Council; and
- 43 5.) Oversee an annual review of Bylaws and policies.

1 520.5.6 Personnel Committee

2 **A. Membership**

3 The Personnel Committee shall have seven voting members made up of three at-large
4 members appointed by Council, the Moderator, the Immediate-Past Moderator, the
5 Moderator Elect, and the Senior Pastor. The Personnel Committee may go into executive
6 session whenever necessary following the same requirements as for Council.

7 **B. Duties**

8 The Personnel Committee shall:

- 9 1.) Provide advice and feedback on personnel issues;
- 10 2.) Assist the Senior Pastor in developing and revising recommended personnel policies to
11 submit to Council for its consideration;
- 12 3.) Ensure that the Senior Pastor or designated staff person maintains adequate personnel
13 files, including current position descriptions;
- 14 4.) Ensure that background checks are conducted on all applicants for church employment
15 before employment begins;
- 16 5.) Review all salary and benefit proposals in consultation with the Senior Pastor and
17 Finance Committee, which in turn shall be submitted to Council for its approval; and
- 18 6.) Conduct an annual performance review of the Senior Pastor, recommending to Council
19 any adjustments in salary and benefits.

20 530 Governing and Operating Documents

21 530.2 Policies

22 530.2.1 Adoption, Amendment, and Repeal

Adoption, amendment, or repeal of policy requires:

- 23 1.) That it be consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws;
- 24 2.) Approval by a majority of voting members attending a Council meeting with a quorum;
- 25 3.) Publishing proposed language or deletion in the Council agenda at least two days prior
26 to a meeting at which it will be considered; and
- 27 4.) If passed on first consideration, a second vote of approval at the following Council
28 meeting unless approved by unanimous vote at first consideration.

29 540 General Governance

30 540.0 Administrative Policies

31 540.0.1 Building Use

32 The Senior Pastor or designee is responsible for scheduling the use of the buildings and facilities and will
33 ensure the use is consistent with the mission and policies of the Church.

34 540.0.2 Code of Conduct

- 35 1.) Plymouth is committed to maintaining the highest standards of conduct and ethical
36 behavior and promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness, and
37 integrity, as well as compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

1 2.) All members of Council, staff, and volunteers shall act with honesty, integrity, and
2 openness in all their dealings as representatives of Plymouth and shall comply with all
3 applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

4 3.) All members of Council, staff, and volunteers shall also adhere to the following
5 fundraising principles:

6 a.) Privileged or confidential Plymouth and donor information shall not be disclosed to
7 unauthorized parties; and

8 b.) Donor and prospect information created by, or on behalf of, Plymouth is the
9 property of Plymouth and shall not be transferred or utilized except on behalf of
10 Plymouth.

11 c.) The parties authorized access to donor information are the Treasurer, the Senior
12 Pastor and their designees, and any person approved by Council.⁶

13 4.) Failure to follow these standards shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including
14 expulsion from Council, termination of employment for staff, dismissal from one's
15 volunteer duties, as well as civil or criminal prosecution if and to the extent warranted.

16 540.0.3 Conflict of Interest

17 Section 1. Overview

18 1.) It is the policy of Plymouth to avoid either the reality or the perception of conflicts of
19 interest or self-dealing in executing its mission.

20 2.) This policy is implemented by disclosure and recusal.

21 3.) Any time a member of Council or key staff determines the need to disclose information
22 or to recuse from a particular decision, that person has the right and obligation to
23 disclose the perceived conflict and not to participate further in the relevant decision.

24 4.) "Key Staff" shall mean each staff member with the ability to significantly influence the
25 outcome of any business decision.

26 Section 2. Conflict of Interest

27 1.) A conflict of interest or opportunity for self-dealing arises when a member of Council or
28 key staff can directly affect the outcome of a Plymouth decision regarding an entity in
29 which the member of Council or key staff has a substantial interest.

30 2.) All members of Council and key staff shall disclose relationships with any entity in
31 which they, members of their immediate family, or organizations under their direction
32 or control have such a substantial interest.

33 Section 3. Substantial Interest

34 A substantial interest shall include:

35 1.) Membership on the governing body;

36 2.) An investment that exceeds a 5% ownership interest;

37 3.) An ongoing business relationship; or

38 4.) Any other circumstances that could significantly affect the member of Council's or key
 staff's ability to judge fairly the merits of a proposed business decision.

39 Section 4. Recusal

40 1.) No member of Council shall vote on an administrative or other business decision
41 involving an entity with which the member of Council has a substantial interest.

- 1 2.) When such a possibility arises, the member of Council shall inform the Moderator of
2 the conflict of interest. The affected member of Council may then listen to the basic
3 presentation of the matter to Council and may briefly provide any corrective
4 information relevant to Council's ultimate decision.
- 5 3.) After offering any such information, the member of Council with a conflict of interest
6 shall leave the meeting and shall not participate further in the decision.
- 7 4.) No key staff shall gather or analyze information, or make any presentation or
8 recommendation to Council, regarding a decision involving an entity in which the key
9 staff has a substantial interest.
- 10 5.) If a key staff member is presented a matter involving such an affected entity, the staff
11 member shall inform the Senior Pastor, the Moderator, or both, of the conflict.
- 12 6.) Either the Senior Pastor or the Moderator shall then designate another, unaffected
13 staff member as the person to supervise the matter from which the conflict has arisen,
14 and the conflicted staff member shall not participate further in the decision.

15 540.0.4 Document Retention and Destruction

16 Section 1. Overview

- 17 1.) Plymouth takes seriously its obligation to preserve information relating to litigation,
18 audits and investigations. Plymouth recognizes that it is a crime to alter, cover up,
19 falsify, or destroy any document to prevent its use in an official proceeding
- 20 2.) All Council members, employees, and volunteers shall preserve all information relating
21 to official proceedings, including litigation, audits, and investigations. Failure to follow
22 this standard shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from
23 Council, termination of employment for Plymouth employees, dismissal from one's
24 volunteer duties, as well as civil or criminal prosecution if and to the extent warranted.
- 25 3.) Each employee has an obligation to notify Council of any potential or actual official
26 proceedings involving Plymouth. Plymouth's Senior Pastor, in consultation with Council,
27 shall maintain and comply with an appropriate document retention schedule, which
28 shall assist Plymouth in complying with this Policy. The current schedule is shown below.

29 Section 2. Schedule

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
Accounts payable ledgers and schedules	7 years
Audit reports	Permanently
Bank reconciliations	2 years
Bank statements	3 years
Checks (for important payments and purchases)	Permanently
Contracts, mortgages, notes, and leases (expired)	7 years
Contracts (still in effect)	Contract period
Corporate records	Permanently
Correspondence (general)	2 years
Correspondence (legal and important matters)	Permanently

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
Deeds, mortgages, and bills of sale	Permanently
Depreciation schedules	Permanently
Donor records	7 years
Duplicate deposit slips	2 years
Employment applications	3 years
Employment and termination agreements	Permanently
Expense analyses/expense distribution schedules	7 years
Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, and so on (active and expired)	Permanently
Internal audit reports	3 years
Inventory records for products, materials, and supplies	3 years
Minutes, bylaws, policies, and resolutions	Permanently
Payroll records and summaries	7 years
Personnel files (terminated employees)	7 years after termination
Retirement and pension records	Permanently
Tax returns and worksheets	Permanently
Timesheets	7 years
Trademark registrations and copyrights	Permanently
Withholding tax statements	7 years
Year-end financial statements	Permanently

1

2 540.0.5 Disaster Plan

The Senior Pastor shall develop and maintain a plan to address any event that would disrupt the operations of Plymouth. Such plan shall include but not be limited to backup of electronic and paper records, password retention, and responsibility determination for various Plymouth members and staff.

3 540.0.6 Naming of a Plymouth Program or Facility

Proposals for naming any Plymouth program or physical facility requires the approval of Council.

4.) Members or Staff may make recommendations stating the:

- 5 a.) Program or facility to be named;
- 6 b.) Person or persons it is to be named for; and
- 7 c.) Reasons for the naming proposal.

8 2.) Proposals for naming any program or physical facility must be consistent with the
9 mission of Plymouth.

10 3.) The duration of naming is intended for the life of the specific program or entity unless
11 otherwise stated.

4.) The naming may be removed by Council if Council determines that significant changes have occurred to the program or facility or that the naming is no longer appropriate.

540.0.7 Safe Church Guidelines

It is of utmost importance to provide a safe and healthy environment that protects the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of its children (those 5th grade and younger) and youth (middle and high school) so that they can learn about and experience God's love. In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines for every volunteer who works with our children and youth.

Section 1. Volunteer Selection and Orientation

A. Application

Each prospective volunteer who will work with children and youth will complete a volunteer application. This application will include:

- 1.) Requests for references (preferably someone from within the church) to be contacted at the discretion of the Senior Pastor or designated staff;
- 2.) Information about past volunteer experiences;
- 3.) A talent and gift assessment; and
- 4.) Background information;

B. Background Checks

- 1.) The Senior Pastor or designee shall conduct a biannual background check of each volunteer or volunteer applicant.
- 2.) Additionally, volunteers involved in overnight programming shall submit to annual background checks.
- 3.) The background check shall include nationwide:
 - a.) Criminal history;
 - b.) Sex offender registry;
 - c.) Social security number trace; and
 - d.) Address history.
- 4.) If someone fails a background check, the applicant will be placed in pastoral care and afforded confidentiality and discretion. The background check results will be reported to the Senior Pastor or designee.
- 5.) If an applicant passes a background check, the application may be approved at the discretion of the Senior Pastor or designee.

C. Orientation

Each volunteer working with Plymouth children and youth will:

- 1.) Be required to complete volunteer orientation. Orientation will include training regarding safe conduct, boundaries, and recognizing signs of abuse and neglect;
- 2.) Receive updates on current practices and refresher information as part of annual Sunday school orientation. Multiple opportunities per year will be offered to complete this orientation;
- 3.) Must attend at least one orientation session every year;
- 4.) Be provided a copy of the Safe Conduct Guidelines; and
- 5.) Abide by Safe Conduct Guidelines at all times.

Section 2. Supervisory Guidelines

1 **A. In Church Situations**

2 1.) All church activities involving children and youth will be supervised or conducted by
3 persons who have satisfactorily completed the volunteer selection process and have
4 been approved as a volunteer by the Senior Pastor or designated staff.
5 2.) Either two adults or one adult and one youth at least five years older than the oldest
6 participant in the classroom shall be present. On Sundays when attendance is low,
7 classes may be combined. Reasonable exceptions to this requirement may be approved
8 at the discretion of Senior Pastor or designated staff.
9 3.) If doors have no visual portal, they will remain open for programming.
10 4.) Picking up a child or youth from church events:
11 a.) Annually parents or guardians will register their child or youth in writing for church
12 programming. This will include designating approved adults or siblings 16 years old or
13 older who may pick the child or youth up from church events.
14 b.) The approved list may be changed at any time in writing including signature and
15 date.
16 c.) When a child or youth who has not been registered attends a church event, the
17 parent or guardian should check the child or youth in with the adult in charge.
18 d.) For choir events, the parent or guardian will check out their child or youth with the
19 choir teacher.

20 **B. Off-site Situations**

21 1.) It is best policy to have two adults in every car when transporting children or youth.
22 Exception can be made at the discretion of the Senior Pastor or designee with
23 permission from a parent.
24 2.) Overnight or longer trips will have at least two chaperones for each common sleeping
25 area. Those chaperones shall have successfully completed the volunteer application
26 process and approved by the Senior Pastor or designated staff.

27 **C. Reporting of Suspected Abuse**

28 1.) If a volunteer or staff suspects physical, mental, or sexual abuse or neglect of a child or
29 youth that attends Sunday school or other church programming, that volunteer shall
30 report those concerns to the Senior Pastor or designated staff.
31 2.) If these concerns are reported to staff other than the Senior Pastor, that staff must
32 report the concerns to the Senior Pastor.
33 3.) No policy or practice of the church may in any way prohibit or discourage any
34 concerned party to report suspicion of abuse or neglect to the Kansas Department for
35 Children and Families, (Kansas Protection Report Center, 1-800-922-5330)
36 4.) If a report is made about the conduct of a children or youth program volunteer:
37 a.) The reported volunteer will be placed under pastoral care and afforded
38 confidentiality;
39 b.) The reported volunteer will also be removed from activities with children and youth
40 until the concern is resolved.
41 c.) If the concern or report is determined to be unsubstantiated, the reported volunteer
42 may be reinstated at the discretion of Senior Pastor.

43 **Section 3. Code of Conduct**

The Senior Pastor or designee shall develop a Code of Conduct for volunteers and prospective volunteers to annually review and sign an acknowledgment of receipt.

1 **540.0.8 Transition Plan**

The Senior Pastor shall develop and maintain a plan to address the unexpected departure of staff or officers. This plan shall include the development of position handbooks for each staff detailing the duties and practices of each position.

2 **540.0.9 Whistleblower**

Plymouth requires its members of Council, volunteers, and staff to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. To that end, Plymouth will investigate any suspected illegal, fraudulent, or dishonest conduct, or use or misuse of Plymouth's resources or property by members of Council, volunteers, or staff.

Members of Council, volunteers, and staff are encouraged to report suspected illegal, fraudulent, or dishonest conduct (i.e., to be a "whistleblower"), pursuant to the procedures set forth below.

3 **Section 1. Definitions**

4 1.) **Baseless Allegation:** A baseless allegation is an allegation which is known to be false, or
5 an allegation made with reckless disregard for its truth or falsity. An individual making a
6 baseless allegation is not considered a Whistleblower for purposes of this Policy, and
7 may be subject to disciplinary action by Plymouth, including legal claims by Plymouth,
8 and any person who is the subject of such baseless allegation.

9 2.) **Illegal, Fraudulent or Dishonest Conduct:** "Illegal, Fraudulent or Dishonest Conduct" is
10 any deliberate act or failure to act which is contrary to applicable law or which is made
11 with the intention of obtaining an unauthorized benefit. Examples of such conduct
12 include, but are not limited to:

13 a.) Forgery or unauthorized alteration of documents;
14 b.) Unauthorized alteration or manipulation of computer files;
15 c.) Fraudulent financial reporting;
16 d.) Misappropriation or misuse of Plymouth's resources, such as funds, supplies, or
17 other assets;
18 e.) Authorizing or receiving compensation for goods not received or services not
19 performed; and
20 f.) Authorizing or receiving compensation for hours not worked.

21 3.) **Whistleblower:** A "Whistleblower" is a member of Council, staff, or volunteer who
22 informs the Moderator, any other member of Council, or the Senior Pastor about an
23 activity relating to Plymouth which that person reasonably believes to be illegal,
24 fraudulent or dishonest Conduct.

25 **Section 2. Reporting**

26 1.) A person's concerns about possible illegal, fraudulent, or dishonest Conduct, or use or
27 misuse of Plymouth's resources or property, should be reported to the Moderator or, if
28 suspected by an employee, to the Senior Pastor, or, if suspected by a volunteer, to the
29 staff member supporting or overseeing the volunteer's work.

30 2.) If, for any reason, a person finds it difficult to report their concerns as directed by the
31 foregoing paragraph, the person may report such concerns to any member of Council,

1 who shall have an affirmative obligation to assure that such concerns are handled in a
2 manner consistent with this Policy.

3.) Reports may be submitted either orally or in writing.

4 Section 3. Rights and Responsibilities

5 A. Senior Pastor

6 The Senior Pastor is required to promptly report suspected illegal, fraudulent or dishonest
7 conduct to the Moderator. Reasonable care should be taken in dealing with suspected
8 misconduct to avoid:

9 1.) Baseless allegations;
10 2.) Premature notice to persons suspected of misconduct or disclosure of suspected
11 misconduct to others not involved with the investigation; and
12 3.) Violation of any person's rights under applicable law.

13 B. Investigation

14 All relevant matters, including suspected but unproved matters, will be reviewed and
15 analyzed, with documentation of the receipt, retention, investigation and treatment of the
16 report. Appropriate corrective action will be taken, if necessary, and a response will be
17 communicated back to the Whistleblower and, to the extent applicable, the Senior Pastor.
18 Where appropriate to assure objectivity or confidentiality, or because of other appropriate
19 considerations, Plymouth may engage an independent person (such as an attorney, auditor,
20 or private investigator) to conduct the investigation.

21 C. Whistleblower Protection

22 Plymouth will protect Whistleblowers as defined below.

23 1.) Plymouth will use reasonable efforts to protect Whistleblowers against retaliation. In
24 particular, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, each Whistleblower's
25 report will be handled with sensitivity, discretion and confidentiality to the extent
26 allowed by the circumstances and by applicable law. Generally, this means that a
27 Whistleblower's report will only be shared with those who have a need to know so that
28 Plymouth can conduct an effective investigation, determine what action to take based
29 on the results of any such investigation, and, in appropriate cases, with law enforcement
30 personnel. Should disciplinary or legal action be taken against a person or persons as a
31 result of a Whistleblower's report, such persons may also have right to know the
32 identity of the Whistleblower.

33 2.) No member of Council, volunteer, or staff of Plymouth may retaliate against a
34 Whistleblower for reporting any conduct which that person believes to be illegal,
35 fraudulent, or dishonest with the intent or effect of adversely affecting the terms or
36 conditions of the Whistleblower's employment, including but not limited to, threats of
37 physical harm, loss of job, punitive work assignments, or effect on salary or fees. The
38 foregoing policy against retaliation shall not apply to a baseless allegation, as above
39 defined.

40 3.) Any Whistleblower who believes that they have been retaliated against may file a
41 written complaint with the Moderator. Any such complaint of retaliation will be
42 promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective measures taken if allegations of
43 retaliation are substantiated. This protection from retaliation is not intended to prohibit

any Plymouth official from taking action, including disciplinary action, in the usual scope of such official's duties and based on valid performance-related factors.

4.) Anyone reporting conduct as described under this policy must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates an improper accounting or auditing practice. The act of making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated, and that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the knowledge that the allegations are false, may be viewed as a disciplinary offense and may, among other things, result in discipline, up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment. Such conduct may also give rise to other actions, including civil lawsuits.

540.1 History and Heritage

540.1.1 History Committee

A. Membership

- 1.) Council shall annually appoint with no limitation on the number of terms a Church Historian.
- 2.) The Church Historian shall form a History Committee and appoint as many members as appropriate. The Church Historian shall chair the Committee.

B. Purpose

The History Committee shall promote the preservation, appreciation, understanding, and utilization of the history and heritage of Plymouth Church and the United Church of Christ

C. Responsibilities

The History Committee shall:

- 1.) Provide proper procedures for conservation, arrangement, and storage for Church records and artifacts of historical value. This includes the placement of records in office files and in the History Committee files as well as the timely deposit of records in the archives at Spencer Research Library;
- 2.) Help create or retain records of important current events in the life of the Church,
- 3.) Compile information needed to gain a knowledge and understanding of the history of Plymouth Church (including the lives of its members) and of the United Church of Christ;
- 4.) Present information and interpretations of the history of Plymouth Church and the United Church of Christ;
- 5.) Assist persons in the study of Church records; and
- 6.) Such other activities appropriate for their purpose.

540.3 Nominating Committee

540.3.1 Diversity of Nominations

The Nominating Committee shall seek to provide nominations for the various positions reflecting the diversity of the membership of Plymouth. Factors to be considered include:

- 1.) Length of membership;
- 2.) Service attended;
- 3.) Age of the members;
- 4.) Professional and community experience;
- 5.) Communities within Plymouth; and
- 6.) Other factors that would bring different perspectives and experiences.

1 540.3.2 Nominations by the Nominating Committee

2 1.) The Nominating Committee shall publish nominations it has ready prior to the 10-day
3 notice requirement for nominees in the Bylaws but may make nominations up to the
4 time of the vote for the position to be elected.

5 2.) The Nominating Committee shall provide brief biographical information for nominees.

6 540.3.3 Nominations by a Member

7 A member wanting to nominate another member for an elected position for which the
8 Nominating Committee is charged with providing a nominee, shall submit a petition to the
9 Moderator or Clerk.

10 1.) For elected positions for which the Nominating Committee has submitted a qualified
11 nominee by the 10-day notice requirement of the Bylaws, the petition shall:
12 a.) Be signed by the proposed nominee indicating their willingness to serve;
13 b.) Be signed by at least 5% of Plymouth's membership reported at the previous Annual
14 Meeting; and
15 c.) Be delivered at least 72 hours before the scheduled time for the meeting for the
16 election.

17 2.) For elected positions for which the Nominating Committee has not submitted a
18 qualified nominee by the 10-day notice requirement of the Bylaws, the petition shall:
19 a.) Be signed by the proposed nominee indicating their willingness to serve;
20 b.) Be signed by at least 15 members of Plymouth; and
21 c.) Be delivered prior to the start of the meeting held for the election.

22 540.6 Speaking in the Name of Plymouth

23 540.6.1 Advocacy, Lobbying, and Partisan Activity

24 Section 1. Introduction

25 1.) In pursuit of its Covenant, "...the service of all...the promotion of justice...the reign of
26 peace...and the realization of our shared humanity," Plymouth members act both
27 individually and collectively to accomplish its social mission.

28 2.) Periodically, activities in the greater society conflict with what our Christian faith calls
29 us to support and work to achieve.

30 3.) In such incidents, it may become desirable for Plymouth to speak collectively and with
31 one voice by adopting issue position statements. It may also be desirable, when
32 necessary and desirable, to engage in lobbying of appropriate legislative bodies.

33 4.) Plymouth does not engage in partisan activity.

34 Section 2. Advocacy

35 A. Definition

36 Advocacy is speaking in behalf of another. It is standing with or standing for a person or
37 group that is disadvantaged or denied justice in society. It is for the integrity of creation,
38 justice, and peace. It is to change attitudes, behaviors, and policies that perpetuate injustice
39 and deny God's will for all creation to flourish. It is speaking with and for the poor, the
40 stranger, and the oppressed.

41 B. General

- 1 1.) Plymouth shall encourage and facilitate ongoing education and discussions within
- 2 Plymouth regarding greater justice in our community.
- 3 2.) Advocacy is a part of Plymouth's efforts to directly assist those in need.
- 4 3.) Members of Plymouth are encouraged to engage in meaningful ways to further the
- 5 mission of Plymouth's support of greater justice in our community. All are free to
- 6 determine their areas and method of support as individuals.
- 7 4.) Staff and moderator, or other individuals in lay leadership positions, when
- 8 communicating outside of Plymouth and identifying as their roles, should clarify that
- 9 they are speaking for themselves and not the Church unless with prior approval by
- 10 Council to speak on behalf of Plymouth.

C. Service and Justice Board Priorities

- 11 1.) The Service and Justice Board may provide Council with an annual list of its top
- 12 priorities for social justice issues.
- 13 2.) The Service and Justice Board shall ensure that the mission and goals of Plymouth are
- 14 reflected and prioritized.
- 15 3.) No approval is required of Council as the list reflects only the priorities of the Service
- 16 and Justice Board.

D. Issue Position Statements in the Name of Plymouth

- 19 1.) As used in this policy, "in the name of Plymouth" includes:
 - 20 a.) Stating explicitly that an opinion reflects that of Plymouth Church.
 - 21 b.) Using Plymouth communication channels to issue a statement without noting that
 - 22 the statement does not necessarily reflect the views of Plymouth.
 - 23 c.) Using the name "Plymouth," the Plymouth logo, or part of the Plymouth logo in such
 - 24 a way that a reasonable person would assume Plymouth Church supports a
 - 25 communication.
- 26 2.) Using a church-provided banner at a rally, march, or other gathering in such a way that
- 27 a reasonable person would assume Plymouth supports the message of the gathering.
- 28 3.) Issue position statements given in the name of Plymouth must have the prior approval
- 29 of Council.
- 30 4.) The draft issue position statement shall be submitted to the Clerk and the Moderator
- 31 Team for consideration by Council.⁹
- 32 5.) Council shall publish the draft issue position statement at least two weeks before the
- 33 meeting at which it shall consider the request. Unless Council decides on alternate
- 34 forms of communication, the draft position statement will be listed on the church's
- 35 website, in the Sunday bulletins, announced from the pulpit and made available through
- 36 a link in the all-church email during the two-week period.¹⁰
- 37 6.) Council shall provide a process to allow Plymouth members to ask questions and
- 38 provide input for any issue position statement request prior to its consideration.

E. Council Considerations

40 Factors used by Council in evaluating a draft issue position statement shall include the

41 following:

- 42 1.) Any relevant existing, broader declaration or statement agreed to by Council or the
- 43 Congregation at a Called Congregational Meeting.

- 1 2.) Resolutions and statements adopted by the national UCC or the Kansas Oklahoma
- 2 Conference.
- 3 3.) The mission and goals of Plymouth.
- 4 4.) Service and Justice Board's list of priorities for social justice issues.
- 5 5.) The diverse views held by Plymouth members.
- 6 6.) Whether the request warrants consideration by the full Congregation at a Called
- 7 Congregational Meeting.

8 Section 3. Lobbying

9 A. Definitions

- 10 1.) **Lobbying:** Attempting to influence legislation. Lobbying is a subset of Advocacy.
- 11 Lobbying does not include conducting educational meetings, preparing and distributing
- 12 educational materials, or otherwise considering or speaking on public policy issues in an
- 13 educational manner.
- 14 2.) **Legislation:** Includes federal, state, or local acts, bills, resolutions, or similar items (such
- 15 as legislative confirmation of appointive office), or public referendum, ballot initiative,
- 16 constitutional amendment, or similar procedure. It does not include actions by
- 17 executive, judicial, or administrative bodies.
- 18 3.) **Attempting to influence legislation:** Includes contacting, or urging the public to
- 19 contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing,
- 20 supporting, or opposing legislation.
- 21 4.) **Substantial:** Not explicitly defined but is generally viewed as less than 5% of Plymouth's
- 22 activities. In general, Plymouth may not spend a substantial part of its activities in
- 23 attempting to influence legislation (commonly known as lobbying). Plymouth may
- 24 engage in some lobbying, but too much lobbying activity risks loss of tax-exempt status.

25 B. Lobbying Requests

- 26 1.) All lobbying done in the name of Plymouth, or any authorized subgroup, must be
- 27 approved by Council.
- 28 2.) This prior approval is to ensure that:
 - 29 a.) Plymouth does not spend a substantial amount of its activities lobbying; and
 - 30 b.) The lobbying request represents the views of Plymouth.
- 31 3.) Any member or group of members requesting approval of lobbying shall submit a
- 32 written proposal to the Clerk. The proposal shall include a short policy statement on the
- 33 issue and the nature of the requested lobbying.
- 34 4.) Council shall publish the draft of any request for lobbying at least two weeks before the
- 35 meeting at which it shall consider the lobbying request.
- 36 5.) Council shall provide a process to allow Plymouth members to ask questions and
- 37 provide input for any request for lobbying.

38 C. Council Considerations

39 Factors used by Council in evaluating a lobbying request shall include the following:

- 40 1.) Current IRS regulations regarding churches and lobbying.
- 41 2.) The percent of Plymouth's activity that would be spent in lobbying.
- 42 3.) Any relevant existing, broader declaration or statement agreed to by Council or the
- 43 Congregation at a Called Congregational Meeting.
- 44 4.) How long a lobbying request will be valid.

- 1 5.) The mission and goals of Plymouth.
- 2 6.) Service and Justice Board's list of priorities for social justice issues.
- 3 7.) The diverse views held by Plymouth members.
- 4 8.) Whether the request warrants consideration by the full Congregation at a Called
- 5 Congregational Meeting.

6 Section 4. Partisan Activity

7 Plymouth is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization pursuant to the Internal Revenue Service.
8 Accordingly, Plymouth:

- 9 1.) Is neutral regarding political parties, political platforms, and candidates for political
- 10 office. Plymouth does not endorse any political party or candidate. Nor does it advise
- 11 members how to vote; and
- 12 2.) Staff and moderator shall not make partisan comments in official Plymouth
- 13 publications or at official Plymouth functions.

14 540.7 Delegates to the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference

15 Lay delegates to the Annual Meeting of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ
16 shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for three-year overlapping terms. The number of delegates is
17 determined annually by quotas for local congregations, established by the Constitution and Bylaws of
18 the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference. In addition to those delegates, the Moderator and Moderator-Elect
19 shall be counted among the quota of lay delegates. The pastors of the Congregation holding ministerial
20 standing in the Kansas Oklahoma Conference shall be clergy delegates.

21 600 Boards and Ministry Teams

22 620 Boards

23 620.1 Purpose and Operation

24 620.1.1 Composition and Procedures of Boards

- 25 1.) Each Board shall have nine voting members unless stated otherwise in policy. There
26 may be as many additional non-voting team members as needed.⁵
- 27 2.) Voting members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for three-year overlapping
28 terms. Vacancies shall be filled by Council appointment for the unexpired portion of the
29 term, subject to confirmation at the Annual Meeting if the unexpired term exceeds one
30 year. No elected member may serve more than seven consecutive years on the same
31 board.
- 32 3.) A voting member vacancy shall be declared by Council for three unexcused absences in
33 a year.
- 34 4.) Each Board shall collaborate with a staff member designated by the Senior Pastor.
- 35 5.) At the first meeting of each Board following the Annual Meeting, a chair, vice-chair,
36 and secretary shall be elected from among the voting membership. The vice-chair shall
37 normally assume the chair the following year, subject to a vote of the Board.
- 38 6.) Each Board chair shall work with the assigned staff person in coordinating the efforts of
39 the Ministry.
- 40 7.) Each Board is encouraged to send a representative to attend each Council meeting to
41 report back to the Board on Council action.

- 1 8.) Each Board shall hold such meetings as necessary to fulfill its purpose. Special meetings
2 may be called by the Chair or by written request of at least two voting members of the
3 Ministry.
- 4 9.) Each Board shall keep appropriate records and documents, such as attendance and
5 minutes, which shall be transmitted to the Senior Pastor or designee in a continuing and
6 timely manner for distribution to Council.
- 7 10.) All Board meetings are open to the members of Plymouth Church.
- 8 11.) The designated staff member, in consultation with the relevant Board is authorized to
9 spend funds allocated to the Board's use in the budget on any item necessary to fulfill
10 their mission subject to limits and restrictions in the Bylaws or other policy. Funds
11 cannot be used for personnel expenses.
- 12 12.) A Board may not sequester budgeted funds in a given budget year for use in a future
13 year without the prior approval of the Finance Committee. Blanket approval to
14 sequester funds will not be given. Approval to sequester funds will normally require that
15 the use of the funds be for a specific project or activity and that this project or activity is
16 not funded in the budget for the next year.
- 17 13.) Each board shall prepare annual financial estimates for all budgetary line items
18 related to its responsibility and shall submit such estimates and requests to Council.

19 **620.2 Established Boards**

20 **620.2.1 Christian Education**

21 The Christian Education Ministry shall work with staff in coordinating and developing the church
22 school and other educational programs designed for persons of all ages.

23 **620.2.2 Deacons**

24 The Deacons shall work with staff in coordinating and developing ministries that nurture the
spiritual growth and care of the Congregation, including assisting the Senior Pastor with the
administration of the sacraments and other services of worship. Deacons shall have 12 members.

25 **620.2.3 Fellowship**

26 The Fellowship Board shall work with staff in coordinating and developing ministries that nurture
and develop our congregational community.

27 **620.2.4 Membership**

28 The Membership Board shall work with staff in coordinating and developing ministries that
promote and sustain membership.

29 **620.2.5 Music and Fine Arts**

30 The Music and Fine Arts Board shall work with staff in coordinating and developing ministries that
promote music and other art for the worship services, and nurture spiritual growth and
enrichment of the Plymouth membership through the arts in additional ways.

31 **620.2.6 Service and Justice**

32 The Service and Justice Board shall work with staff in coordinating and developing ministries that
promote the service and justice priorities of Plymouth Church and the United Church of Christ in
the world.

33 **630 Ministry Teams**

34 Each Ministry Team shall have a written Team Formation Agreement (TFA). The TFA shall include:

- 1 1.) Purpose of the Ministry Team;
- 2 2.) Staff member serving as coordinator or contact;
- 3 3.) Council committee, Board, or staff through which they will operate for Council and
- 4 budget purposes;
- 5 4.) At least three members agreeing to coordinate with staff and other members;
- 6 5.) A list of financial, staff, and space resources that will be needed;
- 7 6.) Its expected length of operation, which can include "indefinite";
- 8 7.) Acceptance of rules of operation including complying with all Bylaws and policies; and
- 9 8.) Recognition that the Ministry Team will need to be renewed each year if it wishes to
- 10 continue for more than a year.

11 **740 Personnel Policies and Employee Handbook**

12 The Plymouth Personnel Policies and Employee Handbook is a collection of policies adopted by Council
13 and placed in a separate collection maintained along with this general policy book.

14 **1000 Resolutions**

15 **1000 Resolutions by Year**

16 **1000.2004 Open and Affirming**

17 We declare Plymouth Congregational Church to be an Open and Affirming Church, welcoming all
18 persons, regardless of gender, race, physical or mental ability, economic status, marital status, age or
19 sexual orientation. We affirm that persons who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans-gendered share with
20 all others the worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God. Therefore, this
21 congregation joyfully and unequivocally welcomes all to share in the life and leadership, ministry,
22 fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings of participation in our community of
23 faith.

24 Adopted April 18, 2004, at a Called Congregational Meeting

25 **1000.2023 Transgender Youth**

26 Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, affirms that members of the transgender,
27 nonbinary, and gender nonconforming community share with all others the worth associated with being
28 unique individuals created by God. Considering the struggles they currently face, we especially welcome
29 and affirm the transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming youth community. This congregation
30 joyfully and unequivocally welcomes the transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming
31 community to share in the life, leadership and blessings of participation in our community of faith. We
32 also commit ourselves to the work of creating not only a world in which transgender, nonbinary, and
33 gender nonconforming people are safe but also a world in which they thrive.

34 Adopted March 28, 2023, by vote of Council

Addendum to Policy Book

All amendments to the Policy Book as adopted by Council at its December 19th, 2023, meeting. More information is available from the Council packet and minutes for the meeting of the date of amendment. The numbers below reference the same superscript number inserted in the policy book where the amended language is found.

1. **520.4.1.2.** Amended on August 27th, 2024 This policy addition arose out of the capital campaign in 2024. It clarifies that any similar project will require review by Council's Finance Committee and review and approval by Council. This is to ensure that expenditures have authorization and there is communication on expected expenditures. Page 11.
2. **520.5.1.A.** Amended on August 27th, 2024. Added "and the chair" to clarify that Council chooses the chair of its committees. Page 12.
3. **520.5.4.12.** Amended on August 27th, 2024. Added new number 12 to duties of Finance Committee clarifying the establishment of a relationship with a new fiduciary institution and to allow flexibility. Page 14.
4. **520.5.5.A.** Amended on August 27th, 2024. Changed the membership of Governance Committee from "such members as Council decides is appropriate" to bring in line with other Council committees. Page 14.
5. **620.1.1.1.** Amended on December 17th, 2024. Changed default number of board members from six to nine. Also deleted redundant membership number language in individual board descriptions. Pages 27 and 28.
6. **540.0.2.3.c.** This language was approved by Council at its December 19th, 2023 meeting in which it first approved the Policy Book. The change was inadvertently dropped in the "cleaned" up version.
7. **520.5.1.A.** Amended on June 24, 2025. Changed title from Membership to Composition and Procedures of Committees. Page 12.
8. **520.5.1.B.** Amended on June 24, 2025. Added new number 6 to duties of Council Committees establishing policy for keeping appropriate records and documents and for distributing records to Moderator and Council. Page 12.
9. **540.6.1.2.D.4** Amended on October 28, 2025. Added "and the Moderator Team for consideration by Council" to clarify to whom draft position statements should be submitted. Page 25.
10. **540.6.1.2.D.5** Amended on October 28, 2025. Added clarification of communication avenues for publishing draft position statements. Page 25.