

## PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

### I. NAME

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Marshall, located at Marshall, Arkansas.

### II. OBJECTIVES

To be a body of Christ, worshiping in fellowship, responding in obedience to His leadership, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible throughout the world.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people maintain a growing knowledge of God and man.

To be a church that ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and world in Jesus' name.

To be a church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

### III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God and is the final authority for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Abstract of Principles. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

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 obligations of mutual counsel as is scripturally possible.

### IV. CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and, on the profession of faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most humbly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and-compassion; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to support the ministries of this body.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to disciple and edify one another ; to seek the salvation of those around us; to walk with godly wisdom, living above reproach, set apart so that we may be a light to the world to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with another biblical body of believers where we can carry out the principles of God's Word.

## BY LAWS TO THE CONSTITUTION

### I. MEMBERSHIP

#### Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

#### Section 2. Qualification for Membership:

Membership in this church shall require:

- (1) Conversion. Persons desiring membership must manifest a change of attitude toward God and personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.
- (2) Baptism. Persons desiring membership shall be immersed in water upon the authority of the church as a testimony to their faith in Christ. Persons desiring membership by means other than baptism must have been previously immersed by a church in alignment with our statement on baptism as a testimony to their faith in Christ.
- (3) Entrance into covenant. Persons desiring membership in this church shall be willing to enter into covenant with the church and the church with them on the basis of the document known as the Church Covenant.

#### Section 3. Candidacy

Persons meeting the above requirements shall be presented to the church for membership at any regular member's meeting in any of the following ways.

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of the church.
- (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from a church of like faith and order.
- (3) By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a church of like faith and order when no letter is obtainable.
- (4) By restoration upon public confession of error by a former member from whom membership has been withdrawn.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor(s) and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty days. A three fourths vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

#### Section 4. Duties of Members

It shall be the duty of church members to adhere to or show evident progress toward adherence to the teachings of scripture as clarified in our church covenant.

### Section 5. Voting Rights of Members

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is not under threat of exclusion (Article I, Section 7, Item 3) and is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

### Section 6. Termination of Membership

Membership in this church shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) Death. (2) Dismissal to a church of like faith and order. (3) Exclusion. Members who manifest inconsistency in their Christian lives, indifference toward, or continued neglect of, their covenant vows and obligations, or flagrant sin, shall be counseled with a view to remedying the problem and every reasonable measure will be taken to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the welfare of the church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a three-fourths vote of the members voting at any regular or special members meeting; and the church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church. The above shall not apply to members who are providentially hindered from performing their Christian obligations. Excluded members may be restored to full fellowship by vote of the church following public confession of error in any regular or special members meeting. (Lev 19:17; Matt 18:15-18; Luke 17:13; Gal 6:1-2; Rom 15:1-2; 1 Thes 5:14; Heb 12:12-13; 1 Cor 5:4-7, 11-13; 2 Thes 3:14-15; Rom 17:17-18; 1 Tim 5:20; Tit 1:13). (4) Personal request. Any member who reaches the point that he/she no longer agrees with this church's doctrinal statement or cannot any longer be bound by these covenant vows with this church may have his/her name removed from the church roll by request after counsel with the pastor and by vote of the church.

## II. CHURCH OFFICERS

All church officers must be members of the church. The officers of this church shall be as follows:

### Section 1. Pastor(s)

- (1) Qualifications: The qualifications of Pastor(s) are listed in I and II Timothy and Titus.
- (2) Duties: According to I Tim 3:1-5, I Pet 5:1-4, I Tim 5:17, I Thes 5:12-13, and Acts 20:28, Heb 13:7, 17, 24, a Pastor is a shepherd and a spiritual overseer. As such he shall oversee, supervise, and lead the church and its organizations to perform their scriptural tasks. The Pastoral Team shall teach regularly at the services of the church, administer the ordinances, and be in charge of the pulpit. ~~He~~ They shall be ex-officio members of all committees.
- (3) Office: Because of the office, Pastors shall be counted worthy of double honor (I Tim 5:17) and the church shall submit to them in the scriptural exercise of their Holy Spirit given authority (Acts 20:28, Heb 13:7, 17, 24).
- (4) Call of: A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a need arises. His election shall take place at a meeting called for the purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given. A pulpit committee may be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. Any member has the privilege of making nominations according to the policy established by the church. The church shall consider only one name at a time.

Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members voting being necessary for a choice.

- (5) Term of service: A pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The pastor shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as pastor. The church may dismiss the pastor on the following grounds:
- (a) Unscriptural teaching.
  - (b) Clear, unscriptural conduct which obviously hinders the church. In such case, the church shall select three men in good standing with the church who shall counsel the pastor in accordance with Matt 18:15-18 and I Tim 5:19. Should the matter be uncorrected the committee shall report the same to the church and if so desired the church may vote to dismiss the pastor by a three fourths majority of the members voting after public announcement for at least two Sundays. If dismissed the pastor shall be given two weeks with salary.

## Section 2. Church Staff

This church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined. Vocational staff members other than a pastor shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by church action. At least two weeks notice at the time of resignation should be given.

## Section 3. Deacons

- (1) Number. There shall be a sufficient number of deacons to adequately serve the needs of member households.
- (2) Term of Office. Deacons shall serve for life unless conditions or practices exist which necessitate removal from office.
- (3) Qualifications. The qualifications for deacons and their wives are listed in Acts 6. And I Tim. 3:8-13 and they shall by the help of God try to live thereby.  
Deacons shall have been faithful members of this church for one year prior to election to office.  
Other Qualifications of deacons are listed under Article VII, Section 7, Items numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8.
- (4) Duties. The word translated "deacon" means servant, attendant, aide, waiter, etc. (James Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible). The word "deacon" in I Tim. 3:10, 13 means to be an attendant or to wait upon (mentally as in host or friend). The words in Phil. 1:1, I Tim. 3:18, 12 means to run errands, an attendant, a waiter. In Acts 6:1-4 these men were selected by the church to perform such tasks as would free the pastors for prayer and ministering the word. No where in the scripture is there any indication that the office is to be used as an authority in any way over the church or the pastor(s). General duties, then, consist of assisting the pastor(s) in building up the church numerically, financially, and spiritually; to visit and minister to the sick, the sorrowing, and the needy; to guard and protect the reputation of the church against gossip, lies, and accusations, and to guard the church's fellowship and seek immediately to remedy any discord or division which arises therein.  
The deacons shall meet as needed to plan, execute, and evaluate activities consistent with their responsibilities.
- (5) Selection. Qualified men shall be elected as active deacons by the church. Those men selected, if previously unordained, shall be formally ordained (set apart) in the customary manner.

- (6) Termination. A deacon's duties may be terminated in the following ways: (a) Personal request. A deacon, who feels that for one reason or another he either cannot or will not perform his duties, may be relieved of his responsibilities as a deacon by personal request and by vote of the church after counsel. (b) Dismissal. Deacons, as church members and elected servants of the church, are bound by their covenant obligations with the church. Therefore, continued covenant violations, failure to fulfill their duties, or failure to maintain the qualifications of their office shall constitute grounds for dismissal by vote of the church.
- (7) Deacons Emeritus. Deacons, who because of health cannot fulfill their duties, may by vote of the church be made Deacons Emeritus. This designation shall be reserved for those deacons who have, in the past, faithfully discharged their duties and is to be considered a bestowal of honor by the church upon those so designated.

#### Section 4. Moderator

The pastor(s) shall be the church Moderator. In his/their absence the chairman of Deacons shall preside, and if he/they is absent also the church clerk will preside until a moderator is elected from the floor at that meeting.

#### Section 5. Clerk

The clerk shall keep a careful and correct record of all the official acts of the church in regular or called conferences, and perform all the duties pertaining to the office, and make quarterly reports to the church, giving detailed information to the membership roll. All church records are church property and shall be preserved in a safe place, either in the church office or a bank safe deposit box, at the end of each current year.

#### Section 6. Treasurer

The treasurer shall be elected annually by the church at the regular election of officers of the church. He/she shall keep a correct record of all financial transactions and shall make a quarterly report to the church, detailing all receipts and disbursements. The treasurer is authorized to disperse funds only as set forth in the budget unless so ordered by the church. The treasurer shall prepare checks for all payments of all accounts properly allowed, and certify the same by signing each check.

#### Section 7. Trustees

Three trustees elected by the church will hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required.

### III. COMMITTEES AND COORDINATING GROUPS

#### Section 1. General

The church can form and dissolve committees as needed. All church committee members shall be recommended by the nominating committee and elected by the church.

#### Section 2. Standing Committees

Standing committees are committees to be voted on annually by the church body having been recommended by the nominating committee. Examples of standing committees are Nominating, Personnel, Finance and Stewardship, Building and Grounds, etc.

### Section 3. Special Committee

Special committees are committees to be voted on as needed by the church body having been recommended by the nominating committee. Examples of special committees are Faith in Action, Kitchen, Audio/Tech, etc.

### Section -4. Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs in any office or committee by reason of death, removal, or resignation, the unexpired term of such person may be filled by the church at any regular or called meeting. The nominating committee shall bring recommendations to the church concerning filling such vacancies.

## IV. ORDINANCES

### Section 1. Baptism

The ordinance of baptism may be administered at any service so designed by the church for the benefit of all candidates who have made public their profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and who have expressed their desire to follow the Lord in Baptism and to unite with this church.

### Section 2. Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly, unless fellowship or doctrinal problems make its scriptural observance impossible.

## V. CHURCH MEETINGS

### Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly on the Lord's day for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of the Almighty God. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor(s).

### Section 2. Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held quarterly.

### Section 3. Special Business Meetings

A special business meeting may be called by the moderator to consider special matters of significant nature. A one week notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable, and then all members must be notified by letter or personal contact.

### Section 4. Secret or Unauthorized Business Meetings

No secret or unauthorized business meetings are valid. No business beyond that of routine weekly affairs shall be carried on in the absence of the Pastor, including his vacation, except (1) with his knowledge, and (2) when the church is without a pastor.

## Section 5. Quorum

A quorum for the transacting of business at any meeting shall be seven members, except in matters pertaining to a pastor, or for the mortgaging or selling of church property, or amending the constitution and By Laws. Then, one fourth of the qualified members shall be a quorum. A majority of the members present shall determine any matter voted upon, except as otherwise stated herein.

## Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, REVISED, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

# VI. CHURCH FINANCES

## Section 1. Budget

The Finance and Stewardship committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and worldwide expenses.

## Section 2. Giving

Scriptural giving is an expression of love to the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore all giving shall be voluntary and free will. Tithes and offerings brought into the general treasury of the church is the only method of finance found in the scripture; therefore no sales, solicitation, or bazaars shall be permitted in the name of this church.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes; therefore it shall be the duty of members to bring their tithes and offerings into the general church treasury (I Cor. 16:2).

# VII. PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

## Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

## Section 2. Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of the pastor(s) for the study of God's Word. All regular teachers must be qualified members and any guest teachers must be approved by the pastor(s).

The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the biblical revelation; reach persons for Christ and church membership.

# VIII. CHURCH OPERATIONS MANUAL

## Section 1. Policies and Procedures

Church policies and procedures shall be described in the church operations manual. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available to any member of the church. The manual shall be maintained by the church secretary. Changes in policies and procedures may be initiated by any church member or

organization. Addition, revision, or deletion of church policies requires- the recommendation of the church officer or organization (including committees) to whose areas of assignment the policy relates.

#### IX. AMENDMENTS

Changes in this constitution and by-laws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the constitution shall be by three quarters vote of all members of the church presently entitled to vote; amendments to the by-laws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

#### X. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Constitution and By-laws shall become effective upon its adoption by the church.