

And be it enacted, That in case any debate shall arise in any church, society or congregation, about the right of voting, or whether the election aforesaid hath been fairly conducted, agreeably to the true intent and meaning of this act, the parties contending shall each of them choose one discreet and reputable person from among the members or trustees of some neighbouring church, society or congregation, of the same religious persuasion, if any such there be, and if none such, then of any other christian society, which two persons shall choose a third qualified in like manner, and the said three persons shall meet at the place where the difference has arisen, and hear and determine upon the matter, and their judgment or award, or the judgment or award of a majority of them, certified under their hands and seals to the contending parties, shall be final.

And be it enacted, That at the first election or appointment of every body politic or corporate aforesaid, every church, society or congregation, assembled as already directed, shall determine and fix on their plan, agreement or regulation, mentioning and specifying distinctly the time and manner of electing trustees, and the manner in which the succession shall be perpetuated, and containing an exact description of the qualifications of the persons severally electing and elected, and to elect and to be elected thereafter, and also the name, style or title, of the corporation, by which it shall be thereafter called, distinguished and known, and the name of the church, society or congregation, choosing the same, which said plan, agreement or regulation, shall be entered in the book herein after directed to be kept by every the said body politic or corporate, and the same shall be acknowledged by the said trustees, or a majority of them, before, and certified by, any two justices of the peace for the county in which the said church, society or congregation, or the greatest number of them, shall reside, or the same shall be acknowledged before, and certified by, one of the judges of the general court, after being well assured by the said trustees, or a majority of them, that the proceedings have been legally and duly conducted; and the said plan or agreement, so acknowledged and certified, shall be filed by the said trustees with the clerk of the county court where the said church, society or congregation, or the greater part of them, shall reside, within six months after such acknowledgment shall be made, and the same shall be recorded in a book to be provided for these special purposes at the expence of the several corporations in that county whose proceedings shall be so recorded, and a copy of the said proceedings, from the records thereof, under the hand of the clerk, and the public seal of his office, shall be of the same force and effect in every court of law and equity within this state, as the original proceedings would be if the same were produced in court, and the said clerk shall be entitled to such fees for his services as are allowed by law for services of the like nature in matters belonging to his office.

And be it enacted, That every corporation, or body politic aforesaid, respectively, and their successors, or the majority of them, by their name of incorporation aforesaid, shall have full power and authority to hold and use one common seal, to appoint the times and places of their meetings, and the number necessary to constitute a quorum, and shall moreover provide and keep a good and sufficient record book, and cause to be therein registered a fair account of all their proceedings, subject at all times to the inspection of the several members of the church, society or congregation, in whose behalf the same are respectively entered, and the same shall be laid before a public meeting, when thereunto required by any five or more of the same; and the said trustees, or a majority of them, shall have full power and authority to frame such rules and ordinances for conducting their concerns, as may be necessary and convenient for accomplishing the end of their institution; provided always, that nothing therein contained shall be repugnant to, but perfectly consistent with, the constitution and laws of this state.

And be it enacted, That all and every of the said corporations or trustees, and their successors, by their respective names or titles, shall be vested with an estate, in fee-simple, in all glebe-lands, and other lands and tenements, and also in every parsonage, church, chapel, meeting-house, or other house of worship and burying-ground, belonging to, and in the use of, the particular church, society or congregation, for which they are respectively chosen as a body politic or corporate, and shall also, by their respective names or titles, have absolute property in all books, plate or other ornaments, and all goods and chattels, belonging to the said church, society or congregation, whether the said lands and tenements, parsonage, church, chapel, meeting-house, or other house of worship, and also whether the said books, plate and other ornaments, and the said goods and chattels, have been given, granted or devised, directly to the said church, society or congregation, or to any person or persons in trust, to and for their use.

Provided nevertheless, That if there be any person or persons whatsoever who may have a legal right to, and be in the actual possession of, any such lands and tenements, it shall and may be lawful for any such person or persons to declare, by an instrument in writing, transmitted to the trustees or corporation of the particular church, society or congregation, of which he, she or they, may be respectively members, the use or trust for which he, she or they, will possess or enjoy the same; and if any such person or persons will declare that he, she or they, have held and enjoyed the same lands and tenements for the use of, or in trust for, the particular church, society or congregation, of which he, she or they, may be respectively members, and shall be willing that the same be applied to, and for the use and benefit of, such particular church, society or congregation, then, and in such case, the person or persons so holding and enjoying the same lands and tenements, shall, by a deed or indenture proper for such purpose, convey and make over to the trustees or body politic or corporate of such particular church, society or congregation, the said lands and tenements to, and for the use and benefit of, such church, society or congregation; but if any person or persons shall refuse to make the declaration aforesaid, or be unwilling to make any such conveyance of the said lands and tenements, then, and in such case, he, she or they, shall not be affected by the operation of