

At a special call meeting, a quorum being present on June 14, 2009, the Bylaws were approved and adopted as per the attached. Dates of Amendment are listed below:

Amended November 6, 2011

Amended April 15, 2012

Amended September 15, 2013

Article I. NAME

The name of this Church shall be The Myrtle Baptist Church of West Newton, Inc. It is located in West Newton, in the City of Newton and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Article II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this congregation is to give visible form to that faith and fellowship to which God has called God's 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 needs 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 and to exercise the authority to reach decisions for governing the spiritual and temporal affairs of this Church being given to us by Christ. We hold that such authority and responsibility is vested in the membership of the congregation.

In carrying out the wider ministry for which Christ has made His Church responsible, we shall adhere to and be members of the Samuel Stillman Association, The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts, the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., Inc., and the United Baptist Convention of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. This Church shall not resign or withdraw from any of these bodies except by a duly adopted amendment to the Bylaws of the Church. No such action to amend the Bylaws shall take place until a consultation has been held by the Pastor, Diaconate and Trustee Board (suggested congregation be consulted also) of this Church with the Moderators of these Associations and the Executive Ministers and/or secretaries of these conventions.

Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches (Copyright, 1964) shall be our guide on matters of polity and practice and Roberts Rules of Order for parliamentary procedure.

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. The Confession of Faith drawn up and adopted by this Church is regarded as an expression of the essential doctrines of grace set forth in the Scriptures. The Confession of Faith is as follows:

We believe in the triune God and sustainer of life. Creator; resurrected Christ, the sole Head of the Church; and the Holy Spirit, who guides and brings about the creative and redemptive work of God in the world and to His deeds we testify.

We believe that God called the worlds into being, created humanity in a like own image, and set before humanity the ways of life and death.

We believe in the Holy Spirit which dwells among us, dwells within us, and guides us through life by binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

We believe in the divinity, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and follow His example of God consciousness as a norm of Christian life. For He alone is our crucified and risen Lord, Who came to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to Himself and that He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

We take a literary and critical view of scripture as divinely inspired but not inerrant. We see the Bible as a Divine metaphor. It is a brilliantly composed record of the trajectory of human thoughts about God, and an evolution of humankind's coming to understand itself through the culturally sacred imagery of the Divine. Furthermore, we believe that although the Bible was not brought about by Divine dictation, because it was written over many hundreds of years and composed by several communities. The Bible is indeed the Word of God that must be "rightly divided"(2 Tim. 2:15) in order to liberate and bring about truth and not to establish dogmatic close-mindedness.

We believe that God calls us into the Church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be God's servants in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at God's table, to join God in God's passion and victory. And that it is our Great Commission to lead people to God consciousness through the teachings of Jesus Christ.

We believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and should be interpreted through the loving lenses of Jesus Christ.

We believe that belief in Justification we are saved from the penalty of sin. And that God promises to all who trust God's forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, God's presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in God's kingdom which has no end.

We believe we are saved by grace through faith.

We believe that humankind was created by God to live in harmony with God. Because of the sins of humankind, Christ died to redeem and reconcile us back to God.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Christian Sabbath is Sunday. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion.

We believe in the second coming of Christ to rapture the Church into everlasting bliss.

We believe that all people of faith are invited to join Christ at Christ's table for the sacrament of Communion. The breaking of bread and the pouring of wine remind us of the costliness of Christ's sacrifice and the discipleship to which we are all called.

We believe that all of the baptized belong body and soul to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, notwithstanding race, gender, sexual orientation, class or creed. We all belong to God and to one worldwide community of faith.

We believe in the inviolable dignity of all persons.

We believe each person to be on a spiritual journey and at different stages of that journey and that every Christian should be on a persistent search for God Consciousness.

We believe in addressing suspicious systems, markets, and nations that deny the inalienable rights of any human sector.

We believe in the practice of ethical principles and revolutionary acts of love.

We believe in the importance of personal change in order to inspire social change and promote peace.

We believe in the power of peace, and work for nonviolent solutions to local, national, and international problems.

We believe in being socially prophetic and not just progressive and liberal for the sake of political correctness.

We believe that God has called us to promote peace by caring for the disenfranchised and marginalized persons on the fringes of our society.

We believe we are a people of possibility. At Myrtle, congregants have the breathing room to explore and hear...for after all, God is still speaking.

This document shall be subject to revision by the congregation as new insights from the Word of God shall indicate ways in which our faith and life may be brought into closer accord with the teachings of Scripture.

This Church also has adopted the following covenant as a means by which its members may express their intent to accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the life of the Church and in the affairs of daily life:

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, toward its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the Church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

Article V. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. ADMISSION OF MEMBERS. - Persons may be received into membership by any of the following methods, subject in each case to the recommendation of the Diaconate and the vote of the Church:

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/her baptism by 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 any other church.

C. BY EXPERIENCE. - A believer of worthy character who has formerly been a member of

a 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/her Christian experience.

D. BY RESTORATION. - Any person who has lost his/her membership for any reason may be restored to membership upon recommendation of the Diaconate and vote of the Church.

E. Persons from non-Baptist churches who have not been baptized by immersion and who do not choose to be immersed may be admitted to membership when the deacons are satisfied that such persons manifest a genuine commitment of their lives to Christ.

After being received into membership by any of the methods in this *Article V*, a member is deemed to be in good standing and eligible to vote at meetings, if the member (a) is at least eighteen years of age, and (b) attends worship service on a regular basis (such attendance requirements may be waived in exceptional circumstances).

Section 2. DISMISSION OF MEMBERS. - Persons may be dismissed from membership by any of the following methods.

A. BY DEATH.

B. BY LETTER. - Any member in good standing may receive a letter of dismission and recommendation to any other church following the recommendation of the Diaconate and vote of the Church.

Article VI. THE PASTOR AND OFFICERS

Section 1. THE PASTOR. - The Pastor shall be the leader of the Church in all of its activities and shall preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, have charge of the stated service of public worship, and direct the spiritual welfare of the Church. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards, committees, and auxiliary organizations of the Church.

The Pastor shall be elected by the Church upon recommendation of the Pulpit Committee as provided in *Article X*. The Pastor shall be the supervisor of all staff personnel. The Pastor shall make recommendations to fill vacancies of Officers that occur between Annual meetings. All recommendations shall be taken to the Church for final vote (ratification).

Section 2. THE MODERATOR. - The Pastor shall be the moderator and shall preside at all Business Meetings of the Church and at all meetings of the Advisory Council. In the absence of the Pastor, the Chair of the Diaconate shall serve as moderator. The Pastor, in consultation with the Chair of the Diaconate, may elect to appoint a Moderator to facilitate Business Meetings of the Church. The appointed Moderator will not be considered an officer of the Church.

Section 3. THE DIACONATE. - The Diaconate shall be elected by the Church upon the recommendation of the Pastor. Deacons shall in every way assist with the work of the Pastor: (a)

consider with the Pastor all applicants for Church membership; (b) cooperate with the Pastor in providing the Pulpit supply; (c) provide leadership and direction for the Church in the absence of a Pastor; and (d) visit the members and care for the sick, needy and distressed members of the Church, using such fellowship funds as may be needed.

The Diaconate shall promote Christian instruction and ministry to the Church membership, provide for the Lord's Supper and aid in its administration, administer the fellowship offering, and prepare and present a written report at each business meeting of the Church of matters in its charge.

The Diaconate has the responsibility of overseeing Church membership and of maintaining at all times the order and discipline of the Church. It is the duty of the Diaconate to intercede in interpersonal conflicts and to bring about reconciliation in accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures. If the Diaconate is not able to do so, then it is the obligation of the Deacons to take the matter before the Church.

The Diaconate shall choose for a two-year term, not to exceed more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office, a chairman, a secretary and a treasurer of the benevolences and shall meet on a regular basis. Special meetings may be called by the Chair. The secretary shall notify members of the Diaconate of all meetings. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4. THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES. - There shall be a Board of Trustees, composed of eleven members elected at each Annual meeting. The Clerk (*Article VI, Section 6*), Treasurer (*Article VI, Section 7*), Collector (*Article VI, Section 8*) and Financial Secretary (*Article VI, Section 9*) shall have the privilege of attending meetings of the Board and shall be present when so requested by the Board.

The Board shall hold in trust all property belonging to the Church and shall take all necessary measures for its protection, management, and upkeep. In cooperation with the Pastor, it shall determine the use of the Church building by outside groups and shall determine suitable charges to be made for such use. It shall designate the bank where the funds of the Church shall be deposited, shall secure the services of a caretaker of the buildings at such salary as is authorized by the Church and supervise his/her services, and shall present all material legal transactions in behalf of the Church to the Church membership for ratification.

The Board shall supervise ways and means of raising the necessary funds for the support of the Church and the disbursement of these funds as appropriate. It shall also evaluate and assess the over-all condition and welfare of the Church, including but not limited to its buildings, grounds and property and make recommendations as to the maintenance and/or disposition of the same. The Trustee Board shall also interview and recommend all salaries of paid personnel of the Church. No contractual agreements shall be entered into unless ratified by the Church.

The Board shall submit to the Church at each Annual Meeting a detailed, comprehensive budget for its consideration. They shall also be responsible for having the financial records of the Church audited at least every three years.

The Board (“Board of Trustees”) shall choose for a two-year term, not to exceed more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office, a chairman and a secretary and shall meet on a regular basis. Special meetings may be called by the Chair. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The secretary shall notify members of the Board of all meetings.

Section 5. THE CLERK. - A Clerk shall be elected for a five-year term, not to exceed more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. The Clerk shall keep a complete record of the transactions of all business at the meeting of the Church. This record 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; the Clerk shall also keep a record of baptisms dedications, and deaths. The Clerk shall notify all officers, committee members and delegates of their election and appointment. The Clerk shall issue letters of recommendation ratified by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written reports, and give legal notice of all such meetings where such is required by these Bylaws. The Clerk shall also assist in preparing denominational reports. After voted upon by the Church, the Clerk shall attest all legal and other documents on behalf of the Church. Immediately after the election of the Clerk's successor, the Clerk shall deliver to the new Clerk all books and records for which the Clerk has been responsible.

Section 6. THE TREASURER. - A Treasurer shall be elected for a five-year term, not to exceed more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the Church and all deposits made in the name of the Church, and checks drawn by the Treasurer shall be in the name of the Church. No funds shall be disbursed by the Treasurer except for the purposes for which they were raised.

Funds received shall be disbursed by the Treasurer only on receipt of a draft from the Financial Secretary by order of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall also disperse on a regular basis all funds received for Missions and charitable work of the denominations with which the Church is affiliated and other causes which the Church may determine.

The Treasurer shall prepare and present a written report of the record of the Treasurer's total receipts and disbursements showing the actual financial condition of the Church and shall distribute the report to the Church membership at the Bi-Annual and Annual Business Meetings. Immediately after election of the Treasurer's successor, the Treasurer shall deliver to the new Treasurer all books and records for which the Treasurer has been responsible.

Section 7. THE COLLECTOR. - A Collector shall be elected for a five-year term, not to exceed more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. The Collector's duty shall be to keep a record of all tithes and pledges and other income to the Church and prepare and distribute individual reports to the Church membership informing each of them of their record of giving. The Collector's duty requires working closely with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary. Immediately after the election of the Collector's successor, the Collector shall deliver to the new Collector all books and records for which the Collector has been responsible. The Collector shall prepare a written report for presentation at the Bi-annual and Annual Business Meetings of the

Church to be distributed to the membership. The Collector shall order and dispense the Church financial donation envelopes.

Section 8. THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY. - A Financial Secretary shall be elected for a five-year term, not to exceed more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. It shall be the Financial Secretary's duty to keep a detailed ledger of Church income and expenditures. On request of the Chair of the Trustee Board, the Financial Secretary shall prepare a report of all Church disbursements to be given to the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary shall, at the end of each quarter and fiscal year, report to the Board of Trustees an account of the matters pertaining to the Financial Secretary's office. The Financial Secretary shall prepare and present a comprehensive, detailed report of receipts and disbursements to the Church at Bi-annual and Annual meetings. Immediately after the election of the Financial Secretary's successor, the Financial Secretary shall deliver to the new Financial Secretary all books and records for which the Financial Secretary has been responsible.

Section 9. THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL. - A Superintendent of the Sunday School shall be elected for a five-year term, not to exceed more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. The Superintendent shall be the executive head of the Sunday School, exercising the authority and performing the duties of that office, following the general directives and policies of the Senior Pastor and in coordination with the Youth Pastor.

Section 10. THE ADVISORY COUNCIL. - There shall be an Advisory Council consisting of the elected officers of the Church to specifically include the Chair and Vice Chair of the Diaconate; Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees; the Clerk; the Treasurer; the Collector; the Financial Secretary; and the Superintendent of Sunday School. The Advisory Council will serve primarily to assist the office of the Pastor and Church in all administrative, fiscal, operational, programmatic and general welfare matters of importance to the Church. The Advisory Council will meet regularly and assume responsibilities for and perform activities that include, but are not limited to:

- a) Developing a Program for the Church and supervise implementation of the Program;
- b) Recommending and ensuring proper support and oversight for all standing and ad hoc committees of the Church;
- c) Preparing and recommending to the Church a list of those qualified to fill the various offices for which elections are held;
- d) Considering specific concerns or occurrences submitted by the Pastor or Church, identifying the resources, programs or organizations that exist to address the concerns, and making recommendations regarding the proper course of action in accordance with Church Polity and Bylaws; and
- e) Making general recommendations, upon request of the Pastor or Church, regarding ways to carry out the Purpose, Polity and Doctrine of the Church as stated in *Articles II, III, and IV* herein.

Qualified recommendations of the Advisory Council shall be taken to the Church for final vote (ratification).

Article VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees' members shall be recommended by the Advisory Council and ratified by the Church. If vacancies occur between Annual meetings, the members of the relevant Standing Committee shall recommend the replacement(s). All recommendations shall be taken to the Church for final vote (ratification).

Article VIII. AD HOC COMMITTEES

The Ad Hoc Committees members shall be recommended by the Advisory Council and ratified by the Church. If vacancies occur between Annual Meetings, the members of the relevant Ad Hoc Committee shall recommend the replacement(s). All recommendations shall be taken to the Church for final vote (ratification).

Article IX. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

There should be auxiliary organizations representing the men and the women of the Church. There shall be a Sunday School, a Youth Organization, a Choir or Choirs, an Usher Board and such other auxiliary organizations as may be organized by members of the Church and ratified by vote of the Church.

Auxiliary organizations shall be governed by their own Bylaws, which must be approved by the Advisory Council and ratified by the Church.

There shall be semi-annual reports highlighting activities for the past six month period for each auxiliary. At each Annual Meeting, auxiliary organizations shall prepare and present a written report reflecting their activities for the previous year. They shall also present a prospective program of activities for the coming year. All auxiliaries shall be under the jurisdiction of the Church.

Article X. THE PASTORATE

Section 1. VACANCY OF THE PASTORATE. - When the Pastorate is vacant, an Interim Pastor shall be supplied by the Diaconate and voted upon by the Church membership. The Diaconate shall convene a Church meeting to select a representative Pulpit Committee of five or more members of the Church. This committee shall take the necessary steps to secure the names of prospective pastors, working in full consultation with the executive or area minister of the Baptist organizations this Church is affiliated with. It shall request from the area minister full information about the record and qualifications of these persons whose names are submitted for consideration. The Church shall not call a minister until such information has been secured. When a suitable person is found for the Pastorate, the committee shall recommend the person to the Church for consideration.

The call of a Pastor shall be considered by the Church at a regularly or specially called meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on two successive

Sundays. Only one candidate shall be presented to the Church at a time. A vote of three-fourths of the members present and qualified to vote shall be necessary to extend a call.

Section 2. THE TERMINATION OF THE PASTORATE. - The term of office may be ended upon ninety days notice on the part of the Pastor or of the Church.

Termination of a Pastor from the office by the Church shall be voted at a regularly or specially called business 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 make valid the termination of the Pastor from the office.

Article XI. THE ELECTIONS

Section 1. TIME. - The election of officers shall be held in accordance to the term of such office during the Annual Meeting of the Church, which shall be held in the first quarter of the calendar year (following service), unless otherwise determined by the Church.

Section 2. QUALIFICATION OF VOTERS. - All matters pertaining to the purchase, sale or mortgaging of property shall be voted on only by full members in good standing and who are of legal age. On all other matters, all members in good standing are entitled to vote.

For voting purposes, a member is deemed to be in good standing if the member (a) has been received into membership by any of the methods in Article V, (b) is at least eighteen years of age, and (c) attends worship service on a regular basis (such attendance requirements may be waived in exceptional circumstances).

Section 3. QUORUM. - A quorum to transact business shall be established when ten percent (10%) of the members are present and qualified to vote, unless a number greater than ten percent is required by these Bylaws.

Section 4. PROCEDURE. - At the Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee shall present to the Church the names of one or more persons for each office 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.

Section 5. VACANCIES. - Vacancies occurring during the year may be filled for unexpired terms by the relevant committees recommending replacements, for vacancies on committees and by the Pastor recommending replacements for all officers. All recommendations shall be taken to the Church for final vote (ratification).

Article XII. MEETINGS

Section 1. WORSHIP SERVICES. - Public services shall be held each Lord's Day at a time during the morning established through regular Church practice or by vote of the Church. The

Lord's Supper shall be served on the first Sunday morning of each month, or at such time as the Church may determine. Sunday School shall be held weekly at a time to be fixed by the Diaconate and approved by the Church. Prayer services may be held at such time as the Church may determine.

Occasional religious meetings may be held at the discretion of the Pastor, by the Diaconate, or by the vote of the Church.

Section 2. THE ANNUAL MEETING. - The Annual Meeting shall be held in the first quarter of the calendar year (following service) for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of individual officers, boards, the election of officers, the transaction of necessary business; and the discussion of issues vital to the life and witness of the Church. All financial reports shall be in writing except as noted in these Bylaws.

The transaction of business shall require a quorum as defined in *Article XI, Section 3*.

Section 3. THE BI-ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING. - The Bi-Annual Business Meeting shall be held in the third quarter of the calendar year (following service) for the purpose of receiving oral reports from individual officers, boards, and committees of the Church and its auxiliary organizations, the transaction of necessary business; and the discussion of issues vital to the life and witness of the Church. All financial reports shall be in writing except as noted in our Bylaws.

The transaction of business shall require a quorum as defined in *Article XI, Section 3*.

Section 4. SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING. - A Special Business Meeting may be called at any time by the Pastor, the Diaconate, or upon recommendation of the Advisory Council. Notice of such meeting, and the subject for which it is called, shall be given from the pulpit at least two Sundays before the meeting date. The transaction of business shall require a quorum as defined in *Article XI, Section 3*.

At any of the regular meetings of worship, however, the Church, may without notice, act upon the reception of members and upon the appointment of delegates to Church organizations, but not upon extraordinary business. A quorum must be present, pursuant to *Article XI, Section 3*.

Article XIII. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended at a regular business meeting or called meeting of the Church by two-thirds vote of those present, qualified, and eligible to vote. It shall be necessary for the congregation to be notified in writing of the meeting and of the proposed amendment(s) at least one month prior to the time when action is taken on the proposal.