

**BY-LAWS**  
**OF**  
**NEW BETHLEHEM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)**  
**Independence Township, Beaver County, Pennsylvania**

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We, the members and adherents of the New Bethlehem Congregation, desiring to follow the teaching of the Divine Injunction “Let all things be done decently and in order”, and believing that order and system in the management of business will promote the best interests of the congregation, hereby agree to adopt the following by-laws to be used in conjunction with the latest edition of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Part I (Book of Confessions) and Part II (Book of Order).

**ARTICLE I – REFERENCES**

Throughout the following additions and clarifications, references will be made to the same Book of Order noted in the preceding paragraph.

**ARTICLE II – OBJECT**

The object of this congregation is the public worship of God and His Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ through the direction of the Holy Spirit. Such organization necessary for the spiritual growth and direction of this congregation and whatever physical and fiscal management deemed essential to our purpose shall be established.

**ARTICLE III – MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION AND CORPORATION**

Meetings of the congregation shall be held at least annually to elect officers and review the reports of Session, and to conduct other business as appropriate. Officers must be elected annually by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

An annual meeting of the corporation should be held the third Sunday of January. The annual meeting of the corporation may be held on the same day as the annual meeting of the congregation. According to civil law, ecclesiastical (congregation) and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of this congregation.

The meetings of the congregation shall be held in the church edifice or such other place as the session shall designate.

Meetings of the congregation and/or corporation shall be governed by the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order.

Special meetings of the congregation and/or corporation may be called. Such a call shall state clearly the purpose of and place for the special meeting, and no other matter save that specified in the call may be considered.

All members on the active roll are eligible to vote on matters coming before both the congregation and corporation meetings of the congregation, whether stated or special. Voting by proxy and cumulative voting are not allowed.

Notice of the annual meeting or special meetings shall be no less than public notice given on two successive Sundays. The meeting called may be convened following the worship service if the notice is given before worship begins on the second Sunday.

All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

A quorum of either the congregation or corporation shall be one-tenth of the active membership as listed in the last Annual Statistical report to the General Assembly.

The installed Pastor shall ordinarily moderate all meetings of the Congregation. If it is impractical for the Pastor to preside, he or she shall invite another minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of the Presbytery, or a person authorized by the Presbytery, to serve as moderator. If there is no installed Pastor, or the installed Pastor is unable to moderate and/or to name another moderator, the Presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.

The Chairman of the Corporation, elected by and from the Session, shall preside over portions of the meeting pertaining to the Corporation.

The Clerk of Session shall serve as secretary for all meetings of the Congregation and Corporation. If the Clerk of Session is unable to serve, the Congregation shall elect a secretary for that meeting. The secretary shall record the action of the Congregation in minutes of the meeting.

#### **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

The members of the Congregation shall be baptized members, active church members, affiliate church members, and other participants as defined by the usages and rules of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

#### **ARTICLE V – CHURCH OFFICERS**

The officers of the Church shall be the Pastor, the Elders in active service on the Session, and the Deacons in active service on the Board of Deacons. Those who are called to office in the Church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as Pastors, Elders, or Deacons.

#### **ARTICLE VI – SESSION**

The Session is charged with maintaining the governance of the Congregation by discerning the will of Jesus Christ who is the Head of the Church and shall seek the best measures for promoting the spiritual interest of the Congregation. The elders on the Session shall also be the trustees of the Corporation in accordance the Book of Order.

The officers of the Session shall be the moderator and the clerk of session. The moderator of Session shall be the installed Pastor. If it is impractical for the Pastor to preside, he or she shall invite another minister who is a member of the Presbytery, or a person authorized by the Presbytery, to serve as moderator. If there is no installed Pastor, or the installed Pastor is unable to moderate and/or to name another moderator, the Presbytery shall make provision for a moderator. The Clerk of Session shall be an elder, but need not be in active service on Session. The Clerk of Session shall be elected or re-elected annually by the Session.

The Session shall consist of the moderator and nine elders, divided into three equal classes, one class of which shall be elected each year at a meeting of the Congregation for a three-year term. No elder shall be elected to the Session for a term of more than three years, nor shall an elder serve on the Session for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. An elder having been elected to the Session for consecutive terms aggregating six years shall be ineligible to serve thereon for a further term until at least one year has elapsed from the expiration of the last term for which that person was elected.

The Session's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to the requirements of all the duties required by the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The full duties of the elders are listed in the Church Operations Manual.

A quorum of Session shall be the moderator plus one-third of members of Session.

#### **ARTICLE VII - DIACONATE**

It is the duty of the Deacons, first of all, to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith.

There shall be 12 deacons divided into three equal classes, one class of which shall be elected at a meeting of the Congregation for a three-year term. No deacon shall be elected to the Board of Deacons for a term of more than three years, nor shall a deacon serve on the Board of Deacons for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A deacon having been elected to the Board of Deacons for consecutive terms aggregating six years shall be ineligible to serve thereon for a further term until at least one year has elapsed from the expiration of the last term for which that person was elected.

The Board of Deacons shall perform all the duties assigned by the Session, and shall be responsible to the Session. The full duties of the deacons are listed in the Church Operations Manual.

The Board of Deacons shall elect a moderator from among its members. The Board of Deacons may also elect from among its members a vice-moderator, and a secretary. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Deacons.

A quorum of the Board of Deacons shall be the moderator or vice moderator, plus one-third of members of the Board of Deacons.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – THE CORPORATION**

The Corporation officers shall consist of the Chairman, Secretary (Clerk of Session), Treasurer, and Board of Auditors.

##### **Term and Election or Appointment of Officers:**

The Chairman is elected by and from the Session for a (1) year term to moderate portions of the congregational meeting that pertain to the Corporation. The Chairman may be elected for successive terms provided the Chairman is an active elder on the Session.

The Clerk of Session shall serve as the Secretary of the Corporation and is elected by the Session for a term of (1) year. The Clerk of Session/Secretary may be elected for successive terms and will keep a faithful and orderly record of all the business transacted by the congregation.

The Treasurer shall be elected or re-elected annually by the Session. The Treasurer shall receive all money of the Congregation, such as offerings, money for the cemetery, interest on funds, etc. The Treasurer shall attend all regular meetings of Session to present a clear and concise monthly financial report. The Treasurer shall record and bank all money received and shall expend the same for items so budgeted, or as instructed by the Session. The Treasurer shall keep a full and accurate account of transactions and shall submit a detailed report at the January congregational meeting. A semi-annual detailed report, as of June 30<sup>th</sup> each year shall be distributed to members in the July or August Church newsletter. All payments shall require the signature of the Church Treasurer and an additional person designated by the Session. The Treasurer shall be properly bonded. Remuneration for the office of Treasurer shall be as determined by the Session and shall be included as an entry in the annual budget.

The Board of Auditors shall consist of three members, with election at the January congregational meeting. Term shall be for three years with one elected each year.

#### **ARTICLE IX – THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee shall prayerfully contact candidates for the various offices of the congregation and shall present a slate of candidates who are willing to serve.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of one member each from Session, Board of Deacons, plus three members of the congregation. Congregation members are to be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting. Their term shall be for three years.

The moderator shall be the member of the session.

**ARTICLE X – REPLACEMENT OF VACANCIES**

Vacancies on the Session or the Board of Deacons may be filled by election at a specially called congregational meeting or at the next annual congregational meeting, whichever the Session shall decide.

**ARTICLE XI – PROCEDURE FOR AMENDING OR ALTERING THESE BY-LAWS**

This Constitution may be amended or altered at any regular meeting of the Congregation by a vote of two-thirds of the active members present, providing such amendment or alteration shall have been presented to the Congregation at least one month previously.

**ARTICLE XII - RATIFICATION**

This constitution is hereby ordained and established for New Bethlehem Presbyterian Church (USA) of Aliquippa, Pennsylvania by vote of the membership on January 20, 2013.

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Rev. Randall K. Clow, Moderator of Session

(Corporate Seal)

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Diane Meanor, Clerk of Session and Corporate Secretary

Approved—January 16, 1978

Amended – January 20, 2013