

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

The First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa, New York

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be The First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa. It shall be affiliated with the Capital Area Baptist Association, the American Baptist Churches of New York State, and the American Baptist Churches USA.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be to worship the triune God and to promote God's Kingdom through public worship, and carrying out an active program of Evangelism and Community ministry; trusting also in the Old and New Testaments as the inerrant Word of God as the basis of our faith and practice.

Mission

Mission Statement: We are a body of believers united in Christ to proclaim, live and love according to God's Word.

Vision

Vision Statement: We will be a Church that encourages passionate disciples of Jesus Christ, shares generously, and graciously serves our community through team ministry.

Church Covenant

Having accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and on profession of our faith in Him, having been baptized according to His example by immersion, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly covenant with one another and with God as members of His Church.

We agree by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, faithfully seeking by all means to grow in grace and in our understanding of the truth of God.

We agree to work and pray for the present and coming Kingdom of God, seeking to have His will done in our lives, in our homes, and in the affairs of our community and world.

We agree to contribute cheerfully and regularly as God prospers us, for the expense of the church at home and abroad.

We promise to be faithful in our social contacts, to be watchful of our manner of life and speech, and to be careful to guard the Holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, His church and its members.

We will remember each other in prayer, aid each other in sickness and distress, do unto all others as we would have them do unto us, and be ever open to Christian reconciliation.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1. Its membership shall be those who have publicly accepted Christ as Lord and Savior

and who are baptized. In addition, they must also satisfactorily attend the church's New Member's Class, and subscribe to the church's Biblical Convictions, Covenant, Constitution and By-Laws. After interview and acceptance by the Board of Deacons, and approval by a majority vote of the members present during Sunday Worship, the candidate(s) will be received into the membership of the church. If a new member has never been baptized, then the new member will be baptized by immersion during a public worship service.

Section 2. When all of the requirements from Article III Section 1 have been sincerely honored, admission to membership also may be by (1) letter from another Baptist Church or letter from another evangelical church; (2) the person seeking membership having knowledge of his or her baptism and Christian experience; (3) restoration to active membership.

Section 3. Membership may be terminated by (1) written request of the member to the Board of Deacons; (2) letter of dismissal to join another church of their choice; (3) the Board of Deacons after a thorough investigation and consultation with the member, if possible; (4) death; or (5) any member who does not participate with the church in any way for three consecutive years shall be considered by the Board of Deacons for such action as they deem best or mark them as inactive on the church membership list or database.

Section 4. Students or Military Personnel from other churches may become Associate Members after attending a membership class. Associate members may serve on committees, but not boards, and may not vote at any congregational meeting.

ARTICLE IV

Officers and Boards

The elected officers and Boards of the Church shall be: Pastor(s), Clerk, Moderator, the Boards of Deacons, Trustees, Christian Education, Missions, and the Church Mouse Nursery School Board. All elected officers and board members shall be active members of The First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa, N.Y.

After election at the May Congregational Business Meeting, each Board shall organize by choosing its own Chairperson and any additional officers needed to meet the goals and objectives for the ensuing year.

Membership on the Board of Deacons, Trustees, Christian Education, Missions, and the Church Mouse Nursery School Board is to be on a rotating three-year term. An individual may be elected for two consecutive three-year terms, for a maximum of six years.

ARTICLE V

Amendments

The Constitution may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present if notice of such proposed amendments has been printed in church publications four weeks in advance and announced the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. The minimal required quorum for constitutional changes shall be twenty-five (25) members over the age of 18. In addition, the constitutional change must be approved by the Board of Deacons by a simple majority.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

Duties of Officers

Section 1. The Pastor/Senior Pastor: The Pastor shall be the leader of the church in all of its activities and shall preach the gospel, administer the ordinances, have charge of the stated services of public worship and direct the spiritual welfare of the church. The Pastor shall serve as counselor of all boards and committees as an ex-officio member without voting privileges. If the event of a tie vote should occur within a board vote, a committee vote, or any congregational meeting the Pastor can cast a deciding vote if a simple majority is required. The Pastor's presence at any board meeting or church meeting shall be counted in order to constitute a quorum.

Section 2. The Associate Pastor: The duties of the Associate Pastor shall be those normally thought of as pastoral duties and shall be delegated to him by the pastor in consultation with the Board of Deacons.

Section 3. The Clerk: The Clerk shall be elected at the May Congregational Business Meeting for a term of three years and may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms. The Clerk shall keep a complete and accurate record of the minutes and membership of the church.

Section 4. The Moderator: The Moderator shall be elected at the May Congregational Business Meeting for a term of three years, may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms and shall preside at all congregational meetings of the Church.

ARTICLE II

Duties of Boards

Section 1. The Board of Deacons: There shall be five members (5) of this Board. The Board of Deacons is the Governing Board of FBC, with the responsibilities of:

- a) providing oversight of all other Boards,
- b) dealing with all issues related to membership and worship,
- c) advising the Pastor about worship,
- d) mediating conflict between Boards and
- e) serving as a support and resource for all other Boards.

Other duties of the Board of Deacons include:

- a) overseeing the caring ministries of the church,
- b) assisting the Pastor in the Ordinance of Baptism,
- c) serving Communion,
- d) administering the Fellowship Fund,
- e) overseeing Membership Classes,
- f) reviewing all candidates for church membership,
- g) reviewing the membership roll according to established procedures,
- h) appointing and training the church ushers,
- i) administering Church Discipline in conjunction with Article III in the Constitution, and
- j) coordinating the Worship Services in consultation with the Pastor.

Section 2. The Board of Trustees: There shall be seven members (7) of this Board. The members of the Board of Trustees are the legal Trustees in accordance with New York State Religious

Corporations Law. The duties of the Board of Trustees include:

- a) attending to all legal transactions of the church,
- b) maintaining custody and control of all church property (both real and personal),
- c) conducting their business in accordance with the religious laws of the State of New York as printed in McKinney's Book of Corporate Law (Vol. 50),
- d) appointing a Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Financial Secretaries for the church current expense and missionary funds and appointing or approving registrars and treasurers for other church funds, and
- e) during a budget year, reallocating line items to meet unexpected needs without exceeding the approved total yearly budget.

The Budget and Finance Committee is a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees, to which one member of the Board of Trustees will be appointed yearly. The representative will bring recommendations back to the Board to be voted on and then implemented if approved.

Meetings of the Trustees may be called by giving at least twenty-four hours' notice personally or by phone or email, but by unanimous consent of the Trustees, a meeting may be held without previous notice. A majority of the Trustees shall constitute a quorum. If a vacancy occurs, such may be filled by the Trustees until the next Congregational Business Meeting of the church, when said appointment(s) will be ratified by the congregation.

Section 3. The Board of Christian Education: There shall be five members (5) of this Board. The Sunday School Superintendent, a Youth Advisor, and the Church Librarian will be ex-officio members of this Board. If ex-officio members are unable to attend board meetings, a written report is required prior to the missed meeting. The duties of the Board include:

- a) overseeing the total educational ministry of the church,
- b) reviewing the C.E. Handbook every three years (3),
- c) appointing Sunday School teachers in the absence of a Sunday School Superintendent or approving appointments made by the Sunday School Superintendent,
- d) being responsible for overseeing the Child Care Ministry,
- e) appointing Youth Advisors and overseeing the total Youth Program, and
- f) appointing Librarian(s) and maintaining the church library.

Section 4. Mission Board: There shall be five members (5) of this Board. The duties of the Mission Board include:

- a) coordinating and directing the affairs and programs related to the Mission budget,
- b) overseeing the total mission ministry of the church,
- c) promoting and planning mission related offerings,
- d) informing and educating the congregation regarding short term and long term mission emphases, and
- e) submitting a summary of the year for the Annual Report.

Section 5. The Church Mouse Nursery School Board: There shall be five members (5) of this Board. The Church Mouse Nursery School is a non-profit preschool that is a ministry of the Church for ages 3-5. The duties of the Board include:

- a) approving new programs, activities, changes to curriculum that are suggested by the Administrator and any changes made to the parent manuals;
- b) monitoring the finances of the school, with an annual financial review under the oversight of the Church Treasurer;

- c) communicating to the congregation via the School Administrator a report of the school's year to date progress at the regularly scheduled business meetings;
- d) interviewing and hiring qualified School and Office Administrators and, if possible, being involved in the interviewing process of Teachers and Aids; and
- e) attending at least one of the annual school functions (open house and/or parent night) to become more familiar with the staff and activities of the school.

ARTICLE III

Duties of Appointed Positions

Section 1. Financial Secretaries: The Financial Secretaries shall be appointed annually by the Trustees to serve for one year and may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms. They shall receive all monies, keep an accurate account of the same and deposit them to their proper treasury. They shall keep a record of the financial giving of each member of the church.

Section 2. Treasurer and Co-Treasurer: Both shall be appointed annually by the Trustees *and* may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms. They shall keep an account of the monies received from the Financial Secretaries together with any other monies or legacies entrusted to their care. They shall pay all bills on authorization of the Board of Trustees and report monthly to the Board of Trustees and annually to the congregation. They shall pay all church employees and maintain appropriate state and federal records relating to employees. Their duties shall be further defined by the Board of Trustees.

Section 3. Fund Treasurers: The Fund Treasurers shall be appointed by the responsible board for each fund maintained by the church. They shall record all contributions and disbursements and make a written report for the January Congregational Business Meeting.

ARTICLE IV

Church Staff

Section 1. The church may appoint paid or volunteer staff personnel to assist the pastor and the boards in carrying out the mission of the church. The Pastoral/Church Staff Relations Committee shall oversee paid and volunteer staff personnel. Any paid staff position will have a job description. The Pastoral/ Staff Relations Committee will interview the candidate for paid staff positions and make recommendations to the church. Paid staff personnel will be selected by a two thirds vote of the membership present at any regular or special business meeting. The Pastoral/Church Staff Relations Committee will monitor job performance and work with paid and volunteer staff to resolve conflicts. Should paid staff termination be required, the Pastoral/Church Staff Relations Committee will make a recommendation to the membership. Termination will require a two thirds vote of the members present at a regular or special business meeting. Should volunteer staff termination be required, the Pastoral/Church Staff Relations Committee upon good cause, shall dismiss said volunteer.

ARTICLE V

Standing Committees

Section 1. Nominating Committee: This committee shall consist of a chairman from the Board of Deacons and one member from each of the other boards of the church. The Nominating Committee shall meet each March to elect their Chairman and to begin the nominating process.

Section 2. Budget and Finance Committee: The Budget and Finance Committee shall be constituted as follows:

Chairman, elected by the congregation for a term of three years (limit of two consecutive terms), the Church Treasurers, one of the Financial Secretaries, and one representative each from the Boards of Trustees, Deacons, Christian Education, and Mission, and *the Church Mouse Nursery School Board*. Their duties include:

- a) managing the overall financial and economic operation of the Church and its ministries, ensuring that all expenditures are consistent with the Church budget, or approved by the Board of Trustees, or the congregation at large, depending on the amount in question;
- b) preparing the annual budget prior to the January business meeting using input from the various Boards and other ministries;
- c) reviewing the financial reports submitted by the Treasurer on a monthly basis and making recommendations to the Board of Trustees on any matter that is outside the Church budget;
- d) maintaining a record of monthly expenses and distributing monthly expense reports to each Board and ministry for their review;
- e) planning and conducting the annual stewardship campaign;
- f) planning and conducting other fund raising campaigns approved by the congregation;
- g) appointing an auditing sub-committee to review the records and reports, with the auditing committee report presented at the May congregational business meeting;
- h) managing all funds in accordance with the direction of the Board of Trustees; and
- i) with the exception of designated gifts, bringing any expenditure over \$1,000 not included in the budget before the congregation for approval.

Section 3. Pastoral/Church Staff Relations Committee: Pastoral/Church Staff Relations Committee (PCSRC): There will be five members (5) on this committee, and they shall meet as needed to perform necessary tasks, but at least four (4) times per year. The members will be elected by the congregation to serve a 3-year term, and may serve a limit of two (2) consecutive 3-year terms. Duties of the Pastoral/Church Staff Relations Committee:

- a) Will have oversight of all of the church's paid staff and will be responsible for the job descriptions for these positions,
- b) When vacancies in paid staff positions occur (with the exclusion of the Pastor), the PSRC will interview candidates and make recommendations to the congregation. Paid staff personnel will be selected by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership present at any regular or special business meeting.
- c) The PSRC will monitor job performances year-round, and deal with performance issues. Annual reviews will be conducted with each employee, and compensation will be recommended to the Budget & Finance Committee for incorporation into the Annual Budget. The congregation will approve/ disapprove all compensation packages each year at the Annual Meeting in January.
- d) The PSRC will work with the paid staff to resolve concerns between them and the congregation. The PSRC will be the channel of communication between the congregation and the paid staff, and will be the point contact for all of the membership's concerns about the paid staff.
- e) Should the termination of any paid staff member be required, the PSRC will make a recommendation to the FBC membership. A two-thirds (2/3) vote at any regular or special business meeting will be required to terminate an employee.

ARTICLE VI

Calling of a Pastor

Section 1. Pastoral Search Committee: A Pastoral Search Committee, consisting of five representative members, nominated by the Board of Deacons shall be presented to the church for election. This committee shall take steps to secure a pastor(s) to be recommended to the church.

Section 2. Voting. The Pastor(s) shall be chosen by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting of the church duly called for that purpose, following the unanimous recommendation of the Pastoral Search Committee. The vote shall be by ballot. Only such a person as is fully qualified by Christian character, ability, and education shall be chosen.

Section 3. The Pastor's term of office shall be indefinite, and may be terminated by either pastor or church by giving at least thirty days' notice. Termination by the church shall require a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting duly called for such purpose.

ARTICLE VII

Ordinations of Ministry Candidates and Licensing

Section 1. If the Board of Deacons receives a request from an individual who feels a calling by God and is ready for ordained ministry, the church shall ordain an individual to the Gospel Ministry under the provisions of the American Baptist Churches USA and the American Baptist Churches of New York State for ordaining.

Section 2. If an individual seeks to explore ministry opportunities and wishes to be licensed to start a possible track to ordination or seminary education, then the individual may be licensed after recommendation by the Board of Deacons. The licensing shall be approved at a church business meeting by a simple majority vote. The ministry licensed is valid for four years and may be renewed upon approval of the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE VIII

Church Meetings

Section 1. Meeting for worship: This church shall convene at least every Sunday for the worship of the Lord and the study of His Word.

Section 2. Communion: This church shall observe the Communion or Lord's Supper at least once each month.

Section 3. Business Meetings: A Congregational Business Meeting of the church will be held the fourth Sunday of January for the review of the year's work, acceptance of the printed Annual Booklet, acceptance of budgets for the coming year, and other business that may come before it. Notice of such meeting shall be read publicly on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting, the nature of the business being stated in the notice.

A Congregational Business Meeting of the church will be held the third Sunday of May to elect Board members, elect new officers, elect members of the Pastor/Church Staff Relations Committee, consider the financial status of the church, give an update on activities of the Boards, and any other business that may need to be considered. Notice of such meeting shall be read publicly on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting, the nature of the business being stated in the notice.

Section 4. Special Meetings: Special meetings of the church may be called upon written request

of at least one third of the active members of the church or by request of the majority of any Board of the church provided two Sundays notice, as prescribed above, has been given. The Pastor, after consultation with the Board of Deacons and the Trustee Board, may call a meeting of the church without prior notice.

Section 5. At any business meeting of the church as a whole, twenty-five (25) members shall constitute a quorum except when noted elsewhere in this document. Qualified voters shall be those members of age 18 or older.

ARTICLE IX

Special Rules of Order

The church may adopt any special rules of procedure in its meetings which it may desire, provided such rules are not in conflict with the foregoing Constitution and By-Laws, and Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended at any regularly called congregational business meeting by a two thirds vote of the members present, provided the proposed amendment has been printed in church publications four weeks in advance and announced on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS APPROVED: January 22, 2017