

1 Constitution and By-laws  
2 of  
3 The American Baptist Churches of the Samuel Stillman Association  
4 (Latest revision November 8, 2013)  
5

6 ARTICLE I – NAME  
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8 This association shall be known as “The American Baptist Churches of the Samuel Stillman  
9 Association.”  
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11 ARTICLE II – PURPOSE AND POLITY  
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13 The purpose of this association is to unite American Baptist Churches in a community of  
14 Christian concern for the furtherance of their common mission through worship, fellowship,  
15 education, and outreach.  
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17 In carrying out the ministry to which Jesus has called us, we shall cooperate fully and effectively  
18 with The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts and American Baptist Churches USA.  
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20 The association shall be the agency through which churches may apply for and become  
21 members of American Baptist Churches USA.  
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23 The association shall be an agency for dialogue in discerning the mind of Christ as American  
24 Baptist Churches.  
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26 The association shall be an agency for strategic planning and programming on matters of area  
27 concern for its churches.  
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29 ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION  
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31 This association shall consist of those churches of Jesus Christ in the Samuel Stillman  
32 Association that affirm its purpose and cooperate in fulfilling its responsibilities.  
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34 Section 1. Delegates. Each member church shall be represented at business meetings of the  
35 association by its pastor and two (2) voting delegates who shall be members in good standing in  
36 the church. All officers and members of the executive committee of the association shall be  
37 delegates ex-officio, with full right to vote.  
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39 Section 2. Admittance. A church is to be received into this association by a request in writing  
40 through its clerk to the executive committee setting forth its desire to be admitted, its faith, its  
41 practice, and its willingness to cooperate fully and effectively with the American Baptist  
42 Churches of the Samuel Stillman Association, the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts  
43 (here and after called TABCOM) and American Baptist Churches USA (here and after called

44 ABCUSA). The recommendation of the Executive Committee and a majority of all delegates  
45 present and voting at a meeting of the association shall be required to receive a church into  
46 membership. If admitted to the Association, the church becomes a member of TABCOM and  
47 ABCUSA. The purpose of acting upon the recommendation of the request shall be stated in the  
48 call to the meeting.

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50 Section 3. Responsibilities. The churches of the association are responsible for:

- 51 A. Sending delegates to meet in association or ordination council when called;
- 52 B. Making annual reports of their progress to the Association, on the forms supplied by  
53 TABCOM;
- 54 C. Undertaking their rightful portion of the Association's expenses; and
- 55 D. Maintaining their covenanted relationships in Jesus Christ with other American Baptist  
56 Churches.

57

58 Covenanted American Baptist Churches cooperate by:

- 59 1. Affirming the statement entitled "We are American Baptists" (revised 6/19/98) as  
60 descriptive of American Baptist faith and practice.
- 61 2. Affirming the purpose of the ABCUSA and of the Region in which the church is a  
62 member. Participating in the life and mission of the American Baptist Churches at  
63 local, regional, national, and international levels.
- 64 3. Financially supporting the mission of ABCUSA at a responsible level.
- 65 4. Sharing with the family the impact of the church's ministries in reaching the  
66 community and the world for Christ by reporting annually on forms supplied by the  
67 region and/or the ABCUSA.

68

69 Section 4. Termination

- 70 A. Withdrawal. A church may break its covenant with the association and withdraw its  
71 membership by having its clerk give notice in writing to the clerk of the association. The  
72 association shall receive and acknowledge the withdrawal notice at its next annual  
73 meeting at which time all mutual responsibilities and relationships shall terminate.
- 74 B. Termination. The Association may withdraw membership from any church by its clerk  
75 giving notice to the clerk of that church in writing of its intention to do so, the action to  
76 be authorized at an annual meeting and to be adopted as final at the following annual  
77 meeting, the vote in each instance to be by a two-thirds majority of the delegates  
78 present and voting, whereupon the mutual relationship and responsibilities shall  
79 terminate. The Association may take such action if for three successive years it has  
80 received no acknowledgment of its request for a report and/or no remittance of support  
81 from the church, or if the action be recommended by the Executive Committee which  
82 finds that the church by its character or practice no longer qualifies for membership.
- 83 C. Closing. When the Executive Committee becomes aware that a church may have closed  
84 the Executive Committee shall investigate and will attempt to contact the church in at  
85 least one of the following manners.
  - 86 • Telephone
  - 87 • Visit

- 88 • Email
- 89 • Contacting TABCOM
- 90 • Other

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92 ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS  
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94 Section 1. Call meetings. The clerk shall mail a written notice of the meeting to the clerk and  
95 the pastor of each member church at least three weeks before the meeting indicating the time  
96 and the place of the meeting and the purposes for which it is called.

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98 Section 2. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the association shall be held in March or  
99 April not less than fourteen (14) days before the annual meeting of TABCOM at a date set by  
100 the Executive Committee. It shall be an open meeting to which all members of the cooperating  
101 churches shall be invited. Only delegates have the privilege of voting during the business  
102 meeting. The agenda of the annual meeting shall include:

- 103 A. Worship;
- 104 B. Electing officers of the association;
- 105 C. Adopting a budget for the association;
- 106 D. Acting upon matters stated in the call of the meeting; and
- 107 E. Acting upon any other affairs of the association.

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109 Section 3. Fall meeting. A meeting of the association may be held during September, October,  
110 or November at a date set by the Executive Committee.

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112 Section 4. Other meetings may be convened under the provision of Section 1 by the Executive  
113 Board (see Article IV Section I). The clerk may also issue a call to meet when authorized to do  
114 so by vote of the association, by direction of the Executive Committee, or by request of a  
115 minimum of six (6) churches.

116  
117 Section 5. Quorum. Delegates from at least one-third of the constituent churches, consisting of  
118 at least twenty (20) delegates shall constitute a quorum for all business and ordination councils.  
119 A lesser number may adjourn the meeting to another time.

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121 Section 6. Order. All meetings of the association will be conducted in accordance with the  
122 Robert's Rules of Order.

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124 ARTICLE V – OFFICERS  
125

126 Section 1. Officers. The officers of the association shall be: moderator, vice-moderator, clerk,  
127 and treasurer. The moderator may appoint a temporary treasurer, clerk and an auditor; they  
128 will not serve on the Executive Committee.

129  
130 Section 2. The officers shall be elected at the annual meeting to serve for a term of one (1) year  
131 and until their respective successors shall have been elected and qualified with the exception of

132 the moderator who shall be elected for a one (1) year term and may serve no more than three  
133 (3) consecutive terms.

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135 Section 3. Duties. The duties of these officers shall be:

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137 1. **Moderator.** The moderator shall:

138 A. Preside over all meetings of the association and of its Executive Committee;

139 B. Be a member ex-officio of all committees except the Nominating Committee;

140 C. Have all the powers of the president of a Massachusetts corporation;

141 D. Be responsible for having each committee convene following the annual  
142 meeting; and

143 E. Be elected for a term of one (1) year and may serve no more than three (3)  
144 consecutive terms.

145

146 2. **Vice-Moderator.** The Vice-Moderator shall:

147 A. Act for the Moderator in his/her absence and shall have such powers and be  
148 charged with such duties as the Executive Committee may prescribe or as the  
149 Moderator may delegate; and

150 B. Be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected.

151

152 3. **Clerk.** The clerk shall:

153 A. Act as clerk of the association and of the Executive Committee;

154 B. Record the number of delegates from each church attending association  
155 meetings;

156 C. Record the minutes of meetings of the association and of the Executive  
157 Committee;

158 D. Perform any other duties usually belonging to the office;

159 E. Send notices of dues to the churches;

160 F. Be responsible for maintaining a set of current Standing Rules of the association;

161 G. Be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected.

162

163 A temporary clerk may be appointed by the moderator to serve in the absence of the  
164 clerk.

165

166 4. **Treasurer.** The treasurer shall:

167 A. Receive, disburse, and account for all funds and other properties (including those  
168 for specific purposes) of the association as authorized by vote of the association  
169 or as directed by the Executive Committee;

170 B. Be elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected.

171

172 A temporary treasurer may be appointed by the moderator to serve in the absence of  
173 the treasurer.

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176 Section 4. Appointed Positions. **The Auditor**

- 177 A. Reviews the accounts of the treasurer each year and shall report such review to the  
178 annual meeting of the association; and  
179 B. Be appointed by the moderator.

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181 ARTICLE VI – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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183 Section 1. Membership. This Executive Committee may have nineteen (19) members, twenty  
184 (20) if the representative to the Board of Directors is not an officer.

185 The Executive Committee shall consist of the following voting members;

- 186 A. The officers (moderator, vice-moderator, clerk, treasurer); the area resource  
187 coordinator (ex-officio with full right to vote) and those assigned to our association by  
188 the Board of Directors of TABCOM.  
189 B. Two (2) elected members at-large serving a three year term;  
190 C. A representative to the region’s Board of Directors (if one of the above officers does not  
191 serve as representative);  
192 D. Chairperson of Ordained Ministry.  
193 E. Chairperson of Nominations Committee.  
194 F. President of the association’s AB Women’s Ministries.  
195 G. Representative of the Stillman Association’s youth ministry.

196

197 Section 2. Duties. The Executive Committee shall:

- 198 A. Meet at least three (3) times annually at such times as it may select, or at the call of the  
199 moderator, to review and coordinate the work of the association (a quorum for such  
200 meetings shall be five (5) voting members);  
201 B. Determine the time, place and program of the association meetings;  
202 C. Act for the association in the intervals between meetings of the delegates;  
203 D. Have the power to fill vacancies occurring in any office or committee during the year;  
204 E. Present the annual budget and recommend the annual assessment at the annual  
205 meeting of the association;  
206 F. Appoint new committees as needed and counsel and advise its various committees;  
207 G. Endeavor in every way to promote the effective Christian witness and program of the  
208 churches, attending to the duties assigned it by the by-laws;  
209 H. Receive and review requests for membership from churches and present a  
210 recommendation to the delegates of the churches of the association. It shall also  
211 provide a process of orientation of new churches to the life and ministry of the  
212 association, region and ABCUSA;  
213 I. Work in concert with TABCOM to encourage, develop and bring into association new  
214 churches within the geographic area of the association; and  
215 J. Invite, at least once a year, one (1) Stillman Association representative from committees  
216 and ministry teams elected at TABCOM’s Annual Gathering for report purposes only.

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ARTICLE VII.— STANDING COMMITTEE

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Section 1. Nominations Committee.  
Shall consist of five (5) persons elected annually to bring the subsequent annual meeting the necessary nominations to fill the association offices and to fulfill its obligations of nominations to TABCOM. No person having served three (3) successive annual meetings on this committee shall be eligible for re-election to it until an annual meeting shall have intervened. The Area Resource Coordinator shall act as advisor of this committee without a vote.

Section 2. Ordained Ministry Committee  
The Chairperson of the committee shall be elected annually.  
Six (6) other members of the committee, composed of both clergy and laity, shall be elected to a three (3) year term and can serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms, with a year intervening. In order to maintain continuity each year, two (2) members will rotate on and two (2) will rotate off.

- The committee shall:
- A. Collaborate in their work with TABCOM Commission on Ordained Ministry.
  - B. Offer counsel to both church and candidate in the ordination process.
  - C. Encourage those who may be considering the call to Christian service, counseling with them regarding college and seminary training, and ordination.

STANDING RESOLUTIONS FOR COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY

Ordination procedures, including the ordination council, shall generally follow the guidelines in the Standing Rules of the Commission on the Ministry of TABCOM (Addendum IV Appendix I Licensing and Ordination).

The Committee on Ordained Ministry of the Association shall pursue an active counseling role in a supportive manner with all candidates for a generally recognized American Baptist ordination within the association and, as such, may:

- A. Recommend that the local church proceed to call an ordination council.
- B. Counsel reasonable delay, require more work on the ordination paper, or make other realistic recommendations.
- C. Recommend that the local church not proceed to call an ordination council.
  - 1) In such a case, the local congregation may appeal to the Committee on Ordained Ministry for advice and counsel or reconsideration of the recommendation.
  - 2) After appeal by the congregation to the Committee on Ordained Ministry, the congregation may, if it so chooses, proceed to call an ordination council in pursuant to the standing rules of the Commission on the Ministry. At such an ordination council the Committee on Ordained Ministry may publicly state its negative recommendation together with stated reasons.

ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended at any annual meeting of the association, or at any special meeting called for the purpose, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present who are entitled to vote, provided that at least thirty (30) days notice of the proposed change has been mailed to the pastors and clerks of each church in the association, and to members of the executive committee.

**Standing Rules**

The following standing rules are for the regulation of association affairs, and established by association vote. They are amendable at any meeting by a majority vote of those present and entitled to vote.

Section 1. Councils. It is not the function of this 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 when instructed to do so by the Executive Committee of the association, or the Ordained Ministry Committee.

Section 2. Nominations. In making nominations to fill the association offices and committee, the Nominating Committee shall:

- A. Observe a general policy of alternating the office of moderator between clergy and laity;
- B. Recommend to the Executive Committee persons to fill vacancies.

Termination of membership of an officer or committee member in the constituent church, or the withdrawal or removal of such officer or committee member from the jurisdiction of the association or church which the person represents, shall constitute a vacating of office.

Section 3. Quorums. A majority of each committee will constitute a quorum for the conduct of committee business, but a lesser number may adjourn to a later date which shall be specified in the motion to adjourn.

Section 4. Assessments. Each member church shall be asked to contribute a set amount annually for each resident member. The amount is to be recommended by the Executive Committee and adopted at the annual meeting of the association. The contribution of the churches is to be sent to the treasurer of the association.

Section 5. The Annual Report. At the annual meeting of the association, the clerk shall present to the churches a written report which may include: reports of the officers and committees, minutes of the association meetings, adopted budget, association directory and such additional information requested by the Executive Committee.

308 The Constitution and By-laws of the American Baptist Churches of the Samuel Stillman  
309 Association was revised and adopted October 18, 1997 at the Fall Gathering of the Samuel  
310 Stillman Association.

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312 Further By-law revisions were adopted

- 313       • March 20, 2004 at the Annual Meeting of the Samuel Stillman Association.  
314       • November 8, 2013 at the Fall Gathering of the Samuel Stillman Association.