

REVISED CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

The provisional constitution for the Community Church of Huntington was adopted on June 26, 2011, to be used for two years commencing July 1, 2011. After two years it will be approved as final, or considered for amendment as experience dictates. In red print below are the suggested revisions.

Article I - Name – The name of this church shall be “The United Baptist Church” of Huntington and Huntington Center Vermont, dba Community Church of Huntington.

Article II - Purpose - The purpose of this congregation is to give visible form to that faith and fellowship to which God has called His people. We acknowledge ourselves to be a local manifestation of the universal church in and through which Jesus Christ continues to minister to the world by His Holy Spirit. We shall seek to fulfill this calling through corporate worship services, through a program of Christian nurture by which our members may be built up in their faith and love, through proclamation of the gospel by word and deed, and through ministering to human need in the name of Christ.

Article III - Polity - Recognizing Jesus Christ as the only head of the Church, this congregation shall seek to ascertain and to obey the will of our Lord in all matters of faith and practice. Authority to reach decisions for governing the affairs of this Church being given to us by Christ, we hold that such authority and responsibility is vested in the active membership of the congregation.

Article IV - Doctrine - This Church accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired record of God's revelatory actions in human history and as the authoritative basis for its doctrine and practice.

Article V – Association - The New Testament shall constitute our final authority in matters of faith; and while we stand for the right and duty of every individual to interpret the New Testament as he led of God, this church adheres to the principles and practices common to the American Baptist churches, and so affiliates itself with the Northwest Association of ABC/VTNH and American Baptist Churches of the USA.

Article VI – Membership

Section I Admission of Members - All members are expected to be active participants in the services and in the support of the Church unless age or health prevents it. All applications for Church membership shall first be considered by the pastor and the Church Board, which shall satisfy themselves with the Christian purpose and life of the candidate and report their recommendations to the Church for its approval. Upon recommendation by the Church Board and affirmative vote by the congregation, persons may be received as members in the following ways:

A - by baptism. Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and who is in essential agreement with the doctrine and practice of this Church may be received into the fellowship of the congregation following his or her baptism by immersion. **Baptism by other than immersion will be accepted where health considerations preclude immersion.**

B - by letter. A person who is in substantial accord with the doctrine and practice of this Church may be received by letter of commendation from another church

C - by experience. A believer of worthy character who has formerly been a member of another church and who, for a sufficient reason, cannot present a letter from that church, but who is in substantial accord with the faith and practice of this Church may be received upon statement of his or her Christian experience.

D – Active Membership Roll - Members shall be listed as active members, if they have been received into the church as outlined above and are/or participating in the services and support of the Church.

Section II - Dismissal of Members - Members removing from us are expected to apply for letters of dismissal and recommendation to another church within a year unless they have left for reasons of temporary employment, study, travel, or retirement. ~~Members who become non-residents and do not ask for a letter of dismissal shall communicate with the Church annually by letter, informing the Church of their continued fidelity to its faith including such other information concerning their spiritual state as they shall be moved to give.~~ Upon recommendation by the Church board and affirmative vote by the congregation, persons may be dismissed as members in the following ways:

A - by letter. Any member in good standing may receive a letter of dismissal and recommendation to any other church following a vote by the Church.

REVISED CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

B – erasure

(1) upon their own request provided such request has been presented in writing to the Church Board and after due consideration by them seems advisable and they so recommend.

~~(2) upon determination that said member has joined another church without requesting a letter of dismissal from this Church.~~

~~(3) for inactivity providing the Church Board has reviewed and made reasonable efforts to restore such a member to active participation~~

~~C – exclusion. Continual disregard of Christian obligations or flagrant and notorious wickedness, or persistence in conduct unbecoming a member, shall be cause for exclusion by vote of the Church, but a member shall not be excluded except by recommendation by the Church Board after a fair opportunity has been given for the repentance of the offending member and said member has been duly notified in writing by the Church Board their reasons for recommending exclusion and the date and time of the Church meeting.~~

C. Discipline – The Community Church of Huntington adheres to the principles found in Matthew 18 as our model.

Section III - Inactive Membership Roll - Members who ~~fail do not to attend or support the Church services~~ **attend services or support the Church** for a period of two years may upon recommendation by the Church Board ~~and vote of the Church,~~ be transferred to ~~a separate~~ **the inactive Membership roll.**

A. Such persons shall, regarding participation in the government and administration of the Church, be regarded as no longer voting members and shall not be reported in statistical records, but shall continue subject to the watchcare and discipline of the Church.

B. Persons on this list may be granted a letter of transfer to other churches if requested ~~and so voted by the Church.~~

C. Persons on this list may be restored to active membership by the Church Board upon satisfying the Board of their active participation.

Article VI - The Pastor and Officers

Section I Pastor - The pastor shall be the leader of the Church in all of its activities and shall preach the gospel, administer the ordinances, have charge of the stated services of public worship and direct the spiritual welfare of the Church in consultation with the Church Board. The pastor shall be a member of all boards, committees and auxiliary organizations of the Church. The Pastor shall be elected by the Church upon recommendation of the search committee as provided in Article VIII, Section I.

Section II Clerk - A clerk shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one year. He or she shall keep a complete record of the transactions of all business at the meetings of the Church and the Church Board. This shall be read for approval at the next following business meeting. The clerk shall keep a record of the names and addresses of members with dates and manner of admission and dismissal and a record of baptisms. He or she shall issue letters of dismissal and recommendation voted by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written reports and shall give legal notice of all such meetings where such is required by this constitution. He or she shall assist in preparing denominational reports and immediately after the election of his or her successor he or she shall deliver to the new clerk all books and records for which he or she has been responsible.

Section III Treasurer - A treasurer shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one year. He or she shall have custody of the funds of the Church and all deposits made in the name of the Church, and all checks drawn by him or her shall be in the name of the Church. He or she shall keep separate accounts of all funds raised or contributed for particular purposes, and no funds shall be disbursed by him or her except for the purpose for which they were raised or contributed. He or she shall have custody of the trust funds, securities, investments, title papers and valuable documents of the Church. The treasurer shall have charge of the receipt and disbursement of all missionary funds. He or she shall present to the Church an itemized report of receipts and disbursements, showing the actual financial condition of the Church, at each annual meeting, this report to have been audited previously as arranged by the Church Board. The treasurer shall make such other financial reports as may be desired by the Church or the Church Board. In no case shall the treasurer expend funds beyond budgeted allocations without a vote

REVISED CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

by the Church. He or she shall deliver immediately to his or her successor all books and records pertaining to the office.

Article VII - The Church Board

Section I - Membership of the Board - There shall be a Church Board consisting of the pastor, the two officers of the Church and six members elected by the Church at its annual meeting. All must be members of the church. **These six members shall be elected for a term of three years. The terms shall be staggered such that two terms end each year. A member can serve for two terms. He or she must then step down for at least one year, after which they are then eligible to serve again.**

Section II – Moderator – At the first board meeting after the annual meeting, the board shall choose a Moderator from among the eight elected members to preside over its meetings. The Board Moderator may also serve as moderator over Church annual and special business meetings, or may appoint another person to preside over the Church meetings.

Section III - Duties - The board shall serve in the capacity of legal trustees of the corporation, holding in trust all property belonging to the Church taking all necessary measures for its protection and upkeep. The board shall also constitute themselves as a typical board of deacons and deaconesses assisting the pastor in his or her work, promoting Christian instruction and ministry to the Church membership, providing for the Lord's Supper and aid in its administration and assisting the pastor at baptisms. The board shall also be responsible for organization and administration of the educational and mission program of the Church. In the absence of the pastor, the Board will be responsible for obtaining supply preachers and/or interim pastors.

Section IV - Budget - The Board will be responsible for developing an annual budget which will be presented to the Church for action at its annual meeting.

Section V - Committees - The Board may appoint additional committees ~~from the membership of the Church to assist them in their duties, the chair of such committees being one of the Board members.~~

Section VI - Meetings of the Board - The Board shall determine their own meeting times which shall be at least once each calendar quarter. A quorum for conducting their business shall be six members.

Article VIII - The Pastorate

Section I Calling a Pastor - When the pastorate is vacant, a representative search committee of at least five members shall be elected by the Church. It shall be the duty of this committee to take the necessary steps to secure the names of prospective pastors, working in full consultation with the executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire. The committee shall request full information about the record and qualifications of those whose names are submitted for their consideration and the Church shall not call a minister until such information has been so secured. They shall prayerfully consider the merits of each person under consideration in regard to personal character, education, doctrine, ministerial record, and preaching ability. When a suitable person is found for the pastorate, the committee, hopefully with unanimity, shall extend an invitation for the person to preach a candidating sermon to the Church. Only one candidate shall be recommended to the Church at a time. The call of a pastor shall be considered by the Church at a regularly called meeting, notice of such meeting, and its purpose, having been read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays. A vote of three fourths of the members present and qualified to vote shall be necessary to extend a call.

Section II Termination - The question of dissolving the pastoral relationship shall be considered at any time by the Church (1) on the presentation of the pastor's resignation, (2) on the majority recommendation of the Church board or (3) on petition signed by at least twenty percent of the eligible membership. When the clerk has ascertained that one of these requirements have been met, a special meeting for dissolving the relationship shall be called by written notice to each member sent at least seven days prior to the date when a vote for dissolution is to be taken. Passage shall require a simple majority of the eligible members present. When termination of the relationship is contemplated by either party, the other party shall be entitled to a notice of not less than thirty days.

Article IX – Elections

Section I Time - The annual election of officers and board members shall be held during the annual

REVISED CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

meeting of the Church.

Section II Qualifications - All matters pertaining to the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of property, or the calling of a pastor shall be voted on by ~~members in good standing~~ **active members** who are of legal age. On all other matters ~~members in good standing~~ **active members** who are fifteen years of age, or older, are entitled to vote. Those members placed on the inactive membership list (Article V, Section III) shall not be entitled to vote.

Section III Procedure - At least one week before the election a nominating committee, appointed by the Church board, shall present the Church with the names of one or more persons for each office and Board position to be filled. At the time of the annual meeting, it shall be the privilege of any member present, and qualified to vote, to place in nomination the name of any eligible person for any office not so nominated. A majority of the ballots cast is necessary for the election of any officer and Board member. ~~Voice voting for the election may be allowed unless there is an objection in which case paper ballots will be prepared and tallied.~~ **Voting will be by voice vote. Paper ballots will only be used if there are five persons requesting so. For active members unable to attend, a vote may also be cast by mail or email. The voter must get his vote to the clerk prior to the beginning of the meeting, and the clerk must have a copy in hand at the meeting.**

Section IV Vacancies - Vacancies occurring during the year **will be tentatively approved by the Board and formal approval at the next Board meeting.** ~~may be filled at any business meeting.~~ The nominating committee ~~Board~~ shall present to the Church nominees for the vacancy to be filled.

Article X – Meetings

Section I Worship Services - Public services shall be held each Lord's Day, and the Lord's Supper observed on the first Sunday of the month unless the Church board determines otherwise.

Section II The annual meeting - The annual meeting shall be held at a time as determined and properly announced by the Church board for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of individual officers, the Church board and committees of the Church and its auxiliary organizations; the election of officers and Church board members; the transaction of necessary business; the adoption of a budget for the ensuing year; and the discussion of issues vital to the life and witness of the Church.

Section III - Special business meetings - Special meetings except one regarding the dissolution of the pastorate (see Article VIII, Section II) may be called at any time by the pastor or by the clerk. Notice of such meeting, and the object for which it is called, shall be given from the pulpit at least one week in advance of the date of the meeting. At any of the regular meetings of worship, however, the Church may, without notice, act upon the appointment of delegates to councils or conventions, the reception of members, dismissal of members to other churches and business which the Church board feels may require immediate attention, but not upon extraordinary business.

Section IV - Quorum - A quorum for the transaction of business at any Church meeting shall be ~~fifteen~~ **twenty-five percent of the** active membership.

Article XI - Church Year - The fiscal year of the Church shall be from July 1 through June 30.

Article XII – Audit – There shall be an annual audit of the church books. The auditor may be a church member, but cannot be a member of the board. An auditing service outside the church may also be used. The auditor shall be recommended by the board, and approved by the church at the annual meeting.

Article **XIII** - Amendments - This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, provided a quorum is present and voting at any annual or a special business meeting. Before such a vote can be taken, however, notice of the proposed amendment shall be sent to the ~~moderator~~ **clerk** of the Church and thirty days allowed for study or advice