

Bylaws of

FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

of Bucks County

Introduction to Bylaws

So long as the Faith Presbyterian Church shall be a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) or its successor, the Book of Church Order of the PCA or its successor shall be used as the general directive by which it shall be governed. The Bylaws, as set forth herein, and as may be duly amended from time to time, are intended only as a supplement to said Book of Church Order, and if there is any conflict between these Bylaws and the Book of Church Order, then the Book of Church Order shall govern.

Article I: Membership

Section 1: Members. Communing members are those who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, and have been admitted by the Session to the Lord's Table.

Those only who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, and admitted by the Session to the Lord's Table, are entitled to all the rights and privileges of the church membership.

Article II: The Pastors

Section 1: Definition. The Pastors (Teaching Elders) of the church shall be ones who are duly ordained, called by the congregation of this church, and installed in accordance with the Book of Church Order.

Section 2: Functions. The Pastors, in addition to those functions they share with other Elders, shall minister to the congregation by reading, expounding, and preaching the Word of God, and by administering the sacraments.

Article III: Ruling Elders

Section 1: Qualifications. This office is one of dignity and usefulness. He that fills the office shall possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and able to teach. He shall exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the gospel. He shall manage his own family well and shall have a good reputation among those who are outside the church.

Section 2: Authority and Responsibility. The Pastors (Teaching Elders) and Ruling Elders jointly have the responsibility of governing and spiritually overseeing the Church, including teaching. Elders, both severally and jointly, are to watch diligently over the flock that no corruption of doctrines or morals enters therein and are to exercise discipline in this regard. Elders should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. Elders should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. Elders should pray with and for the people. Ruling Elders possess the same authority and eligibility to office in the church courts as Teaching Elders.

Article IV: The Session

Section 1: Structure and Tenure. The congregation, after hearing the recommendation of the Session, shall determine the number of Elders.

The office of Elder is perpetual and, as such, may not be laid aside easily or without good reason. In light of health concerns or extenuating circumstances, however, an Elder may request a sabbatical leave or resignation from active service on the Session. The request must be written and it must indicate the reason(s) for the request. Once approved by the Session, the Elder shall be released from active service and its attending duties, i.e., he shall not be required to attend Session or Presbytery meetings or to lead worship during the time of his sabbatical.

Moreover, while the office of Elder is perpetual, the term of active service on the Session for Elders shall be four years and may be renewed for a second four-year term. At the end of any consecutive two terms of service (or by choice, after one term of service) the Elder will take a sabbatical of at least one year before being eligible to serve on the Session again.

The active Elders, i.e., those serving on the Session, shall be the Trustees of the corporation, and as such shall hold title to all real estate and personal property owned by the Church.

Section 2: Authority and Responsibility. The Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the church, for which purpose it has power:

- (a) To inquire into the knowledge, principles, and Christian conduct of the church members under its care;
- (b) To censure those found delinquent in the above;
- (c) To see that parents do not neglect to present their children for baptism;
- (d) To receive members into the communion of the church;
- (e) To remove members for just cause;
- (f) To grant letters of dismissal to other churches, which when given to parents, shall always include the names of their non-communing baptized children;
- (g) To examine, ordain, and install Ruling Elders and Deacons on their election by the church;
- (h) To require the Ruling Elders and Deacons to devote themselves to their work;
- (i) To examine the records of the proceedings of the Deacons;
- (j) To approve and adopt the budget;
- (k) To approve actions by the board of Deacons of special importance affecting church real and personal property;
- (l) To call congregational meetings when necessary;
- (m) To establish and control Sunday schools and Bible classes with special reference to the children of the church;
- (n) To establish and control all special groups in the Church such as Men in the Church, Women in the Church, and special Bible study groups;
- (o) To promote world missions;
- (p) To order collections for pious uses;
- (q) To exercise, in accordance with the Directory of Worship, authority over the time and place of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, over all other worship services, over the music in the services, and over the uses to which the church building and associated properties may be put;
- (r) To take the oversight of the singing in the public worship of God;
- (s) To assemble the people for worship when there is no Pastor;
- (t) To determine the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the church and congregation;
- (u) To observe and carry out the lawful injunctions of the higher courts;
- (v) To appoint representatives to the higher courts, which shall, on their return, make report of their diligence.

The Session shall approve final action by the Deacons in matters of special importance affecting the real or personal property of the Church. The Session may select and appoint godly men and women of the congregation to assist the Deacons in caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in distress or need.

The Session shall admit to the Lord's Table those persons who have made a profession of faith and have been baptized.

No person shall be invited to preach in the church without the consent of the Session.

Section 3: Meetings. The Session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. Moreover, the pastor has power to convene the Session when he may judge it requisite; and he shall always convene it when requested to do so by any two of the Ruling Elders. The Session shall also convene when directed so to do by the Presbytery.

Section 4: Moderator. The pastor is, for prudential reasons, Moderator of the Session.

The Moderator has all authority necessary for the preservation of order and for the proper and expeditious conduct of all business before the court, and for convening and adjourning the court according to its own ruling. In any emergency, he may change the time or place or both, of meetings to which the court stands adjourned, giving reasonable notice thereof.

Section 5: Clerk. A clerk shall be elected by the Session to serve for a definite period as determined by the Court, but not to exceed one year without reelection. It is the duty of the Clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required. Such extracts under the hand of the Clerk shall be evidence to any ecclesiastical court and to every part of the Church.

Section 6: Committees. The Session may establish standing and special committees and determine their composition, functions and terms of service. Committee members may include members of the congregation.

Section 7: Limitation of Obligations. The Session shall adhere to the Book of Church Order of the PCA, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Faith Presbyterian Church, and to the corporate laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Session shall have no authority to financially obligate the Church or congregation in any manner not specifically provided for in the Book of Church Order without first obtaining the approval thereof from the congregation at a duly constituted meeting.

Article V: The Board of Deacons

Section 1: Structure and Tenure. The congregation, after hearing the recommendation of the Session, shall determine the number of Deacons. The Board shall elect its own Chairman and Secretary.

The office of Deacon is perpetual and, as such, may not be laid aside easily or without good reason. In light of health concerns or extenuating circumstances, however, a Deacon may request a sabbatical leave or resignation from active service. The request must be written and it must indicate the reason(s) for the request. Once approved by the Board and the Session, the Deacon shall be released from active service and its attending duties, i.e., the inactive Deacon shall not be required to attend Board meetings and shall be released both from the rotation of diaconal worship duties and from any particular duties as may have been assigned by the Board in the context of active service.

Moreover, while the office of Deacon is perpetual, the term of active service on the Board for Deacons shall be three years and may be renewed for a second three-year term. At the end of any consecutive two terms of service (or by choice, after one term of service) the Deacon will take a sabbatical of at least one year before being eligible to serve on the Board again.

Section 2: Qualifications. The office of Deacon is one of sympathy and service. To the office of Deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment.

Section: 3: Responsibilities. It is the duty of the Deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality among the members of the Church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall support, as directed by the Session, the public worship and ministries of the church, and shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal. They shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation.

In the discharge of their duties the Deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session.

Section 4: Meetings. The Board of Deacons shall hold regular meetings at least once a quarter, and whenever requested by the Session.

Section 5: Committees. The Board of Deacons may establish standing and special committees and determine their composition, functions and terms of service. Committee members may include members of the congregation.

Section 6: Limitation of Obligations. The Board of Deacons shall adhere to the constitution and Bylaws of the Faith Presbyterian Church and to the Book of Church Order of the PCA, and to the corporate laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Board of Deacons shall have no authority to financially obligate the Church or congregation in any manner not specifically provided for in the approved budget of the church, except for reasonable and necessary expenses not to exceed 10% of the budget line item or \$1,000.00, whichever is greater, on a one-time or cumulative basis per year, without first obtaining the approval from the Session.

Section 7: Deaconesses. Upon the recommendation of the Session, the congregation may elect godly women of the church to the position of Deaconesses to assist the Board of Deacons in their work. The qualifications for Deaconesses shall correspond to those of Deacons (Article V, Section 2). Their structure and tenure shall be the same as those of Deacons (Article V, Section 1). Deaconess shall participate fully in all meetings and ministries of the Board of Deacons. Deaconesses, however, are commissioned by the Session to their position, not ordained, and therefore they do not possess any ecclesiastical authority in the church, nor may they serve as chairman of the Board of Deacons.

Section 8: Treasurer. The Board of Deacons shall, with the Session's approval, appoint the Treasurer of the church. This person need not be a member of the Board of Deacons, but must be a member of the church in good standing. It is the duty of the Treasurer to effectively administer and maintain the financial records of the church in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. There shall be kept under the Treasurer's direction a ledger showing the cash account of all funds and a balance taken at the close of each month. These books shall at any time be available to the Board of Deacons and the Session and may be submitted to an independent audit at least once a year, if directed by the Board of Deacons or the Session. The Treasurer is under the direct supervision of the Session and Deacons of the church and officially reports to the Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

Section 9: Assistant Treasurer. The Board of Deacons shall endeavor, with the Session's approval, to appoint an Assistant Treasurer of the church. This person need not be a member of the Board of Deacons, but must be a member of the church in good standing. The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer in paying disbursements and in drawing checks against the church funds as directed by the Board of Deacons and/or the Session. The Assistant Treasurer is under the direct supervision of the Treasurer and the Deacons of the church, and reports to the Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

Section 10: Recording Treasurer. The Board of Deacons shall, with the Session's approval, appoint the Recording Treasurer of the church. This person need not be a member of the Board, but must be a member of the church in good standing. The Recording Treasurer shall keep careful records of all tithes, gifts, offering and contributions to the church, including the names of each contributor, the amounts given and the funds to which the contributions have been designated. At least once a year the Recording Treasurer shall provide written proof to each contributor of their contributions to the church by fund as required by the Internal Revenue Service. There shall be kept under the Recording Treasurer's direction a ledger showing these contributions by contributor and by fund. These books shall at any time be available to the Board of Deacons and the Session and may be submitted to an independent audit at least once a year, if directed by the Board of Deacons or the Session.

Article VI: Nomination, Election, and Installation

Section 1: Qualification of Nominees. All nominees for the offices of Elder or Deacon shall be members of the Church at the time of nomination. Three non-family nominations from members of the church shall be required for a person to be nominated. No officer presently serving shall be considered for nomination to another office unless that officer's present term is in its last year.

Section 2: Preparation of Nominees. All nominees who are willing to serve in the office for which they are nominated may be required to take a series of preparatory classes, to be established by the Session.

Section 3: Formal Subscription. All nominees who are candidates for office shall subscribe to the doctrine and polity of the PCA. The Session shall examine each nominee on the constitutional requirements, and upon approval the Session shall present his or her name for election.

Section 4: Congregational Meetings for Election. There shall be annually at least one Congregational Meeting for the purpose of election to the Session and the Board of Deacons. This congregational meeting for election shall be held at the Annual Congregational Meeting in January or early February. Additional special congregational meetings for election may be held if vacancies need to be filled.

Section 5: Election of Officers. Election of officers shall be by written ballot and be established by majority vote of those members present and voting. Where term of office is less than a normal term, the determination of who shall be given the longer term shall be made by the count of votes cast for particular nominees.

Section 6: Ordination and Installation. All Elders and Deacons shall be ordained and installed, and Deaconesses shall be commissioned and installed, as may be appropriate at a service to be held soon after their election.

Section 7: Failure To Hold Elections. Should the congregation or corporation fail to hold elections at the regular time, all Elders and Deacons, as well as other officers whose terms expire, shall hold office until their successors are elected.

Article VII: Congregational Meetings

Section 1: Powers of the Congregation. The powers of the congregation shall be in addition to other authority herein expressed as follows:

- a. To elect a pulpit committee for the purpose of nominating a Pastor or Associate Pastors for election by the congregation;
- b. To elect a Pastor or Associate Pastors;
- c. To approve the terms of call to a Pastor or Associate Pastors;
- d. To change the terms of call of a Pastor or Associate Pastors;
- e. To amend Bylaws;
- f. To authorize the Trustees to acquire, mortgage, lease, assign, transfer, or otherwise dispose of real property.

Section 2: Time. There shall be an Annual Congregational Meeting in January or early February, at a time established by the Session.

Section 3: Nature of Business. The congregation may consider ecclesiastical or corporate matters duly referred to it.

Section 4: Corporation Meetings. The congregational meetings shall also be corporation meetings. When corporation matters are considered, procedures of the corporation shall be in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The fiscal year of the corporation shall be the calendar year.

Section 5: Call of Meetings. The Session or the Presbytery, which duly possesses such jurisdiction, can call special congregational meetings. The Session shall also call a special congregational meeting upon the written request of twenty-five percent (25%) of the communicant members. Such meeting and its purpose shall be announced as noted in Section 6 of this Article and convened within four weeks after filing the request with the Session.

Section 6: Notice of Meeting. Whenever it may seem for the best interests of the church that a congregational meeting should be held, the Session shall call such meeting and give public notice of at least one week. No business shall be transacted at such meeting except what is stated in the notice.

Section 7: Quorum. At all congregational meetings other than those called specifically for the purpose of amending the Constitution of the Church a quorum shall equal one-fourth (1/4) of the communicant members when the communing membership is less than 100, or one-fifth (1/5) of the communicant members when the communing membership is more than 100 but less than 300. There shall be no voting by proxy.

Section 8: Moderator. The Pastor shall be the Moderator of congregational meetings by virtue of his office. If it should be impracticable or inexpedient for him to preside, or if there is no pastor, the Session shall appoint one of their number to call the meeting to order and to preside until the congregation shall elect their presiding officer, who may be a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America, or any male member of that particular church.

Section 9: Order. In the conduct of meetings any parliamentary questions not covered by this Constitution and Bylaws shall be decided by the latest edition of "Robert's Rules of Order."

Article VIII: Amendments

Section 1: Amendments. With the exception of Article IX which may not be amended, the Bylaws of the church may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the communicant members of the church present voting at any regular or special meeting, provided the proposed amendment(s) has been presented to the congregation for discussion at a congregational meeting held at least one week prior to the meeting at which the voting will take place, and provided the congregation has been duly notified of the proposed amendment(s) in the call of the meeting of the corporation.

Article IX: Dissolution

Section 1: Dissolution. In the event that Faith Presbyterian Church should be dissolved for any reason, then, in that event, all assets of the corporation, if any, shall be transferred to another eleemosynary corporation that is exempt from Pennsylvania income tax. This provision of the Bylaws is irrevocable and is not subject to amendment except to the extent necessary to designate the name of any transferee qualifying under the income tax laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.