

CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS OF THE MINISTERS COUNCIL OF THE
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW YORK STATE

(Revised, May 2008)

Article I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be The Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches of New York State.

Article II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization is to promote the welfare of the Church by sustaining and improving the professional leadership of the American Baptist Churches of New York State.

Toward this end the Council shall:

1. Promote fellowship and provide counsel for its members;
2. Help its members develop their spiritual maturity and vocational skills;
3. Maintain a helpful interest in the total well-being of the professional church leader, including good pastoral relations, financial security, and upholding professional and ethical standards of the Christian Ministry;
4. Provide a means of expression and debate for members on those issues that affect the professional leadership of the American Baptist Churches USA;
5. Work actively to promote mutual support of the membership.

Article III - RELATIONSHIPS

Section 1. This Council is an Auxiliary Organization of the American Baptist Churches of New York State.

Section 2. The President shall serve as representative of the Ministers Council to the American Baptist Churches of New York State. The Sectional Vice-Presidents shall serve as the representatives to their respective geographical District/Section. The Associational Advocates will assist their respective Sectional Vice-President in representing the Ministers Council to the Advocate's Association.

Section 3. This Council is a professional organization operating in cooperation with and is a member of the Ministers Council of the ABCUSA.

Article IV - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in the Council is held in one of the following ways by Professional Church Leaders holding membership in a local congregation affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA:

- A. Regular membership is determined by the following:

1. Service in an identifiable American Baptist related ministry;
2. Listing in the Registry of ABC USA Professional Church Leaders;
3. Payment of local and national dues within the last fifteen (15) months;
4. Cooperation with the purpose stated in Article II.

B. Life Membership will be granted without payment of dues to all retired members of the Ministers Council residing in the state as determined by the Executive Committee.

C. Newly ordained ministers or commissioned missionaries will be granted one (1) year's free membership.

Section 2. In the absence of meeting the above requirements, membership may be granted upon petition to the Executive Committee of the Council.

Article V - ORGANIZATION

Section 1. The Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches of New York State shall be organized into four (4) geographic Sections: Western, Western Central, Eastern, and Eastern Central.

Western Section Associations include: Chautauqua, Allegany-Cattaraugus, WEGO, Niagara Area.

Western Central Sections Associations include: Wayne, Iroquois, Finger Lakes, Living Waters, Broome-Tioga.

Eastern Central Section Associations include: Fransego, Madison, Mohawk-Oneida, North Country.

Eastern Section Associations include: Adirondack, Capital Area, Mid-Hudson/Union.

Section 2. Officers. The Officers of the Council shall be a President, a First Vice-President, four (4) Section Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and two (2) Members-at-Large who shall be elected by ballot. The President, First Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected for a term of two (2) years. The Section Vice-Presidents and the two (2) Members-at-Large shall be elected for a term of three (3) years on a rotating basis. All officers shall assume office at the close of the Annual Meeting. No elected officer shall be eligible for the same office for more than one (1) full term. The President and First Vice-President

shall be elected in the odd-numbered years and the Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected in even-numbered years.

Section 3. Duties of Officers.

- A. The President shall preside at the meetings of the Council and shall be Chairperson of the Executive Committee and member *ex-officio* of all other committees. The President shall be the first representative to the Senate of the Ministers Council of the ABCUSA.
- B. The First Vice-President shall serve in the place of the President when necessary. He or she shall be the second representative to the Senate of the Ministers Council of the ABCUSA. The First Vice-President shall fulfill responsibilities at the direction of the President when mutually agreed upon.
- C. Each Section Vice-President is responsible for the advancement of the Council in that Section.
- D. The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of the Council and the Executive Committee, (a copy) of which shall be given to the office of the American Baptist Churches of New York State for filing, and shall be available to the members of the Ministers Council. The Secretary shall provide for the safe keeping of the records and all official documents.
- E. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse the funds of the Council and shall be responsible to the Executive Committee. The Treasurer shall, in cooperation with the Executive Committee, prepare an annual budget to be submitted for approval by the Council at its Annual Meeting, and shall maintain a list of members.
- F. The two (2) Members-At-Large shall serve at the discretion of the President.

Section 4. Associational Advocates. The members of the Ministers Council in each of the sixteen (16) Associations within the American Baptist Churches of New York State shall select an Advocate to serve a term of two (2) years. The names of the Advocates will be reported at the Ministers Council Annual Meeting.

Section 5. Duties of the Advocates. The Advocates will serve as liaisons between the

Associations and their respective Section Vice-President, bringing associational concerns and interests before the Ministers Council and promoting the interests of the Ministers Council before the Association. Advocates will work with their respective Section Vice-President in planning and promoting any Ministers Council interests, programs or activities within a particular Section. For Associations without an Advocate, the Section Vice-President will work to assist that Association in ways which are appropriate to the needs of the Association.

Section 6. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected officers and the immediate past President. The Executive Committee shall perform the work of the Council between sessions. The duties of this committee include:

- A. The annual appointment of a Nominating Committee;
- B. Serving as the Program Committee for the Annual Meeting and for such other meetings or conferences as may be held;
- C. Naming persons to fill vacancies for unexpired terms to serve until the next Annual Meeting.

Section 7. Ministry Support and Mediation Panel. A Council member may contact the President to request a Ministry Support and Mediation Panel if he/she feels it is needed **to address issues of conflict with his/her congregation.** At least three (3) Council members may be appointed by the President to serve. The panel will hear the parties involved, clarify issues, discern the movement of the Holy Spirit, and advocate steps for healing. It will expeditiously report its findings to the involved parties and to the Executive Committee. Reasonable panel expenses will be paid by the Council.

Section 8. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee at least two (2) months before the Annual Meeting. It shall consist of five (5) members, none of whom shall be a member of the current Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall name one of its members to serve in an advisory capacity. The Nominating Committee shall make recommendations for President, First Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Nominating Committee shall consult with members from each of the four (4) Sections in selecting nominees for the four (4) Sectional Vice-Presidents. The Nominating Committee shall be guided by the principle of inclusive membership and shall be sensitive to our diversity, including sectional balance, in making its recommendations for officers. The Nominating Committee shall include in its report a listing of the Associational Advocates and

their terms.

Section 9. Representatives to National Ministers Council Senate. The President shall be our first representative and the First Vice-President shall be our second representative. If necessary, the Executive Committee shall appoint other officers as alternates. Any additional representatives to whom we are entitled shall be selected by the Executive Committee from among the officers, if possible.

Article VI - MEETINGS

The Annual Meeting of the Council shall be held at a time determined by the Executive Committee. Additional meetings may be called by the Executive Committee or upon request of twenty (20) members. One month's notice shall be given to members prior to each meeting. Twenty-five (25) members shall constitute a quorum of the Council.

The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year. Special meetings may be called by the President and/or any three (3) members of the Executive Committee. Five (5) members shall constitute a quorum of the Executive Committee.

Additional meetings or programs may be held in a particular Section, but such that are held in the name of the Ministers Council of New York State must have the approval of the Executive Committee.

Article VII - RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of all meetings.

Article VIII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended at any Annual Meeting of the Council upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting, provided notice of the proposed amendment(s) have been submitted in writing to all members of the Council at least one (1) month before the meeting at which action is to be taken.

Article IX - CODE OF ETHICS

We subscribe to the current Code of Ethics as adopted by the National Ministers Council.