

CONSTITUTION

THE FIRST SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CHURCH OF TORONTO

PREAMBLE

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this Church shall be **THE FIRST SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CHURCH OF TORONTO**, located in ONTARIO, CANADA

ARTICLE II - OUR FAITH

We believe in God our Father, in God the Son Jesus Christ and in God the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the Bible - it is our Authority in matters of faith and conduct.

We believe in the Church. We believe that the church of God is all believers gathered by the Holy Spirit and joined into one body, of which Christ is the Head. We subscribe to the Christian doctrines and practices as set forth in the **Statement of Beliefs of Seventh Day Baptists**¹.

We believe in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Through confession of faith in Christ and baptism by immersion, we enter the Church. Through the Lord's Supper, we symbolize our Christian Fellowship and pledge allegiance to our Risen Lord.

We believe in the **Sabbath of the Bible**. Following our Lord's example, we observe the **Seventh Day Sabbath**, sunset to sunset, to the glory of God and the physical and spiritual enrichment of man.

We believe in Christ's great commission: as his disciples, we commit ourselves to carry-out Christ's great commission: as his disciples, we commit ourselves to share Christ's Good News with mankind (Matthew 28:19 & 20).

ARTICLE III - OUR COVENANT

We covenant to keep the commandments of God, sustained by **Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit**.

We covenant to meet for worship on the Sabbath and to support the programs of the **Church**.

We covenant to give in service to God, a fair portion of our time, abilities and material possessions in the belief that these are given to us as trust from God.

We covenant to watch over each other for good and to pray for each other to the intent that we may grow in wisdom and spiritual understanding.

¹ See attached addendum

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

This Church recognizes two degrees of affiliation, Full membership and Associate membership.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

The Officers of the Church shall be Full members (as noted in the By-Laws).

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

a) **Worship Services**

Worship Services shall be held on each Sabbath (*Seventh Day of the week - Saturday*) during the year, except as otherwise decided upon by the membership, in consultation with the **Pastorate**² and/or **Diaconate** (as noted in the By-Laws).

b) **Other Activities of the Church**

Other services may be held at such time and in such places as may be determined by the membership.

c) **Communion and Baptismal Services**

The time and location shall be determined by the Pastorate in consultation with the Diaconate.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – MEETINGS

Worship Services - Emergency Measures. When deemed necessary, because of weather or other circumstances meriting change, the Pastorate in consultation with the Diaconate, may cancel or substitute time and place.

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Qualifications for Membership

Membership is open to anyone who accepts **Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour**, who has been baptised by immersion, who **observes the Seventh Day** of the week (Saturday) as the Sabbath and who is in full accord with and adheres to Article II and III of the Constitution.

Exception: Where there are extenuating circumstances, baptism by immersion may be waived by a majority of members present on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

Associate members shall be required to apply for renewal of membership annually; such application to be voted on at the Annual Business Meeting. Associate members may request full membership at any time.

² See By-laws, Article III – Officers, Pastorate

Section 2 – Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership

Members of the Church covenant to pray for each other so that by precept and example they demonstrate the Gospel in family, social and business relations.

Full members of the Church shall have the privilege and duty of voting at all elections and upon all issues that shall come before the Church and of serving in any elected or appointed office for which they are qualified.

Members of the Church have the responsibility to bear jointly, according to their ability, the necessary expenses of the Church. Tithing is an obligation and is strongly encouraged. Additionally, financial support for church programming is strongly encouraged (auxiliary fees, offering, Relief Fund, etc.).

To maintain membership:

- (i) Members must be in attendance a minimum of twenty-six (26) Sabbaths during the Church year, and
- (ii) Tithing must be maintained regularly.

***Exception:** If the foregoing (i). and (ii). is not maintained, such members shall be listed as inactive. Notwithstanding subsections (i). and (ii). above, members who inform the Church that they are ill, or who are abroad, or for any other extenuating circumstances of which the Church is aware shall be exempted.*

If regular attendance and/or tithing are not restored during the second year, such members should be referred to the Advisory Committee for their recommendation and a final decision is to be made by the Church regarding membership status.

Section 3 – New Members

A person wishing to unite with the Church may make the request for membership to a Pastor or a member of the Diaconate. The Pastorate and the Diaconate will confer with the candidate to assure his/her understanding and acceptance of the covenant, the government of the Church and the **Seventh Day Baptist Statement of Beliefs**.

a) Full Members

Upon assurance of his/her understanding and acceptance of those beliefs, and after baptism by immersion except as noted under **(EXCEPTION-ARTICLE II, Section 1)** the candidate may be admitted by vote of the majority of members present and:

- (i) verbal affirmation of his/her faith at a church worship service, at time of baptism or at a regularly scheduled Business Meeting,

or

- (ii) presentation of letter of transfer of membership from another Seventh Day Baptist Church,

or

(iii) testimony of faith, after previous baptism by immersion; letters of transfer of membership are encouraged.

b) Associate Members

Any person not wishing to avail themselves of full membership, who desires to unite with the Church in fellowship and worship, and who is eligible under **ARTICLE 2 SECTION 3** may, by his/her request and the vote of the Church, may become an associate member without interfering with full membership in another Seventh Day Baptist Church. Associate members may share and enjoy all the services and activities of the Church and may participate in business meetings except they shall not vote or hold offices as noted under **ARTICLE III OFFICERS**.

An Associate Member will be allowed to hold office in a Church auxiliary or sit on a Church Committee if 75% of the Advisory Committee approves and brings such a recommendation to the Church for a vote of approval. An Associate Member may stand for re-election at each Annual Business Meeting.

Section 4 – Discipline

The Church, as the Body of Christ, must be disciplined. Membership in the Body assumes responsibility and accountability.

When a member has breached or is alleged to have breached the moral tenets of the Church, or committed any act which deviates from the Statement of Beliefs or the Bible, and this is brought to the attention of any member of the Church, this should be reported to the Pastorate. If warranted, a special Disciplinary Committee of three (3) appointed by the Pastorate, and after consultation with the affected party, shall investigate such breach or allegation and report its findings to the Pastorate.

The findings shall be presented to the Board of Directors for its review before it is presented to the Church.

When the matter is presented to the Church, the Church shall then decide on the recommendation from the Pastorate the discipline to be meted out.

These may include but are not limited to:

- a) Mild rebuke
- b) Loss of voting privileges
- c) Temporary or permanent prevention from holding office
- d) Temporary or permanent removal from office
- e) Suspension of membership
- f) Disbarment from membership
- g) Banning

Should b) through g) be adopted by the Church, an official letter from the Church should be sent to the affected party within two weeks (*14 days*) of the Church's decision. A disbarred member may make an application to the Advisory Committee for re-admittance.

Readmission to membership and fellowship is possible and encouraged. After proper investigation (depending on the reason for loss of membership or banning) and a demonstrated change in the behaviour that led to the loss of membership and/or banning, and on a majority vote at a properly constituted business meeting of the Church, membership and fellowship may be restored.

ARTICLE III – OFFICERS

The officers of this Church shall be:

- (i) Senior Pastor, Pastors, Senior Deacon, Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Music Director, Deacons, Deaconesses, Auditors, Chairperson of Property Management Committee³, Sabbath School Superintendent and such other Officers as shall be deemed necessary.
- (ii) The Senior Pastor, Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer, plus three (3) at large members elected at an Annual Business Meeting for a term of three (3) years shall comprise the Board of Directors of this incorporated body.
- (iii) All officers shall be Landed Immigrants or Canadian Citizens.

Pastors, Deacons, Deaconesses must conform to the biblically stated requirements (1 Timothy 3:1-13).

The Church membership at a general or a special business meeting may terminate the unexpired term of any officer whose performance or conduct it considers woefully inadequate.

'Calling' a Pastor

When a vacancy exists, or the incumbent is unable, or unwilling to serve between regular Business Meetings, the Moderator shall recognize that a vacancy exists, and shall bring a recommendation to the Church to fill the unexpired term.

In 'calling' a Pastor, the Advisory Committee will elect a Search Committee of five (5) members, who shall present its recommendation to a regular or special Business Meeting of the Church.

The Church and the Pastor shall enter into a formal written agreement whereby the Pastor shall serve for a term of at least two (2) years (to the closest Annual Business Meeting). The Pastor must be of the Seventh Day Baptist Faith.

A Secret Preferential Ballot (Yes or No) will be taken with majority vote of the members, assuring recall for at least one year. A mutual agreement between the

³ **NB Committee:** The duties of the Office of Chair of Property Management Committee, as well as the duties of the Office of Sabbath School Superintendent need to be specified under "Duties of Officers". Language is to be considered to add to the role of the Moderator to ensure the Nominating Committee fills the position of Sabbath School Superintendent and Music Director.

Pastor and the Church may extend recall term beyond one year. If requested, the ballot counts may be given to the Pastor for his personal information.

Duties of Officers

The Pastorate

The Pastorate expresses the collective leadership of the church, and shall comprise the Senior Pastor and the Pastors who shall work in close conjunction with each other.

Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is the leader of the Pastorate and is responsible for the Spiritual leadership of the Church. He shall:

1. Be responsible for regular Sabbath, Communion, Baptismal Services, and Infant Dedications.
2. Be alert to needs of Church and community and willing to serve both.
3. Work in close coordination with and serve as ex-officio member of all Church Committees.
4. In consultation with the Pastors, be responsible for the preaching appointments.
5. Be the official representative at Association, General Conference, and other external functions.
6. In consultation with the Pastors, ensure the assignment of duties and responsibilities within the Pastorate.
7. Responsible for the teaching and planning of the biblical education of the congregation.

Pastors

Pastors are responsible for the Spiritual leadership of the Church. They shall:

1. Be responsible for regular Sabbath, Communion, Baptismal Services, and Infant Dedications.
2. Be alert to needs of Church and community and willing to serve both.
3. Complete their duties and responsibilities as assigned within the Pastorate.
4. Responsible for the teaching and planning of the biblical education of the congregation.
5. Work in close coordination with and serve as ex-officio member of all Church Committees.

Senior Deacon

The duties of the Senior Deacon are to assist the Pastors and in their absence in conjunction with the Diaconate, ensure the performance of the duties of the Pastorate in every respect with the exception of marriages.

Moderator

1. Preside at all special and regular Business Meetings of the Church.
2. The Moderator shall make up the agenda for all business meetings and shall ensure the Advisory Committee is aware of the agenda before all regular and Special business meetings.
3. Conduct the business of the Church in accordance with the By-Laws.
4. Arrange for all Business Meetings to be announced at least one week in advance, except in emergencies.
5. Shall be in constant communication with the Church Clerk regarding outstanding matters of the Church.
6. Shall ensure that all committees are functioning properly and shall report any deficiencies to the Advisory Committee.
7. Ensure that budgets are submitted by auxiliaries.

Assistant Moderator

The Assistant Moderator shall assume the duties of the Moderator in his/her absence, or as delegated by the Moderator.

Clerk

1. Serve as the Recording Officer of the Church Business Meetings and shall carry out all general and specific correspondence as directed by the Church.
2. Serve as Custodian of the Church records except such as specially assigned to others (e.g., financial documents).
3. Record all membership activity in Record Book⁴ and Church minutes books.

Assistant Clerk

The Assistant Clerk shall assume the duties of the Clerk in his/her absence or when required to do so.

Treasurer

1. Count the weekly offering in conjunction with the Assistant Treasurer or in his/her absence, a member of the Diaconate.
2. Keep an accurate accounting record of receipts, disbursements and special funds established by the Church.
3. Make disbursements for the recurring expenses of the Church upon request and authorization of the Church and at such other times as the Church may direct.
4. Provide quarterly and annual reports to the Church that accurately reflect the financial status of the Church and at such other times as the Church may direct.

⁴ The Record Book should contain rules of the church citing the business meeting that they were decided, the standard practices of the church, a list of active members, births, deaths, marriages, infant dedications, baptisms, and legal agreements/contracts.

5. Prepare an Annual Budget to be submitted to the Advisory and the Board of Directors for their approval.

Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer and shall assume the duties of the Treasurer in his/her absence.

Music Director

Plan and provide instrumental and vocal music for **Worship Service and Special Programs** in coordination with the Music Committee.

The Diaconate

a) Membership:

The Diaconate shall consist of the Deacons and Deaconesses. Any ordained member of the Church may be invited to serve.

b) Responsibilities:

1. Assist the Pastorate in the ordinances of baptism and communion.
2. Assist the Pastorate in maintaining the programs and sustaining the work of the Church.
3. Lead out in church visitation and ministry to the sick and needy.
4. Nominate new members to the Diaconate as needed, and propose same to the Church for election.
5. The Diaconate shall appoint a Senior Deacon.
6. Assist the Pastorate in planning Ordination Services.
7. Assist in all other matters as requested by the Pastorate.

c) Meetings of the Diaconate

Meetings shall be held at least quarterly. Regular reports shall be made at Quarterly and Annual Business Meetings.

Property Management Committee

a) Membership:

The membership shall not be less than five (5) or more than seven (7) persons elected at the Annual Church Business Meeting.

b) Responsibilities:

The Property Management Committee shall be responsible for management, maintenance and custodial care of all Church property and shall report to the Board of Directors for official approval of their actions.

c) Reports:

A record shall be kept of all meetings and regular reports and recommendations concerning Church property shall be made at each Quarterly Business meeting.

Auditors

They shall audit the Books and records of the Treasurer and submit a written report to the Church Annual Business Meeting.

On advice of the Board of Directors, the Auditors may request from the Treasurer the Books for auditing at anytime. A written report of their findings shall be submitted to the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days for their consideration.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall hold in trust all properties belonging to the Church and transact under its direction, the legal business of the Church.

These include, but are not limited to, maintaining the non-profit status of the Church, taxes, insurances, property transfers, borrowing of money and incurring indebtedness, deeds of trust, promissory notes, bonds, mortgages and other duties as delegated by the Church. All contractual agreements must be approved as to form by the Board of Directors and signed by any two of the following board members - Chairman of the Board, Treasurer or the Clerk. Two (2) members of the same family shall not sign on behalf of the Church.

ARTICLE IV - COMMITTEES

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee shall consist of the Moderator, Senior Deacon, a Deaconess, Treasurer, Clerk, a representative from the Property Management Committee, Sabbath School Superintendent, a Youth Advisor, a representative from the Men's Fellowship, a representative from the Women's Auxiliary, a representative from the Planning and Fundraising Committee, an elected member of the Church, and the Senior Pastor or designate (a member of the Pastorate), who shall act as Chairman. The elected member shall serve a two (2) year term.

The Advisory Committee's responsibility is to plan and co-ordinate the total Church program.

The Advisory Committee shall advise the Pastorate on administrative matters. All members of the Advisory Committee shall be members of THE FIRST SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CHURCH OF TORONTO.

It shall review the agenda prepared by the Moderator for the Church Business Meetings, and shall make recommendations to the Church in keeping with its review of Church administration. A quorum shall consist of 50% +1 of the members.

The work of the Advisory Committee is subject to the Church and the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V – CHURCH AUXILIARIES

a) Sabbath School

The Sabbath School is an organization of the Church for promoting Christian Education. Officers shall be elected annually by the Church. These Officers shall be a Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer and such other Officers as deemed necessary.

Sabbath School Superintendent shall report to the Quarterly and Annual Business Meetings.

b) Other Church Organizations

Such organizations as the Women's Auxiliary, Men's Fellowship and Youth Fellowship and all other Auxiliaries, although independently organized, are a part of the Church and supplement its work in many ways. Their development, growth and affiliation with other similar national organizations shall be encouraged by the Church but only with prior approval of the Church. They shall be encouraged to bring annual reports to the Church Business Meetings.

AMENDING FORMULA CLAUSE

The Constitution and its by-laws may be amended at any business meeting of the church by a two-thirds majority vote provided:

- (i) The amendment has been submitted in writing to the membership at least three (3) weeks prior to its consideration by the church.
- (ii) The amendment(s) shall be adopted after three (3) readings by a two-thirds majority vote. Each reading requires a two-thirds majority vote.

DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event that the **First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Toronto** ceases to function as a Church under the *Income Tax Act (Act)* and is no longer registered as a church under the **Act**, then all property, assets and liabilities of said Church at the time of dissolution shall be turned over to

NON-PROFIT CLAUSE

The Organization (Church) shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members and any profits or other accretions to the Organization shall be used in promoting its objects.

The Directors of the Incorporated body shall be the Officers of the Church which are elected by the Church. The Officers are the Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, the Senior Pastor and three (3) members elected at large by the Church for a term of three (3) years.

WORKING DRAFT CONSTITUTION
DECEMBER 3, 2013

Lucy Sincere	M. [unclear]	Syme Day
Jane Williams	John [unclear]	[unclear]
Genoa	[unclear]	[unclear]
M. Condise	[unclear]	[unclear]
James	C. Reynolds	[unclear]
# Mark	C. Watt	[unclear]
Heather Lynch	E. Taylor	[unclear]
[unclear]	L. Morris	[unclear]
[unclear]	N. Anderson	[unclear]
Randison	Lauree Reynolds	[unclear]
Joyce Young	[unclear]	[unclear]
[unclear]	[unclear]	[unclear]
[unclear]	[unclear]	[unclear]
[unclear]	[unclear]	[unclear]

COMPOSITION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Makeup of the Advisory Committee
<u>13 members</u>
1. Pastor
2. Moderator
3. Senior Deacon
4. Deaconess
5. Treasurer
6. Clerk
7. Property Management (rep)
8. Sabbath School Super.
9. Youth Advisor
10. Men's Fellowship
11. Women's Fellowship
12. Planning and Fundraising
13. Elected

*two (2) year term for elected member/officer