

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WESTERVILLE, CONSTITUTION

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner, and for the purpose, of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this church shall be the First Baptist Church of Westerville

ARTICLE II. DECLARATION OF FAITH

The sole authority for faith and practice is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. These articles of faith shall serve as guides in interpretation, having no authority over the conscience. They constitute a consensus of this Baptist body for the general instruction and guidance of the members.

The Articles of Faith as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention June 14, 2000 and published as *The Baptist Faith & Message, 2000* shall serve as a statement of faith for this Baptist body. This booklet shall be considered part and portion of this constitution.

ARTICLE III. CHURCH COVENANT

The church covenant as adopted by The First Baptist Church of Westerville, on November 6, 2016, as a statement of intention on the part of the local church members, shall serve as a covenant for the body of believers. A copy of this covenant shall be considered part and portion of this constitution.

ARTICLE IV. AFFILIATION

This church shall be affiliated with the Metro Columbus Baptist Association, the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, and the Southern Baptist Convention. The church shall take into consideration all suggestions by the said affiliates.

ARTICLE V. CHARACTER

Section 1. Polity. The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptists.

Section 2. Doctrine. This church receives the Scriptures as its authority and guide in matters of faith and practice.

Section 3. Incorporation. This church shall be incorporated in accordance with the laws of the state of Ohio governing religious bodies.

Section 4. Relationship. This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation that are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this Church will cooperate with and support the local association of Baptists, the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio and the Southern Baptist Convention.

All property of said Church is to be held for the use of and benefit of those of the membership, even though they may be a minority, who adhere to, maintain and propagate the doctrines, faith and practices of Baptist churches cooperating with the local association of Baptists, State Convention of Baptists in Ohio and the Southern Baptist Convention. A refusal of the membership, though they may be a majority, to adhere to, maintain and propagate the faith and practices of Baptists and to cooperate with the local association of Baptist, State Convention of Baptists in Ohio and the Southern Baptist Convention shall constitute such a deviation from the accepted usages, practices, customs and beliefs of Baptists, that said majority shall no longer constitute the true congregation of said Church, and the title of the property of the Church shall vest in, and be held for the use and benefit for the minority of the membership, who do adhere to and maintain the doctrines, faith and practices of Baptists and who cooperate with the local association of Baptists, State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

If there is no minority to make adequate use of said property, then the title to same shall revert to or become vested in the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, as Trustee, to hold and use said property or the proceeds therefrom to advance and propagate the Baptist cause and denomination in Ohio.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications. Membership may be attained as follows:

- 1) By a public profession of faith in Christ and baptism.
- 2) By letter from any church of like faith and order and such one has been scripturally baptized and shall be accepted by a simple majority.
- 3) By restoration.
- 4) By statement of membership of like faith and order provided the person has been scripturally baptized.

Section 2. Method.

- 1) The pastor or deacons shall meet with the candidates for membership in counsel on the experience and duties of the Christian life and the candidate's responsibilities as a member of this church.
- 2) New members shall be voted on by the church at a regular business meeting.

Section 3. Termination. Membership ceases as follows:

- 1) By letter of dismissal to a church of like faith and order. The letter shall not be granted directly to the individual.
- 2) By removing from the roll those uniting with other denominations.
- 3) By exclusion. Should a member become an offense to the church by reasons of immoral or unchristian conduct, the church shall terminate his membership, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.
- 4) By non-attendance of the services of the church. Unless providentially hindered regular attendance will be expected by all members of this church. After everything has been done to restore a non-attender to active fellowship, as set forth in Matthew 18, will the name of any resident member of the church who fails to attend the church services for a period of six (6) months, be removed from the church roll and placed on an inactive list. Members who become non-resident will be expected to transfer their membership within one year or less from the time of their departure before being placed on an inactive list. If such members moved to an area where no church of like faith is available, they may retain active membership with this church by correspondence.
- 5) By death.
- 6) A member, upon request may be dismissed from his covenant obligations to this church if the church deems such request satisfactory.

ARTICLE II. ORDINANCES

The Ordinances of this church shall be Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Section 1. Baptism.

- 1) Repentance and faith in Christ shall precede baptism.
- 2) Baptism shall be by immersion.
- 3) Baptism shall be administered by authority of the church.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper.

- 1) The Lord's Supper shall be recognized as a local church ordinance.
- 2) The Lord's Supper shall be observed as prescribed by the Scriptures; that is, following baptism, church membership and self-examination. (I Cor. 11:27-28)
- 3) The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least one time in each quarter.

ARTICLE III. CHURCH OFFICERS AS SPECIFIED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

All the officers of this church shall be regular attending members who are wholehearted backers of the full program of the church, and tithers.

Section 1. Pastor.

- 1) The pastor shall be called to his office immediately.
- 2) Resignation shall require at least two weeks' notice.
- 3) Dismissal shall be immediate with two weeks' salary.
- 4) The pastor shall have the equivalent of one day off each week.
- 5) The pastor shall have an annual two weeks' vacation with pay and may be increased with tenure.
- 6) The pastor shall be responsible for his pulpit supplies in case of absence except when:
 - a) On vacation
 - b) Illness
 - c) On business for the church
 - d) Outside revivals not to exceed two weeks per year.
- 7) The church shall participate in the Minister's Retirement program of Guidestone Financial Services of the Southern Baptist Convention.
- 8) The pastor shall secure all evangelists for all meetings with church approval.
- 9) The church shall send the pastor to the Southern Baptist Convention, and/or to the State Convention, the State Evangelistic Conference, or to an Assembly (state or convention wide) when financially able.

- 10) The pastor shall be ex-officio member of all organizations, departments, and committees, and may call a special meeting of either organization, department, or committee whenever a need for a special meeting arises.
- 11) It must be authorized by the church for the pastor to hold outside revivals beyond two weeks per year.
- 12) The pastor shall not be absent from the pulpit more than two Sundays in succession each year unless approved by the church.

Section 2. Deacons.

- 1) The number of deacons shall be three for the first one hundred church members: additional deacons shall be determined by the needs of the church and as men become qualified by meeting the requirements as shown in Section 2, Paragraph 3b.
- 2) Active Deacons shall be elected to serve for three-year terms. At the end of three years, they will rotate to Associate Deacon status. An Associate Deacon will be eligible for re-election to Active Deacon status after one year has elapsed.
- 3) Method of election shall be as follows:
 - a) Each church member present shall nominate for deacon from a list of male members a number equivalent to the number to be elected.
 - b) Those named most shall be investigated on the following points:
 - i. No person shall be considered a candidate for the office of deacon until he has been an active member of the church for one (1) year, unless such a person has been ordained as a deacon in a Baptist church elsewhere. In this case if the person meets the specified qualifications he may be elected to serve as an active deacon in this church after six months' worship.
 - ii. Any person who is being considered a candidate for the office of deacon must prove himself according to the scriptures. (Acts 6:3, I Tim. 3:8-13).
 - c) The church in business session shall elect the deacons.
- 4) Deacons elected by the church shall be ordained unless already ordained by this church or a church of like faith and order.
- 5) Each deacon along with the pastor will be responsible for ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of the church membership. As the pastor is responsible for every member of the church, the membership will be divided equally among the active deacons, who in turn will assist the pastor in being responsible for the welfare in a similar way as described in the scriptures. (Acts 6:1-6)
- 6) The deacons shall have a regular monthly meeting.

ARTICLE IV. CHURCH STAFF

Section 1. Definitions.

1) Ministerial Staff:

The Ministerial staff consists of the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Minister of Education, Minister of Evangelism, Educational Director, Minister of Music, Music Director, Musicians, Minister of Youth or Youth Director or any other spiritually called or spiritually led paid position.

2) Support Staff:

The Support Staff consists of the Church Secretary, Janitorial service, Grounds Keeper, Nursery workers or any other paid position that is not considered to be a spiritually called or spiritually led position.

Section 2. Filling of Position.

- 1) The position of Pastor and Associate Pastor is to be searched out by the Pastor Search Committee and recommendations to be made to the church for its action.
- 2) All other Ministerial positions are to be searched out by the Personnel Committee and recommendations to be made to the church for its action.
- 3) Support Staff positions are filled by the Personnel Committee based on the guidelines and requirements set up by the Personnel Committee and approved by the church.

Section 3. Supervision.

- 1) The position of Pastor and Associate Pastor will be supervised by the active deacons of the church and these positions will be reviewed once each year. Recommendations for salary for these positions will be made by the deacons after consultation with the Finance Committee.
- 2) The pastor, being the spiritual and administrative leader of the church, shall have supervision over all the Ministerial Staff and over the Support Staff position of Church Secretary. Performance review of these positions, except for Pastor and Associate Pastor will be conducted by the Personnel Committee of which the Pastor is a member. Recommendations for salary for these positions will be made by the Personnel Committee after consultation with the Finance Committee.
- 3) The Support Staff, with the exception of Church Secretary, shall be supervised by the appropriate department heads, trustees or other positions responsible for the results of the Support Staff position. Performance review of these positions will be conducted at least once each year by the Personnel Committee. This committee will solicit information from the positions responsible for supervision of these positions to be included in the review. Recommendations for salary for these positions will be made by the Personnel Committee after consultation with the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE V. OTHER CHURCH OFFICERS

All officers shall be members of the church.

Section 1. Trustees.

- 1) The number of trustees shall be three (3) with one elected each year for a three-year term and one rotating off. If a trustee cannot complete the elected term for any reason, the position will be filled for the remainder of that term only.
- 2) The trustees shall as, provided by law and the action of the church, represent the church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase and disposal of church property. They shall execute all legal papers relating to the church and to the community as the church may direct. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action.
- 3) The trustees shall have no control over the use of the church property except by vote of the church.
- 4) The trustees shall maintain an accurate and up-to-date church property document. The property document shall include a complete inventory of the church property, including a descriptive account of the church property, its approximate value, and location in the church at the time of inventory.
- 5) The trustees shall have the responsibility of making certain that all church property has adequate insurance coverage at all times. In order to maintain proper insurance coverage, the trustees shall make an annual inspection of the church property each year and evaluate the church insurance program accordingly. This inspection will be made annually and the findings with recommendations shall be reported to the church at the next regular business meeting.
- 6) The trustees shall audit or cause to be audited the books of the treasurer at least one time annually.
- 7) The trustees shall maintain a document which contains current backgrounds checks on those individuals serving in sensitive areas such as counters, or working with children.

Section 2. Clerk.

- 1) A Clerk shall be elected annually and shall be the clerk of the church organization.
- 2) The church clerk shall keep a correct record of all proceedings of the regular and special business meetings of the church in a document provided for this purpose.
- 3) The clerk shall sign letters of dismissal of members and write for the letters of those who join the church on promise of a letter from another church.
- 4) The clerk shall keep a correct roll of the membership of the church and be responsible for all records of events in the life of the church which are of historical value and interest.

- 5) The clerk shall present a written report to the church at its regular business meetings. This report shall consist of minutes of the last regular business meeting and all the called business meetings, which have not been read and approved by the church, those received, dismissed and the correct membership.
- 6) The annual letter to the association shall be filled out by the clerk and read before the church for its approval.

Section 3. Treasurer.

- 1) The treasurer shall be elected annually.
- 2) The treasurer shall make all payments of all accounts upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by the organization head, and shall disburse by check all monies consistent with the budget of the church, any exception to be made upon recommendation of the Finance Committee to the church in a business session.
- 3) A permanent record shall be kept of all financial activities of the church. This may be designated to an assistant or to a financial secretary.
- 4) A financial statement shall be prepared for the church membership monthly and presented to the church at the monthly business meeting.
- 5) An annual report of each individual's contributions shall be sent to contributors.
- 6) Financial statements will be considered as confidential, but may be studied and observed by the financial committee when deemed necessary.

Section 4. Music Director

- 1) The music director shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. Directing the adult choir.
 - b. Directing the youth choir or supervision of the choir.
 - c. Coordinating with the pastor in the selection of music for all church services.
 - d. Coordinating the overall music program with the pianist and organist.
 - e. Leading congregational singing.

Section 5. Other Officers.

- 1) The number of church officers shall be determined by the needs of the church.
- 2) All officers except the pastor, paid workers, deacons and trustees shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected annually.

ARTICLE VI CHURCH FINANCE

Section 1. Support of the Church.

- 1) The support of the church shall be by tithes and offerings.
- 2) The church shall operate with a unified budget.
- 3) The financial year shall begin January 1.

Section 2. Subscription to the Budget.

- 1) The Finance Committee shall take measures to stimulate stewardship, and will urge the membership to subscribe to the church's inclusive budget.
- 2) The Finance Committee shall stimulate stewardship among new members by providing them a copy of the church budget and other information about the church soon after they become members of the church.

ARTICLE VII ORGANIZATION AND COMMITTEES

Non-church members shall not be elected nor appointed to any teaching or church committee. Non-church members may serve as ushers, greeters, choir members and similar special ministries when requested by the chairmen, directors, or coordinators.

Section 1. Organizations.

The church shall sponsor such organizations as contribute to the up-building of the church. Heads of organizations shall give a report at monthly business meetings. Southern Baptist literature shall be used.

Section 2. Nominating Committee.

- 1) Each year at the April business meeting the pastor shall appoint a committee of three persons to be approved by the church, who shall work with the pastor in nominating and recommending to the church all officers and committees that are to be elected by the church.
- 2) The first work of this committee will be to nominate at the July business meeting the heads of all organizations.
- 3) When these officers have been elected by the church, they shall automatically become members of the Nominating Committee and assist in nominating and recommending to the church all other officers. This committee shall remain active until a new committee is appointed the following year.
- 4) This committee is also responsible for nominating and recommending to the church persons to fill balance of terms for any office that has been vacated by anyone for any reason, providing it is an office the committee normally would make nominations and recommendations. For example, if the term of an office is normally for three years and is vacated with eighteen (18) months still to be completed, a person shall be nominated and recommended for the balance of that term only.

Section 3. Church Council.

- 1) This council shall consist of the chairman of the deacons, the chairman of the trustees, the heads of all organizations, and the pastor as chairman.
- 2) It shall be the duty of this committee to:
 - a) Set up a calendar of activities.

- b) Coordinate the work of all organizations.
- 3) The program recommended by the council is subject to approval by a vote of the church.

Section 4. Pastor Search Committee.

- 1) This committee shall consist of the chairman of the deacons or a deacon that he may appoint, the Sunday School Director or a person he/she may appoint from the Sunday School organization, the Chairman of the Personnel Committee or another member of that committee that he/she may appoint, and at least two other active members enlisted by the nominating committee and elected by the church.
- 2) The committee shall be charged to make a careful study of the history of the prospective pastor, giving special attention to:
 - a) His conversion experience.
 - b) His call to the ministry.
 - c) His moral character.
 - d) His doctrine and denominational cooperativeness.
 - e) His ability to execute the office of pastor.
 - f) The evidence of his equipping for the ministry.
- 3) Only one person at a time will be under consideration of the church for pastor.
- 4) Upon calling a Pastor or any paid Ministerial Staff, seventy-five (75) percent affirmative vote of the membership present will be necessary to constitute a call.

Section 5. Personnel Committee.

- 1) This committee shall consist of the pastor, chairman of the Finance Committee or a member that he may appoint, chairman of the deacons, or a deacon that he may appoint and two other active members elected by the church. When the active church membership exceeds two hundred (200) an additional two members shall be elected to this committee.
- 2) This committee is responsible for developing, maintaining and administering personnel policies for Church Staff.
- 3) This committee is to survey the need for, and to recommend church staff additions, deletions and/or job status changes. In accordance with the guidelines approved by the church, this committee has the authority to dismiss, and/or replace Support Staff positions as long as the majority of the committee is in agreement.
- 4) Responsibilities:
 - a) Prepare and maintain job descriptions, including both responsibilities and qualifications, for the Ministerial Staff and Support Staff excluding the Pastor and Associate Pastor.
 - b) Develop and maintain a church staff salary and benefit program.
 - c) Prepare and submit annual budget recommendations to implement salary and benefit programs.

- d) Monitor and evaluate performance of personnel in accordance with instructions under ARTICLE IV. CHURCH STAFF.
- e) Maintain personnel records.

Section 6. Finance Committee.

- 1) There shall be three (3) elected members of this committee, with one elected each year for a three-year term and one rotating off, plus the current treasurer. If a member cannot complete the elected term for any reason, the position will be filled for the remainder of that term only.
- 2) This committee shall prepare a yearly budget and submit it to the church not later than the November business meeting.
- 3) One member of this committee shall be elected to sign the checks in the absence of the treasurer.
- 4) This committee meets at least once each quarter to review the current budget and more often as financial advice and assistance is needed by the church or another committee.
- 5) This committee assists the church in stewardship planning, stewardship promotion, and financial administration.
- 6) This committee plans and reviews expenditures regularly in terms of budget allocation.
- 7) This committee reviews the current budget at least quarterly with the church council and makes recommendations for revisions and adjustments to the church as needed as income changes or Departmental needs increase or decrease.

Section 7. Counting Committee.

- 1) This committee shall consist of six or more church members, one of which is the Sunday School Secretary, with the balance being nominated by the Nominating Committee and being elected by the church. The Finance Committee may participate in the duties of this committee when deemed necessary.
- 2) This committee shall receive all contributions from the Sunday School Secretary, the church offering plates and other sources, prepare deposits and deposit money in the bank depository.
- 3) Prepare summary of receipts and give copy to financial secretary and treasurer.

Section 8. Ordinance Committee.

- 1) The Baptismal Committee shall consist of two men and two women. It shall be the duty of this committee to make all arrangements for the ordinance of baptism and to render such assistance to the pastor and the candidates as may be necessary.
- 2) The deacons shall name from their number a committee responsible for preparation and conducting of the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Section 9. Usher Committee.

The Chairman of Ushers and a sufficient number of aides to care for the seating and comfort of the congregation, the greeting and introduction of visitors, the preventions of interruptions and distractions, and similar needed services shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church.

Section 10. Building and Grounds Committee.

- 1) The building and grounds committee shall give attention and study to the condition and state of repair and appearance of the building and grounds and see that such repairs and improvements are made as authorized by the church or as included in the church budget.
- 2) All matters of major repair and improvement shall be presented to the Finance Committee for study prior to presentation to the church by the building and grounds committee if funds were not included in the current budget. In the event of an emergency involving heat, water, and electricity, the Chairperson is authorized to take such action as deemed necessary to maintain the buildings in normal operating condition.
- 3) The building and grounds committee shall be responsible for the study of space requirements, future building projection requirements and make the church aware of the current needs and projected needs.

Section 11. Other Committees.

Other committees shall be determined by the needs of the church. Special committees shall be appointed by the pastor; standing committees shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee. Final approval of all committees shall be by vote of the church.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship.

The church shall maintain full-time services.

Section 2. Business

- 1) The church shall hold monthly business meetings on Wednesday following the **second** Sunday of the month.
- 2) The Moderator shall be a lay person elected to serve for a term of one year to begin at the beginning of each church year.
- 3) The Assistant Moderator shall moderate in the absence of the Moderator. In the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and a Moderator Pro-tem shall be elected.
- 4) The Moderator may, and shall, when requested by the pastor, deacons, trustees, or a standing committee, call from the chair special business meetings, the particular

object of the meeting being clearly stated in the notice. Special meetings of the church may also be called by the clerk upon written application of five members specifying the object thereof. Notice of all special business meetings shall be announced at no fewer than three public services prior to the special called business meeting.

5) The church year shall begin September 1.

Section 3. Quorum of Membership.

- 1) At regular, announced meetings those present shall constitute a quorum.
- 2) For election of officers ten (10) per cent of the active membership will constitute a quorum.
- 3) For calling a pastor, a paid staff worker, buying or selling property, and assuming the obligation of a debt above the monthly income of the church, and amending the constitution, twenty-five (25) per cent of the active membership shall constitute a quorum. The Bylaws may be amended by two-thirds of the stated quorum by voting at any meeting of the church, provided one month's notice is given. The Constitution may only be amended annually by two-thirds of the stated quorum by voting at an annual meeting of the church, provided one month's notice is given.

Section 4. Parliamentary Procedure.

All questions of procedure not provided for in these bylaws shall be determined according to Roberts Rules of Order.

Revision January 7, 1987

Revision August 30, 1987

Revision February 25, 1990

Revision March 4, 1992

Revision August 17, 1994

Revision October 5, 1994

Revision April 12, 1997 (change is in shaded print Article VIII section 2 paragraph 1.)

Revision July 14, 1999 (change is in shaded print Article VIII section 2 paragraph 3.)

Revision August 12, 2015 (adopted Baptist Faith and Message, 2000)

Revision April 30, 2017 (adopted draft changes 1.28.17)