

Constitution and By-Laws
Beacon Falls Congregational Church
Organized in 1846



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CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

Name, Mission and Vision

Section 1: Name

The Church shall be called the Beacon Falls Congregational Church, Incorporated.

Section 2: Mission

**To glorify God through
the faithful preaching of His Word,
the making of disciples,
and reaching the world for Jesus Christ.**

Section 3: Vision

Our Vision is to be a family of faith, hope and love, focused on joyfully giving and living to the glory of God [2 Cor 8:1-5; 1 Cor 10:31].

We see a people marked by a sincere repentance from our sins [Matt 4:17; Luke 5:31-32; Acts 17:30].

We see a people who live with a whole-hearted trust of Jesus Christ as Lord, Savior and our only hope in life and death [John 3:1-8; 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 14:7-8].

We see a people with a peace which surpasses all understanding, brought about by intense and never-ending prayer, both individually and church-wide [1 Th 5:16-18; James 5:13; Phil 4:6-7; Ps 62:8].

We see a people engaged in the study of and obedience to the Holy Scriptures, the very Word of God, fully inspired and without error. Therefore, we openly declare sound Biblical doctrines. [Titus 1:9-11; Ps 18:30; 2 Tim 2:15; 4:2].

We see a people in full commitment to the Great Commission, seeking the salvation of unbelievers through the loving service of others and the clear proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, humbly knowing that while it is our responsibility to share the good news of salvation, it is God only that does the saving [Matt 28:18-20; Eph 2:4-10].

We see a people committed to the systematic discipling and mentoring of fellow believers towards spiritual growth and maturity [Matt 28:18-20; Titus 1:9-11; 2 Peter 1:3-11; Rom 15:14].

We see a people who pursue personal holiness, who acknowledge the authority of our qualified spiritual leaders, and the practice of church discipline, to develop a godly and loving congregation. [1 Peter 1:16; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:10-11; Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:1-13; 1 Th 4:3-8].

We see a people faithfully worshipping God, both privately and publicly, and using our spiritual gifts to support the ministries of this church and to fulfill one-another in loving fellowship [Heb 10:24-25; John 13:14, 34-35].

ARTICLE II

Covenant, Doctrinal Beliefs and Statement of Faith

Section 1: Covenant

The covenant by which this Church exists as a distinct body, and which every member accepts, is as follows:

We do now, with humble acknowledgement of our sinfulness and unworthiness, with grateful trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, with heartfelt dependence on the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier and Comforter, publicly consecrate ourselves to the glory, worship and service of God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — sincerely and unreservedly committing ourselves to God, now and forever promise, God being our helper, to:

- a) Obey His commands.
- b) Observe the sacraments.
- c) Walk according to the light of the Gospel of Christ.
- d) Submit ourselves to the government of this Church, so far as it is conformable to the Gospel.
- e) Love and watch over its members as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- f) Attend its worship, uphold its discipline, and promote its purity, prosperity and peace.

Section 2: Doctrinal Beliefs and Statement of Faith

This Church holds that living to the glory of God in obedience to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures is the essence of Christian discipleship. Each member shall have the right and obligation to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of one's own conscience under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We have a mutual respect for diverse convictions of sincere Christian belief. This Church commends to its own members the following doctrinal beliefs and statement of faith as an expression of how this Church interprets the Word and Will of God.

Doctrinal Beliefs

The Bible

The Scriptures, made up of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired, inerrant, eternal, and authoritative Word of God. They serve as the supreme and sufficient authority in all matters of faith, conduct and Christian living. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Mark 13:31; Matt. 4:4)

Trinity

There is only one true God. He is supremely good, glorious, loving, and holy. God is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son (Jesus) and Holy Spirit. These three are the same in substance, equal in power and glory. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 14:10; John 14:16-17)

- **God the Father** is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, and unchangeable. Nothing happens except through Him and by His will. (Gen. 1:1; Lev. 11:45; Rom. 1:20)
- **God the Son** is Jesus Christ, Who is truly God and truly man. In the incarnation, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a perfect life among us, was crucified, died, and buried. He defeated death by rising on the third day, and ascended to heaven. He is the only mediator between God and Man. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. (Col.1:15-20; John 14:6; Heb. 2:17; 1 Cor. 15:2-4; 2 Tim. 4:1-2)
- **God the Holy Spirit** was sent from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. He indwells every genuine believer in Christ as an abiding Comforter, Helper and Guide. (Rom. 8:26-27; Gal. 5:22-23; John 14:26; Eph. 1:13-14; Matt. 7:21-23)

Holiness of God

God's holiness refers to His absolute purity and to His uniqueness in being separate from all He has created. We are called to holiness because He is holy. (1 Peter 1:15-16; Isa. 57:15; 1 Sam. 2:2; Lev. 11:45)

Creation

God created the heavens and the earth, and everything in it, and His original creation was perfect with no death or suffering. His crowning creation was mankind whom He made in His image, and gave the gift of free will. (Gen. 1:1; Gen. 1:26-31; John 1:3; Joshua 24:15; Deut. 30:19-20)

Sin/Depravity of Mankind

The world is now full of suffering, pain, and evil due to humans' rebellion against God, thereby incurring not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation

from God. As a result, all humans are born with a sinful nature, and disobey God in thought, word, and deed. Tragically, we love people and things more than we love the God Who made us; and are therefore under His just condemnation, without defense or excuse. (Gen. 2:16-17; Rom. 5:18-19; Rom. 3:23)

Salvation

Salvation is deliverance from condemnation, the forgiveness of our sins, and the guarantee of eternal life. Salvation is obtained through faith in the life, sacrificial death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. (John 3:16-18; Matt. 19:25-26; Acts 16:31; Acts 2:21)

- **Repentance** is a sincere turning away, in both mind and heart, from sin against God and a sincere commitment to walk in obedience to Him going forward. (Matt. 4:17; Acts 3:19; Luke 5:31-32)
- **Saving Faith** is trusting the person and work of Jesus Christ alone for our salvation. Those with saving faith have been ‘born again’ into eternal life. (John 3:3; John 3:6-7; Mark 16:16; 1 John 5:13)
 - **The Resurrection of Jesus Christ** is the core doctrine of our faith. Most simply put, a Christian is someone who believes in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, and lives in light of the implications of it. (Rom. 10:9)
 - The resurrection demonstrated to the whole universe the deity of Jesus and God’s love for him. (Rom. 1:4; Acts 5:30-31) It gives us the joy of knowing that Christ is with us today. (Matt. 16:18). It gives us hope beyond the grave. (1 Thess. 4:13) The resurrection purchased our justification and reconciliation. (Rom. 4:25, 2 Cor 5:18-20). It assures us that Christ will personally return to judge and rule the world. (Acts 17:30-31)
- **Justification** is God’s gracious and full acquittal of sinners who believe in Jesus Christ, not on account of any good works we have done, but solely through receiving Him and relying on Him through faith. (Rom. 3:26; Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:24; Rom. 10:9-10; Gal. 2:16)
- **Reconciliation** - As our sins are forgiven and erased God draws us to Himself, completely changing us to new beings in a right and harmonious relationship with Him. (Rom 5:10-11, Col 1:20-22)
- **Assurance/Eternal State** - Those who have been born again are kept by God’s power, sealed by the Holy Spirit, and are thus secure in Jesus Christ forever. They may rest and rejoice in the assurance of their salvation, and eagerly await everlasting bliss and delight in heaven. (Rom. 8:16; Heb. 10:22) Those who are unsaved will suffer eternal separation from God, everlasting punishment and torment in hell. (Rev. 21:8; Mark 9:43)

We thus affirm that salvation is through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, by God’s grace alone, according to the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone. (Eph. 1:7; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:28; Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 10:31; Acts 4:12; 2 Cor. 5:21; Jude 1:25; Titus 1:9; Matt. 4:4)

Church

The Church is the Body of Jesus Christ, composed of His genuine believers. As head of the Church, the Lord Jesus calls us to the faithful preaching of His Word, making of His disciples, and reaching the world for His sake. We are a fellowship of the flawed but forgiven, carrying out His purposes and will in the world. (Matt. 28:16-20; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Rom. 12:4-5; Col. 1:18; Matt. 7:21-23)

- **Women and Men in Ministry** - God created both men and women in His own image; therefore both are called to serve equally in the ministries of this Church. (Gal. 3:28; Rom. 16:1-4)
- **Sanctity of Life** - We embrace the inherent dignity and immeasurable worth of all human beings' lives from conception to natural death. (Psalm 139:13-15; Exod. 20:13; Gal. 1:15; Jer. 1:5; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eccl. 8:8; Job 1:21)

Prayer

Prayer is the essential and direct communication between people and God, and is the way we develop a personal relationship with Him. Although God is sovereign over everything, He uses prayer as the means to accomplish His divine will; changing our hearts into conformity with His will. We pray to the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 7:7-8; 1 John 5:14; Matt. 6:9-13; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:16-18)

Sacraments

We celebrate two Sacraments as the outward, physical signs of inward, spiritual realities.

- **Baptism** is the symbolic washing with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is the sign and seal of God's covenant of grace with us and our children. Our congregation commits itself to the spiritual nurture and fellowship of the infant, child, or adult being baptized. (1 Pet. 3:21; Gal. 3:27; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-41; John 1:29-33)
- **The Lord's Supper** (also called Holy Communion) is a perpetual remembrance of Jesus' saving work where we proclaim His death, resurrection, and His future return. Our Lord instituted this feast on the night He was betrayed, using the visible elements of bread and wine to teach His disciples to spiritually receive and feed on Him. In these simple actions, believers experience communion with Christ Himself. The Lord's Supper is open to all who have repented of their sins and who hold Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. You need not be a member of this Church to join in this feast with us. (1 Cor. 11:24-29; Matt. 26:26-28; John 6:48-54)

Rites

We observe three rites as solemn ceremonies marking significant rites of passage in our faith lives.

- **Confirmation** is the sacred ordinance where students who have been baptized and properly educated, renew and ratify the promises made at their Baptism. The

Church, in turn, receives them into full membership and prays for their filling with the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:10; John 20:22; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:5-6; 2 Tim. 1:6)

- **Holy Matrimony** - We believe that marriage is the exclusive, covenantal union of one man and one woman, as designed by God. We will faithfully follow the scriptural definition of marriage (Gen 1:27; Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-9; Mark 10:1-12; Eph. 5:30-33) in the teachings and practices of this Church, and therefore this Church will not officiate, solemnize, perform or host a marriage or marriage-like ceremony involving anything other than the union of one man and one woman as instituted by God.
 - We further refer to God's Commandments and Scriptural Teachings listed herein concerning sexual activity: Exd. 20:14; 1 Cor. 6:18-20
 - We fully believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be condemned as sinful and are not in accordance with the Scriptures, nor the doctrines of this Church. (Eph. 4:31-32; Matt. 7:3-5; Col. 3:13)
- **Christian Burial** (either bodily or cremation) is both the celebration of, and thanksgiving to God for a life lived among us. We commit the soul of our dearly departed into the hands of Almighty God, taking comfort in His promises. (Rev. 21:4; Phil. 1:21-23; Psalm 116:15; 2 Cor. 5:6)

The Statement of Faith

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of
Our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father
And to his deeds we testify:
He calls the worlds into being
Creates man in his own image,
And sets before him the ways of life and death.
He seeks in holy love to save all people from
Aimlessness and sin.
He judges men and nations by his righteous will
Declared through prophets and apostles.
In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our
Crucified and risen Lord,
He has come to us
And shared our common lot,
Conquering sin and death
And reconciling the world to himself.
He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit,
Creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
Binding in covenant faithful people of all
Ages, tongues and races.
He calls us into his church
To accept the cost and joy of discipleship,

To be his servants in the service of men,
To proclaim the gospel to all the world
And resist the powers of evil.
To share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,
To join him in his passion and victory.
He promises to all who trust him
Forgiveness of sin and fullness of grace,
Courage in the struggle for justice and peace,
His presence in trial and rejoicing,
And eternal life in his kingdom which has no end.
Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him.

Amen.

Original version of Statement of Faith adopted upon the merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Church with a number of Congregational Christian Churches in 1957.

ARTICLE III

Polity and Governing Body

Section 1: Polity

This Church is an independent congregational church. This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but recognizes and sustains the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among the member churches of the Christian Church Universal, and it is in fellowship with all churches which acknowledge Jesus Christ to be their Lord, seeking with them that unity which shall bring us all into the one Body of Christ.

Section 2: Governing Body

The government of this Church is vested in its members who exercise the right of control of all its affairs. The Governing Body of this Church shall be the membership assembled in a Church Meeting. The vote of a simple majority of the members present and voting shall be the action of the Church except as otherwise provided herein. The following decisions shall be reserved exclusively to the Governing Body acting in accordance with the provisions of this section:

- a) The calling and dismissal of ministers.
- b) Purchase, sale or mortgage of Church real estate.
- c) Adoption of an Annual Budget.
- d) Election of principal committees, officers and non-officers as provided in Article V.
- e) Amendment of the Church Constitution and By-Laws in accordance with the provisions of Article XI.

ARTICLE IV

Membership

Section 1: Qualifications

Membership in this Church is open to any baptized person who confesses faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who subscribes to the Covenant of this Church as expressed in Article II.

A person may become a member of this Church by one of the following:

- a) Upon confession of faith,
- b) By presenting a letter of transfer from another church, or
- c) By reaffirmation of faith; and by compliance with the procedures for reception into membership established by the Board of Deacons.

Persons who are members of other churches and do not wish to give up their membership in such other churches may become members of this Church by the procedure outlined in this Article.

Section 2: Reception

The reception of members shall ordinarily be done in conjunction with the celebration of Holy Communion.

Section 3: Duties

Members are expected to:

- a) Be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life.
- b) Attend habitually the services of this Church.
- c) Remain informed of Church finances and to give regularly for its support and its benevolences.
- d) Share their time and talents in its organized work.
- e) Keep spirit of unity and personal responsibility to preserve harmony.

Section 4: Rights

Only members who are in full and regular standing may act and vote in the transactions of the Church.

Section 5: Termination.

The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles which follow:

- a) Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of transfer and recommendation to any other evangelical church is entitled to receive it upon

- written request. In case of removal to another community, such request should be promptly made.
- b) The Church, through the Board of Deacons in conjunction with the Pastor, may also, after due notice and diligent effort to make such action unnecessary, terminate the membership of persons for the period of two years non-resident, or for the same period of time not habitually worshipping with the Church, or for the same period of time not contributing to its support according to the system prescribed by the Church or in some way satisfactory thereto.
 - c) Should a member become an offense to the Church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of one's covenant vows, the Church, through the Board of Deacons in conjunction with the Pastor, may terminate the membership of such person, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.
 - d) The membership of no person shall be terminated (except by letter) at the meeting when the recommendation for such action is made.

ARTICLE V

Pastor, Officers, Non-Officers and Committees

Pastor, Officers and Non-Officers

Section 1: Pastor

A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs.

If for any reason the Church is without a called Pastor, the Board of Deacons shall call a meeting of the Church membership to elect a Pastoral Search Committee of not less than six members nor more than nine members, actively supportive of the church through regular attendance, who shall seek to acquire qualified candidates to fill the vacancy. When a candidate has been determined to be satisfactory to the Pastoral Search Committee, a duly called meeting of the Church membership shall be convened for the purpose of acting upon their recommendation. A simple majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the Church shall be required to call a minister.

Section 2: Clerk

A clerk, shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for one year, or, until a successor shall be elected.

Section 3: Treasurer

A treasurer, shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for a term of one year, or, until a successor shall be elected.

Section 4: Assistant Treasurers

Two assistant treasurers, shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for one year, or, until successors shall be elected. This position is not considered an officer of the Church.

Section 5: Church School Superintendent

A superintendent of the Church school, shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for one year, or, until a successor shall be elected.

Section 6: Assistant Church School Superintendent

An assistant superintendent of the Church school, shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for one year, or, until a successor shall be elected. This position is not considered an officer of the Church.

Section 7: Auditor

An auditor, shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for one year, or, until a successor shall be elected.

Committees

Section 1: Board of Deacons

A Board of Deacons, also known as the Diaconate, consisting of nine deacons, three of whom shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for a term of three years. In addition to the nine adult deacons, one confirmed youth, still in high school, may be elected each year to serve a one year term only, enjoying the same voting rights as the adult committee members. Any deacon, having served a substantial number of terms, upon election by the diaconate, may be designated as a deacon emeritus for life.

Section 2: Prudential

A Prudential Committee, consisting of nine members, three of whom shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for a term of three years. In addition to the nine adult members, one confirmed youth, still in high school, may be elected each year to serve a one year term only, enjoying the same voting rights as the adult committee members.

Section 3: Christian Education

A Christian Education Committee, comprised of six elected members, two of whom shall be elected at each Annual meeting for a term of three years. In addition to the six adult members, one confirmed youth, still in high school, may be elected each year to serve a one-year term only, enjoying the same voting rights as the adult committee members. The Church school superintendent shall serve as an ex-officio member of this committee.

Section 4: Endowment

Section 4. The Endowment committee shall consist of five members. The congregation will annually elect one new member to serve on the Endowment Committee for a term of five years. If for any reason, a vacancy should occur on the committee, such vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term at either a special meeting or an annual meeting of the Church.

Sections 5: Pastoral Relations

A Pastoral Relations Committee, comprised of six members, two of whom shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for a term of one year or until their successors shall be elected; two members shall be appointed, one each by the Diaconate and Prudential committees, to serve for a period not to exceed the expiration of their respective terms on the committee which they represent; and two members shall be appointed by the Pastor to serve for one year, or, until successors shall be appointed.

Section 6: Church Council

A Church Council, consisting of all officers of the Church, the president or chairperson of each organization of the Church, the chairperson of each committee of the Church and the advisors of the youth group.

Section 7: Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee, comprised of six members, two of whom shall be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve for a term of three years.

Section 8: Committee Officers

Chairpersons, assistant chairpersons and recording secretaries, unless otherwise provided for, shall be elected as deemed appropriate and necessary by each committee at its first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the Church, to serve for one year or until their successors are elected.

Section 9: Vacancy

If for any reason, a vacancy of an officer, non-officer or on any committee should occur, such vacancy may be filled for the unexpired term at an Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting of the Church congregation.

ARTICLE VI

Duties of the Pastor, Officers, Non-officers and Committees

Section 1: Pastor

The Pastor shall have the following duties in his or her charge:

- a) The spiritual welfare of the Church with the assistance of the Board of Deacons.
- b) Shall model a Godly life, enlist people as followers of Christ, Preach the Gospel
- c) Administer the Sacraments.
- d) Have under his or her care all services of public worship and administer the activities of the church in cooperation with the various boards and committees.
- e) Ensure the pastoral care of the Church, particularly for the sick and troubled.
- f) Shall ordinarily preside at all meetings of the Church except when matters concerning the Pastor are considered or when another moderator is chosen.
- g) Have in his or her care the leadership training program.
- h) Shall be an ex officio, advisory non-voting member of all boards and committees, and shall be the chairperson of the Church Council.

Section 2: Clerk

The Clerk shall have the following duties in his or her charge:

- a) Keep a complete record of the transactions at all business meetings of the Church, which shall be read for approval at the next following business meeting.
- b) Keep a register of the names of members with dates of admissions and dismissal or death, together with a record of baptisms, marriages and confirmations.
- c) Notify all officers, members of committees, and delegates of their election or appointment, shall issue letters of dismissal, transfer and recommendation as directed by the Pastor or Diaconate.
- d) Preserve on file all communications and written official reports.
- e) Give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as indicated in the By-Laws.

Section 3: Diaconate

The Diaconate shall have the following duties in their charge:

- a) Provide for the Lord's Supper and aid in its administration.
- b) Confer with and assist the Pastor in all matters relating to services of public worship and the music program. This includes the hiring, annual review, dismissal and the duties of the Organist/Director of Music.
- c) Organize and administer care for the sick and needy.
- d) Administer the Memorial Fund.

- e) Administer effective programs of membership and evangelism, including church growth and fellowship activities, as well as mission education and outreach of the Church, both local and worldwide.
- f) Have oversight of the content communicated by the Church across various media, including the official church website and social media networks.
- g) May create from within or outside their own members such ministry teams as may be necessary to carry out the above responsibilities.

Section 4: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have the following duties in his or her charge:

- a) Disbursement records and all bank and check records.
- b) Have the authority to pay bills budgeted for and recurring expenses of the Church and Parsonage.
- c) Payment of all other bills requires prior approval of the Prudential Committee.
- d) Make a written report at the Annual Meeting of all receipts and disbursements, which have been duly approved and audited by the Church Auditor.
- e) Be an ex officio non-voting member of the Prudential Committee.

Section 5: Assistant Treasurers

The Assistant Treasurers shall have the following duties in their charge:

- a) The pledge records, weekly offerings, and all other income receipts.
- b) Keep a detailed record of each weekly offering and any other income received and shall provide the Treasurer with a copy of the weekly report.
- c) Be responsible for making the bank deposits of the weekly receipts.
- d) May, at the request of the Prudential committee, issue quarterly and/or annual statements to regular contributors, with each account being separate and distinct from all other records.
- e) Be familiar with the duties of the Treasurer.

Section 6: Church School Superintendent

The Superintendent of the Church School shall have the following duties in his or her charge:

- a) General oversight and direction of the Church School, and shall conduct its affairs by such methods as may be approved by the Christian Education Committee.
- b) Present a written report of the work of the Church School for the year at the Annual Meeting.
- c) Be an ex officio voting member of the Christian Education Committee.

Section 7: Auditor

The Auditor shall have the following duties in his or her charge:

- a) Examine the Treasurer's records and submit a written report to the Annual Meeting of the Church.

- b) Notify the Prudential committee immediately of any irregularities.

Section 8: Prudential

The Prudential Committee shall have the following duties in their charge:

- a) The care, supervision and maintenance of all church property, both real and personal.
- b) They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or in any manner convey or acquire any real property without a specific vote of the Church at a duly called meeting for the stated purpose.
- c) Prepare a yearly budget for the necessary operating costs of worship services, church programs and property to be presented for approval at the Annual Meeting of the Church.
- d) Have in their care the raising of funds to meet the budget.
- e) Consider for approval bills submitted by the Treasurer and see to the proper auditing of the Treasurer's accounts.
- f) Have in their care a formal receipts and treasury procedure. With the assistance of the Church Auditor and the Assistant Treasurers, they shall review the process annually. If changes are necessary, they require a vote of the Prudential Committee.
- g) Authorize the amount of remuneration for the Pastor, Sexton, Organist, Treasurer, Secretary and any other position generated as the need arises.
- h) Have under their care the hiring, annual review, dismissal and duties of the Sexton and Secretary.
- i) Care for all matters of the Memorial Garden including but not limited to upkeep, sales and contracts of niches, engravings, review pricing annually, maintain all records of sales, contracts and niche locations, co-ordination of church secretary, treasurer and a Memorial Garden Committee consisting of an Administrator, Record Keeper and a Prudential appointed liaison.

Section 9: Christian Education

The Christian Education Committee shall have the following duties in their charge:

- a) The promotion and direction of religious education throughout the Church.
- b) Study modern trends of education and advise concerning curriculum.
- c) Secure, train and dismiss teachers and advisors for the church school or other groups.
- d) Administer a background check program for the safety of the church.

Section 10: Pastoral Relations

The Pastoral Relations Committee shall have the following duties in their charge:

- a) Consult with the Pastor endeavoring to reconcile in a Christian spirit any differences or potential problems which may arise between the Pastor and the church membership.

- b) Perform an annual review of the Pastor’s effectiveness in fulfilling the duties as specified in Section 1. The purpose of this review is to provide focused feedback on strengths and areas of growth for a continued improvement of the Pastor personally and the church as a whole. While the details of this review shall be considered confidential, a summary of the review and a recommendation for remuneration adjustment shall be provided to the Diaconate and Prudential Committees.
- c) Meet at the call of the chairperson or the Pastor. All matters taken up at such meetings shall be strictly confidential and shall be regarded as having the status of “privileged communication” unless mutually and unanimously agreed otherwise. If differences arise which cannot be satisfactorily reconciled by this process, the next level of appeal will be to the Board of Deacons, and then, if necessary, a Special Meeting of the congregation is required.

Section 11: Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of nominees for all elective offices and committees to be acted upon at the Annual Meeting of the Church.

Section 12: Church Council

The Church Council shall have the following duties in their charge:

- a) Act in an advisory capacity.
- b) The Pastor shall preside as chairperson of the council, or in the absence of the pastor, a temporary chairperson may be chosen.
- c) Meet monthly to provide a means whereby the particular interests and activities of each committee and organization can be communicated to and integrated with programs of other committees and organizations.

ARTICLE VII

Organizations

Section 1: The Church shall have oversight of all organizations formed for the purposes of Ministry and Fellowship. Of all such organizations the Pastor shall have general oversight, and the Church will expect a report from each at its Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

Meetings

Section 1: For Worship

- a) Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day, and special services may be appointed at the discretion of the Pastor, the Board of Deacons or by vote of the church.
- b) The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at such regular dates as the Church may, from time to time, determine; and unless otherwise ordered, upon the first Lord's Day of each month.
- c) Occasional religious meetings may be appointed at the discretion of the Pastor, the Board of Deacons or by vote of the Church.

Section 2: For Business

- a) The Pastor may, and shall, when requested by the Board of Deacons, Christian Education, Church Council or the Prudential Committee, call from the pulpit special business meetings, the particular object of the meeting being clearly stated in the notice.
- b) Special Meetings of the Church shall be called by the Clerk upon written application of any five members specifying the object thereof, which shall be read at the public service on the Lord's Day at least one week prior to the meeting date. No Special Meeting shall be held on the same day on which the first notice is given.
- c) At all meetings for business called by the Clerk, a chairperson shall be chosen by the vote of the Church; but at all other meetings the Pastor shall preside except when the business relates to the Pastor. In absence of the Pastor, a temporary chairperson shall be elected by vote of the Church.
- d) The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held during the first month of the calendar year at which time the budget shall be presented for consideration. The annual reports shall be presented, officers and committees elected, and such other business transacted as may be specified in the call or authorized in the By-Laws. This meeting shall be called by the Clerk in the manner specified in paragraph (b) of this section.
- e) At the Annual Meeting and all Special Meetings of the Church, fifteen members must be present to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE IX

Discipline

Section 1: Should any unhappy differences arise between members, the aggrieved member shall follow in a tender spirit the rules given by our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew.

Section 2: Should any case of gross breach of covenant or of public scandal occur, the Board of Deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense, and if such effort fails, shall report the case to the Church which shall proceed with the appropriate action. See ARTICLE IV, SECTION 5 (c).

ARTICLE X

Endowment Trust Fund

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of the Endowment Trust Fund (hereinafter referred to as the Fund) shall be to generate supplemental income for the ministry of the Church through the prudent investment of all gifts and bequests donated to the Fund.

Section 2: Management

No monies shall be dispersed from the Fund until a minimum Fund balance of one hundred thousand dollars balance (\$100,000) is established. A Fund balance of a minimum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) shall remain in perpetuity. No monies shall be dispersed from the Fund that will result in a Fund balance of less than \$100,000.00, except in the event of default in the church's obligations under any mortgage or lien which default could result in the loss of title or possession to the land and buildings comprising the church and/or the parsonage. In such event, and upon request in writing from the Prudential Committee, the Endowment Committee may vote to distribute endowment funds without regard to the \$100,000.00 minimum fund balance set forth herein. Should the Committee vote to do so, it shall certify in writing to the Congregation (a) the Committee's finding that the disbursement is necessary to preserve Church property and (b) that all other practicable measures to cure the default have been exhausted. Ten days after publication of such notice in the church bulletin and whatever electronic means is commonly used at the time, if the default has not been cured, the Committee may disburse endowment funds as described herein.

Section 3: Administration

The Committee shall have in its care the establishment, promotion and financial administration of the Fund. Only the Prudential Committee or the Board of Deacons (Diaconate) may make requests for disbursements from the Fund. Any such requests must be submitted in writing to the Endowment Committee a minimum of 30-days prior to the requested distribution date for the Endowment Committee to prudently consider the financial well-being of the Fund. Actual disbursement of the funds shall be contingent upon the approval of members present at the Annual Meeting or a duly called Special Meeting of the Church which specifically lists the request for endowment fund disbursement on the Warrant call. The Committee shall make a written financial report at the Annual Meeting of all donations, income received, invested and disbursed.

ARTICLE XI

Section 1: Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended, except as otherwise herein provided for, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at any Annual Meeting of the Church, or at a Special Meeting called for that purpose, the proposed amendments having been laid out before the Church in writing not less than one month before the time of the proposed action.

ARTICLE XII

Section 1: Dissolution

The Beacon Falls Congregational Church and its property shall be forever devoted to Christian purposes. Any action to dissolve the congregation must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of eligible voting members present at a Special Meeting duly called at least one month in advance, to specifically consider such action. If this church shall cease to exist by its own option or otherwise, all property real or personal, after paying off any debts against it, shall be transferred as a gift to one or more ministries or organizations which are organized and operated exclusively for Christian religious purposes. Such ministries or organizations shall be named in the dissolution call.

Revisions adopted: January 21, 2024