

BY-LAWS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN BURLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this congregation is: The Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Massachusetts.

The name of this corporation is: The Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Massachusetts, Inc., of the Town of Burlington in the County of Middlesex in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

ARTICLE II. GOVERNANCE

This congregation and corporation is governed by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The governing council of this church is the session; boards of the church are the board of deacons, and board of trustees. The session is responsible for the mission and government of this church. All ministry and work of the deacons, trustees, treasurer, and any other boards, committees, or organizations of the congregation and corporation is carried out under the authority of the session.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Active members are those who have been received into membership of this congregation by the session in accordance with the *Book of Order* G-1.0303 and G-1.0402. Active members may vote in congregational meetings, and may be elected to offices of ordered ministry (*Book of Order* G-2.0102).

The session may delete names from the roll of the congregation when a member requests, or has moved or otherwise ceased to participate actively in the work and worship of the congregation for a period of two years (*Book of Order* G-3.0204).

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

Ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the congregation.

Meetings of the congregation shall be conducted according to the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, except in those cases where the *Book of Order* or these By-Laws provide otherwise. All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

The congregation may meet by electronic means if members have reasonable notice of the electronic meeting and all participants have the ability to discuss and vote on business items. The required notice and quorum for such meeting are the same as for regular in-person meetings.”

Public notice of annual or special meetings of the congregation shall be made on at least two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. The meeting may be held on the day of the second notice.

The pastor shall ordinarily moderate all meetings of the congregation. Where circumstances make it impractical for the pastor to preside, the presiding officer shall be determined as directed by the *Book of Order*, G-1.0504.

The clerk of session shall be secretary of meetings of the congregation. If the clerk of session is unable to attend, the congregation shall elect a secretary for that meeting in his or her stead. The secretary shall record the actions of the congregation in minutes of the meeting. On behalf of the congregation, the

session, at its next stated meeting, shall review and approve the minutes of the annual meeting or any special meetings of the congregation.

There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation at the church, held in January of each year on a date specified by the session.

The purpose of the annual meeting is:

1. To elect ruling elders, deacons, trustees, and members of the next year's nominating committee.
2. To receive the annual report of the session and other organizations of the church along with plans for the coming year.
3. To review and approve pastoral terms of call based upon report of the prior review by the session.
4. To transact any other appropriate business as provided in the *Book of Order*, G-1.05.

Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the session, by the presbytery, or by the session when requested by the trustees, or when requested in writing by one fourth of the active members on the roll of the congregation as provided in the *Book of Order*, G-1.0502. Calls for a special meeting shall state clearly the purpose of the meeting, and no business other than that specified in the call may be considered.

ARTICLE V. VOTING

All active members are entitled to vote at meetings of the congregation. The quorum of a meeting of the congregation is not less than one tenth of the active members on the roll of the congregation. Voting is limited to those active members present/participating in a meeting of the congregation; voting by proxy is not allowed.

ARTICLE VI. SESSION

The session is composed of nine *ruling elders* in active service, divided into three equal classes, one class of whom is elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year term. No ruling elder shall serve on the session for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years, and after six years' service, no ruling elder is eligible to be elected to a new term until one year has elapsed.

The *clerk of session* is elected for a one-year term by the session from among its members at the first regular session meeting following the annual meeting.

The responsibilities of the session are defined in the *Book of Order* G-3.02.

ARTICLE VII. DEACONS

The board of *deacons* is composed of nine deacons in active service, divided into three equal classes, one class of whom is elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year term. Provision for length of service is the same as that for ruling elders, above.

The *moderator*, *vice-moderator*, and *secretary* of the deacons are elected for one-year terms from among its members at the first regular meeting of the deacons following the annual meeting.

The responsibilities of the deacons are defined in the *Book of Order* G-2.02

ARTICLE VIII. TRUSTEES

The board of trustees is composed of six trustees, divided into three equal classes, one class of whom is elected each year at the annual meeting. Provision for length of service is the same as that for ruling elders and deacons.

The *chairperson* and *secretary* of the board of trustees are elected for one-year terms from among its members at the first regular meeting of the trustees following the annual meeting.

The responsibilities of the trustees are:

1. To administer the property and finances of the congregation and corporation, including care of buildings and grounds, preparation of budgets, provision for adequate insurance coverage, and responsible investment.
2. To provide representatives to the finance committee of session, which prepares an annual budget of appropriations needed for all purposes for the succeeding year: a goal budget prior to the annual stewardship campaign, and a final budget based on the results of the campaign.
3. To provide for the annual auditing of all books and records of church finances.
4. To hold stated meetings at least quarterly, and keep accurate minutes of trustees meetings.
5. Any other responsibilities related to the property and finances of the church that the session may designate.

ARTICLE IX. TREASURER

The *treasurer* of the congregation and corporation is elected annually by the session at the first meeting following the annual meeting. The nominating committee shall make recommendation to the session of a qualified candidate from the active membership of the church. The board of trustees supervises the work of the treasurer.

The responsibilities of the treasurer are:

1. To charge each item of expenditure against the proper appropriation, and notify the trustees and session if expenditures are liable to exceed appropriations in the approved budget.
2. To keep records of all receipts and expenditures, and regularly to advise the trustees of the general and particular conditions of the finances.
3. To be custodian of all valuable papers such as deeds, insurance policies, and all papers ordered placed on file by the trustees and to deliver all to his/her successor.
4. Any other responsibilities related to the finances of the church that the session or trustees may designate.

ARTICLE X. NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS

Nominations for ruling elders, deacons, trustees, and the next year's nominating committee shall be made by a representative nominating committee of the active members of the church.

The nominating committee is comprised of at least six members in addition to the pastor, who is a member of this committee, *ex officio* and without vote. One member of the nominating committee is from the members of session; this member convenes the nominating committee, and ordinarily chairs

the committee. One member is from the board of deacons, and one from the board of trustees. At least three additional members shall be elected from among the active members of the congregation. Members of the nominating committee serve for a term of one year. No member of the nominating committee, other than the pastor, may serve on the committee for more than three consecutive years. The term of a nominating committee commences immediately upon election and continues until the next nominating committee is elected.

Care shall be taken to make the nominations as representative as possible of men and women, young and old, and racial ethnic members of the congregation.

Elections shall take place in accordance with the *Book of Order*, G-2.0401. Additional nominations of qualified persons for any elected office may be made from the floor by any active member in attendance with the consent of the nominee. A majority of all the active members present and voting is required to elect; voting by proxy is not allowed. If the number of nominations is equal to the number of open offices the vote may be by voice or by hand. If the number of nominations is more than the number of open offices the vote must be by ballot.

Vacancies in elective offices shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner provided for above, with elections to take place at annual or specially called meetings of the congregation.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended only by approval of two-thirds of those eligible voters present at a duly called meeting of the congregation, and only in accord with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

CHANGE LOG

Adopted 23 January 1988	Original version
Amended 12 February 1989	Unspecified amendment(s)
Amended 21 January 2012	Updated to reflect changes in the Form of Government
Amended 16 January 2016	Amended Article IV to change date of annual meeting to a date in January specified by session
Amended 27 January 2019	Amended Articles IV and X to delete reference to the preschool board
Amended 14 June 2020	Amended Article IV to allow for electronic congregational meetings