

BY-LAWS OF THE CONGREGATION OF
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF
HUDSON FALLS, NY
Approved June 1, 2014

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OR MISSION

The First Presbyterian Church of Hudson Falls, New York, has been called by God and organized to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, to minister to the needs of members of the congregation and residents of the community, and to promote peace and justice in the world.

I. RELATION TO THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

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

II. GOVERNANCE OF THE CHURCH

This church shall be governed in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*.¹ Consistent with that *Constitution*, these by-laws shall provide specific guidance for this church. The most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall be used for parliamentary guidance, although in any situation in which the *Constitution* and *Robert's Rules* are in conflict, the *Constitution* shall have higher priority (G-3.0105).

III. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH (G-1.04)

In accordance with the *Constitution*, the Session shall vote to enroll individuals as members of the church. The categories of membership are: Baptized Members, Active Members, Affiliate Members, and Other Participants.

Baptized Members are persons who have received the Sacrament of Baptism but who have not yet made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Baptized Members are not entitled to speak in meetings of the congregation, nor to vote, nor to hold office.

Active Members are persons who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, have voluntarily submitted to the government of this church, and participate in the church's work and worship. Active Members are entitled to speak in meetings of the congregation and to vote and hold office.

Affiliate Members are active members of another church in this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who have temporarily moved from the community where the church of active membership is situated, and have presented the Session with a certificate of good standing from the appropriate governing body

¹ According to F-3.04 in *The Book of Order*, the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* consists of *The Book of Confessions* and *The Book of Order*.

of that church. Affiliate Members are entitled to all the rights and privileges of an Active Member except the right to vote and hold office.

Other Participants are persons who are not members of, or who may have ceased active participation in, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Other Participants are welcome and may participate in the life and worship of this church and receive its pastoral care and instruction. The invitation to the Lord's Supper is extended to all who have been baptized, remembering that access to the table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. Confessing members of other Christian churches may present children for baptism, in conformity with the *Constitution*.

IV. MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH (G-1.05)

There shall be two, distinct annual meetings of the congregation on the church premises on such dates as may be called by the Session. The first at which at least the following business shall be presented: annual reports from organizations and the Session (information only), financial report for the preceding year (information only), budget for the current year (information only), changes in the terms of call for the pastor(s).

The second at which the following business shall be presented: nomination of church officers, election of church officers, election of members to serve on the Nominating Committee. Following the regular congregation meeting for the election of officers, the Session shall conduct a program of study and preparation for the new officers, and examine them in accordance with the *Constitution*. New officers will be ordained and installed on a date set by the Session.

Special meetings may be called by the Session, in accordance with the *Constitution*. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meetings, and business shall be restricted to that which is specified in the call.

Only Active Members are entitled to vote in meetings of the Congregation, and to hold office.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS (G-1.0502)

Public notice of the 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 given in printed and verbal form at least ten days in advance, which shall include two successive Sundays.

V. MODERATOR (G-1.0504)

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 teaching elder 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 moderator possesses the authority necessary for preserving order and for conducting efficiently the business of the congregation. He or she shall convene and adjourn the body in accordance with its own action.

The president of the Board of Trustees shall moderate that portion of congregational meetings at which corporate business is conducted. In the absence of the president, the congregation shall elect another member of the Board of Trustees as moderator for that particular portion of the meeting.

VI. SECRETARY (G-1.0505)

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

VII. MINUTES (G-1.0505)

The minutes of the meeting recorded by the secretary shall be attested by the moderator and the secretary, and recorded in the minutes book of the Session. Minutes of the congregation are the property of the congregation in perpetuity, or to its legal successors, and shall be shared with church members in the way deemed most efficient by the Session. The Session shall provide copies of the minutes of congregational meetings to members of the congregation upon request.

VIII. QUORUM AND VOTING

The quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be the persons serving as moderator and secretary and at least one-tenth of the Active Members of the congregation. The secretary shall determine that a quorum is present. Only active members may vote, regardless of age. Voting by proxy is not allowed.

IX. INCORPORATION

In accordance with the laws of the state of New York, the congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed. Consistent with the laws of this state, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the congregation.

X. NOMINATING COMMITTEE (G-2.0401)

The congregation shall form a Nominating Committee in the following manner:

- a. There shall be five members of the Nominating Committee
- b. One of the members shall be a ruling elder currently serving on the Session and shall serve as moderator of the committee.
- c. One member shall be designated by and from the Board of Trustees
- d. Three of the members, who are not persons currently serving on the Session, Board of Deacons, or Board of Trustees, but are active members of the congregation, shall be nominated and elected at a meeting of the congregation.
- e. Members of the committee shall be elected for a three-year term, and no member shall serve more than three years consecutively.

- f. The Pastor shall be a member *ex officio* and without vote.
- g. The Nominating Committee shall bring to the congregation nominations for no more than the number of positions to be filled.
- h. The floor shall be open for nominations at the congregational meeting.

XI. RULING ELDERS

The congregation shall elect nine ruling elders divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year for a three-year term. No ruling elder shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A ruling elder having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for reelection to the Session for a period of at least one year. (G-2.0404)

The Session, at its first meeting following the installation of a new class of officers, shall elect a ruling elder to serve as clerk and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work. At that same meeting of the Session, the session shall annually elect a treasurer, along with such assistant treasurers as it may deem necessary. A quorum for the Session shall be the pastor or other duly-appointed presiding officer and one-third of the ruling elders presently serving on the Session.

XII. DEACONS

The congregation shall elect from its membership Deacons to be commissioned by the Session and to serve on the newly formed Congregational Care Committee, consisting of ruling elders and deacons.

The Congregational Care Committee shall be chaired by a ruling elder currently serving on Session, and, at its first meeting following the installation of officers, shall elect a secretary from among its members and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work.

XIII. TRUSTEES

The congregation shall elect six trustees divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year for a three-year term. No trustee shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A trustee having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for reelection to the Board of Trustees for a period of at least one year.

The Board of Trustees, at its first meeting following the installation of officers, shall elect a president and a secretary from among its members and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work. The pastor shall be a member of the Board of Trustees, *ex officio* and without vote. A quorum for the trustees shall be one third of the members, including the president.

XIV. VACANCIES

Vacancies on the Session, the Board of Deacons or the Board of Trustees may be filled at a special meeting of the congregation or at the regular congregational meeting for the election of officers, as the Session may determine.

XV. AMENDMENTS

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