

Constitution for  
**Faith Community Church**  
Barre, Vermont

*Article One – Name*

The name of this church shall be the Faith Community Church.

*Article Two – Affiliation*

This church shall be affiliated with the Baptist Convention of New England and the Southern Baptist Convention.

*Article Three – Purpose*

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify God by living as a people redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ while also sharing the hope of the gospel with our community so that it may find strength for daily living through faith in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

*Article Four – Statement of Faith*

Our statement of faith is modified from the Baptist Faith and Message, 2000 edition.

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and is the standard by which all human conduct should be tried.

There is one and only one living and true God. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God, and fell from his original innocence. Only the grace of God can bring man back into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.

There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Salvation is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Communion is a symbolic act whereby all true believers memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Anointing of the sick by the elders of the church is a time of confession, prayer, and an expression of healing faith.

Dedication of infants and children is the symbolic giving of our children back to the Lord, understanding that He has entrusted them to our care that we might bring them up in the knowledge and admonition of the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek to win the lost. This is done through verbal witness, through a Christian lifestyle and through active participation in missionary efforts.

God is the source of all our personal blessings. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their income cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. Regardless of what modern culture proclaims or government institutions dictate, our church shall recognize no other definition of marriage. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing from the Lord. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

The church recognizes that there are many issues not covered by the above statement of faith. As much as is reasonably possible, each person shall seek to allow others the freedom to seek God's will on matters not specifically addressed in our statement of faith.

#### *Article Five – Membership*

##### A. Procedure

1. Each candidate for membership shall complete a membership application and then meet with the elders to give a confession of faith in Christ and express agreement with our statement of faith.
2. After approval by the elders, each candidate will be presented at a regular Sunday service or business meeting. The congregation shall affirm the new members and offer them the right hand of fellowship.
3. Baptism by immersion will be required of each candidate who has not previously been baptized by immersion.
4. Those holding membership in another church shall request a letter of transfer.
5. Individuals who only plan to reside in the local area on a temporary basis or on a part-time basis may join the church as associate members. The requirements and procedures for

joining the church as associate members shall be the same as for regular membership except that associate members shall not be required to request a letter of transfer from another church. It is assumed that associate members shall hold dual membership in both their home church and in our church. Associate members shall have all the rights and responsibilities as regular members. Associate members may hold any office or position within the church except that of elder.

B. Church Discipline

1. A member who absents himself from church services for three months or more shall be contacted by the elders to discuss their forsaking of the assembly. The goal shall be to restore this person to the fellowship of the church. If restoration is not achieved, the person's name shall be placed on an inactive roll. Those on the inactive roll shall not have voting privileges nor be considered for office. The elders may reactivate a person's membership when they feel the person has come to a place of repentance and restoration.
2. The elders may permanently remove a member from the roll after following the proper steps in Matthew 18:15-17. According to the scriptures, the congregation must be made aware of this action and must approve of the elders actions in the matter. If the congregation does not approve of the elders actions in the matter, then the person shall remain on the inactive roll until the issue is resolved. Notice of dismissal will be in writing.
3. Members in good standing may be dismissed at their own request to join a different fellowship. Notice of dismissal will be in writing.
4. Members not in good standing may receive a letter of transfer to a different fellowship, but that letter must state that the person is not in good standing with the congregation and list the reason why they are not in good standing.

*Article Six – Church Government*

- A. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the elders shall guide the church in day to day matters. The elders shall call for a business meeting to report to the congregation as often as needed, but at least once each quarter. All business meetings shall be announced during a regular Sunday morning service at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- B. *The Elders will maintain a working organizational leadership document that outlines roles and responsibilities for each leadership team within the church. Each leadership team will be lead by an elder. The purpose of this document is to provide organizational oversight and ensures a plan for continuity. \*Reference Leadership Framework Document*
- C. Matters that the elders deem too significant to decide on their own shall be presented to the congregation for their consideration. All active members age 18 or over shall be eligible to vote in all matters of church business that are brought before the congregation.

- D. While the elders shall use their judgment on what matters to present to the congregation, the following items will ALWAYS be presented to the congregation for consideration:
  - 1. Buying or selling real estate
  - 2. Creating an indebtedness for any period longer than 45 days
  - 3. Spending any amount over \$1000
  - 4. Changing the constitution
  - 5. Disbanding the church
  - 6. Adding to or deleting any of our denominational affiliations
  - 7. An annual budget
  - 8. The appointment of any elder, including a pastoral elder
- E. A quorum of one third of the active membership over the age of 18 is needed to conduct business. If a business meeting has a quorum when it is called to order, then all business conducted at that meeting will be valid. If a quorum is not obtained, the moderator or church clerk may call a second meeting designating a lesser number as a quorum. A majority vote of the members present shall be required to pass any motion unless otherwise indicated by this document.
- F. Intent to amend the constitution may be announced at any business meeting and suggested revisions given to all active church members for a minimum of 30 days prior to any change being considered by the congregation.

#### *Article Seven – Officers*

- A. During the fourth quarter of the calendar year, the elders shall present to the congregation a full slate of willing nominees for all offices for the coming year. Nominations from the floor will always be in order for all offices except that of elder.
- B. All church offices shall be elected for a one-year term except the elders. Elders shall be elected by the church for a five-year term. At the end of the term, an elder will be examined by the current elders and recommended to the congregation for an additional term. In case of the decease, resignation, or removal of one of the church officers before the term expires, another person will be appointed by the elders to finish the term.
- C. The membership shall elect the following officers:
  - 1. Elders – shall direct the day to day affairs of the church, teach the Bible in public services, provide such spiritual counsel as needed by the congregation, and serve as the signers of legal documents. *The minimum qualifications for elders shall not be less than those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, including the requirement that elders be men. In addition to the minimum qualifications given in Scripture, elders must be members of Faith Community Church who fully subscribe to the Church’s Statement of Faith (Article Four) and are actively involved in the ministry of the Church.*
  - 2. Moderator – shall preside at all business meetings of the church.
  - 3. Clerk – shall keep complete minutes of all church meetings and maintain an accurate membership roll. All records will belong to the church.

4. Treasurer – shall keep accurate records of receipts and disbursements of all funds; make deposits of all monies or other valuables in the church’s name in reputable institutions that the church shall designate; make all disbursements according to the annual budget or special direction of the congregation; and make a monthly printed report available to the elders and congregation. All records will belong to the church. An assistant treasurer may be elected if needed.
5. Sunday School Director – shall oversee the Sunday School and shall assist the elders in selecting Sunday School teachers for all classes.
6. Deacons – shall assist the elders in leading the spiritual programs of the church, in the ordinances of Baptism and Communion, benevolence, and in outreach and ministry, with particular attention on assisting the poor and the widowed. \*Reference supporting Deacon Ministry and Benevolence Ministry documents.
7. Other officers or committees as needed.

#### *Article Eight – Pastoral Relations*

- A. When the church is in need of a pastoral elder, a Pastoral Elder Search Committee shall be elected. This committee shall consist of the elders and two members elected by the congregation. The Pastoral Search Committee may work with several candidates at a time, but only one candidate shall be presented to the congregation for consideration. A final decision must be made by the congregation on that one candidate before another candidate can be considered.
- B. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a business meeting shall be necessary to call a pastoral elder. No second ballot shall be taken.
- C. The services of a pastoral elder may be terminated at any time, either by the pastoral elder or a two thirds majority vote of the members present at a meeting called for that purpose. Notice of this meeting shall be mailed to the active membership two weeks in advance. The party desiring the change shall give notice of sixty days of such termination unless a shorter notice is mutually agreed upon.

#### *Article Nine – Miscellaneous*

- A. Our church shall support the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention as our primary method of supporting worldwide missions.
- B. Our church shall support the Baptist Convention of New England as a method of supporting local missions.
- C. Our church shall use Christian Education materials from resources approved by the Elders for our various teaching programs. The elders may consider exceptions if a program leader presents sample material in advance for them to examine and the elders determine that those materials hold to the doctrines of the church.
- D. Our church facility shall not be used for same sex weddings, civil unions or other similar ceremonies. Our ministers, elders, and/or deacons shall not preside at such ceremonies in our

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church or at other venues. Ministers, elders and/or deacons who violate this rule shall be immediately removed from office. Ministers, elders, and/or deacons who have been ordained by our church who violate this rule shall be automatically stripped of their ordination credentials.

*This constitution was originally adopted in September 2004, and modified on January 10, 2010 The most current version, printed above, was approved on April 28, 2019.*