

For October 30, 2021 Presentation

The Gathering of Baptists

www.gatheringbaptists.ca

A Community with which to Find A Home

Preamble:

We write this piece as a brief document to describe what you may find with The Gathering of Baptists (GB). Our beginnings were as a group exploring what it is to be Baptist, and to provide a voice within the Baptist Convention of Ontario & Quebec to encourage respect for our basic Baptist heritage of “democratic” congregational government and the freedom of individuals and of congregations to discern what they believe and how they govern themselves.

We strive to provide connections, resources, and workshops (Gatherings) to help to wrestle with issues in Christian life and ministry, as well as a faith association for those who are seeking similar ends. No one of us has a corner on truth; together we grasp a wider vision and enthusiasm. We are delighted that the issues we have explored have garnered nation-wide interest and participation.

Our website offers our identity and purpose, our history, our legal status, Bylaw, processes and procedures, some of our writings, and information on some of our events.

This article attempts to explain that we can be of help in all provinces. It is not our aim to draw persons from historical connections, only to provide a safety net for progressive clergy to enable them to continue their ministry when privileges and licenses are threatened or integrity compromised.

Legal Status:

We are a federally incorporated (2004) entity under the Canadian not-For-Profit Corporations Act. Our head office is currently at RR 1 Lynden, Ontario.

Financing:

Our revenue is from annual membership fees, donations, and registration fees for Gathering Events. We do not have charitable status because our initial scope did not merit it.

A Community:

We are a community of individuals which attempts to explore issues impacting Christian ministry. Members are those who are sympathetic with our identity and purpose. There are those who support with annual membership fees with the associated member privilege (Class A), and others who have expressed interest but not taken the step to be corporate voting members (Class B). We hold individual and congregational memberships.

Credentialing of Clergy:

Persons may be credentialed with The Gathering in accordance with defined procedure. GB clergy may also hold credentials with our Conventions or other bodies. GB credentials are Canada-wide.

An Agency For The Issuance Of Licenses To Clergy To Perform Marriages:

The Gathering is an accredited agency with the Government of Ontario for processing the application and issuance of Licenses to Perform Marriages in Ontario. Applying clergy must be “Class A” members of The Gathering of Baptists. It appears that we can gain similar privilege in other provinces when we have a member (Class A) who is prepared to become a provincial “Governing Official” for licensing, present the application, and to oversee those licensed. We will probably also need a candidate who is applying for a License to Marry in the province, based on Ontario experience and regulations. One from our Board of Directors is planning on initiating the process in British Columbia in coming months.

Pensions & Benefits:

The Gathering of Baptists does not involve itself in the offering of pensions nor benefits for clergy. These are available via private investment and insurance providers. Individuals may find, as some of us have, that they can locate such services which will out-perform the Conventions’ plans, as well as being completely portable.

Questions:

Inquiries may be addressed to our Secretary, to our Moderator, or to any member of our Board of Directors (aka Steering Committee).

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