

**BYLAWS  
BETHANY REFORMED CHURCH**

**PREAMBLE**

This church is a member church in the Reformed Church in America. These bylaws are not intended to supersede the *Book of Church Order* of the Reformed Church in America (*BCO*). If there is any inconsistency between these bylaws and the *BCO*, the *BCO* shall control.

**ARTICLE I  
Membership**

Section 1. Eligibility

The members of the church congregation shall be as described in the *BCO*. A record of members by profession of faith and/or baptism shall be maintained by the church consistory.

Section 2. Annual Meetings

The annual congregational meeting shall be held in June. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- A) Elect consistory members of the church.
- B) Receive an annual report from the consistory (including information about the programs and activities of the church).
- C) Adopt estimate of the coming year's expenses (budget).
- D) Conduct any other business necessary to accomplish the purposes of the church.

Section 3. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the members may be called at the direction of the consistory, or upon the written request of twenty (20) percent of the confessing members.

Section 4. Quorum

Members present at any meeting held after notice to the members shall constitute a quorum for transaction of membership business.

Section 5. Voting

- A) All decisions shall be made by oral vote unless a vote by ballot is required by the consistory, by the bylaws of this corporation, or by state law.
- B) A majority vote of the confessing members present at a meeting shall determine any issues unless a greater percentage is specifically required by the consistory, articles of incorporation, bylaws, or state law.

Section 6. Rules of Order

The consistory shall have authority to adopt rules of order that are consistent with the bylaws and articles of incorporation of this church.

## Section 7. Notice

Notice to members required by the articles of incorporation, bylaws, or state law shall be given in the church bulletin or by such other means as may be determined by the consistory or required by state law. Notice of the annual congregational meeting shall be made on two Sundays preceding the date of such meeting.

## **ARTICLE II Consistory/Board of Trustees**

### Section 1. Title

The church shall be governed by the church consistory, which shall be the directors and board of trustees of the church. Consistory members are the installed minister/s serving under a call, and the elders and deacons currently installed in office. A consistory is a permanent, continuing body that functions between stated sessions through committees.

### Section 2. Eligibility

Subject only to any restrictions imposed upon eligibility for consistory membership by either applicable law, the classis of which this church is a member, or the *BCO*, all confessing members of the church over 21 years of age are eligible for nomination and election to the consistory.

### Section 3. Number

The consistory shall be composed of the pastor/s, and a minimum of three (3) elders and three (3) deacons unless the congregation approves a change in the number of consistory members.

### Section 4. Meetings

The consistory shall meet monthly, with the date and time of the meeting to be determined by the president. Special meetings of the consistory shall be called upon the majority vote of the officers of the consistory or if requested by at least three members of the consistory.

### Section 5. Election

- A) Election of the consistory shall be by written ballot.
- B) A single slate of nominees for vacancies on the consistory shall be established by the consistory from nominations by confessing members of the congregation.
- C) If any vacancy on the consistory occurs by death, resignation, or incapacitation the consistory may appoint and install a member of the great consistory to the same office of his or her previous service until the next congregational meeting for the election of elders and deacons.
- D) The names of the persons elected as elders and deacons shall be published in the church on three successive Sundays preceding their installation, in order that any legitimate objections may be presented to the board of elders for its judgment.

### Section 6. Term

Consistory members shall serve a two (2) year term. No consistory member serving a full two (2) year term shall be eligible for re-election to serve consecutive terms. The term of consistory

members shall be arranged so that approximately fifty (50) percent of the consistory members are elected each year.

#### Section 7. Voting

- A) Each consistory member shall have one (1) vote regarding any business conducted.
- B) All decisions shall be made by oral vote unless a vote by ballot is requested by a consistory member or is required by the church's bylaws, or applicable state law.
- C) A majority of the votes cast shall determine any issues unless specifically provided otherwise by the consistory, the church's articles of incorporation, the church's bylaws, or applicable state law.

#### Section 8. Quorum

A majority of the consistory members regularly convened shall constitute a quorum for doing business and making decisions.

#### Section 9. Duties of consistory members

Consistory members shall:

- A) Serve as liaisons between the consistory and the church's members.
- B) Meet monthly to conduct the business of the church.
- C) Present an annual report and budget to the church's members.
- D) Serve on committees as determined necessary by the consistory.

Responsibilities of the Board of Elders - The primary responsibility of the elders is to oversee the spiritual concerns of the church as defined in the *BCO*. These include, but are not limited to baptism, membership, and discipline.

Responsibilities of the Board of Deacons - The primary responsibility of the deacons is to oversee the material and financial concerns of the church as defined in the *BCO*. These include but are not limited to, maintenance of property, and administration of financial concerns.

#### Section 10. Notice

Notice regarding the date and time of monthly consistory meetings shall be given in the church bulletin on the Sunday immediately preceding the meeting. Notice regarding special meetings shall be given by mail or email at least three (3) days but not more than thirty (30) days prior to any special consistory meeting.

### **ARTICLE III Officers**

#### Section 1. President

The senior pastor shall be president of the consistory and preside at all meetings of the congregation and meetings of the consistory except where otherwise provided. It shall be the duty of the president to state and explain the business to be transacted, to enforce the rules of order, and, in general, to maintain the decorum and dignity belonging to the church of Jesus Christ. He is a member of the Executive Committee.

## Section 2. Vice President

The consistory shall elect one of the elders to the office of vice-president. The vice president shall act on behalf of the president in the absence or disability of the president, or at the president's request. He shall become the executive officer of the church in the event of a presidential vacancy. He is a member of the executive committee.

## Section 3. Clerk

The consistory shall elect one of the elders to the office of clerk. The clerk shall take and keep minutes of meetings of the congregation and of the consistory and file these minutes together with minutes of deacon meetings and other important records for safe keeping. The clerk writes special letters as requested by the consistory. He is a member of the executive committee.

## Section 4. Chairman of the Deacons' Board

The consistory shall elect one of the deacons to the office of chairman of the deacons. He shall be the liaison between the minister and the deacons. The chairman of the deacons shall preside at the deacon meetings. He is to arrange the scheduling of the deacons work. He is a member of the executive committee.

## Section 5. Treasurer

The consistory shall elect one of the deacons to the office of treasurer. The treasurer shall be entrusted with the receipts and disbursements of church funds. The treasurer shall give a financial report each month to the consistory only of total receipts, total expenditures, and the treasurer's balance after receipts and expenditures. A detailed financial report shall be given to the congregation by the consistory no less frequently than annually. Either the treasurer or a deacon at large is a member of the executive committee.

# **ARTICLE IV Committees**

## Section 1. Appointment

The consistory shall have authority to appoint members to committees as needed and as circumstances require, may designate and appoint standing and/or special committees, and may designate the number of persons to serve on and the duties of any committee.

## Section 2. Authority

- A) Committees shall investigate, make recommendations, and implement consistory policies and functions.
- B) No committee shall have the power to act without the approval of the consistory, except in matters of emergency (in which case the action shall promptly be submitted to the consistory for ratification).
- C) All committees shall report their activities to the consistory. No standing or special committee shall represent the consistory or church in advocacy of or opposition to any

project without the specific authorization of the consistory or as is clearly permitted under the general powers granted to committees by the consistory.

- D) All committees shall retain their authority and continue to function until such time as a new committee is appointed, the committee's work is completed in accordance with the directives given regarding creation of the committee, or the committee is disbanded by the consistory.

### Section 3. Committee Structure and Meetings

Unless the consistory specifies otherwise, all committees shall elect a chairperson who shall report to the consistory regarding the work of the committee. Committee meetings shall be called by the chairperson and held as necessary to carry out the committee's responsibilities.

### Section 4. Quorum

Unless the consistory specifies otherwise, a majority of the members of the committee present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of committee business.

### Section 5. Notices

Notice required for committee meetings shall be determined by the chairperson of the committee unless specific directions regarding notice are given by the consistory.

## **ARTICLE V Finances and Ownership of Property**

### Section 1. Control

All finances and all properties of the church shall be under the control of the consistory.

### Section 2. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of this organization shall run from July 1 to June 30 [the succeeding year]. The books of the church shall be kept in accordance with the fiscal year.

### Section 3. Financial Review

The consistory shall initiate a financial review which shall be reported directly to the consistory after examination of the financial records. The financial records shall be reviewed at least once every two (2) years or upon change of the treasurer.

### Section 4. Ownership of Property

The church shall have authority to own, sell, hold, lease, and furnish any real or personal property as may be necessary to carry on the functions and purposes of the church. Any instruments concerning conveyances of real estate shall be signed by the president and secretary of the consistory. [Requires approval of classis]

### Section 5. Loans and Indebtedness

Any indebtedness of the church in excess of two-thirds of the prior year's expenditures for congregational purposes shall be incurred only after a resolution approving such indebtedness is approved by a majority of the consistory. The consistory shall authorize the president and secretary to sign any evidences of indebtedness and to pledge or mortgage the assets of the church. [Requires approval of classis]

## **ARTICLE VI Amendments**

### Section 1. Proposal

Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by the consistory, and shall only be effective if submitted to and approved by a majority vote of the congregation present at a congregational meeting after notice of the proposed amendments have been provided to the congregation.

### Section 2. Notice

Any notice regarding proposed changes in the bylaws shall be given to the congregation in writing at least two (2) Sundays prior to the regular or special meeting at which the proposed change in the bylaws shall be considered.

*Approved by the congregation June 4, 2017.*