

Purpose, Doctrine, Covenant and By-Laws Memorial Baptist Church of Middlebury, Vermont

NAME

The name of this church shall be Memorial Baptist Church of Middlebury, Vermont.

PURPOSE

We commit ourselves to knowing God and making God known. We will follow Jesus by loving God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

POLITY

This church is an independent, evangelical congregation with government vested in the body of members who seek to know and do the will of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Bible. This church shall maintain an affiliation with the American Baptist Churches U.S.A. and the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire.

DOCTRINE

We accept the Bible as our inerrant and infallible authority.¹ We believe the Bible reveals God the Father, Jesus Christ as God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

We believe in God the Father as creator of heaven and earth² and in Jesus Christ his only begotten son, our Lord and Savior.³ We affirm He was born of the Virgin Mary,⁴ suffered death on the cross for the sins of humanity, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared bodily to his disciples.⁵ He ascended into Heaven where He reigns with God the Father.⁶ We believe He will return to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the third person of the triune God. The Holy Spirit is the Counselor sent by Christ to teach us all things.⁷ The Spirit bestows gifts to believers for mutual ministry in service to the glory of God, and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.⁸

We believe that sin has separated humanity from the love of God and that the wage of sin is death.⁹ However, the death of Jesus on the cross has removed the punishment of sin from those who are in Christ.¹⁰ Therefore we believe that salvation comes by God's grace through Christ alone and not by any human work. The Christian is regenerated and transformed by God's work and is called to have a faith in Christ which expresses itself through love.¹¹

We believe in the Church as Christ's body, a spiritual temple, and a priesthood of all believers.¹² The local church is accountable to Christ for her life and ministry. It is called to assist, counsel, and encourage other churches, seeking to be one as Jesus and the Father are one.¹³

¹ Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, 2 Peter 1:20,21, Psalm 119:9, 28-30, 97-105

² Genesis 1-2

³ John 1:1-14

⁴ Matthew 1:18-23, Luke 1:26-38

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15: 1-8

⁶ Acts 1:6-11

⁷ John 14: 15, 21

⁸ 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11, Romans 6:26,27

⁹ Romans 6:23

¹⁰ Romans 5:8-11

¹¹ Ephesians 2:1-10, Galatians 5:6

¹² Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, 1 Peter 2:4-8

¹³ John 17:20-23, Acts 15:1-34

A Covenant

Having been saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, being members together of the body of Christ universal, and as members of Memorial Baptist Church, we commit to the following covenant by agreeing to be accountable to God and to each other in these particulars:

- First: We will reverently regard the Bible as our final authority for faith and practice.
- Second: We will seek to be a part of God's work by: gathered worship, sharing of the Gospel, consistent Christian living, mutual encouragement and exhortation, persistent prayer, missionary endeavor, Christian education, and Christ-centered fellowship.
- Third: We will study the Word of God with diligence and teach the truths of the Christian gospel to those who live in our households.
- Fourth: We will consider how we may spur one another to love and good deeds. We will not give up meeting together for fellowship and worship.
- Fifth: We will consecrate our time and our talents to serve God and one another with deeds of Christ-like kindness, as fellow-heirs with Christ and fellow-members of His body.
- Sixth: We will be committed co-laborers for the cause of Christ. We will seek to walk together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of Christian love and discipleship. We will receive counsel and instruction in accordance with biblical teaching. We will strive to bear one another's burdens.
- Seventh: If we leave this place, we will unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and principles of God's word.

We, being mindful of our weakness and that we can do nothing to merit favor with God, seek the guidance and power of Christ our Lord to keep this covenant. We humbly trust in the merits of Jesus Christ for the pardon of our sins. We trust also the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to sanctify and enable us to persevere in our Christian living until we see our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ face to face.

SECTION I - MEMBERSHIP

- Article 1. Members of this church are baptized people who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, give evidence of a changed heart, and who agree to abide by the doctrinal statement and covenant of our church.
- Article 2. All candidates for membership shall appear before the Board of Deacons and the Pastor to be interviewed regarding their faith in Christ and views concerning the covenant and doctrinal statement of Memorial Baptist Church. To this end, a copy of the Purpose, Doctrinal Statement, Covenant, and By-Laws will be given to potential candidates and explained. The pastor and/or deacons will do this before an interview takes place. The board may vote to recommend the candidate for membership or to counsel the candidate to receive further counsel and instruction.
- Article 3. Upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons, candidates for membership will be accepted into membership upon a 2/3 vote of a properly warned meeting of the membership. The right hand of fellowship will be offered at the next scheduled service of worship by all members present to formally induct new members. This induction will include the signing of the Purpose, Covenant, and By-Laws as kept by the Clerk.
- Article 4. Active members will have the right of voice and vote at all duly warned meetings of Memorial Baptist Church.
- Article 5. Members shall retain their active membership in this church by living in accord with the Covenant. The Pastor and the Board of Deacons will review the active membership roll annually. After one year of inactivity, members will be contacted by the Deacons and may be placed on the inactive members list. Inactive members are ineligible to vote at church meetings until they are interviewed by the Pastor and Board of Deacons and readmitted to active membership.
- After a person has been on the inactive members list for four years the Board of Deacons may remove his or her name from the inactive member list. Such action will not be taken if a legitimate reason is found retaining the person for another year.
- Article 6. The Clerk shall enroll new members by one of three designations, by baptism, by letter of transfer from another church, or by Christian experience. The designation will be assigned by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

SECTION II - OFFICERS AND BOARDS

- Article 1. The officers of this church shall be the Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, two Co-Treasurers, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, three Financial Secretaries, two Auditors, members of the Board of Christian Education, American Baptist Churches Delegates, members of the Nominating Committee, and Moderator.
- Article 2. The call of the Pastor shall be by secret ballot. A vote of 2/3 of the members present at a properly warned meeting with a quorum of 1/3 of active members present shall be required to call a pastor. A Pulpit Committee charged with presenting a candidate for consideration shall only bring one candidate at a time while keeping all deliberations within the committee strictly confidential.
- Article 3. Deacons shall be called for terms of four years. The office is open to both men and women. Those who serve are to be called because of their recognized fitness to provide spiritual guidance and leadership in cooperation with the Pastor. An affirmative vote by a majority is required for each candidate. In any particular year the nominating committee will not be obligated to present any new candidates for Deacon. However, at all times there will be at least three men and three women serving as Deacons. After serving a four-year term, Deacons are required to retire for at least one year before becoming eligible for recall to service.
- Article 4. Trustees shall be called for terms of three years. Six Trustees must be serving at all times. An affirmative vote by a majority is required for each candidate. After serving three years, Trustees will be required to retire for at least one year before becoming eligible for recall to service. If it becomes impossible to find a suitable candidate to serve as a Trustee to fill out the requirement of having six Trustees, the church may waive the retirement of a retiring Trustee for one three year term. This will require a 2/3 vote of the members present and voting. This Trustee will have the option of resigning after one year. No Trustee shall serve more than two terms without taking a year of retirement.
- Article 5. The Offices of Co-Treasurer, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, the Financial Secretaries, Auditors, Board of Christian Education, and Moderator will all be called by majority vote for terms of one year. The Auditors and Moderator shall serve no more than three terms without a retirement of at least one year. Other officers will have no retirement requirement.
- Article 6. Any officer who fails to perform their duty will be removed from office upon a vote of both the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees. This may occur only after consultation with the officer whose removal is being considered.

SECTION III - DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND GOVERNING BOARDS

All officers and boards shall serve subject to the will of God as discerned by the entire membership assembled in a properly warned meeting. Final human authority and accountability rests with the membership as a whole.

Article 1. Only members of the church are eligible to serve as officers and members of the boards of the church with the exception of the Board of Christian Education, which may include non-members.

Article 2. All officers and boards shall prepare written reports for the annual meeting and be ready at that time to give an accounting of their ministries.

Article 3. The Board of Deacons shall serve as an oversight board for the ministry of the church including evangelism, missions service and support, discipleship and spiritual guidance, Christian education, worship, visitation, and other ministries God raises up. The board may authorize and disband positions or committees to do Christ's work. The work of the Board of Christian Education will be evaluated and encouraged by the Deacons in conjunction with the Pastor.

The duties of the Board of Deacons shall include:

- To assist the Pastor in providing leadership in worship, and in services of communion and baptism.
- To interview candidates for membership as outlined in Section I.
- To administer a Deacons' Fund to assist those in need. A treasurer chosen from the Board will make monthly reports at regularly scheduled Deacons' meetings about expenditures and the current balance in the Fund. The chair of the Board of Deacons will confirm the balance of the Fund prior to the regular monthly meeting.
- To serve as a Pastoral Relations Committee by supporting and evaluating the Pastor's ministry. This includes oversight of the leave and use of time policies relative to the Pastor. If it is agreeable to the Pastor, a subcommittee of the Board of Deacons may be designated to perform this task. If a sub-committee is named, the congregation will be notified at quarterly meeting and in the bulletin.
- To arrange for preaching in the Pastor's absence.
- The Board of Deacons shall appoint a Head Usher who may appoint a committee of Ushers to facilitate orderly and reverent worship. The Head Usher need not be a Deacon, but must be a church member. Ushers need not be members of the church.

The Board shall elect a chairperson at the first meeting after the annual meeting of the church.

Article 4. The Board of Trustees shall hold in trust all property, assets, and funds belonging to the church and take all necessary measures for their maintenance and upkeep. Their specific duties shall be:

- To establish policies for the use of church property by groups inside and outside the church.
- To prepare an annual budget for the church and submit this budget for a vote in December.
- To superintend the raising of funds for church expenses.
- To assist in the accurate counting of offerings.
- To supervise all paid non-pastoral staff.

The Trustees have no authority to loan or invest funds without authorization at a properly warned church meeting.

The Trustees shall make no expenditure not found in the budget in excess of \$1,000 without authorization at a properly warned church meeting. Emergency repairs are excepted from this stipulation.

The Board shall elect a chairperson at the first meeting after the annual meeting.

Article 5. The Co-Treasurers shall maintain the accounts held by the church and pay all bills as authorized by the annual church budget, by order of the church after a duly warned meeting, or by the Board of Trustees in keeping with stated policies found in these by-laws. The directives given by the church in August 1993 are to be complied with unless these are modified by vote of the church at a properly warned meeting. These directives shall be attached as an appendix to these by-laws.

The Co-Treasurers shall be ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees and shall have monthly reports available for their meetings. These reports will be accurate and audited by the Auditors before every quarterly meeting of the church.

The Co-Treasurers will share their duties in a way deemed agreeable to both, subject to approval by the Board of Trustees.

Article 6. The Financial Secretaries will collect, count, and deposit all monies contributed to the church and keep an accurate account thereof. They will inform the Co-Treasurers of deposits made. They will provide offering envelopes to all who request them and shall keep an accurate record of individual giving and provide receipts of such giving as required by law or requested by contributors..

There will be three Financial Secretaries. One of these will be designated by the Financial Secretaries as the Head Financial Secretary. At least one Financial Secretary will join a member of the Board of Trustees to count each offering

including Deacons' Fund offerings. Two of the counters must not live in the same household.

Article 7. The Clerk shall keep a record of all official business transacted by the church.

The Clerk shall keep a chronological list of the members with the date of admission, dismissal, or death.

The Clerk shall receive and send all documents and letters pertaining to transfer of membership from another Christian Church.

The Clerk shall fill out and mail all denominational forms, all forms required by governmental authorities, and shall file all communication and written reports of the church.

The Clerk shall make certain that all official meetings of the church as a body (as stipulated in Section V, Article 5), are properly warned and that accurate minutes of the proceedings are kept.

The Clerk shall preserve the lists of signatures of members who have signed The Purpose, Covenant, and By-laws of Memorial Baptist Church and keep a current list of all active and inactive members.

The Assistant Clerk shall perform the Clerk's duties in his or her absence as well as any other duties mutually agreeable to the Clerk and the Board of Deacons.

Article 8. The Board of Christian Education shall consist of no fewer than 3 Church members and shall be responsible for the educational ministries of the church. This includes:

- ◆ Church ministries and summer ministries.
- ◆ Selection of curriculum in consultation with the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.
- ◆ Purchase of supplies.

The Board of Christian Education will designate one of its members as chairperson. The chair will preside over the Board meetings and act as primary liaison person with the members and friends of the church.

The Board of Christian Education shall work in collaboration with the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

The Board of Christian Education will be appointed by the Board of Deacons and confirmed by the congregation at the April quarterly meeting of the church. Terms of service will begin in July. Board members will be appointed for one-year terms. It is recommended that at least one member should continue for the next year to maintain continuity on the board.

Article 9. The Moderator shall preside over all properly warned meetings of the church body. The Moderator shall ascertain if a quorum is present and shall assure that meetings are conducted decently, clearly, and in good order. The Moderator, in collaboration with the Pastor, shall solicit items for the agendas of the annual and quarterly meetings of the church and formulate the agenda items for church meetings.

In the absence of the Moderator, the Pastor shall preside at properly warned meetings of the church body. If the Pastor is unavailable, the Chair of the Board of Deacons shall preside.

Article 10. Two Auditors shall be called at the annual meeting for the purpose of conducting a thorough audit of all receipts, expenditures, and financial records of the church before every quarterly meeting. The church's auditing standards adopted in August 1993 will be followed unless they are modified by a majority vote of the members at a properly warned meeting of the church body. An appendix of these standards will be attached to these by-laws.

Article 11. A Nominating Committee shall present a slate of Officer nominees at the annual meeting of the church. All nominees on this slate must have been contacted and agree to serve. This committee will also meet to choose nominees to fill any vacancies that occur during the year.

The Nominating Committee will consist of four persons. The Pastor will serve in an ex-officio capacity. One member will carry over for an additional year and serve as chair of the next year's committee. The other three will serve one year.

Article 12. Officers and boards shall submit budget proposals to fund their ministries to the Board of Trustees and shall be accountable for expenditures of relevant line items in the church budget.

SECTION IV - THE PASTOR

Article 1. The Calling of the Pastor:

When need arises to call a pastor, a Pulpit Committee shall be called consisting of six members. Two members will be named from the Board of Deacons by that board. One member will be named from the Board of Trustees by that board. Two members will be called on an at-large basis at a properly warned meeting of the church. A youth advisor or senior high youth group member will be selected to serve on this committee as well.

This committee shall take the necessary action to secure a pastoral candidate. It shall investigate the merits of each person under consideration in regard to character, education, theological beliefs, ministerial record, and preaching ability. It is recommended that the Pastor have four years of college and three years of seminary training and be recognized as having privilege of call with the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire. The candidate shall accept in spirit the Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches USA. When the committee has agreed on a suitable candidate, the committee shall recommend this person to the church for consideration.

The call of the Pastor shall come before the church at a properly warned meeting of the church body. Notice from the pulpit will be given on two consecutive Sundays. A 2/3 vote of those present and voting is required to extend a call to a pastoral candidate. One third of the qualified voting membership shall be required for a quorum. The vote on a motion to call a candidate shall be by secret ballot.

A candidate shall be presented only after a mutually agreeable arrangement on salary, pension, professional expenses, health insurance, vacation, study and days off has been agreed upon and made available to the body. The candidate must agree to accept our church's Covenant, By-laws, and Mission Statement. A report of these agreements, plus biographical and professional information about the candidate will be made available at least one week before the church meeting.

Article 2. The Termination of the Pastorate:

The Pastoral relationship shall continue by mutual agreement without specification as to term. The relationship may be dissolved upon a majority vote of those voting at a properly warned meeting of the church body. One third of the qualified voting membership shall be required for a quorum. This vote will constitute a dissolution of the relationship with assurance of two months' full compensation. The pastor may continue his or her duties during this period if the church so desires.

The Pastor may also dissolve the relationship by tendering a resignation giving two month's notice of the dissolution of the relationship.

Article 3. The Duties of the Pastor:

The Pastor will become a member of the church upon beginning pastoral duties. The Pastor will exercise spiritual oversight of the church's ministry and members, administer the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and, in consultation with the Board of Deacons, have control of the pulpit and services of public worship. The Pastor's main purpose will be the preaching of the Gospel, teaching and visiting among the people of the church, and the general administration of the church's ministry.

The Pastor's participation in denominational, ecumenical, and community organizations is at the Pastor's discretion provided the duties of ministry to the church are not neglected.

SECTION V - GENERAL PRACTICES

- Article 1. The annual meeting of the church shall be the first Sunday of February. Public notice of the date shall be given two consecutive Sundays in advance from the pulpit or in the worship bulletin. The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers and members of the Governing Boards and to receive reports from the officers, boards, Pastor, and ministries of the church. Other items of business may also be placed on the agenda.
- Article 2. The mode of baptism practiced in this church shall be the immersion if able of those who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who have agreed to repent from their sin.
- Article 3. The church shall have a meeting quarterly to review the budget and the overall ministry of the church. These will be held on the last Sunday in April, July, and October. These meetings may be delayed for no longer than two weeks by joint approval of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees. Public notice of the meeting shall be given two consecutive Sundays in advance from the pulpit or in the worship bulletin.
- Article 4. Special meetings of the church may be called by the Pastor, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Deacons or by signed petition of ten members of the church to the Moderator.
- Article 5. All meetings of the church body will be considered properly warned if notice is given from the pulpit or in the worship bulletin for two consecutive Sundays. The time, date, place, and general purpose of the meeting will be part of a proper warning. Starting times of meetings will be determined by the Board of Trustees.
- Article 6. For the annual meeting a quorum for doing business shall be at least 1/5 of the active membership of the church. All other meetings require 10 members unless otherwise designated (see Section IV).

SECTION VI - AMENDMENTS

- Article 1. The Purpose, Covenant, and By-Laws of Memorial Baptist Church may be amended at any properly warned meeting of the church body. The text of the proposed amendments must be available at the first notice of the warning. The quorum requirement of the annual meeting will apply.
- Article 2. The Clerk will make available new copies of the revised Purpose, Covenant, and By-Laws with the amended text no later than the annual meeting after amendments are adopted.

SECTION VII - THE ILSLEY ENDOWMENT

- Article 1. The Funds once left with the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire known as the Ilsley Fund will be administered by the church using the following procedures.
- Article 2. The Board of Trustees, or a committee designated by the Trustees and approved by the congregation, will administer the Fund according to the guidelines of this section.
- Article 3. The Board of Trustees may draw five percent of the Fund's value in any given year to fund the operating budget or special projects of the church. The fund's value will be determined by the average of the past three years of the fund's existence, values for each quarter of the year will be used to determine the average. Until the third year of the fund's existence, the average will be averaged by the quarterly averages accrued to date.
- Article 4. Any withdrawal above the five percent of Article 3 will require a two thirds vote of the congregation at a properly warned meeting of the church. The quorum for this meeting will be one third of the active membership of the church.
- Article 5. Additional gifts to the Ilsley Endowment will be accepted and administered according to the rules of this section.

Internal Controls
Memorial Baptist Church of Middlebury, Vermont
(Passed August 25, 1993 - to be attached to 1998 By-Laws Revised 07/27/2008)

1. Consolidate all funds into one interest-bearing checking account, including the benevolence fund.
2. Income from the Ilsley fund, ABEC, Atlantic Richfield, Minnie Averill account, etc., should be direct deposited to the checking account.
3. Trustee to count weekly collections with the Financial Secretary or the Assistant Financial Secretary. Duplicate deposit slip to be signed by both people: one copy to be given to the Treasurer, and one to the bank.
4. No checks to be written to and signed by the same person.
5. Monthly Treasurer's report given to the Trustees should detail prior and current month's activity for comparison, as well as year-to-date and budgeted totals.
6. Detailed description of all church revenue should be given on the monthly Treasurer's report given to the Trustees.
7. Records to be available for quarterly audit:
 - Bank statements
 - Paid invoices and receipts
 - Canceled checks and deposit slips
 - General Ledger
 - Revenue Journal
 - Monthly Treasurer's Reports
8. Standardized checklist of audit functions performed, to be attached to the monthly records audited.
9. Written request or invoice required before check can be generated.
10. Excess funds recommended for investment into ABEC only.
11. Guidelines should be established for bequests, etc.
12. Financial Secretary or Trustee only should be making deposits.
13. Limited number (2) of people authorized to write and sign checks.
14. Written procedures should be developed for Treasurer's and Auditor's duties.
15. To direct the Trustees to look into bonding the finances of the church.
16. To store the records of the church at the church in a fireproof safe.
17. To mail all statements to the church (which is already happening).
18. Only one (1) signature is required on a check. (*This control added at Annual Meeting, January 26, 1994.*)

These controls are open to discussion, amendment, and additions by the Church membership.
Final Internal Control guidelines will be audited for compliance at least once yearly.