

By-Laws 2021



First Baptist Church of Norwich

239 West Main Street

Norwich, CT 06360

BY-LAWS of the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

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ARTICLE I ... NAME

This Church shall be called “The First Baptist Church” in Norwich, Connecticut.

ARTICLE II ... COVENANT

This Church acknowledges the Bible to be the inspired record of God’s revelatory actions in human history and as the authoritative basis for its doctrine and practice.

As a summary of principles for Christian conduct among its members it adopts the following COVENANT:

As we trust we have been brought by Divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ and to give ourselves wholly to Him, so we do now, relying upon His gracious aid solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other and promise that we will walk together in brotherly love, according to the teaching of the New Testament;

That we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and help one another as occasion may require;

That we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others;

That we will endeavor to bring up such as may be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and holy example, we will seek to win our kindred and acquaintances to Christ and to Godly life;

That we will rejoice in each other’s good, and with tenderness and sympathy bear one another’s burdens;

That we will live circumspectly in the world, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,” and remembering, that as we have voluntarily been buried in baptism, and have been raised up from the emblematical grave, so there is on us a special obligation to live a new and holy life;

That, as stewards of the Lord, we will cheerfully contribute of our property, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, for the relief of the poor, and to aid in extending the message of the Gospel to the whole human family;

And that, through life, amidst evil report and good report, we will seek to live to the glory of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

ARTICLE III ... POLITY

Believing that all authority comes from Jesus Christ, the only head of the Church, we hold that the authority and responsibility for making decisions in church matters is vested in the active membership.

In carrying out the wider ministry for which Christ has made His Church responsible, we maintain a relationship with the Stonington Union New London Baptist Association, the American Baptist Churches of Connecticut, and the American Baptist Churches in the USA.

This church voluntarily associates with other churches in the greater Norwich area to carry out the ministry of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE IV ... MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Admission of Members.

Persons may be received into membership in the following ways:

- (a) Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change of heart and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this Church and subscribing to its Covenant and By-Laws, may by baptism be received into membership.
- (b) Members of other churches of a Protestant faith and order may be received by letters of dismissal and recommendation.
- (c) Any believer of worthy character who has formerly been a member of a Christian Church but for sufficient reason cannot present a letter from that church, may be received as a member upon profession of faith.

(d) If the Pastor and Diaconate are satisfied that a person is physically unable to experience the rite of immersion, then said person may be accepted into membership of this Church simply on profession of faith.

All applicants for membership shall be examined by the Pastor and at least five members of the diaconate to ascertain their character and Christian standing. If these shall be found satisfactory their names shall be read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays and said applicants shall then be received into membership of the Church upon baptism, by letter, or upon profession of faith, as the case may be.

The Right Hand of Fellowship shall be the official rite of membership in this Church, and it shall be extended to new members by the Pastor and the Chairperson of the Diaconate, or a person so designated by the Diaconate, during the Sunday morning worship service.

Section 2. Sponsorship of Members.

Each new member may be sponsored by a member of the church approved or appointed by the Diaconate. The sponsor shall help the new member to develop the practice of responsible church membership.

Section 3. Duties of Members.

In addition to the general terms of the Church Covenant the following specific duties are hereby stated.

(a) Every member of the Church, resident or nonresident, shall be expected to contribute regularly to its support.

(b) Absent members who are permanently located where they have access to another Protestant Church shall be expected to take letters and unite with such church.

Section 4. Voting Rights of Members.

All members in good standing shall have equal voting rights, except that members under the age of eighteen (18) years shall be ineligible to vote on financial matters.

Section 5. Dismissal of Members.

Persons may be dismissed from membership in any of the following ways, and shall be so recorded by the Church Clerk:

(a) By Death

(b) By Letter

Upon affirmative vote by the Pastor and at least five members of the diaconate, any member may be granted a letter of transfer to any other church by the church clerk, who shall report all such letters granted at official church business meetings. Letters of transfer shall be sent to the pastor or clerk of that church.

(c) By Deletion

(i.) Upon the request of any member to be removed from membership the Diaconate shall instruct the clerk to delete the name from the membership.

(ii.) Upon knowledge that any member has joined another church the Diaconate shall instruct the clerk to delete the name from the membership.

(iii.) Any member of this Church, resident or nonresident, who could have and has not attended, contributed to, or communicated with the church for one year, and who has been communicated with by letter (with a reasonable belief that such communication was received) may, upon action of the diaconate be removed from the membership_and placed on the inactive list, if requested, for a period not to exceed ten years.

Section 6. Reinstatement of Members.

Any former member may be restored to membership upon action of the Diaconate when he or she shows renewed interest in the Church.

ARTICLE V ... RULES OF ORDER

Section 1. Special Circumstances.

All matters pertaining to Church discipline or order, not otherwise provided for in these by-laws, shall be referred to the diaconate, the members of which shall, if necessary, refer the matter to a Church meeting for final action.

Section 2. Reports and Church Records.

(a) Minutes of all Church business meetings shall be maintained for congregational review.

(b) The official records of all Church Officers, Boards and Committees, with the exception of personal information maintained by the Financial Secretary and the Diaconate, shall be available for review upon request of any active member.

(c) A report shall be presented by each Board and Committee at the annual meeting of the congregation.

Section 3. Eligibility Requirements for Officers, Boards, Committees, and Church Organizations.

(a) All elections of officers in the various organizations connected with this church shall be reported to the Church for ratification.

(b) All persons who serve as an officer, or as a member of the Board of Trustees or Board of Deacons, or as a chairperson of any committee or holding a leading office in any organization connected with the Church, must be a member of the Church and be at least 18 years of age, unless otherwise specified by these by-laws.

(c) All employees who are members of the congregation shall not serve on the Board or Committee to whom they report unless as stated in these by-laws (while they are employed).

(d) Nonmembers who participate in the life of the congregation may serve on the various committees of the church but will not be allowed to serve as chairperson or be able to vote at congregational meetings.

Section 4. Expenditure of Funds.

Expenditures beyond budget in any major budget category must be approved at a duly constituted meeting of the congregation. Major budget categories will be identified by the Budget Committee as part of the annual budget approval process.

Section 5. Extension of Term Limits.

In the event that a qualified nominee cannot be found to fill a vacancy which is created by the incumbent reaching the maximum term, the nominating committee may recommend that the incumbent's term be extended.

Section 6. Election of Officers, Boards and Committees

The Nominating Committee shall present a recommended slate of officers, boards and committees to fill all current vacancies existing at any duly constituted business meeting of the congregation. Additionally, nominations for any position may be introduced from the floor. Eligible voting members of the congregation shall vote for all contested positions with the nominee receiving the majority of votes declared the winner. In those positions that are uncontested, a motion may be put forth to have the clerk cast a single ballot for the slate as presented by the Nominating Committee, thus dispensing with the need for having a vote by ballot.

ARTICLE VI ... ELECTION AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers.

The officers of this Church shall be the Pastor, the Moderator, the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, the Clerk, the Financial Secretary, the Assistant Financial Secretary, the Sunday School Superintendent, the Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, the Secretary/Treasurer of the Sunday School and the Church Historian.

Section 2. Pastor.

(a) The Pastor shall be elected by ballot at a meeting specially called for that purpose upon recommendation of the Pulpit Committee. (Article

X, Section 1) The Pastor shall continue in office until his/her employment is terminated in accordance with Article X, Section 2.

(b) The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church in all activities. He or she shall preach the gospel, administer the ordinances, have charge of worship services, direct the spiritual welfare of the Church and its witness to the community beyond its own constituency.

(c) The Pastor, in an administrative capacity, shall have supervision over the total program of the Church. He or she will be an ex-officio member of all the Boards, Committees and Auxiliary Organizations of the Church. The Pastor may call a special meeting of any Board or Committee at his or her discretion, upon giving proper notice to the membership of the Board or Committee. The Pastor (with the approval of the Board of Trustees) shall establish a job description for the Church Secretary, retain a person to fill the position, and supervise his/her performance. The Pastor shall counsel annually with the Church Secretary concerning his/her evaluation and compensation, and present a salary recommendation to the Budget Committee.

Section 3. Moderator.

(a) A Moderator shall be elected for a one-year term at each annual meeting.

(b) The Moderator shall be the lay leader of the Church. He/she shall preside at all business meetings of the Church. In the Moderator's absence, Chairperson of the Diaconate or Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (in that order) shall assume his/her position for that meeting. The Moderator shall prepare an agenda in advance of every meeting which will be posted on the Church bulletin board for at least one Sunday prior to the scheduled meeting. The Moderator shall notify the Nominating Committee of any vacancy in an elected position. He/she will insure that a transfer of records, keys, and equipment has taken place upon the change of officers (Pastor, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Clerk, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary and Sunday School Officers).

(c) The moderator shall have the authority to appoint an ad hoc committee to accomplish a specific goal approved by the Church membership.

Section 4. Treasurer.

(a) Treasurer shall be elected for a one year term at each Annual Meeting.

(b) The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the primary checking account of the Church. He/she shall pay all bills, mission payments and the payroll for current expenses as ordered by the Church or by the Board of Trustees. Proper receipts and/or vouchers shall be kept for disbursements, and they shall be submitted to the Auditing Committee when they examine the books. The Treasurer is responsible for the timely filing of all tax reporting required by state and federal government agencies. At each regular business meeting of the Church, he/she shall present a report of receipts and disbursements showing the actual financial condition of the Church. The Treasurer shall make a financial report to the Board of Trustees at all regularly scheduled Trustees meetings. The Treasurer shall submit a report at the Annual Meeting of the congregation. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Board of Trustees and the Budget Committee. On the completion of his/her service, he/she shall deliver immediately to his/her successor all books and records pertaining to the office.

Section 5. Assistant Treasurer.

(a) An Assistant Treasurer shall be elected for a one-year term at each Annual Meeting.

(b) The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer and be trained in all the duties of the Treasurer and take over the duties in his/her absence. The Assistant Treasurer shall have access to all records of the Treasurer for the purpose of enabling him/her to carry out the duties of his/her office. The Assistant Treasurer shall be a member of the Board of Trustees and Budget Committee.

Section 6. Clerk.

(a) A Clerk shall be elected for a one-year term at each Annual Meeting.

(b) The Clerk shall keep a complete record of the proceedings of the Church in its business meetings. This shall be read for approval at the next business meeting of the Church. The Clerk shall keep a record of the names of members with dates and manner of admission and dismissal (as approved by the Board of Deacons – Article IV, Sections 1, 5 & 6). The Clerk shall maintain a list of former members with the dates and manner of admission and dismissal. A record of all parent/child dedications, weddings and funerals in the Church shall be maintained. The Clerk's statistical report shall be presented for inclusion in the Annual Report. He/she shall notify all Officers, Committee Members and delegates of their election or appointment. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal as approved by the Diaconate (Article IV, Section 5), take charge of records and papers placed on file by vote of the Church and give legal notice of all meetings where such is required by these By-Laws. The Clerk shall also assist in preparing the Denominational Reports. On completion of the Clerk's term of office, he/she shall deliver to the successor all books and records for which he/she has been responsible.

Section 7. Financial Secretary

(a) A Financial Secretary shall be elected for a one-year term at each annual meeting.

(b) The Financial Secretary shall record all Church contributions and offerings, except in those instances when by a vote of the congregation other persons are appointed to receive receipts from special drives and capital funds. He/she shall keep a record of all pledges made and money collected. Monies shall be deposited in a bank selected by the Board of Trustees and the balance entered into the Church financial records. The Financial Secretary shall provide each contributor of record with a semi-annual statement of regular and special contributions. He/she shall present records for auditing before the Annual Meeting or in the event of a change of the Financial_Secretary before the end of the term. Personal data shall be confidential and not be used except for the documentation of active membership. On completion of his/her service, he/she shall deliver immediately to the

successor all books and records pertaining to the office. The Financial Secretary shall present a report at each regular business meeting of the congregation. The Financial Secretary shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.

(c) The Financial Secretary shall oversee the work of the Counters Committee.

Section 8. Assistant Financial Secretary.

(a) An Assistant Financial Secretary shall be elected for a one-year term at each annual meeting.

(b) The Assistant Financial Secretary shall assist the Financial Secretary and take over duties in his/her absence. The Assistant Financial Secretary shall have access to all records of the Financial Secretary for the purpose of enabling him/her to carry out the duties of his/her office. The Assistant Financial Secretary shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.

Section 9. Sunday School Superintendent.

(a) A Sunday School Superintendent shall be elected for a one-year term at each annual meeting.

(b) The Sunday School Superintendent shall be the administrator of the Sunday School and the Chairperson of the Sunday School Committee (Article VIII, Section 11). The Sunday School Superintendent shall present a report at each regular business meeting of the congregation.

Section 10. Assistant Sunday School Superintendent.

(a) An Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall be elected for a one-year term at each Annual Meeting, not to exceed three consecutive years.

(b) The Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall assist the Superintendent and take over duties in his/her absence. The Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall be responsible for ordering teaching materials for the Sunday School.

Section 11. Secretary/Treasurer of the Sunday School.

- (a) A Secretary/Treasurer shall be elected for a one year term at each Annual Meeting.
- (b) The Secretary/Treasurer of the Sunday School shall be responsible for maintaining the attendance and financial records of the Sunday School as well as performing any necessary correspondence.

Section 12. Church Historian

- (a) Church Historian may be appointed by the Moderator in consultation with the Pastor when a person demonstrates a genuine interest in the preservation of the church history.
- (b) The Church Historian shall be responsible for preserving historical information and artifacts, sharing historical information with the membership, and acting as a resource to the Pastor and congregation.
- (c) The Church Historian shall be appointed for a three-year term and may be appointed for successive terms.

ARTICLE VII ... ELECTION AND DUTIES OF BOARDS

Section 1. Diaconate.

- (a) The Diaconate shall consist of nine members, with a minimum of four Deacons and four Deaconesses. Three members shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of three years.
- (b) The Diaconate shall choose annually a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, and shall meet regularly each month. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Chair, the Vice-Chair, or the Secretary, who shall notify the other members. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.
- (c) The Diaconate, with the Pastor, shall examine all matters connected with the reception, discipline, and dismissal of members. It shall also act as a committee on baptism.
- (d) The Diaconate shall visit the sick; cooperate with and assist the Pastor in the performance of duties. This board, with the pastor, shall

have general charge of all meetings held in the Church and may regulate their character. It shall have general supervision of the Church premises during meetings therein. It shall act as a committee on pulpit supply and be responsible for hosting guest ministers.

(e) The Diaconate shall prepare and distribute the elements of Lord's Supper.

(f) The Diaconate shall receive the fellowship offerings. These offerings shall be placed in a fund to be used for charitable aid to persons in need or other worthy uses. For further information on the use of the fund, see the document "Guidelines for use of the Deacons' Fellowship Fund," a copy of which is maintained in the church office. All information shall be kept in strictest confidence. A report shall be made at the Annual Business Meeting of total receipts and disbursements. An internal Board audit shall be conducted annually.

(g) The Diaconate may approve and appoint sponsors for new members as provided in Article IV, Section 2. They shall also assist candidates in the rite of believer's baptism.

(h) The Diaconate shall be responsible for retaining an interim pastor when necessary (Article X, Section 3).

(i) Any present or former Deacon may, upon recommendation of the Diaconate and vote of the church, be given the honorary title of "Deacon Emeritus". If currently serving on the Board their vacancy shall be filled. He/she may, however, attend meetings of the Board, assist in serving the Lord's Supper, or in any other way that he/she is able; and in so doing, be considered an ex officio member of the Board with full voting rights.

(j) The Diaconate shall prepare an annual budget request for submission to the Budget committee.

(k) The Diaconate shall present a report at each regular business meeting of the congregation.

Section 2. Trustees.

(a) The Board of Trustees shall consist of ten members, including the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, the Assistant Treasurer, the Assistant Financial Secretary, the Property Committee Chairperson, and five at-large trustees. Two of the at-large trustees shall be elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of three years.

(b) The Board shall choose annually a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and a Treasurer, and shall meet regularly each month. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or the Vice-Chair. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

(c) The Board of Trustees shall have the care and custody of the property of the Church and have charge of its financial affairs, always subject to the regulations prescribed by the laws of the State of Connecticut.

(d) The Board of Trustees shall have charge of the Trust Funds of the Church and shall perform any duties which by law devolve upon Trustees. They shall have authority to transfer to the Church Account monies from Trust Funds. Where Memorial Funds are involved, only the interest may be transferred. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer real property without specific authority by vote of the Church.

(e) The Board of Trustees shall designate the bank(s) or financial institutions where the funds of the Church shall be deposited.

(f) The Board of Trustees shall be responsible to secure and maintain adequate insurance protection for property, liability, and fidelity.

(g) The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the ways and means of raising necessary funds from investments and Church building use for the support of the Church and benevolence.

(h) The Board shall monitor the financial status of the Church throughout the year and alert the Trustees of any potential problems.

(i) The Chair shall present a written report to the Church at each regular business meeting (including investment portfolio), as well as an annual Financial and Narrative Report.

(j) In an emergency, the Chair shall be authorized to spend not in excess of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) from the maintenance and repair fund without prior approval of the Board. All expenditures in excess of the \$300.00 must be approved at a duly constituted meeting of the Board.

(k) The Board of Trustees shall approve the job descriptions for the Custodian, Secretary, and Organist as presented by the supervising committee or individual.

(l) The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for submitting an Annual budget to the congregation for consideration during the Annual Business Meeting of the Church.

(m) The Board of Trustees shall appoint a committee of ten plus appropriate alternates to serve as a Counters Committee for the Church to work under the direct supervision of the Financial Secretary.

(n) Any present or former Trustee may, upon recommendation of the trustees and vote of the church, be given the honorary title of "Trustee Emeritus". If currently serving on the Board their vacancy shall be filled. He/she may, however, attend meetings of the Board, or assist in any other way that he/she is able; and in so doing, be considered an ex officio member of the Board with full voting rights.

Section 3. Attendance

If any Board member fails to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings without cause, or resigns, the office shall be declared vacant subject to approval by a majority vote of Board members.

ARTICLE VIII ... ELECTION AND DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. Nominating.

(a) The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least six members, with at least two to be elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of three years.

(b) The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be to present nominations for all Officers, Boards and Committees (wherein the term of office has expired or vacancies have occurred for any reason) at the annual business meeting of the Church. The slate of Officers shall be posted on the Church bulletin board at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

(c) During the course of the year when the Nominating Committee is notified by the Moderator of any vacancy in an elected position, the Committee will make a recommendation for filling the vacancy at the next business meeting of the Church.

Section 2. Stewardship.

(a) A Stewardship Committee shall consist of at least three members. At least one member will be elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of three years.

(b) The Stewardship Committee shall annually plan and conduct a Stewardship Campaign of all members to solicit pledges for the coming year. The Committee shall report the results of the campaign to the Board of Trustees prior to the Trustees' December meeting.

(c) The Committee shall conduct a program of stewardship education throughout the year to maintain a stewardship consciousness among the membership.

(d) The Committee shall present a written report at each regular business meeting of the Church as well as an Annual Report.

Section 3. Budget.

(a) A Budget Committee shall consist of at least 5 members including the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer. At least one member will be elected each Annual Meeting for a term of three years.

(b) The Budget Committee shall be responsible for obtaining budget requests from all Church Boards and Committees. The Committee shall prepare a budget proposal for presentation to the Board of Trustees during the Trustees' October meeting.

(c) The Committee shall present a written report at each regular business meeting of the church as well as an Annual Report.

Section 4. Property.

(a) A Property Committee shall consist of at least three members, with at least one member to be elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of three years. A Chairperson will be elected for a one-year term at each Annual Meeting, not to exceed three consecutive years.

(b) The Property Committee shall be responsible for the regular inspection of the Church property. They shall be responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Trustees concerning the maintenance and upkeep of the Church property.

(c) The Property Committee shall be responsible for arranging the purchase of housekeeping supplies for the custodian.

(d) The Property Committee (with the approval of the Board of Trustees) shall establish a job description for the church custodian, retain a person to fill the position, and supervise his/her performance. The Committee shall counsel annually with the Custodian concerning his/her evaluation and compensation, and present a salary recommendation to the Budget Committee.

(e) The Committee shall submit a formal budget request annually to the Budget Committee for items in the Church budget for which they are responsible.

(f) The Committee shall present a written report at each regular business meeting of the church as well as an Annual Report.

Section 5. Pastoral Relations.

(a) The Pastoral Relations Committee shall consist of at least three members, with at least one to be elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of three years.

(b) The Committee shall meet with the Pastor a minimum of three times a year.

(c) The Pastoral Relations Committee shall meet with the Pastor periodically to help strengthen the Pastor-people relationship through a mutual exploration of the role of pastoral leadership; it shall act as a channel of communication between Pastor and people; it shall counsel with the pastor regarding a continuing education program, and annually review the Church's responsibility for the Pastor's compensation making appropriate recommendations to the Budget Committee.

(d) At least one member of the Pastoral Relations Committee shall become a member of the Pulpit Committee whenever the need arises.

(e) The committee shall present a written report at each regular business meeting of the Church as well as an Annual Report.

Section 6. Mission.

(a) The Mission Committee shall consist of at least three members, to be elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of one year.

(b) The Mission Committee shall continually encourage the stewardship of giving to the work of Jesus Christ beyond our local ministry. This shall include support of the work of the American Baptist World Mission programs, the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. offerings, such as World Fellowship, America for Christ, One Great Hour of Sharing, and Retired Ministers and Missionaries, as well as the ministries of The American Baptist Churches of Connecticut.

(c) The Mission Committee shall promote a continuing missionary education program among the church membership.

(d) The Mission Committee shall propose the annual mission budget to the Budget Committee.

(e) The committee shall present a written report at each regular business meeting of the Church as well as an Annual Report.

Section 7. Music.

(a) The Music Committee shall consist of at least three members, to be elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of one year. The Organist/Director of Music shall be an ex officio member of the Committee.

(b) The Music Committee, working in cooperation with the pastor, shall be responsible for the total music program of the church.

(c) The Music Committee (with the approval of the Board of Trustees) shall establish a job description for the Organist/Director of Music, retain a person to fill the position, and supervise his/her performance. The Music Committee shall counsel annually with the Organist/Director of Music concerning his/her evaluation and compensation and present their salary recommendation to the Budget Committee.

(d) The Music committee shall formulate an annual budget request to be presented to the Budget Committee. The Committee shall administer all funds budgeted for the music program.

(e) The Music Committee shall have supervision of all music supplies, and also in the use, maintenance and repair of the organ, pianos, and other musical instruments and equipment.

(f) The committee shall present a written report at each regular business meeting of the church as well as an Annual Report.

Section 8. Flower.

(a) The Flower Committee shall consist of at least three members, to be elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of one year.

(b) In coordination with the Diaconate, it shall arrange the flowers for worship services and for their distribution afterwards. It shall also be concerned with beautification of the church building and grounds in

coordination with the Trustees. It shall be responsible for the decoration of the church during Easter, Thanksgiving, and the Advent season.

(c) The Committee shall present a written report at each regular business meeting of the Church as well as an Annual Report.

Section 9. Reception.

(a) The Reception Committee shall consist of at least six members, to be elected at each annual meeting for a term of one year.

(b) The Reception Committee shall seek to make visitors welcome at the services of the Church and shall labor to promote the mutual acquaintances of those who attend. They shall act as ushers unless from time to time some other group is authorized to act in their stead.

Section 10. Auditing.

(a) The Auditing Committee shall consist of two members, with one member elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of two years, neither of whom shall be an officer charged with the holding of funds or accounts of the Church.

(b) This committee may, from time to time throughout the year on its own initiative or at the request of the Board of Trustees, audit the books, accounts, and securities of the Church. They shall conduct such an audit whenever there is a change in the office of Treasurer or Financial Secretary, and at the end of the fiscal year. The Committee shall make a report of the audit at the Annual Meeting and if any audit is made during the year, they shall submit a report of such audit to the Church at the first business meeting subsequent to the audit.

Section 11. Sunday School Committee.

(a) The Sunday School Committee shall consist of the Sunday School Superintendent and the Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Secretary/Treasurer and the Sunday School Teachers. In addition, there will be up to three at large members elected for a one year term.

(b) The Committee shall meet regularly. Special meetings shall be called by the Chair as needed.

(c) The Committee shall be responsible for the organization and administration of the educational program of the Church, including supervision of the curriculum, time schedule, use of space and equipment and the enlistment and training of all Sunday School teachers.

(d) The Committee shall supervise the nursery and recruit attendants as needed.

(e) Annual budget requests shall be submitted to the Budget Committee.

(f) The Committee shall present a written report at each regular business meeting of the Church as well as an Annual Report.

Section 12. Counters.

(a) The Counters Committee shall consist of at least ten members, appointed annually by the Board of Trustees.

(b) The duties of the Counters Committee shall be to count and deposit Church contributions and offerings and to provide all associated records and contribution receipts to the Financial Secretary.

(c) The Committee members shall work in pairs on a weekly, rotating schedule.

(d) In the event of absence, an assigned Counter shall arrange for a replacement by a fellow Committee member.

(e) Committee members shall attend any and all training sessions as requested by the Financial Secretary or Assistant Financial Secretary.

ARTICLE IX ... MEETINGS.

Section 1. Worship Services.

(a) The congregation shall meet each Sunday for a service of public worship, preaching of the Gospel, and study of the Scriptures.

(b) The Ordinances of the Lord's Supper shall be observed by the Church on the first Sunday of each month, or at other times as the Pastor and Diaconate may determine. Exception to this rule may be made when approved by the Pastor and the Diaconate. Communion shall be open to all who profess faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and their personal Savior.

(c) A Sunday School shall be maintained and classes shall meet on the Lord's Day.

(d) Other services of public and group worship and instruction shall be conducted as necessary for the fulfillment of the purpose and covenant of the Church. While such services may be planned under the sponsorship of any of the auxiliary organizations, they should be coordinated with the Pastor and are subject to the approval of the Diaconate.

(e) Any service of the Church may be temporarily changed or omitted by action of the Diaconate and/or Pastor.

Section 2. Business Meetings.

(a) The Annual Business Meeting of the Church shall be held during the month of January. Other regular business meetings will be held quarterly, typically during the months of April, June, and October.

Special business meetings may be called as they are needed.

(b) Notice of regular business meetings shall be read from the pulpit on two Sundays immediately preceding the date of such meetings. A summary of the agenda shall be included in the notice. A copy of this notice shall be posted in a conspicuous place, near the principal entrance of the Church one week prior to the meeting.

(c) The Pastor may at any time call a meeting without such notice as prescribed for the purpose of taking action on such matters as pertain to the spiritual interests of the Church in its ordinary work.

(d) Fifteen members of the Church who are eighteen years of age or over shall be a quorum for the transaction of any business. A lesser number may adjourn the meeting to a future date.

(e) Unless specified otherwise, business meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

(f) The order of business at all regular business meetings shall be as follows:

- i. Call to Order
- ii. Prayer
- iii. Reading of previous meeting's minutes
- iv. Report of Financial Secretary
- v. Report of Treasurer
- vi. Report of Boards & Committees
- vii. Other Reports
- viii. Unfinished business
- ix. New business
- x. Adjournment

ARTICLE X ... THE PASTORATE

Section 1. Calling a Pastor.

(a) When the pastorate is vacant, a representative Pulpit Committee, of at least five members including one member from the Pastoral Relations Committee, shall be presented by the Moderator, with input from the Nominating Committee, for election by the congregation at a business meeting of the church. It shall be the duty of the Pulpit Committee, after consultation with the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Connecticut, to select a candidate to be presented to the Church. Only one candidate at a time shall be presented at a meeting of the Church. Only candidates whose ordination is recognized by the American Baptist Churches of Connecticut shall be considered.

(b) The call of a Pastor shall be considered by the Church at a special business meeting with at least forty members present constituting a quorum, called for that purpose based on the recommendation of the

Pulpit Committee. An affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of the members present shall be necessary to extend a call.

(c) It will be the responsibility of the Pulpit Committee in consultation with the Board of Trustees to develop an appropriate salary package for the new Pastor, to be approved at a duly constituted meeting of the congregation. The provisions of this package will constitute an offer of employment. If the offer is accepted, a contract for employment will be entered into between the Pastor and the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the Church.

Section 2. Termination of Pastorate.

(a) The Pastor may terminate his employment upon sixty days' notice to the Church unless otherwise stipulated in his/her contract.

(b) The termination of the Pastor's employment shall be considered by the Church at a special business meeting called for that purpose. A quorum shall consist of at least forty members present. An affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of the members present shall be necessary to terminate employment upon sixty days' notice. Notice of such action shall be given for two Sundays preceding the meeting.

Section 3. Interim Pastor.

After consultation with the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Connecticut, the Diaconate shall be responsible for securing an Interim Pastor and shall be jointly responsible with the Board of Trustees in entering a contract.

ARTICLE X: REAL ESTATE, BEQUESTS, DONATIONS.

Section 1. Real Estate.

(a) No real estate held by this Church shall be sold, mortgaged, or otherwise disposed of unless authorized by a vote of three-fourths of the members eighteen years of age or over, present at a duly warned business meeting held for that purpose.

(b) The Trustees shall have the power to execute on behalf of the Church all necessary deeds of conveyance in connection with the sale, mortgage, or other transfer of said real estate.

(c) The Church may acquire and hold by purchase, gift, or devise any real estate whatsoever. No real estate shall be purchased unless authorized by a vote of three-fourths of the members eighteen years of age or over, present at a duly warned business meeting held for that purpose.

Section 2. Bequests or Donations.

If any bequest or donation shall be made to the Church and the person bequeathing or donating the same designates no special application of it, said bequest or donation shall be funded in the name of the giver, and the interest therefrom only used toward defraying the regular expenses of the Church.

ARTICLE XII BY-LAWS.

Section 1. Authority and Intent.

These By-Laws are intended to govern the internal affairs of the Church. They are not intended to preclude activities that are not specifically addressed but are consistent with the ministry of the Church.

Section 2. Amendments.

These By-Laws may be amended, altered, changed, or repealed at any business meeting of the Church by vote of three-fourths of the members present. No amendment, alteration, change or repeal shall be voted at any meeting unless the call for that meeting shall have given notice of such proposed amendment, and the proposed change has been posted on the bulletin board, near the main entrance to the Church, for at least one full week prior to the meeting at which the vote is taken.

Section 3. Review.

During leap year the moderator shall appoint at least five members to a By-Laws Review Committee. This committee shall review these By-Laws

and provide a report containing recommended changes or a statement that no changes be made at the next Annual Meeting of the Church.

****A major revision of the church By-Laws was approved at a congregational meeting on December 11, 1994 and taking effect at the 195th Annual Meeting of the Church on Thursday, January 26, 1995.*

****Revisions to the By-Laws were approved at the annual congregation meeting on January 29, 2004 and the changes were effective on May 1, 2004.*

****Revisions to the By-Laws were approved at the annual congregation meeting on January 27, 2005 and the changes were effective as of that date.*

****Revisions to the By-Laws were approved at the annual congregational meeting on January 28, 2010 and the changes were effective as of that date.*

****Revisions to the By-Laws were approved at the annual congregational meeting on January 24, 2013 and the changes were effective as of that date.*

****Revisions to the By-Laws were approved at the annual congregational meeting on January 22, 2017 and the changes were effective as of that date.*