

Revised By-Laws Proposed by Session (passed 5.20.2025)  
for Congregational Approval at Called 7.13.2025 Meeting

**Great Bridge Presbyterian Church**  
**Chesapeake, Virginia**  
**BYLAWS**

**Article I. Identity and Purpose**

The Great Bridge Presbyterian Church is a member church in the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia (PEVA) in the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It has been called by God and organized by the Presbytery to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in worship, to perform service to the needy, and to promote peace and justice in the world. The Church operates as a domestic non-profit tax-exempt church and is incorporated as such.

**Article II. Governance – Powers and Order of Authority**

The Church derives its powers from the authority given it by the Lord Jesus Christ. It assumes all the powers authorized and permitted by the Constitution of the PCUSA for a congregation as well as those granted to a nonprofit corporation. The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Church. This church's Congregation and Session shall be governed in accordance with the Constitution of the PCUSA, both its *Book of Confessions* and its *Book of Order* (BoO). Subordinate to that Constitution, these Bylaws, and then the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)*, shall provide specific guidance. Great Bridge Presbyterian Church is governed by a Session of ordained ruling elders and a Diaconate which is under the authority of the session (G-2.02).

**Article III. Meetings**

**Section III.01 Virtual Meetings**

Congregational Meetings shall always be held in person. All Session, committee, board or other meetings may be held virtually either fully or hybrid, when the following circumstances exist:

- a. One or more members are unable to attend the meeting in person, and
- b. The persons attending virtually are able to maintain confidentiality during the meeting, and
- c. All attendees have the ability to contact each other via cell phone or by other means during the meeting

It is understood that during the virtual meeting all communication will occur openly and any additional comments or thoughts during a discussion must occur through the public chat feature so that they are visible to all members.

**Section III.02 Session.** The Session shall hold stated meetings monthly but may choose to skip a meeting during the summer. Special meetings may be called in accordance with G-3.0203 of the *Book of Order*. The number of Session Elders shall be proportionate to the size of the congregation as determined by the Session. The quorum for Session meetings shall be the moderator and fifty percent of the ruling elders in active service of the Session. The quorum for receiving new members shall be the moderator and two ruling elders. Neither absentee ballots nor voting by proxy shall be permitted. Whenever possible, reasonable notice of 24 hours shall be given for all Session meetings.

**Section III.03 Meetings of the Board of Deacons.** Deacons set their meeting agenda and schedule and communicate this to Session.

**Section III.04 Meetings of the Congregation.** The Congregation shall hold an annual congregational meeting and special meetings as necessary in accordance with G-1.05 of the *Book of Order*. The business to be transacted at these meetings shall be limited to items specifically listed in the call for the meeting. A quorum for Congregational meetings shall be ten percent (10%) of its active members. All active members of the congregation present at either annual or special meetings are entitled to vote. The vote of a majority of members present at a meeting at which a quorum exists is an act of the congregation. Notice of congregational meetings shall be given at regular services of worship on two successive Sunday(s) prior to each meeting. The meeting may be convened following the notice given on the second Sunday. Neither absentee ballots nor voting by proxy shall be permitted. Both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same congregational meeting.

## **Article IV. THE CORPORATION OF GREAT BRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Great Bridge Presbyterian Church was incorporated in December, 2007. For more information see the Corporation's bylaws.

## **Article V. MEMBERSHIP**

In accordance with G-1.03 of the *Book of Order*, the Session shall receive and nurture members of the church. All members shall carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other (G-1.0101)

## **Article VI. SESSION**

### **Section VI.01 Powers and Responsibilities**

The Session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders. Together with all installed pastors and associate pastors, they have voice and vote at all meetings. The Session has the responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. The Session will have the responsibility and powers as set forth in G-3.02. The Session, at its first meeting following the annual meeting, shall elect an elder to serve as clerk and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work. The Clerk can be either an active ruling elder, or can be a resting ruling elder (one that is not currently serving on Session). If the Clerk is a resting ruling elder, he/she will have voice, but no vote.

### **Section VI.02 Elections and Terms**

The congregational nomination committee presents a slate of candidates to serve as Active Ruling Elders each year. The Session is made up of three equal classes (as near as Possible), one class of whom shall be elected each year at a Congregational meeting for its three-year term, ordinarily commencing in June. If necessary, at the direction of the Session, the Church Nominating Committee shall nominate a candidate for a vacancy, to be elected by the Congregation for the unexpired portion of the vacated position's term.

No ruling elder shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A ruling elder having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for re-election to the Session for a period of at least one year. These term restrictions may be waived by the Presbytery for specific situations (G-2.0404).

**Section VI .03 Temporary Pastoral Relationships.** In accordance with G-2.0504b, when a Congregation does not have a pastor, the Session, with approval of the Presbytery, may obtain the services of a minister of the Word and Sacrament in a temporary pastoral relationship.

## **Article VII. DEACONS**

### **Section VII.01 Powers and Responsibilities**

The ministry of deacon is one of compassion, witness and service. Deacons are organized as a board of deacons with one member serving as the moderator. Deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session. They may be given additional duties as delegated by the Session, including assisting with the Lord's supper during worship and home visitations (G-2.02).

### **Section VII.02 Elections and Terms.**

The congregational nomination committee presents a slate of candidates to serve as Deacons each year. The Board of Deacons is made up of three equal classes (as near as possible), one class of whom shall be elected each year at a Congregational meeting for its three-year term, ordinarily commencing in June. If necessary, at the direction of the Session, the Congregational Nominating Committee shall nominate a candidate for a vacancy, to be elected by the Congregation for the unexpired portion of the vacated position's term.

No Deacons shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A ruling elder having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for re-election to the Session for a period of at least one year. These term restrictions may be waived by the Presbytery for specific situations (G-2.0404).

## **Article VIII. COMMITTEES**

### **Section VI.01 Congregational Nominating Committee**

In accordance with G-2.0401, the Congregation shall elect a nominating committee of at least three active members of the congregation with at least one ruling elder currently serving on the session.

The Nominating Committee of Great Bridge Presbyterian Church should consist of the following:

- There shall be seven members on the committee.
- Two of the members shall be elders designated by the Session at least one of whom shall serve as chair of the committee and the other as co-chair who will become the chair the following year.
- One of the members shall be designated by the deacons.
- Four of the members, who are not elders currently on the Session or Deacons currently in service, may be designated by church organizations. This number must always be the majority of the committee, depending on the number of elders and deacons chosen.
- Members of the committee shall be elected annually, and no one shall serve more than three years consecutively.
- The pastor (or moderator of the Session) shall be a member ex-officio, but without vote.

- The committee shall bring to the annual meeting of the Congregation nominations only for the number of positions to be filled [Note: If more nominations than positions to be filled are desired, or if there are additional nominations from the floor, election should be by secret ballot.]
- The floor shall be open for additional nominations at the meeting.
- Elections in the Congregation shall be fair, just and inclusive in accordance with F-1.0403, and G-3.0103 & G-2.0401.

### **Section VII.02 Other Committees**

The Session, in accordance with G-3.02, shall establish, discharge, and review the actions of any committee or other organization within the Congregation. Ordering of the ministries of GBPC will be determined by the Session as best to fulfill the vision and mission of the Church.

## **Article VIII. RECORDS AND REPORTS**

**Section VIII.01 Rolls.** The session shall create and annually review rolls for all baptized members, active members, and affiliate members in accordance with G-1.04 & G-3.0204

**Section VIII.02 Minutes.** The session shall ensure that there are proper and adequate minutes, duly approved, and other records in accordance with G-3.010 & 3.0204.

**Section VIII.03 Other Records.** The Session shall submit any requested records to the Presbytery in accordance with G-3.0107.

## **Article IX. AMENDMENTS**

Subject to the Constitution of the PCUSA, any Articles of Incorporation, and state laws, these bylaws may be amended or added to, or new bylaws may be adopted by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those active members of the Congregation present and voting at a meeting of members of the Congregation at which a quorum is present, provided that the proposed changes have been published at the same time as the call of the meeting at which the changes are voted upon.