

The First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia
Congregation ByLaws
Adopted on February 17, 2013
As amended on February 7, 2016, February 10, 2019, and
November 17, 2019

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I Statement of Purpose or Mission

The First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia 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.

II Relation to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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

III Governance of the Church

This church shall be governed in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Consistent with that Constitution, these Bylaws shall provide specific guidance for this church. Roberts Rules of Order (current edition, Newly Revised) shall be used for parliamentary guidance.

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IV Meetings of the Church

Annual meeting: There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation held on the second Sunday in February or at such other date as may be determined by the Session. The following business shall be presented: 1) annual reports from organizations and the Session (for information only), 2) financial reports for the preceding year, 3) the budget for the current year (for information only), 4) changes in the terms of call for the pastor(s), 5) the report of the nominating committee for church officers, and 6) the election of members to serve on the nominating committee for the coming year. Full opportunity shall always be given at the annual meeting of the congregation for nominations from the floor by any active member of the congregation for the offices of ruling elder or deacon. A majority of all active members present and voting shall be required to elect. Any other business to be conducted at the annual meeting must be included in the call for that meeting, and no other business than that specified in the call for an annual meeting will be in order.

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Special meeting: Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Session and shall be called when requested in writing by one-fourth of the active members on the roll of the congregation. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meetings, and business shall be restricted to that specified in the call.

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V Notice of Meetings

Adequate public notice of all congregational meetings shall be given, including notice given at the two regular services of worship immediately prior to the meeting. Public

notice shall appear in the worship bulletin for each of the two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting and be posted on the church web site at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

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VI Moderator

The pastor shall moderate the meetings. If there are co-pastors, they shall alternately preside at meetings. When the church is without a pastor, the moderator appointed by the presbytery shall preside. If it is impractical for the pastor or the moderator of the Session appointed by the presbytery to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the Session, another minister of the presbytery to preside. When this is not expedient, and if either the pastor or the moderator concurs, a member of the Session may be invited to preside.

VII Secretary

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.

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VIII Minutes of the Meeting

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.

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IX Quorum for the Meeting

The quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be the moderator, the secretary, and at least twenty-five (25) members. Consistent with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania a quorum shall be twenty-five (25) active members on corporate matters. The secretary shall determine whether a quorum is present. All active members of the congregation present at either annual or special meetings are entitled to vote.

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X Incorporation

In accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania the congregation has caused 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.

XI Nominating Committee

The congregation shall form a nominating committee in the following manner:

- (1) There shall be at least seven (7) active members on the nominating committee.
- (2) Two (2) members shall be ruling elders currently serving on the Session, one (1) member shall be a deacon currently serving on the Board of Deacons, and four (4) members shall be elected from the congregation-at-large (not ruling elders or Deacons).
- (3) The pastor shall be an ex-officio member.

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XII Ruling Elders (the Session)

The congregation shall elect for a three (3) year term no fewer than nine (9) and no more than eighteen (18) ruling elders. The number of ruling elders to be elected each year shall be determined by the Session pursuant to Section XV of these Bylaws. The Session

shall be divided into three (3) equal classes. No ruling elder shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six (6) years. A ruling elder having served a total of six (6) years shall be ineligible for reelection to the Session for a period of at least one (1) year. The pastor shall be the moderator of the Session.

XIII Deacons

The congregation shall elect for a three-year term no fewer than nine (9) and no more than fifteen (15) deacons. The number of deacons to be elected each year shall be determined by the Session pursuant to Section XV of these Bylaws. The Board of Deacons shall be divided into three equal classes. No deacon shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six (6) years. A deacon having served a total of six (6) years shall be ineligible for reelection to the board of deacons for a period of at least one (1) year. The pastor shall be an advisory member of the Board of Deacons and may name one (1) additional advisory member of the Board of Deacons.

XIV Trustees

The ruling elders serving on the Session shall constitute the Board of Trustees. The pastor shall be an advisory member of the Board of Trustees. The pastor also may name one (1) additional advisory member of the Board of Trustees.

XV Size of the Session and the Board of Deacons

The Session is delegated the authority to establish the number of members on the Session and the Board of Deacons, however, the minimum number of members on each of the two bodies shall be nine (9), with the maximum for the Board of Deacons being fifteen (15) and, for the Session, eighteen (18). The Session shall report its decision regarding the number of members to be elected as ruling elders and deacons at the annual meeting of the Congregation.

XVI Vacancies

Vacancies on the Session and the Board of Deacons may be filled at a special meeting of the congregation or at the annual meeting, as the Session may determine.

XVII Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Consistent with the policy of the Presbytery of Philadelphia that the Bylaws of each church incorporate the church's sexual misconduct policy, the applicable portions of the Personnel Policy of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, including the Workplace Free of Harassment or Discrimination Policy and the Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy are incorporated by reference into these Bylaws.

XVIII Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended subject to the Articles of Incorporation, the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), by a two-thirds majority vote of the voters present, providing that the proposed changes shall have been made available to the voters electronically, or by hard copy upon request, at least two (2) weeks prior to the vote, as well as available in hard copy at the meeting called for approval of any changes.

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