

OLD COLONY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - NAME:

The name of this Association is: OLD COLONY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION (OCBA).

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Association is to provide member churches fellowship, support and collective opportunities for promotion of the Gospel as each seeks to implement the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III – RELATIONSHIPS

The Association is in covenantal relationship with The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts (TABCOM) and consequently with the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA). *Refer to attached copy.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall consist of those Christian churches of Baptist polity within the contiguous historical province of this Association, which subscribe to and agree to support, the intent of the Articles of Purpose and Relationships. Churches who are members of the Association as of the adoption of these by-laws are members without further action. Churches seeking to become members shall submit the request in writing with a copy of the recorded affirmative vote of the congregation attesting to their willingness to subscribe to the Association's By-laws together with documentation of organization, such as their covenant and by-laws. Admission shall be completed upon vote of the Association at the next called meeting.

A church will retain membership by:

continued affirmation and promotion of the STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.

continuing participation in the meetings of the Association.

filing of its annual report with the Association Clerk.

continuing participation in sharing in the expenses of the Association.

Any church failing to fulfill these obligations may have its voting privileges suspended upon recommendation of the Executive Board and subsequent vote of the Association.

A member church desiring to separate from the Association is expected to so advise the Clerk of the Association of their intent, the reason for their action and a copy of the congregational vote regarding the action. The Association and Clerk

shall immediately advise the Executive Board and the TABCOM area minister and call meeting of same at which time, mindful of the admonitions of Scripture, seek to effect reconciliation. A report of the matter shall be made at the next called meeting of the Association together with recommendations for such actions as may be determined to be best for our mutual Christian witness.

The Association may initiate dismissal if it is conclusively demonstrated that a member church has abrogated the covenant relationship of these By-laws. Such action on dismissal shall follow a procedure corresponding with those for voluntary dismissal; except that a special meeting shall be called for the purpose. A vote of two thirds of delegates present and voting is required.

ARTICLE V – GOVERNANCE:

The legal business of the Association shall be conducted by representation of the member churches determined as follows: One pastor of the church and four layperson delegates. All persons in regular standing in a member church may participate without vote.

The stated Clerks of each member church and the Association shall serve as the liaisons for all official communications. All communication from the Association shall also be directed to the serving pastor and all Executive Board Members.

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS:

All regular meetings of the Association shall be called by the Clerk mailing written notices to the Clerk and Pastor of each member church and each Association Executive Board member not less than thirty days before the date of such call, stating the time and place and reason for the call.

The Annual meeting shall be called by the Clerk in accordance with the standing rules. Other meetings shall be called by the clerk at the direction of the executive Board. A quorum shall require the presence at the called meeting of a minimum of ten member churches. A lesser number may adjourn the meeting from time to time.

A special meeting shall be called upon the request of three or more churches, given in writing, stating the purpose for such request. The clerk shall notify the executive Board and issue the call within sixty days.

All actions taken by the Association shall be determined by a simple majority of those delegates present and voting at the meeting unless otherwise provided for in these by-laws.

ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS: The officers and Committees established by these by-laws shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association from a ballot presented by the Nominating Committee. They shall serve designated terms of office

and/or until their successors shall be elected. Nominees shall be resident members of a participating church.

MODERATOR:

A moderator shall be elected to a term of two years and may be re-elected to one additional term only. Nominees shall have exhibited leadership skills in a local church. The duties of the office are those common to the office including presiding at all meetings of the Association and the Executive Board, and as an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating.

The Moderator shall serve as the principal liaison between the Association, the Area Minister, and TABCOM.

The Moderator will seek to keep the Vice Moderator informed of all essential matters; shall determine that adequate clerical and financial records are being maintained and that required reports are rendered in a timely fashion. He/she shall make a report to the Association at its Annual Meeting.

VICE MODERATOR:

A Vice Moderator shall be elected with the same qualifications and to the same term of office as the moderator. The Vice Moderator shall be ready to serve in the event of the Moderator's absence or incapacity.

He/she shall be a voting member of the Executive Board and shall have such other responsibilities and powers as may be voted by that Board. The Vice moderator may be nominated and expected to succeed the current moderator.

CLERK:

A clerk shall be elected for a term of 1 year and may serve consecutive terms. He/she shall perform all duties common to the office; including the recording of the minutes of all Association and Executive Board meetings and the timely submission of such reports as may be requested by affiliated organizations.

The Clerk shall publish a written Annual report to the Association which shall include actions taken by vote of the Association and roll calls of churches participating at the called meetings during the year.

The Clerk's signature shall be on file with all depositories holding Association fund. He/she shall be authorized by the Executive Board to exercise this authority in the event of the Treasurer's absence or incapacity.

In the absence of the Clerk, the Moderator shall appoint a Clerk pro-tempore. Actions so recorded shall be transcribed and provided to the Clerk without delay.

TREASURER:

A Treasurer shall be elected for a term of one year and may serve consecutive terms. He/she shall perform all duties common to the office; including the receiving, distributing and accounting for all funds of the Association as authorized by vote of the Association or directed by the Executive Board. Written reports shall be presented to the Annual Meeting and oral reports to the Executive Board meetings. He/she shall be Chairperson of the Association Budget Committee.

AUDITOR:

The auditor shall be elected annually to term of one year, and may serve consecutive terms. He/she shall audit the accounts of the Treasurer and determine that the Clerk's records are complete and in good order. He/she shall file a written report with the clerk 21 days before the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII – EXECUTIVE BOARD

There shall be an Executive Board comprised of the Moderator, Vice- Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and Chairpersons of all Committees and Task Forces, the Executive Officer or a designated member of any affiliated organization whose jurisdiction coincides with that of the Association, and such other persons as may be elected or appointed to serve as Association representatives to TABCOM or ABCUSA functions.

The TABCOM area Minister and the Commissioned Associational Ministers serving this Association shall be members ex-officio.

The Board shall meet not less than four times in each fiscal year. It shall administer the work of the Association. A budget for the year following and advance plans for ensuing periods shall be presented for action at the Annual Meeting. It shall appoint persons to responsibilities as provided in the Standing Rules. It may appoint, for service until the next Annual Meeting, a replacement for any officer or chairperson unable to serve.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

There shall be a NOMINATING COMMITTEE of not less than six persons representing all areas of the Association elected annually. They shall bring to the subsequent Annual Meeting the necessary nominations to fill the offices of the Association. This committee shall also nominate representatives to TABCOM in accordance with our covenant relationship. No person having served on the Nominating Committee for two successive years shall be eligible for re-election until one year shall have intervened.

There shall be an ORDAINED MINISTRY COMMITTEE consisting of six persons, the majority of whom shall be ordained minister. They shall be elected for staggered terms of two years. They shall act in collaboration with the

TABCOM Commission on Ordained Ministry and be concerned with the welfare of all American Baptist persons within the Association who are:

Preparing for the ordained ministry.

Pastors of churches.

Ministers in special service.

Retired ministers.

Commissioned missionaries

Retired missionaries.

The chairperson or one he/she shall appoint, shall also act as the Chairperson of the Ordination Council. (See Ordination Council attached to Standing Rules.)

OTHER COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES may be appointed by the Executive Board, in accordance with the Standing Rules to accomplish the spiritual ministry of The Association as stated in Articles II – PURPOSE.

ARTICLE X – AMMENDMENTS:

These By-laws may be amended at any regularly called meeting of the Association, or at any special meeting called for that purpose. Such amendments shall become effective upon an affirmative voted of two-thirds of the delegates present and voting, provided at least Sixty days written notice of the proposed change has been sent by the Clerk of the Association to the pastor and Clerk of each constituent church and to the members of the Executive Board.

OLD COLONY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
October 15, 1996

STANDING RULES

The following standing rules are for the regulation of Association affairs and established by Association vote. These rules may be amended by submission of a proposal to the executive Board which shall recommend action to the next called meeting of the Association. The majority vote of those present and entitled to vote shall be effective.

Section 1 – COUNCILS

It is not the function of the Association to rule on matters of faith, polity or procedure for its constituents. When the occasion arises requiring a consensus on such matters, it shall be sought in a council comprised of the pastor and two delegates from each church in the Association, called by the clerk of the Association or the Ordained Ministry committee. A report shall be made to the Association at the next called meeting.

Section 2 – NOMINATIONS

In making nominations to fill the Association offices and committees, the Nominating Committee shall:

- A. Observe a general policy of alternating the office of moderator between clergy and laity.
- B. Recommend to the Executive Board persons to fill vacancies.
- C. Nominate not more than one person from any church for the general offices of the Association.
- D. Designate the convener of each committee nominated.
- E. Nominate none of its members to any office in the Association except to the Nominating Committee.
- F. Refer to job descriptions as prepared by the Executive Board and on file with the Clerk.
- G. Determine that each nominee is a member in good standing in a cooperating, constituent church.
- H. Not nominate a person to hold more than one elected office at any one time except as provided by the By-laws or Standing Rules.

Section 3 – TERM OF OFFICE AND VACANCIES:

Officers and committees shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association, shall assume office on May 1, and serve until their respective successors shall be elected.

The termination of membership of an officer or committee member in a constituent church, or the withdrawal or removal of such officer or committee member from the jurisdiction of the Association or church which he/she represents, shall constitute a vacating of office.

The Executive Board shall be empowered to replace inactive officers or representatives if they fail to give reason for not attending two (2) Executive Board meetings in succession.

The Executive Board shall also be empowered to fill any vacancies occurring between Annual Meetings.

The Nominating Committee shall submit the names of persons to replace such temporary appointments at the next Annual meeting.

The Executive Board shall develop and maintain statements of responsibilities and job descriptions for each office and committee. The Clerk shall ascertain that these records are current and annual provide them in writing to the Nominating Committee for distribution to the corresponding nominees.

Section 4 - ANNUAL/FISCAL YEAR AND ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual/Fiscal year of the Association shall be May 1 through April 30 of each year. The Annual Meeting shall be held not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. A specific date shall be set by the Executive Board.

Section 5 - CLUSTERS

The Executive Board shall encourage the formation of clusters of sister churches to promote the purpose of the Association.

Section 6 – ORDINATION COUNCIL:

The attached document titled “Steps in the Ordination Process within the Old Colony Baptist Association,” adopted in 1994, shall govern this council.

Section 7 – CONTRIBUTION/ASSESSMENTS

Each member church shall be asked to contribute a set amount annually for each resident member. The amount shall be recommended by the Executive Board and acted on at the Annual Meeting of the Association. This voluntary contribution by the churches should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association upon receipt of a communication from that person.

Section 8 – COMMITTEES/TASK FORCES:

A. NOMINATING COMMITTEE and ORDAINED MINISTRY COMMITTEE

These are permanent committees provided in the By-laws.

B. BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Treasurer shall be the Chairperson and the Executive Board shall appoint not less than two additional members. They shall prepare a budget for the ensuing fiscal year and submit it to the Executive Board for review and action at the Annual Meeting. They shall recommend to the Executive Board proposed changes in the assessment policies.

C. ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE:

The Executive Board shall appoint an Annual Meeting Committee of not less than five persons, not less than 90 days before the determined date of said meeting. The responsibilities of this committee shall be to determine and provide for place, time and program.

D. COMMISSIONED AREA MINISTERS:

Persons may be appointed to this work as provided in the attached document:
“COMMISSIONED ASSOCIATIONAL MINSTERS.”

E. SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES:

The Executive Board may appoint person or persons to perform task which are not provided for in the by-laws. Such units shall be established, as the need arises, to develop and/or execute plans, programs and/or projects. The Executive Board shall specify in writing the purpose of each unit, its convener, and its life.

Commissioned Associational Ministers

Purpose: The office of Commissioned Association Minister (CAM) helps our functioning at the associational level as the Body of Christ, sharing leadership, identifying, developing and deploying gifts for the well-being of the whole body, bringing glory to God through the Spirit of Christ.

Office: Commissioned Associational Minister (CAM) shall hereafter be an office within the Old Colony Association. The Area Minister shall recommend to the Executive Board such persons to serve as CAMS as he or she deemed appropriate. Upon the affirmative vote of the Executive Board, the CAM shall begin serving and shall be commissioned at the next associational meeting and recognized at the subsequent annual gathering of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. The term of office shall be considered two years from the date of appointment.

Personal Qualifications: CAMS shall be persons who are called and gifted by God to serve our association, its leadership, its congregations, their leadership and all the people of God. Ordinarily, a CAM shall be a resident of the association, have a history of service to God and humankind, a heart for ministry, and concern of OCBA and our ABC family. Installed pastors are not eligible to be CAMS.

Covenant: In consultation with the Area Minister and/or the OCBA Executive Board, a covenant shall be developed which shall include the gifts and interests of the CAM to be offered in service, and the pattern of service or availability. The covenant shall be reaffirmed or redrawn biennially or at the desire of the CAM or Area Minister. The CAM shall be part of a team which will provide feedback and support to the Area Minister and meet no less than twice a year. CAMS shall serve as ex-officio members of the Executive Board of the OCBA.

Appreciation and Expenses: Appreciation shall be demonstrated toward the CAM through recognition and affirmation, the inherent satisfaction of living out one's call, influence upon the OCBA, the fun and fellowship of the Area Minister – CAM team. Expenses incurred by the Cam shall be reimbursed by the Association upon submission and affirmative vote of the Executive Board.

**Steps in the Ordination Process
Within the Old Colony Baptist Association**

Before the Ordination Council

1. Within three months of the granting of a pre-ordination licenses, the Chairperson of the OCBA Committee on the Ministry (COMB) or a designee will arrange a meeting with the licensee and local church pastor for the following purposes:
 - A. To become acquainted with the licensee.
 - B. To explore ways for the candidate to become involved with the Association.

A brief summary of the interview will be mailed by the interviewer to the licensee with a copy to the local church, TABCOM Committee on Ministerial Preparation Secretary (for licensee's file), and COM file. Should the licensee wish to respond to the summary, a copy of the response should be mailed to these same places.

2. The OCBA COM will appoint an advisor to maintain contact on an annual basis with the licensee to provide guidance in the process, in cooperation with the local church pastor. This advisor will find ways to include the licensee in the life of the association. This will include, but not be limited to, the licensee attending an annual meeting to be introduced and make a brief statement, followed by attendance and participation at least once each year at OCBA functions.
3. When OCBA COM chairperson has received written confirmation that the candidate has met Ministerial Preparation Committee requirements and that Commission on the Ministry (TABCOM) has voted that he or she should proceed toward ordination, the chairperson will arrange a time for the presentation of the candidate's Ordination paper to COM. The candidate shall see that the COM chairperson is given a current copy of the paper.
4. The chairperson will mail a copy of the paper to each member of COM with a cover letter stating the date, place and time for the examination of the candidate (cost of mailing will be covered by OCBA.) This notice should be mailed *at least* 10 days in advance of the meeting.
5. The candidate will meet with COM at the appointed time and present his or her paper. It is expected that the candidate will appear by her or himself. The paper should include the following elements?
 - A. Christian Experience
 - B. Call to the Ministry
 - C. Theological Views
 1. God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit
 2. Scripture
 3. Humanity, Sin
 4. The Church

5. Role of the Pastor and laity in ministry

- D. Understanding of American Baptist Polity
- E. Attitude toward the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A. and its ecumenical witness.

After presentation of the paper, Committee members will ask questions and enter into dialog with the candidate concerning the paper. Following a suitable period of discussion, the COM will excuse the candidate in order to vote on its recommendation. It may vote in one of the following ways:

- A. The candidate and local church should proceed with the ordination process.
- B. The candidate should be delayed in the process until certain conditions are met e.g. revision or refinement of the paper, Center for Career Development evaluation.
- C. The candidate and local church should not proceed in the ordination process for some specified reasons.

The candidate will be invited back into the COM. The recommendation will be shared and explained with the candidate by the chairperson. It should be understood that this process may take one or more meeting between the candidate and the COM.

6. A letter stating the recommendation of the COM will be sent to the local church, with copies to the candidate, Area Minister, OCBA Moderator, Clerk and COM files. This letter will include the next steps in the process. Should the COM recommend proceeding toward ordination, the procedure is as follows:

- A. The candidate send COM chair a finalized copy of the Ordination paper.
- B. The COM chair contacts the local church to set a date for the Ordination Council. This date must be at least 30 days after the date of the notification to be sent to constituent churches.
- C. The OCBA clerk will mail a notice of the call of an Ordination Council to all constituent churches, both Pastors and Clerk, along with a copy of the ordination paper and a response card in the Clerk's packet. The cost for the preparation and mailing of the packet will be borne by OCBA.

At the Ordination Council

- 1. The Council will be called to order by the OCBA Moderator who will open the gathering in prayer.
- 2. The Clerk of the Association will read the call for the Council.
- 3. The Clerk of the Association will read the roll of constituent churches, noting the number of delegates and pastors in attendance. Those delegates present will constitute a quorum.
- 4. The Moderator of the OCBA will introduce the Chairperson or designated member COM who will preside over the Council.

5. Chair COM/designee will confirm that the candidate has met all requirements and standards for ordination and explain the purpose and procedure for the Ordination Council:
 - a. To hear the candidate's statement of faith and practice as contained in the paper.
 - b. To examine the candidate relative to that statement, with the purpose of discerning the candidate's fitness for ordained ministry. Questions should seek clarification and understanding of the candidate's statement and theology, and the Chair/designee will have the authority to rule on the appropriateness of all questions or seek clarification from the questioner.
 - c. To excuse the candidate and all non-delegates from the room for the discussion and vote upon a recommendation. Following the vote, the candidate and others will be invited back into the room and informed of the action taken. The possible recommendations to the local church are as follows:
 1. To proceed with ordination
 2. To delay ordination for some specific reason (e.g. pending a call to service or clarification of some issue.)
 3. To not ordain (specific reason or reasons given)
 - d. The Council will be closed with a prayer, a devotional moment, or other appropriate act of worship.

Following the Ordination Council

1. The clerk of the Association will mail official notification of the action taken by the Council to the local church, with copies to the candidate, Moderation OCBA, Area Minister, Office of the Executive Minister (TABCOM), and the Chair of COM for file.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF THE ABCUSA¹

ABCUSA as a manifestation of the church universal bears witness to God's intention to bring redemption and wholeness to all creation. American Baptists believe that God's intention can be sought and followed in local congregations and other gatherings of Christians in associational, regional and national and world bodies as they receive from one another mutual counsel and correction. Since Jesus Christ is the head of the church, each body of Christians, seeking to order its life in accordance with the Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has a proper responsibility under God for maintaining its life of worship, witness and ministry.

In every area of their common life, American Baptists, acknowledging the importance of creative diversity, seek such a balance of freedom and order as will keep all parts of ABCUSA open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and at the same time enable them to work responsibly to carry out the common task of mission and ministry in our time.

ABCUSA acknowledges that it shares common faith in Christ with churches which may be quite different from it in history, polity and practice. Consequently, it seeks to share with them a common ministry and to express it faithfully.

ABCUSA acknowledges that God's will is manifested in movements outside the formal structures of Christ's church, and that, therefore, it must respond faithfully to such disclosures.

ABCUSA further acknowledges and confirms its commitment to the objects stated in its act of incorporation as follows: "to give expression to the opinions of its constituency upon moral, religious and denominational matters and to promote denominational unity and efficiency in efforts for the evangelization of the world.

¹ STANDING RULES 5.1.1 – COMMON CRITERIA FOR COOPERATING CHURCHES

The following common criteria shall service as the minimal qualifications for a cooperating church:

1. Accept and publicize the purpose statement of the ABCUSA and of the regional mission organization in which the church is located.
2. Participate regularly in the programs and the ministries of the ABCUSA at both the national and regional levels.
3. Utilize ABCUSA resources appropriate to the congregation's need.
4. Support the mission of ABCUSA by contributing a fair share of the congregation's income exclusive of building payments to the AB mission support.
5. provide reports on the forms supplied by the regional mission organization and/or ABCUSA