

CONSTITUTION

Adopted November 14, 2021

Pathways Baptist Church

Gaithersburg, Maryland

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**CONSTITUTION
OF
PATHWAYS BAPTIST CHURCH
OF
GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND**
(Incorporated under the Laws of the State of Maryland)

Article 1: Name

The name of this Church shall be “Pathways Baptist Church, Inc.” (hereinafter PBC) and it shall be governed by the Bible and the following Articles.

Article 2: Purpose

United by the Grace of God in Christian experience we, the members of PBC, recognize and receive the Bible as the inspired Word of God and agree to accept it as our only rule of faith and practice. We declare our adherence to the doctrines and teachings of the New Testament, and state our purpose to be as follows:

- The maintenance of the worship of God and the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- The study and practice of Christian discipleship as revealed and taught in the New Testament.
- The promotion and advancement of Christ’s Kingdom throughout the earth.
- Provide service to the membership and the community.

PBC shall be incorporated as a non-profit institution.

Article 3: Who We Are

PBC’s Mission, Vision, Core Values, Beliefs and Church Covenant shall be documented and approved by the Congregation. Revisions to Beliefs shall have the recommendation of the Elders. Revisions to Mission, Vision, Core Values and Church Covenant shall have the recommendation of the Church Leadership Team, Senior Pastor, or committee charged with this purpose. Approval of revisions shall be during a Regular or Called Congregational meeting.

Article 4: Affiliations

PBC is a free, autonomous, independent body, congregational in nature, with authority to determine for itself, in the manner set forth in this Constitution, its own governance, the use of its property and all PBC policies.

PBC shall assert its freedom from denominational control; however, PBC recognizes the value and mutual helpfulness in the voluntary associations of churches which are in such agreement in faith and practices as to make possible a spirit of fellowship and cooperative endeavor. For these purposes, PBC is in cooperative affiliation with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches, USA.

Article 5: Membership

Section 1: Qualifications

Persons desiring to be members of PBC shall meet one of the following qualifications:

- a. Profess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord and experience believer's baptism by immersion (those with special needs will be accommodated).
- b. Statement of previous profession of faith and believer's baptism by immersion.
- c. Transfer of membership from another church of like faith and order.

Section 2: Admission of Members

Persons will be admitted as members of PBC upon completion of the following:

- a. Meet qualifications in Article 5, Section 1.
- b. New Members' Orientation as offered to define membership duties, responsibilities, and expectations.
- c. Public commitment to PBC's Mission, Vision, Core Values, Church Covenant and Beliefs in a worship service, and receiving affirmation of the Congregation.

Section 3: Duties and Responsibilities of Membership

- a. PBC members shall be disciples of Jesus Christ who minister and serve the PBC body and community with faithful and sacrificial contributions of their time, talents, skills, and finances.
- b. PBC members shall agree to and conduct themselves according to the Church Covenant.
- c. "Voting Members" are PBC members that have the privilege of voting on PBC business matters if they are fifteen (15) years of age or older and participate in PBC activities, including attendance and financial support.

Section 4: Ending of Membership

Membership in PBC shall be ended in one of the following ways:

- a. By request of the member.
- b. By death of the member.

- c. By Elders and Deacons following a prolonged period of inactivity and separation from PBC.
- d. By letter to join with another church.
- e. By a disciplinary process overseen by the Elders.

Article 6: Governance

Section 1: Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the Church.

Section 2: Congregation

The governance of PBC shall be congregational in nature and shall be vested in its voting membership.

- a. The "Congregation" shall consist of the Voting Members.
- b. The Congregation shall hold the Elders and Senior Pastor accountable for fulfilling and upholding PBC's Mission, Vision, Core Values and Beliefs according to applicable policies and procedures.
- c. The Congregation shall celebrate the work of God at PBC.
- d. The Congregation shall have approval authority of the following as described in this Constitution, PBC policies or procedures:
 - 1. PBC's name, Mission, Vision, Core Values, Beliefs and Church Covenant
 - 2. To extend or to revoke the call (employment) of the Senior Pastor
 - 3. To extend or to revoke the call (employment) of other Ministerial Staff
 - 4. The acquisition and disposal of capital assets or debts in excess of one-twelfth of the annual budget
 - 5. Amendments to the Constitution
 - 6. PBC Policies
 - 7. Annual Budget
 - 8. Election of Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Officers, and members of Standing Committees
 - 9. Dissolution and Distribution of Assets of PBC
- e. Congregational Meetings:
 - 1. Congregational authority is exercised through Congregational Meetings, held at a minimum of twice each calendar year, to hold the Elders and Senior Pastor accountable for fulfilling PBC's mission and to celebrate the work of God at PBC. The Church Leadership Team will designate the specific dates of these meetings.
 - 2. Congregational meetings shall be held in person unless there are safety and/or health concerns as determined by the Church Leadership Council, in which case they may be held by a combination of in person and/or virtual means.

3. A special Congregational meeting for consideration of any matter shall be called by the Senior Pastor, the Church Leadership Team, or the Elders. The time and purpose shall be announced at least seven (7) calendar days in advance; alternatively, every member shall be notified in writing as to time and purpose at least three (3) calendar days in advance. Only the announced business shall be transacted at a special Congregational meeting.
4. Two-thirds of Elders and thirty Voting Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a regular or special Congregational meeting, with all motions voted in the meeting requiring a two-thirds affirmation of those Voting Members present and voting, unless stated elsewhere in this Constitution.
5. Non-members may observe Congregational meetings unless prohibited by PBC policy but shall not participate in discussion.
6. The Moderator shall serve as presiding officer for Congregational meetings; in case of absence or conflict of interest (as described in PBC policy) of the Moderator, the Senior Pastor (or the Elders in attendance) shall appoint a moderator whose confirmation becomes the next order of business.
7. All business before PBC shall be conducted in a Christian spirit, and the process will follow *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*, except as it conflicts with specific provisions of this Constitution.
8. Voting Members must be present to vote and cannot vote by proxy.
9. Voting Members must disclose potential conflict of interest regarding any issue under discussion and must recuse themselves from the related vote. The Moderator shall decide whether the conflict of interest is enough to require a member to not participate in discussion of the topic.
10. Non-Voting Members may participate in discussion unless the Moderator determines that the member has a conflict of interest enough to require them to not participate.

Section 3: Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures of PBC shall be established as follows:

- a. PBC policies will be recommended by relevant Standing Committees, the Church Leadership Team, Elders, Deacons, or staff and shall be approved by the Congregation.
- b. Standing Committees, the Church Leadership Team, or relevant staff shall establish procedures necessary to implement approved policies.
- c. The following Operating Manuals shall be prepared to document policies and procedures:
 1. Personnel Manual
 2. Finance Manual
 3. Operations Manual, containing all other policies and procedures not included in the Personnel Manual or Finance Manual, including, but not limited to, specifics regarding

nominations, terms of office, number of members on a committee, ballots, and other guidelines or processes to guide the Congregation, Elders, Deacons, Senior Pastor, Standing Committees, Church Officers, Ministry Teams, employees, volunteers, and other committees and teams.

Article 7: Leadership

Section 1: Introduction

PBC shall maintain structure necessary to execute its Purpose.

All in official positions of leadership (Senior Pastor, Ministerial Staff, Elders, Deacons, Trustees, members of Standing Committees, Church Officers) shall be Voting Members, be elected by the Congregation, and will serve in such a way that the character and nature of God are clearly demonstrated. They shall comply, to the best of their ability, with scriptural prerequisites of kingdom citizenship, and shall have knowledge of this Constitution and applicable policies and procedures.

Section 2: Senior Pastor

- a. The Senior Pastor shall be the spiritual and ministry leader of PBC.
- b. The Senior Pastor shall be accountable to the Congregation and the Elders for pursuing PBC's Vision within the boundaries of its Mission, Values, and Beliefs, implementing PBC's strategic plan, and functioning within this Constitution, PBC policies and procedures.
- c. The Senior Pastor shall meet the following qualifications:
 1. Must be a Minister of the Gospel whose Christian character and qualifications have been examined and found to be fit for the position
 2. Must be in harmony with PBC's Vision, Mission, Values, Beliefs and Church Covenant
 3. Must be a seminary graduate and an ordained minister
 4. Must meet the qualifications of an Elder
 5. Must be in harmony with the organizations with which PBC is affiliated
- d. Duties and Responsibilities: The Senior Pastor, following the Will of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, shall:
 1. Strive to fulfill the Scriptural obligations of this office with all fidelity
 2. Preach the Gospel
 3. Shepherd PBC in fulfilling its Mission and Vision considering its Values and Beliefs
 4. Model what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ
 5. Administer the ordinances as commanded in the New Testament
 6. Lead efforts to discern, design, implement, and evaluate the most effective ministries that will achieve the strategic goals
 7. Develop, equip, lead and hold accountable other staff and volunteer leaders for their own spiritual maturity, and to carry out their responsibilities and the Mission of PBC

8. Ensure that policies and procedures are followed, and that administration is performed with high integrity
 9. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of PBC, with voting privileges, and shall lead the Church Leadership Team.
- e. In the absence of the Senior Pastor, unless stated elsewhere in the Constitution, these duties shall be performed by the other Ministerial Staff, should PBC have such. If not, the Elders shall oversee the execution of these duties.
 - f. Termination - The Senior Pastor will serve until the employment relationship is dissolved at the request of either the Senior Pastor or the Congregation. In either case, at least thirty (30) calendar days' notice shall be given of termination of the employment relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon, with both the Senior Pastor and the Congregation seeking to follow the Will of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
 1. If the employment relationship is to be dissolved at the request of the Congregation it shall be done through a special called Congregational meeting, upon recommendation of the Elders, and shall require an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Voting Members present and voting.
 - g. Whenever a vacancy occurs in the position of the Senior Pastor:
 1. The Elders shall select an Interim Senior Pastor.
 2. The Elders shall nominate a Senior Pastor Search Committee, which is comprised of Voting Members that reflect the diversity of PBC, to be approved by the Congregation.
 3. The Senior Pastor Search Committee shall search for a nominee for Senior Pastor, negotiate salary and benefits in consultation with the Finance Committee and in accordance with personnel policy, and bring that nominee to the Congregation for approval.
 4. Approval of the nominee for Senior Pastor shall require an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Voting Members present and voting.

Section 4: Other Ministerial Staff

- a. Ministerial Staff shall be defined in the Personnel Policy. A nominee shall be recommended to the Congregation by a Ministerial Staff Search Committee in consultation with the Senior Pastor and other relevant committees. The Ministerial Staff Search Committee shall be comprised of the current Personnel Committee and other Voting Members appointed by the Senior Pastor. It shall be the committee's duty to seek out and nominate ministers of the gospel whose Christian character and qualifications have been carefully examined and found to fit the recommended position. Any person considered for the Ministerial Staff shall be in harmony with PBC's Vision, Mission, Values, Beliefs, Church Covenant and with the organizations with which PBC is affiliated.
- b. Duties and Responsibilities of Ministerial Staff shall be determined by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Personnel Committee. A job description with specific duties and responsibilities will be presented to the Congregation with the nominee for approval.
- c. Termination - Ministerial Staff shall serve until the employment relationship is dissolved.

Section 5: Church Leadership Team

a. Membership:

1. Senior Pastor
2. Ministerial Staff
3. Representative of the Elders
4. Leader of Personnel Committee
5. Leader of Finance Committee
6. Leader of Trustees
7. Leader of the Deacons
8. Other Voting Members as necessary to accomplish the Mission of PBC, as determined by the Senior Pastor

b. Responsibilities:

1. Ensuring implementation of the strategic plan
2. Evaluating programs
3. Advise, encourage, and facilitate coordination of the Ministry Teams. The purpose of the oversight is to ensure full implementation of the strategic plan and to reduce unnecessary redundancy, not to micromanage the Ministry Teams.
4. Holding PBC Ministry Teams accountable for the following:
 - a. Outcomes of ministry teamwork
 - b. Training ministry team members
 - c. Working as teams to accomplish the mission of the team
5. Assisting the Senior Pastor in identifying representatives to meetings of organizations with which PBC is affiliated

Section 6: Elders

a. Purpose:

1. Shepherd PBC through discernment, encouragement, and accountability while focusing on PBC's Vision and Mission
2. Guard the integrity of PBC's Vision, Mission, Values, and Beliefs
3. Lead by example the spiritual life of prayer, sacrifice, and service

b. Responsibilities

1. Preserve PBC Values and Beliefs
2. Partner with the Senior Pastor to ensure that all aspects of PBC life align with PBC's Vision, Mission, Values, and Beliefs
3. Encourage sound doctrine and practice; teach Scripture; admonish and correct error
4. Model what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ
5. Mentor leaders
6. Effect PBC discipline process where necessary. A prayerful effort at biblical restoration in the spirit of Christ and in accordance with His word, as in Matthew 18:15-17, shall be made
7. Meet at least six times a year
8. Mentor emerging leaders intentionally, including but not limited to recommendations for seminary, licensing, or ordination
9. Other duties stated elsewhere in this Constitution

- c. Selection
 - 1. Composition
 - a. The Elders shall be comprised of not fewer than three people and no more than twelve including the Senior Pastor
 - b. The majority of the Elders shall be comprised of PBC Voting Members not in the not employed by PBC.
 - 2. Qualifications
 - a. Be Voting Members for at least two years
 - b. May not give less than a tithe
 - c. Be in harmony with the Vision, Mission, Values, and Beliefs
 - d. Desire the will of God in every decision they make in their lives
 - e. Have demonstrated over time the reality of their conversion and the depth of their spirituality through consistent prayer, worship, scriptural knowledge, stewardship, daily living, and ministry work
 - f. Meet the Biblical qualifications for Elders as described in 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:6-9 and other biblical passages
 - g. Demonstrate an ability to teach and handle Scripture with integrity
 - h. Demonstrate a love for all people by sharing themselves with others
 - i. Live respectable lives, displaying both discipline and grace in ways worthy of honor
 - j. Live with spiritual authenticity and freedom from hypocrisy, deserving respect and a good reputation with those outside of PBC
 - k. Live lives free of patterns of sin
 - l. Practice sexual purity
 - m. Exhibit mental, emotional, and spiritual stability, free from all excesses
 - n. Exhibit freedom from addiction and be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others
 - o. Be content with what they have materially and not be motivated in life or ministry by financial gain
 - p. Be biblically grounded, able to explain and apply biblical concepts in their own words and discern error when they hear it
 - q. Be known for prioritizing and practicing biblical principles with their families and in their homes
 - r. Be gracious, peacemaking people who can remain self-composed in highly emotional interpersonal conflicts, and able to deal effectively in doctrinal disagreements
 - s. Make judgments based on scriptural principles rather than superficial decisions based on spiritually immature or worldly thinking
 - t. Lead or participate regularly in a small group
 - 3. Election
 - a. The Congregation shall nominate candidates for elders who are then vetted by the current Elders via an application, an interview, and a background check.
 - b. The Elders shall recommend those qualified and successfully vetted to the Congregation for election. Election requires three-fourths approval of the Voting Members present and voting at a Congregational meeting.
 - c. All current Elders shall be brought to the Congregation annually for reaffirmation.
- d. Organizational Habits:
 - 1. An Elder (other than the Senior Pastor who is a permanent member of the Elders) shall not spend more than six years (two three-year terms) without a year of sabbatical.

2. All decisions voted by the Elders require a three-fourths majority of those in attendance in order to pass, with a quorum of three-fourths of the Elders necessary for a vote to be taken.
 3. The Elders shall undergo an accountability review by the Senior Pastor, collectively and individually, at least annually, regarding qualifications for service. The result will serve as a primary indicator whether an Elder should continue in service, undertake proactive or remedial actions, or resign from service.
- e. Removal
1. An Elder's service shall be terminated either by resignation or by dismissal.
 2. Any PBC member with concerns about an Elder shall act in accordance with the instructions in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21.
 3. Any Elder (other than the Senior Pastor) shall be dismissed in either of two ways: (1) by a two-thirds vote of the Voting Members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting, or (2) by a three-fourths vote of current Elders (excluding the Elder under consideration) and the approval of the Senior Pastor.

Section 7: Deacons

"Deacon(s)" refers to all PBC deacon(s). "Core Deacons" shall be the subset of the deacons who have the responsibility to manage the work of the deacons as they fulfill their responsibilities.

- a. Purpose
 1. Deacons shall serve the practical needs of the Congregation
 2. Deacons shall advance the unity of the church
 3. Deacons shall reflect and extend God's love
- b. Responsibilities
 1. Deacons shall serve the Congregation in ways distinct from and complementary to those of the Elders, Pastors, and Staff
 2. Deacons shall prepare and serve communion as directed by the pastoral staff
 3. Deacons shall assist with the ordinance of baptism as directed by the pastoral staff
 4. Deacons shall collect a benevolence offering to support congregational or community financial needs as determined by the pastoral staff and deacons, and as appropriate to the Mission of PBC
 5. Deacons shall assist pastoral staff in caring for congregation members who might be suffering some personal struggle or otherwise need assistance
 6. "Core Deacons" are deacons that have been elected by the Congregation to make decisions and lead the operations of deacon ministries.
- c. Selection
 1. Qualifications:
 - a. Be Voting Members
 - b. Meet the Biblical qualifications for deacon as described in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
 - c. Be in harmony with the Vision, Mission, Values, Beliefs and Church Covenant
 - d. Demonstrate spiritual maturity and wisdom
 - e. Demonstrate Christian love and service without prejudice or favoritism

- f. Have demonstrated prior faithful service to God's kingdom and PBC.
 - 2. The Congregation shall nominate candidates for deacon service who are then vetted by the Senior Pastor and current Core Deacons to be recommended to the Congregation for election as Core Deacons.
- d. Length of Term
- 1. Deacons shall serve the congregation for as long as they are led to serve or until they are removed, or they are no longer Voting Members.
 - 2. A Core Deacon's term of service shall be three years. A Core Deacon may serve two consecutive three year terms of service after which they must take at least a one year sabbatical from being a Core Deacon before being nominated to be a Core Deacon again. After being a Core Deacon, they may continue to serve the congregation as a deacon for as long as the deacon is led to serve.
- e. Removal
- 1. A Deacon's service shall be terminated either by resignation or by dismissal.
 - 2. Any PBC member with concerns about a Deacon shall act in accordance with the instructions in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21.
 - 3. Any Deacon shall be dismissed in either of two ways: (1) by a two-thirds vote of the Voting Members present and voting at a Congregational Meeting, or (2) by a three-fourths vote of current Core Deacons (excluding the Deacon under consideration) and the approval of the Senior Pastor.

Section 8: Trustees

- a. Duties and responsibilities:
- 1. Shall serve as legal officers and act in the name of and on behalf of PBC. Any three (3) of five (5) trustees shall authorize all contracts, deeds and other instruments necessary to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer PBC property when directed to do so by the Congregation
 - 2. Shall hold the title to all PBC property for the benefit of PBC.
 - 3. Shall not sign any documents, legal or otherwise, involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, until a specific resolution has been approved by Voting members during a Congregational meeting, authorizing trustee signatures. Likewise, trustees shall not sign contracts, make loans of PBC money, or co-sign or obligate PBC as guarantor, or use PBC assets in any manner as collateral for third party loans/mortgages without the specific approval of the Voting Members during a Congregational meeting.
- b. Selection:
- 1. As mandated by State of Maryland, the Resident Agent (Senior Pastor) shall be a trustee.
 - 2. In addition, there shall be four Voting Members as trustees.
 - 3. The four additional trustees shall be nominated by the Senior Pastor and elected by the Voting Members during a Congregational meeting.
- c. Terms of office:
- 1. Trustees term of service shall be four (4) years and shall be staggered so that one-fourth terminate annually.
 - 2. Trustees are eligible for re-election to successive terms.

Section 9: Standing Committees

- a. There shall be two Standing Committees of PBC: A Finance Committee and a Personnel Committee.
- b. Selection: The Senior Pastor shall vet and recommend candidates for approval by the Voting Members during a Congregational Meeting.
- c. Responsibilities: Standing Committees shall use the resources of and act on behalf of PBC in accordance with authority delegated by the Congregation.
- d. Other: Terms of office, number of members, and other guidelines will be included in the Finance and Personnel Manuals.

Section 10: Church Officers

“Church Officers” shall be the Moderator, the Treasurer and the Clerk.

Section 11: Ministry Teams

- a. Selection: The Ministry Teams shall be created by, and their leaders shall be appointed by, the Senior Pastor.
- b. Responsibilities:
 1. Ministry Teams shall fulfill the need or specific mission for which they were created, e.g., Missions Team and Student Ministries Team. They shall be authorized to use the resources of and to act on behalf of PBC when such authority has been delegated by the Congregation or Senior Pastor.
 2. The Ministry Team leaders shall recruit, train and lead the Ministry Teams to carry out their responsibilities.

Article 8: Ordinances

The ordinances shall be Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Article 9: Licensing and Ordaining

Licensing and ordination to the Gospel Ministry shall be the responsibility of the Elders.

Article 10: Indemnification

To the full extent permitted by Maryland Law, as amended from time to time, PBC shall indemnify any pastor, officer, committee member, employee, volunteer or agent of PBC against any and all expenses and liabilities actually and necessarily incurred by or imposed in connection with any claim, action, suit, or other legal proceeding to which they may be or is made a party by reason of any acts or omissions to act while carrying out their delegated duties in PBC; except, however, that there shall be no indemnification in relation to matters in which said person acted in bad faith; engaged in active and deliberate dishonesty; received an improper personal benefit in money, property, or services; or, in the case of any criminal proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe their actions or omissions were unlawful. Further,

if a proceeding is by or in the right of PBC, indemnification may not be made for any person who is found by a court to be liable to PBC. Whether a person is entitled to indemnification consistent with the requirements of this Section shall be determined by the Trustees. Reasonable expenses may be advanced by PBC in defending such actions. Indemnification as provided in this Article shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, administrators, or other legal representatives of the pastor, officer, committee member, employee, volunteer or agent. If any part of this Article shall be found, in any action, suit, or proceeding, to be invalid or ineffective, the validity and the effectiveness of the remaining parts shall not be affected.

Article 11: Restrictions on PBC Activities

PBC's activities shall be restricted to those consistent with the Purpose for which it is incorporated and permitted under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) or corresponding provisions of any subsequent code.

Article 12: Dissolution and Distribution of Assets

Any vote to dissolve PBC requires a three-fourths vote of Voting Members present and voting at a Congregational meeting that had been preceded by a Congregational meeting where the motion to dissolve PBC has been proposed and then laid on the table for at least 60 calendar days. Both Congregation meetings shall be preceded by PBC-wide notice given at least 30 calendar days in advance stating the purpose, place and time of the meetings. If the motion to dissolve PBC is to facilitate another purpose for the PBC corporation such as merging with another church, and is approved, all assets shall be distributed according to the relevant documents governing the purpose for which the dissolution of PBC was approved. If the motion to dissolve PBC is without another purpose for the PBC corporation, all assets (including property) shall be distributed to an appropriate Baptist religious organization, the selection of which shall be (1) in consultation with the DC Baptist Convention or other appropriate Baptist organization, and (2) approved by the percentage of Voting Members required to approve a motion as specified in Article 6 Governance, Section 2 Congregational meetings.

Article 13: Amendments

Amendment(s) to this Constitution require a three-fourths vote of Voting Members present and voting at a Congregational meeting that had been preceded by a Congregational meeting where the proposed amendment(s) have been proposed and then laid on the table for at least 60 calendar days. Both Congregation meetings must be preceded by PBC-wide notice given at least 30 calendar days in advance stating the purpose, place and time of the meetings.

Amendments to the Constitution shall be proposed by a majority of the Church Leadership Team, a committee appointed specifically to consider amendments, or by petition to the Moderator by at least 10% of the Voting Members present at a Congregational Meeting. The proposed amendments shall be considered in the first of two required Congregational meetings within ninety (90) days.