

CONSTITUTION OF PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (OPC)

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this congregation shall be the Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC).

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Section 1. The Purpose Defined

Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC) is established by God's sovereign grace as a body of Christian believers under the headship of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18; 2:19) to promote Christian worship, fellowship, evangelism, and growth in the reformed tradition.

Section 2. Mission Statement

The ecclesiastical constitution of Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC), subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, consists of The Westminster Confession of Faith with its Larger and Shorter Catechisms as adopted by the 1936 General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Book of Church Order, including the Form of Government, Book of Discipline, and Directory for the Public Worship of God as adopted by the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

- 1) Worship that is scriptural, God-centered, and Christ-exalting with expository preaching that brings the light of the whole counsel of God to bear on individuals, families, communities, and society; and with celebrative praise that is pleasing to God.
- 2) Fellowship that is family-oriented and supportive, that is caring by including individuals into the whole covenant family of God, and that is strengthened by biblical and God-honoring stewardship.
- 3) Evangelism that is life-changing by boldly proclaiming the scriptural message of God's grace in Christ, calling men, women, and children to repentance and faith, and bringing all of life under the Lordship of Christ in our community and in our support of home and foreign missions.
- 4) Growth that is nurtured by biblical and practical teaching, by encouraging oversight which trains and corrects, and by concrete and compassionate mercy ministry.

ARTICLE III ECCLESIASTICAL CONSTITUTION & GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Ecclesiastical Constitution

The ecclesiastical constitution of Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC), subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, consists of The Westminster Confession of Faith with its Larger and Shorter Catechisms as adopted by the 1936 General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Book of Church Order, including the Form of Government, Book of Discipline, and Directory for the Public Worship of God as adopted by the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

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Section 2. Constitutional Authority

The provisions of the constitution shall control over any provisions of the bylaws that may be in conflict with it.

ARTICLE IV AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended only at a properly called Congregational Meeting. The proposed amendment shall be distributed in writing to each voting member by either personal delivery or regular US mail at least five (5) days prior to the called meeting. The proposed amendment shall be adopted by at least three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of those in attendance at the congregational meeting if a quorum is present.

A chronology of all amendments shall be attached to this Constitution and Bylaws to provide historical documentation of all revisions.

BYLAWS OF PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (OPC)

ARTICLE I DOCTRINAL AND GOVERNMENTAL STANDARDS

In order to direct and maintain the Christian faith and worship, the doctrinal standards of Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC) shall be and are the Holy Scriptures and as they are summarized in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as adopted by its 1936 General Assembly. Further, Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC) shall be and is governed by The Book of Church Order of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and by the following by-laws which shall be and are subordinate to The Book of Church Order and the Constitution of Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC).

ARTICLE II THE CONGREGATION AND CORPORATION

Section 1. Membership

The congregation shall consist of all members of the church, both communicant and non-communicant (Form of Government XIII. 1.).

Section 2. Relationship

Under the laws of the State of Ohio, the corporation and congregation shall be one, having the same officers.

ARTICLE III MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meeting

The annual Congregational and Corporation Meeting shall be held during the month of January each year as determined by the Session. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

Section 2. Quorum

The quorum for Congregational Meetings shall consist of one-third (1/3) of the voting members.

Section 3. Eligible Voters

Voting in Congregational Meetings shall be limited to communicant members in good standing. Voting in Corporation Meetings shall be limited to communicant members in good standing who are at least eighteen (18) years of age

Section 4. Officers

Ordinarily the Moderator and the Clerk of Session shall serve as Moderator and Clerk, respectively, in Congregational and Corporation Meetings.

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Section 5. Notice of Meetings

Public notice of all meetings of the congregation and corporation must be announced from the pulpit on two consecutive Lord's Days prior to the meeting and shall be placed in the church bulletin on the same dates.

Section 6. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Session or on petition signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the voting members.

ARTICLE IV ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Nominations

Nominations for candidates for the offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon must be submitted to the Session by the third week of May. To be considered as potential officers, those nominated must receive two or more nominations. Nominations must include stated reasons why the candidate would be qualified to serve as an elder or deacon within the congregation. The Session shall announce on the last Lord's Day of May those men whom it has approved to enter a period of training for church office. These men shall then be trained and certified by the Session, normally in time to be presented to the congregation for election at its annual meeting in January. They shall be elected by a majority vote.

Section 2. Term of Service

Ruling Elders and Deacons shall be elected for indefinite tenure.

Section 3. Sabbatical Leave and Study Leave for Church Officers

A church officer may request to be relieved from the duties of his office for a time only for very good reasons and with the approval of the Session. In his inactive status the officer remains installed in his office. The Session may at any time reactivate the individual with his consent to full service.

An elder or deacon may request a sabbatical for the purpose of theological study. He may request financial assistance from the church for his continuing education.

A pastor may be eligible to request a sabbatical leave lasting for three months. The pastor may request the sabbatical leave only after having served the church for seven (7) years. The approval of this request is contingent upon the financial condition of the church. Only when the church is able to meet its financial obligation shall the request be granted.

A pastor shall be allowed to take a study leave of up to two weeks (two Sundays) within a year suitable for his continuing theological education. Financial compensation for his continuing education shall be included in the yearly budget of the church.

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Section 4. Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall be appointed by the Session from Ruling Elders and Deacons. The Congregation may elect one communicant member of the church in good standing to also serve as Trustee for a term of three (3) years.

ARTICLE V TRUSTEES AND TREASURER

Section 1. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees shall be charged with ensuring that the church's financial records are reviewed annually unless waived by the Session. The trustees shall be charged with proposing to the congregation the purchase, sale, rent, or lease of properties, real or otherwise, to include any indebtedness for the transaction. The trustees shall be responsible for the execution of all legal instruments for the congregation/corporation and shall also act as the custodian of the church's legal documents. In addition, the trustees shall be responsible for the supervision of those who may be employed by the church for custodial, secretarial, and other such services.

Section 2. Meetings and Quorum

The Board of Trustees shall meet at least once annually. A quorum shall be a majority of its members.

Section 3. Officers and Treasurer

The Board shall choose its own officers of whom there shall at least be president and secretary. The Board shall also choose the Treasurer of the church, who shall be a communicant member in good standing. The Treasurer need not be a member of the board of Trustees. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to keep the funds of the church in a banking institution approved by the Board, including both regular and benevolent funds. The Treasurer shall report to the Board in writing on the regular funds of the church, and, to the Session on the benevolent funds of the church. The Treasurer shall also provide a summary report on all church funds on a monthly basis for publication to the congregation.

ARTICLE VI BUDGET

The budget shall be assembled by a commission appointed by the Session, which commission shall normally consist of deacons and other appointees. The budget shall be presented to the Session for review and approval at least two (2) weeks before the annual Congregational Meeting. The congregation shall vote to support the proposed budget at its annual Congregational Meeting. Upon receipt of the congregation's recommendation, the Session shall adopt a final budget.

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ARTICLE VII PASTORAL RELATIONS

Section 1. Pulpit Committee

When the church is without a pastor, the congregation shall elect a pulpit committee at a called Congregational Meeting. The congregation shall elect any three communicant members in good standing to serve on the committee. The Session and Diaconate shall each appoint one of its members to also serve on the committee. If there are no Deacons then the Session shall appoint two (2) Ruling Elders to serve on the committee. The committee shall elect a chairman and a secretary. The committee shall operate under the oversight of the Session (Form of Government XXII.3.).

Section 2. Pastoral Severance

If the pastoral relationship is dissolved because of censure or by the church's request, the church shall provide to the pastor severance pay including medical benefits up to sixty (60) days from the date of severance.

ARTICLE VIII INTRA- CHURCH RELATIONS

The members of the church and the pastor(s) are Christians and believe that the Bible commands them to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (see Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 6: 1-8). Therefore, the members and pastor(s) agree that any claim or dispute arising from or related to the Constitution, By-Laws, any amendments thereto or enforcement thereof shall be settled by biblically-based mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (see *The Peace Maker* by Ken Sande). The members and pastor(s) understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any such controversy or claim and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

ARTICLE IX CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (see Mt. 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Pr. 16:28; 26:20), invites confession (see Pr. 11:13; 28:13; Jas. 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (see Pr. 20:19; Rom. 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, members and the pastor(s) are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, the pastor(s) and elders shall carefully protect all confidences that they receive through pastoral counseling in accordance with Scripture and the Book of Church Order of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. If Scripture requires or counsels for the disclosure of confidences, or the law

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requires disclosure, such confidences will be disclosed to the extent required or counseled for, but only to those to whom the confidences should be disclosed.

- B. Any conflicts within the church resulting from breaches of confidentiality shall be resolved according to the provisions outlined in ARTICLE VIII INTRA-CHURCH RELATIONS.

ARTICLE X DISSOLUTION OF PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (OPC)

In the event that Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC) elects to dissolve, the Session shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporation, transfer or convey all remaining assets to the presbytery or to any other entity which adheres and promotes the doctrines as set forth in its constitutional standards. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of or be distributed to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the session shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered.

ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Procedure

These bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and new bylaws may be adopted by a simple majority of voting members present at a properly called Congregational Meeting. The alteration, amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall be distributed in writing to each voting member by either personal delivery or regular US mail at least five (5) days prior to the called meeting.

Section 2. Chronology of Amendments

A chronology of all amendments shall be attached to the bylaws to provide historical documentation of all revisions.

Original Adoption by congregation – January 2004
CHRONOLOGY OF AMENDMENTS

CONSTITUTION

January 25, 2008

1. All references to Providence Presbyterian Church were standardized to Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC)
2. All references to Pickerington, OH were removed

BY-LAWS

January 25, 2008

1. All references to Providence Presbyterian Church were standardized to Providence Presbyterian Church (OPC)
2. All references to Pickerington, OH were removed
3. Article IV, Section 1 changed the words ‘September’ to ‘May’
4. Article IV, Section 3, paragraph 2 added the word ‘theological’ before the word ‘study’
5. Article IV, Section 3, paragraph 2 added the words ‘up to’ before the word ‘two’
6. Article IV, Section 3, paragraph 2 added the word ‘theological’ before the word ‘education’
7. Article V, Section 1 changed the word ‘audited’ to ‘reviewed’
8. Article V, Section 1 added the words ‘to include any indebtedness for the transaction’ after ‘otherwise,’
9. Article V, Section 1 removed the words ‘and shall call congregational/corporation meetings to act on such recommendations’ after ‘otherwise,’
10. Article V, Section 3 changed the word ‘He’ to ‘The Treasurer’