

# BYLAWS OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF YORKTOWN

## I. Statement of Purpose or Mission

The Mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown, as God's people, is:

- ~ to invite all into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, study and fellowship;
- ~ to work for God's peace, justice and human dignity by reaching out to the world in servant ministry

## II. Relationship to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown is a member church of the Presbytery of Hudson River in the Synod of the Northeast of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

## III. Governance of the Church

This church shall be governed in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. Consistent with that *Constitution*; these bylaws shall provide specific guidance for this church. *Robert's Rules of Order - Newly Revised* shall be used for parliamentary guidance.

## IV. Incorporation

In accordance with the laws of the state of New York, the congregation has caused a corporation to be formed which is the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown Incorporated. Consistent with the laws of this state; both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the congregation. (G-7.0304)

{Note: Since the pastor or moderator is not a member of the corporation, consistent with Article VII, the Chair of the Corporation shall be invited to moderate that portion of the meeting when corporate matters appear on the agenda. The Elders on the Session shall serve at the same time as Trustees of the Corporation. The Clerk of Session shall also serve as Secretary of the Corporation. }

## V. Meetings of the Church

There shall be an Annual Meeting of the congregation in the church building on a Sunday in the first quarter of each calendar year as determined by the Session. At least the following shall be presented at the Annual Meeting: annual reports from organizations and the Session (information only), financial report for the preceding year, including a report of the Auditors, budget for the current year (information only), changes in the terms of call for the pastor (s), nominating committee report for church offices (G-7.0302), and election of members to serve on the nominating committee. A quorum shall be no less than ten (10) per cent of the members of the Congregation.

Special meetings of the congregation may be called by Session. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meetings, and the business shall be restricted to that which is specified in the call. (G-0302)

## VI. Notice of Meetings

Public notice of the congregational meetings shall be given in printed and verbal form on at least two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. When the meeting is called for the purpose of electing a

pastor, the notice shall be in printed and verbal form at least ten days in advance, which shall include two successive Sundays. (G-7303)

### **VII. Moderator**

The pastor shall moderate the congregational meetings and the Session meetings. If there are co-pastors, they may alternately preside at the meetings. When the church is without a pastor, the moderator appointed by the presbytery shall preside. If it is impractical for the pastor or moderator of the Session to officiate, the congregation shall elect a moderator for the specific meeting.

### **VIII. Clerk**

The Clerk of Session shall serve as secretary of the congregational meetings. If the Clerk of Session is not present or is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a secretary.

### **IX. Minutes of the Meeting**

The minutes of the Congregational Meeting recorded by the secretary shall be attested by the moderator and the secretary and shall be recorded in the minute book of the Session. (G-7.0307). The minutes can be posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.

### **X. Quorum for the Meeting**

The quorum of a meeting shall be the moderator, the secretary, and not less than ten (10) per cent of the congregation. Consistent with the laws of the state of New York, a quorum shall be not less than ten (10) per cent of members on corporate matters. The secretary shall determine that a quorum is present. Only active members may vote (G-7.0301) regardless of age. Consistent with the laws of the state of New York, voting is restricted to active members. Voting by proxy (written authorization for a stated person to vote for the person requesting a proxy vote) is not allowed at congregational meetings. Consistent with the laws of the state of New York, voting by proxy shall be permitted only as to a particular corporate matter (G-7.0404)

### **XI. Election of Officers**

Officers shall be elected annually at a duly called meeting of the congregation and Corporation and at special meetings when vacancies occur. The Nominating Committee shall present nominations to the congregation for the offices of Ruling Elders, Deacons, Youth Elder and/or Youth Deacon.

Nominations shall be accepted from the floor with the consent of the nominee.

The newly elected officers shall take office immediately after ordination and installation in January before the Annual Meeting of the congregation.

### **XII. Nominating Committee**

The congregation shall form a nominating committee in the following manner:

1. There shall be nine members on the nominating committee.
2. Two of the members shall be Elders designated by the Session, one of which shall be currently serving on the Session and shall serve as moderator of the committee.
3. Two members shall be designated by the Board of Deacons.
4. Five of the members, not person's currently serving on the Session or the Board of Deacons, shall be nominated from the members of the congregation at the Annual Meeting of the congregation.

5. Members of the committee shall be elected annually, and no member shall serve more than three years consecutively.

No person's name shall be placed in nomination without the person being contacted and consenting and agreeing to fulfill the obligations of that office.

The Nominating Committee shall report to the Congregation at least two Sundays prior to the Annual or Special Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation.

Nominees shall be chosen from the active list of communicant members of the congregation in effect at the time nominations are being considered.

No person shall be nominated for the position of Elder or Youth Elder if a member of that person's immediate family will be serving on the Session.

### **XIII. Elders**

The congregation shall elect eighteen (18) Elders divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the Election Meeting for a three year term. No Elder shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating six years. An Elder having served a full three year term shall be ineligible for re-election to the Session for a full term for a period of at least one year.

The Session shall, so far as practical, reflect the composition of the congregation in age, race and gender.

### **XIV. Youth Elders**

The congregation shall elect two Youth Elders at the election meeting for a one year term. A Youth Elder may serve a second consecutive year if elected to so serve. A Youth Elder shall not serve more than two consecutive years.

### **XV. Deacons**

The congregation shall elect twelve (12) Deacons divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the Election meeting for a three year term. No deacon shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating six consecutive years. A Deacon having served a full three year term shall be ineligible for reelection to the Board of Deacons for a full term for a period of at least one year.

### **XVI. Youth Deacons**

The congregation shall elect two (2) Youth Deacons at the Election Meeting for a one year term. A Youth Deacon may serve a second consecutive year if elected to so serve. A Youth Deacon shall not serve more than two consecutive years.

### **XVII. Meetings of Board of Deacons**

The Board of Deacons, at its first meeting following the Annual Meeting, shall elect a moderator, vice moderator, secretary and a treasurer from among its members and set a schedule for meetings as necessary to carry out its work.

The pastor shall be an advisory member of the Board of Deacons. A quorum for the Board of Deacons shall be one third of the members, including the moderator.

### **XVIII. Vacancies**

Vacancies on the Session or the Board of Deacons may be filled at a special meeting of the congregation or at the Annual Meeting, as the Session shall determine.

### **XIX. Meetings of Session**

The Session shall meet monthly at a time and day set by the Session at the first meeting of each calendar year. A particular meeting may be cancelled by Session or the Moderator for reasonable cause. A quorum for a Session Meeting shall be six (6) Elders and the Moderator.

The Session, at its first meeting following the Annual Meeting, shall elect a Clerk of Session, who shall also serve as Secretary of the Corporation; a President and Vice president of the Board of Trustees, who shall also serve as President and Vice President of the Corporation; a Church Treasurer, who shall also serve as Treasurer of the Corporation; as many as two Assistant Treasurers; a Financial Secretary, and three Auditors.

### **XX. Commissions**

A commission system of government shall be used to carry out the work of the Session. The commissions shall be formed to include, but not be limited to, the following: Operations, Education, Worship, Mission, Stewardship, Communications, Personnel and Congregational Life. Each Commission may set its own schedule for meetings but shall meet regularly.

A Ruling Elder currently in office, appointed by the Moderator, shall serve as Chair of each Commission with the approval of Session. A Co-chair may be appointed by the Chair with the approval of Session from among the members of the commission. Commission members shall be appointed by the Commission Chair with approval of the Session. The authority of each Commission is delegated authority from the Session. Commissions shall seek approval from the Session whenever there is doubt about its authority to take a particular action.

Each Commission Chair shall report regularly to Session, in writing or orally, the work of the Commission or by specific written proposals when Session action is necessary.

Commission budgets are subject to the operating policy for fiscal responsibility established by the full Session.

The Session shall review the Commission structure at the end of each calendar year.

### **XXI. Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended by the congregation subject to the Articles of Incorporation, the laws of the state of New York and the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA)* by a two-thirds vote of the voters present, providing that the proposed amendment, in printed form, shall have been distributed at the same time as the call of the meeting at which the amendment(s) are voted upon.

Adopted this **6th** day of **February** in the year of our Lord **2011** at a congregation meeting held at the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown, Yorktown Heights, New York.

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Clerk of Session