

Congregation Regulations

Framework for Congregational Bylaws – Resolution of the Council of the Baptist Christian Church of April 28, 2019

Chapter I – Membership in the Congregation

Article 1.

1. Membership in the Congregation of the Baptist Church in the Republic of Poland, hereinafter referred to as the "Congregation", is acquired by way of a resolution of the Congregation Conference, subject to the conditions set out in Article 9(3) of the Basic Internal Law.

2. If an application for membership is made by a person who is a member of another congregation of the Baptist Christian Church or another evangelical church, membership may be acquired by a resolution of the Congregation Council on the basis of a certificate issued by the congregation to which the applicant belongs.

3. The Council of the Congregation may establish additional conditions for membership in the Congregation.

4. A member of the congregation is obliged to serve the congregation with his spiritual gifts and to support it financially, as well as to submit to its pastoral care and discipline.

Article 2.

Membership in the Congregation ceases as a result of:

- 1) transfer of membership to another congregation,
- 2) resignation submitted in writing to the Council of the Congregation,
- 3) resolutions of the Congregation Council on removal from the list of members,
- 4) resolutions of the Congregation Conference on disciplinary disfellowshipping,
- 5) death.

Article 3.

1. A person transferring membership to another congregation shall apply to the Pastor or the Congregation Council for a certificate confirming membership in the Congregation and indicating the congregation to which he or she intends to move. Removal from the list of members of the Congregation takes place on the date of issuance of the above-mentioned certificate.

2. The removal referred to in Article 2(3) shall be made due to the unjustified absence of a member of the Congregation for a period of at least 6 months. Before deciding to remove a Pastor or Congregation Council, it is the responsibility of the Pastor or Congregation Council to attempt pastoral contact.

3. Disciplinary action shall be taken by the Council of the Congregation if a member of the Congregation persists in sin, causes divisions in the Congregation, or professes a doctrine contrary to the Confession of Faith of the Church.

4. After the disciplinary proceedings have been conducted, the Congregation Council decides whether to discontinue the proceedings if the charges are found to be unfounded or if repentance is found. Otherwise, the Congregation Council submits a request to the Congregation Conference.

5. In the course of disciplinary proceedings, the Council of the Congregation may pass a resolution to suspend a member of the Congregation from membership for a period not exceeding 6 months. In justified cases, the suspension may be extended to one year. In such a situation, the Congregation Council shall provide a written explanation for the extension of the suspension.

6. The Council of the Congregation may adopt a resolution to suspend a member of the Congregation also at the request of the person concerned in connection with his or her long-term departure or in other justified circumstances.

Chapter II – The Congregation Conference

Article 4.

1. The Congregation Conference shall be composed of adult members of the Congregation, with the exception of persons who have been suspended from membership.

2. Underage members of the Congregation may participate in the deliberations of the Congregation Conference with the consent of the person presiding over the meeting of the Congregation Conference.

Article 5.

The Conference of the Congregation shall have jurisdiction to make the decisions referred to in Article 16. Fundamental National Law and, in particular, to:

- 1) appoint committees to control the financial activities of the congregation;
- 2) elect delegates to the District Conference;
- 3) Accept the annual reports of the Congregation Council and the First Pastor of the Church.

Article 6.

1. The Council of the Congregation shall present to the members of the Congregation in the customary manner a notice of the convening of the Conference of the Congregation at least 10 days before the date of the opening of the Conference. The notice shall contain the draft agenda for the Conference.

2. In the absence of a Congregation Council, the Congregation Conference shall be convened and presided over by a representative of the District Council to which the Congregation belongs, or by a member of the Church Council.

3. Persons who are the subject of personnel requests included in the agenda shall be notified in writing within the time limit set out in paragraph 1.

4. In the case of disciplinary proceedings against a member of the Congregation, the person concerned may participate in the portion of the proceedings relating to that proceeding only with the consent of the Congregational Conference.

Article 7.

One of the Congregation Conferences of the year is a reporting event. The main subject of its deliberations is the annual written report of the Council of the Church and the First Pastor of the Church.

Article 8.

1. The Congregation Conference shall be presided over by the Chairman of the Congregation Council or another person elected by the Congregation Conference.
2. The proceedings of the Congregation Conference shall be recorded. The minutes of the proceedings shall be adopted no later than during the proceedings of the Conference following the minutes of the proceedings.

Chapter III - The Council of the Congregation

Article 9.

1. The Congregational Conference shall determine the size of the Congregation Council in accordance with Article 20(1) of the Fundamental Internal Law.
2. Before electing the Congregation Council, the Congregation Conference determines the qualifications of the candidates in accordance with the character of the Congregation Council adopted by the Congregation.
3. The term of office of the Council of the Congregation shall be 3 years. The Congregational Conference may decide on a different length for the next term of office of the Congregation Council within the framework of Article 21(1) of the Basic Domestic Law.
4. The term of office of the Congregation Council shall be counted from the date of its election and shall end upon the election of a new Congregation Council.
5. The outgoing Congregation Council shall convene a Congregation Conference for the election of the Congregation Council for a new term of office not later than 3 months after the date specified in paragraph 3.

Article 10.

The Council of the Congregation shall have the authority to make the decisions referred to in Article 19 of the Fundamental Internal Law, and in particular to:

- 1) appoint and dismiss Vicars,

- 2) signing invocation agreements with the clergy of the congregation and determining the amount of their salaries,
- 3) determining the subordination of non-ordained clergy,
- 4) hiring and firing employees of the Congregation who are not clergymen of the Congregation,
- 5) to create, transform and abolish the branches and agencies of the Congregation, to give them bylaws, and to appoint and dismiss their chairmen,
- 6) decide on the frequency and manner of celebrating church ordinances, including the Baptism of Faith and the Lord's Supper,
- 7) establishing the rules for the Pastor to accept declarations of marriage as part of the religious form of civil marriage,
- 8) Keeping the Register of Members of the Congregation, the Register of Charges, the Book of Marriages, the Book of Congregational Minutes, the Cemetery Registers and the keeping of the records of the Congregation.

Article 11.

1. Meetings of the Congregation Council shall be held at least once a quarter.
2. The meetings of the Congregation Council shall be recorded. The minutes of the meeting are approved by the Congregation Council.

Article 12.

The duties of the Chairman of the Congregation Council include, in particular:

- 1) convening meetings of the Congregation Council,
- 2) ensuring that the procedures provided for in the Basic Internal Law of the Church and the Regulations of the Congregation are observed in the activities of the Congregation,
- 3) Keeping and storing congregation records.

Article 13.

1. Membership in the Council of the Congregation shall cease in the situations specified in Article 2 of these Regulations and in the event of suspension from the rights of a member of the Congregation.

2. In the case of disciplinary proceedings against a member of the Congregation Council, the person concerned may participate in the portion of the Congregation Council meeting relating to that proceeding only with the consent of the Congregation Council.

3. In the situation described in paragraph 1, a by-election to the Congregation Council shall be held.

Chapter IV – The Clergy of the Church

Article 14.

The clergy of the congregation are Pastors, Deacons, Missionaries, and Vicars. The clergy of the congregation should meet the criteria described in Articles 47(2) and 48(2) of the Basic Domestic Law, respectively.

Article 15.

1. The First Pastor, Senior Pastors and Auxiliary Pastors shall be appointed and dismissed by the Congregational Conference in accordance with Article 48(3) of the Basic Internal Law.

2. If a congregation has a First Pastor, the Assistant Pastors shall be appointed at the request of the First Pastor.

3. A pastor's ministry is not a term of office. The congregation may also appoint a pastor for a limited period of time.

4. Appointment to serve as the First Pastor of the Church requires a 3/4 majority of votes in the presence of at least 51% of the total number of members of the Church entitled to vote. A pastor may be transferred to the position of Assistant Pastor or Senior Pastor by a simple majority of votes

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5. The First Pastor of the Church is responsible for the ministry, teaching, and preaching of the Church. In particular, congregational services are subject to it, as well as the pastoral aspect of all congregational services. The First Pastor of the Church is the guardian of the purity of doctrinal doctrine preached in the Church. Provides a vision for the ministry, development, and character of the Congregation and works closely with the Congregation Council. The First Pastor of the Church leads the Church as its shepherd and guardian.

6. Once a year, the First Pastor of the congregation presents his report to the Congregational Conference.

7. Auxiliary Pastors report in their duties to the First Pastor of the Church. The First Pastor of the congregation determines the scope of their duties, working hours, vacation dates, and issues work orders.

8. A Senior Pastor may become a Pastor after many years of service in the Church, who is unable to perform the pastoral function full-time due to his health condition or life situation. The Senior Pastor works with the First Pastor in the areas of ministry, preaching, and teaching. He may also carry out specific assignments assigned to him by the Congregation Council.

Article 16.

1. Clergy of the Congregation who are financially supported by the Congregation and wish to undertake additional service or work outside the Congregation must obtain the approval of their superior. In the case of the First Pastor and the Senior Pastor, the approval of the Congregation Council is required.

2. The termination of the ministry of a clergyman of the congregation shall be effected by:

1) submit a resignation,

2) dismissal from the function performed,

3) the expiry of the period for which it was appointed,

4) Death.

Chapter V – The Charges of the Church

Article 17.

1. The status of a ward of the Congregation is a special form of participation in the community of the Congregation in accordance with Article 5(2) of the Basic Internal Law.
2. The status of a mentee is provided for persons who meet the following conditions:
 - 1) are members of Baptist (or evangelical) congregations where they live,
 - 2) meet the requirements of Article 9(3) of the Fundamental Domestic Law,
 - (3) are temporarily in the area of operation of the congregation in their care;
 - 4) intend to serve the congregation in which they reside with their spiritual gifts and to support it financially,
 - 5) are willing to submit to the pastoral care and discipline of the congregation.
3. The Council of the Congregation may establish additional conditions for the acquisition of the status of a ward of the Congregation.
4. A ward of the Congregation does not have the right to vote in the Congregation or to stand for election.

Article 18.

1. The status of a ward is obtained by a resolution of the Council of the Congregation.
2. An applicant submits an application to the Congregation Council together with a letter of recommendation from the home congregation.
3. The letter of recommendation should include:
 - 1) the date of baptism,
 - 2) the opinion of the parent congregation,
 - 3) Contact information of the pastor or representative of the authority of the home congregation.

Article 19.

1. The Council of the Congregation shall keep a Register of the Wards remaining in the community of the Congregation.
2. The ward is introduced to the congregation in the manner customary for new members of the congregation.
3. The Council of the Congregation informs the authorities of the mother congregation of the decision to admit the ward into the community of the Congregation.
4. If you are transferred to another congregation or return to your home congregation, the Congregation Council will issue a certificate and an opinion to the person in your care.
5. The Council of the Congregation informs the Congregation of the removal of the ward from the Register of Charges.

Article 20.

1. Removal of a mentee from the Register of Wards may also take place:
 - 1) due to unjustified absence from the congregation for a period of at least 3 months,
 - (2) because of persistence in sin, causing divisions in the Church, or professing doctrine contrary to the Church's Creed, or lack of repentance in this regard.
2. There is no right of appeal against the decision of the Congregation Council to remove him from the Register.
3. In the event of disciplinary removal of a ward from the Register, the Congregation Council shall inform the parent congregation of this fact.

Chapter VI — Transitional and final provisions

Article 21.

On the effective date of these Framework Congregational Regulations, in congregations where only one pastor serves, he or she shall become the First Pastor of the congregation ex officio.

Article 22.

The provisions of these Regulations shall enter into force on the date specified in the resolution of the Church Council