

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of preserving and making secure the principles of our Faith and to the end that this body be governed in an orderly manner, consistent with the accepted tenets of the Missionary Baptist Churches affiliated with the South Roanoke Association, Baptist State Convention, and Southern Baptist Convention, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the Church, and to set forth the relationship of this body to other bodies of the same faith, we do declare and establish this Constitution.

GENDER

For the sake of consistency and uniformity, all pronoun references to gender contained herein are in the masculine. There will be no restrictive interpretation of these references.

ARTICLE I – NAME

This body shall be known as the *First Baptist Church of Washington, NC, Inc. Corner of Main and Harvey Streets, Washington, Beaufort Co., North Carolina.*

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this body shall be to provide regular opportunities for Public Worship, to sustain the Ordinances, Doctrines, and Ethics set forth in the New Testament for the Church of our Lord, Jesus Christ; to nurture its members through a program of Christian Education and Fellowship; to channel its offerings to the support of the objects of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and to preach and propagate among all people the gospel of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1.

The membership of this Church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of spiritual regeneration, who have been baptized by immersion upon their profession of Faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, who have subscribed to the Covenant and Constitution of this Church, and who have been received by vote of the Church.

By *INACTIVITY*, A Church Member may drop himself from the regular Church Roll. In any two consecutive years when (1) there is no record of a member making a contribution, and (2) there is no record of the member attending a Church Service or activity, and (3) the member does not write a letter expressing a desire to remain in the membership of the Church, this person shall have automatically removed his name from the Active Membership Roll. Such names shall be transferred to the Record Roll and the person shall not be considered a member of the church, although the church will continue the record of his having been a member in the past. This policy does not affect the sick or shut-ins who are unable to respond to these requirements. A person whose name has been dropped from the regular Church Roll by inactivity may be returned to the Active Membership Roll of the Church by writing a letter to the Church requesting renewed membership in the Church.

Section 2.

All new members shall be received under the watch care of the Church until they qualify themselves for permanent membership. During the watch care period either the member or the Church may sever relationship by choice. A watch care member may not hold office or vote in Church Conference. Membership for a watch care member shall become permanent when (1) a candidate coming on Profession of Faith is baptized, (2) a candidate coming by statement is voted full membership in a regular Business Conference; (3) when the church requests and accepts by vote in regular Business the letter of a person coming by transfer. All members will be expected to orient themselves to the Baptist faith and doctrine by attending new-member classes conducted by the Membership Committee and/or Pastor.

Section 3.

Members may resign their membership by choice.

Section 4.

Letters of transfer may be granted to any church of like Faith and Order for members in good standing. When letters are granted, membership in this church will terminate.

Section 5.

When a member of this Church joins a Church of different Faith and Order, membership in this church will terminate, and only a notice of this action will be issued.

Section 6.

The church, after due notice and opportunity for hearing and kindly efforts to make such action unnecessary, may terminate the membership of persons who habitually absent themselves from the services when well and able to attend, or otherwise fail to fulfill the obligations specified in the Church Covenant. Such action will be taken only upon the recommendation of the Deacons to the Church.

Section 7.

In considering the duties involved, members are expected, first of all, to be faithful in all the duties essential to the Christian Life; to attend regularly the services of the Church; to give regularly and systematically to its support and Kingdom causes; and to share in its organized work.

Section 8.

In considering the rights involved, members, and members only, who have attained the age of 16 may vote in the transactions of the Church.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

Section 1.

This church shall hold regular meetings for Worship, Teaching, Training, and Fellowship.

Section 2.

This church shall hold regular monthly business meetings.

Section 3.

Special business meetings of the Church, or of authorized groups within the Church, shall be set according to the needs of the congregation, as provided in the By-laws.

Section 4.

When the membership is in conference for the purpose of voting on ministerial staff positions an absentee vote is acceptable under certain named circumstances:

1. The Church member must be in good standing. (Article III Membership) and,
2. The Church member must be unable to attend because of illness, be a known homebound member or has a conflict and must be out of town.

The church member must give his/her vote to the committee member responsible for filling the ministerial staff position (Pastor Search Committee member or Personnel Committee member).

The vote must be submitted to a designated committee member and written on the absentee voting form that is available at the church office. This vote must be recorded prior to the scheduled vote. In the event that the voting action in church conference is delayed or not taken the absentee vote is null and void.

ARTICLE V - CHURCH OFFICERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Section 1. OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall be a Pastor, Minister of Education & Youth, Minister of Music, Minister of Children & Outreach and other vocational leadership as needed; Deacons, Trustees, and other such officers as shall be required for the work of the church in any of its departments or organizations. All of these must be members of this church in good standing.

Section 2.

A. PASTOR ~ Election and Duties:

Whenever a vacancy occurs, a Pastor shall be called by the Church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the Pastor or the Church. In either case, at

least two weeks' notice shall be given of termination of the relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed, with both Pastor and the Church seeking to follow the Will of God and the Leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The vote to call the Pastor shall take place at a meeting on a Sunday morning especially set for that purpose of which at least one week's notice of the impending vote has been given the membership. The election of the Pastor shall be based upon the unanimous recommendation of a special committee elected to seek out and nominate as Pastor a minister of the gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office of Pastor of this church.

The Pastor Search Team shall bring only one name at a time for consideration of the Church, and no nomination shall be made except that of the committee. Election shall be by Ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present and voting, plus valid absentee ballots necessary for a call. Should the one recommended by the committee fail to receive a three-fourths vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another candidate for Pastor, and the meeting shall be adjourned without debate.

The pastor shall be in charge of the welfare and oversight of the Church. He shall be ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees. He may call a special meeting of the Deacons or any Committee according to procedures which may be set forth in the By-laws. He shall conduct religious services for stated and special occasions, administer the ordinances, minister to the members of the Church and Community and perform other duties that usually pertain to that office. He shall have special charge of the Pulpit ministry of the Church and shall, in cooperation with the Pulpit Committee or the Deacons, provide for pulpit supply when he is absent and arrange for workers to assist in Revival Meetings and other special services. The Pastor shall preside at all meetings of the Church except as otherwise provided in the By-laws. He shall be the administrative head of the Church, supervise the professional staff, and assist the Personnel Committee in arranging and approving all absences and vacations of all Church employees.

B. MINISTER OF EDUCATION & YOUTH

The Minister of Education/Youth will be responsible for the planning, development and Promotion of the Educational and Youth Programs of the Church. He shall work very closely with the heads of the Church organizations in order to arrive at and maintain an adequate and effective Educational Program in the Church. His work will emphasize Christian Education and Youth Ministry. He shall be responsible for ordering and maintaining adequate supplies for the organizations of the Church with which he works. He will also aid in the selecting, training, and directing of the leaders of the Church organizations. It shall be his duty to see to it that the Educational Activities of the Church are guided by approved Southern Baptist publications and Standards of Excellence.

At times he will be expected to cooperate with the other members of the Church Staff on projects which would require the united efforts of the entire Staff. He will correlate and coordinate the activities of the various educational and mission organizations in the church. This Staff member shall keep himself fully informed about the quality of work

being done by the various teams and committees in the church and shall constantly seek to improve those areas. This person will be supervised by the Pastor.

C. MINISTER OF MUSIC

The Minister of Music shall be responsible for the organization, promotion, enlisting, and training of members in a fully graded program of Church Music. The Music Program of the Church shall have as its primary purpose the training of musicians and the enhancing of all phases of worship. The Minister of Music shall enlist, train, and guide selected workers to assist in this work. It is important that this Staff member cooperate with all other members under the direction of the Pastor. The Minister of Music has the responsibility of the direction of music for worship services. He shall cooperate with the Pastor in the worship planning of all services and shall work under the direction of the Pastor.

D. MINISTER OF CHILDREN & OUTREACH

This is a ministerial position whose primary focus is to develop, maintain, promote, and administer ministries for children from birth through grade 6. This person will minister to families with the intent to provide opportunities to witness, shepherd, and disciple children in this modern era. The Minister of Children will work closely with the Minister of Youth in developing a comprehensive plan for all pre-school and school age children. The outreach concept should be included in children's programming but should also result in church wide outreach plans that include adults. This person will be supervised by the Pastor. Specific job responsibilities are detailed in the job description maintained by the Personnel Committee.

E. DEACONS

There will be at least 18 deacons serving three year terms in rotating groups. The deacons shall elect their Chairman each year. The Chairman will serve on the Church Council.

Qualifications:

To be eligible for nomination as a Deacon, one must be twenty-one years of age, and have been a member of this Church for at least one year at the time of the nomination. A Deacon will not be eligible for re-election for one year after rotating off.

Method of Election:

Any Church member with voting privileges may recommend another church member to be considered for the position of Deacon by submitting a written recommendation during the month of May. Recommendations shall be submitted to the Church office utilizing the Deacon Recommendation Form which will be made available to church members. A valid form, in addition to general personal information, will require the individual to identify themselves and to express how the nominee embodies the characteristics of a deacon. All recommendations must be submitted by the first Sunday in June. The Deacon Recommendation Form will be readily available to the Church Body no later than the first Sunday in May. A member may not recommend more nominees than deacons to be elected.

The manner of selecting deacons will be as follows:

(a) The Chairman of the Deacons will forward all submitted recommendations to a Deacon Nomination Committee that will consist of those deacons whose term of service expires in the current calendar year.

(b) This committee of deacons will review the submitted forms to determine the spiritual qualifications and fitness of those recommended for service as a deacon set forth in I Timothy 3, and the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws.

(c) After reviewing all the forms, the committee of deacons will, by the first Sunday of July, bring forward the recommendations of those individuals that best exemplify and exhibit the biblical characteristics of a deacon as set forth in I Timothy 3.

(d) After review by the Pastor, the Deacon Nomination Committee will then determine the willingness to serve of those individuals that are qualified to serve. The number of nominees will not exceed the number of vacancies to be filled.

(e) Each nominee that expresses a willingness to serve will be interviewed by the Pastor, Nominating Committee Chairman and Deacon Chairman collectively. The purpose of this interview process is to ensure that the nominees understand the seriousness of this position and that their beliefs and desires as Christians are directed to fulfill God's Will.

(f) Should a nominee decide, for any reason, he is not ready to be a deacon, or the Pastor, Nominating Committee Chairman and Deacon Chairman collectively, believe that a nominee is not prepared to be a deacon, the Deacon Nominating Committee will seek the willingness of another nominee. Any such nominee will undertake the interview process as set forth in section (e) above.

(g) The Deacon Chair will present the exact number needed to the Church for election. The election will be held in a called business meeting on the last Sunday Morning service preceding Labor Day weekend. If there are fewer nominations presented than the number of vacancies, the number presented will be voted on by the Church at that time. The Deacon Nomination Committee will continue to search for candidate(s) to fill the open positions and then present those nominations to the Church at a later Business Meeting.

(h) If a vacancy occurs after this election, a special committee of current deacons selected by the Deacon Chair in coordination with the Pastor will form a new Deacon Nominating Committee and will present a nominee to fill the vacant term. This nominee will be brought forward to the Church pursuant to the method set out in section (g) above. This election will be held on a Sunday morning.

Ordination:

A Special service will be held to ordain those newly elected Deacons who have not been previously ordained to the office of Deacon. This service will be held before the new term of the incoming Deacons begins.

Standards:

Deacons should be persons:

- 1) who are of good report in the community as being both spiritual and upright in all relationships
- 2) who are both faithful and sincere at all times and in all relationships to God and man
- 3) who totally abstain from the use and sale of intoxicating substances
- 4) who totally abstain from profanity, vulgarity, and suggestiveness
- 5) who are committed to God as good stewards of their time, talents, and money
- 6) who are regular and active members that attend all Church organizations and meetings except as hindered by things consistent with Christian ethics and conscience
- 7) who maintain their home in love, having the respect and honor of their spouse and obedience of their children
- 8) with both the willingness and the ability to think clearly and work effectively.

This standard by no means covers all the considerations for the office of Deacon, nor is it intended that this shall be merely a legalistic matter. It does recognize the right of the Church to require and expect its Deacons to accept this standard as a guide for their lives as is borne out in Holy Scriptures in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3. The Bible makes the same general requirements for Deacons as for Ministers, and these two are the only church offices calling for ordination.

Duties:

Based on the model of the Deacon in the New Testament, Deacons shall be servants of the Church, working always to promote a harmonious and peaceful spirit within the Church. As a body, they shall also address and seek to resolve spiritual concern which affect the Church and its ministry.

Deacons shall give advice to the pastor in all matters concerning the welfare and work of the Church. With the Pastor, they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant progress of the Church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of Christians, and the extension and growth of the Kingdom of God.

Through a plan of ministry, the Deacons shall establish and maintain personal and spiritual relationships with the members of the Church. They shall seek to know the physical, moral, and spiritual needs and struggles of the members and to serve the whole Church in offering relief, support, and encouragement to those in need. Deacons shall confer freely with the Pastor about all matters which, in their judgment, would be wisely and spiritually handled in private.

By direction of the Holy Spirit and in counsel with the Pastor, the Deacons shall oversee

the discipline of the Church, being guided always by the principles set forth in Matthew 18: 15-17; I Corinthians 5: 9-13; and I Thessalonians 5: 12-14.

The Deacons shall assist the Pastor in the serving of the Lord's Supper and in other duties as described in the Deacon's Handbook.

F. TRUSTEES

The Deacon Officers, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary, shall serve as trustees for the Church and officers of the corporation.

The Trustees shall, as provided by law and the action of the Church, hold in trust the title(s) to all property of the Church and shall represent the Church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase, improvement and disposal of Church property; see that Church property is adequately insured. 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; neither shall they have any control over the use of the church property except by vote of the Church. The Trustees shall have the oversight of keeping safely the old and current records and statistics of the church, which shall include minutes and Church rolls, all of which shall be properly stored in the Church buildings or otherwise as determined by the Trustees.

Section 3.

Support Personnel

In addition to the Church officers, the Church may employ such support personnel as needed to carry out the work of the Church. This may include, but not be limited to, Church Secretary, Custodian, and Instrumentalist. Detailed duties of each employee shall be outlined in a job description and kept in the Church Personnel Policy Manual.

A. Church Secretary

The Church Secretary shall work under the direction of the Pastor. He is secretary first to the Pastor, second to Staff members, and third to Church organizational leaders in this order. When there is more secretarial work to be done than the Secretary can handle, he shall consult with the Pastor concerning priorities of the work to be done and the feasibility of securing extra temporary secretarial assistance.

B. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary is a permanent part-time position responsible for performing all the duties necessary to receive and disburse all monies that are represented on the FBC annual budget. The Financial Secretary works under the supervision of the Pastor and in concert with the church Treasurer. This person is responsible for monthly financial reports to the Church conference and any annual reporting required by the Church, IRS, and the national, state, and local Baptist Church organizations.

C. Custodian

The Custodian shall work under the direction of the Properties Committee. He is

responsible for the care of the First Baptist Church buildings so as to contribute helpfully to the safety and well-being of our members at all services; to see to the cleanliness of the building, and to perform all duties as required by the current job description.

D. Instrumentalists

The instrumentalists shall play for all services as directed by the Minister of Music. They shall cooperate with the Minister of Music in the attainment of a suitable program of Church Music. They shall follow the guidelines of the established Personnel Policy.

Temporary Personnel

A. Interim Pastor

Upon the resignation, death or any other circumstance that results in the permanent loss of the services of the Pastor the following process will be initiated to call an **Interim Pastor** for the period of time during which the church is seeking a new Pastor.

The Deacon body will evaluate the church's spiritual condition to determine what the needs of the church are regarding an Interim Pastor and devise search parameters to guide the Interim Pastor Search Committee.

The Deacon body and Personnel Committee should consult with the Budget Finance Committee regarding expenses for the Interim Pastor Search Committee as well as package offerings for the Interim Pastor.

Within 60 days after the Pastor vacancy, the Deacon body will report to the church regarding the interim selection process and recommend an Interim Pastor Search Committee. The Deacon body will recommend to the church a 3-5 member Interim Pastor Search Committee. The committee would be a special committee and should include representatives from the Personnel Committee, Deacon body and the church at large.

Upon approval from the church, the Interim Pastor Search Committee will meet with the Personnel Committee to review search parameters and hiring conditions to be used in the search.

When a proposed candidate for Interim Pastor has been selected, the search committee will present the candidate and a proposed covenant package to the Deacon body and the Personnel Committee. Upon approval, the candidate will then be recommended to the Church in conference to be called as the Interim Pastor. A simple majority vote approval is required to call the Interim Pastor.

The Interim Pastor will serve until a new Pastor is called or as long as the relationship between the church and the Interim Pastor is satisfactory to all parties. The Personnel Committee will serve as the Interim Pastor's contact for questions or issues.

ARTICLE VI - GENERAL

Section I. Church Council

The Church Council shall serve the Church by leading in planning, coordinating, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the Church and its organizations.

The primary functions of the Church Council shall be to recommend to the church suggested annual Church goals and objectives; to review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by Church Officers, organizations, and Committees; to recommend to the Church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate achievements in terms of Church objectives and goals.

Regular members of the Church Council shall be the Church Moderator, who will serve as chairman, Pastor, ministerial staff, chairman of the Deacons, Sunday School Director, Brotherhood Director, WMU Director, chairman of the Personnel Committee, chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee, chairman of Properties Committee, chairman of Nominating Committee, and Church Clerk, who will serve as secretary. All Church Council members shall have voting privileges. The Pastor and ministerial staff shall serve as ex-officio members.

The Church Council will meet monthly prior to the Church Conference. All matters agreed upon by the Church Council which require Church action shall be referred to the Church for approval or disapproval.

Section 2. Ministerial License

When a member announces to the Church that he feels the Call to the ministry, the Church upon the recommendation of the Pastor and by majority vote, may license him as an acknowledgement of his call to the Ministry and encouragement to make preparations for it. The Clerk of the church may furnish the member with a copy of the Minutes or a Certificate of License as his credential, and a register of persons licensed by the Church will be maintained in a permanent file. It is understood that the performance of civil duties by the member shall be governed by State Law and cannot be conferred solely by Church vote. The Church may, at its discretion, revoke any such license by majority vote.

Section 3. Ministerial Ordination

In the event this Church is requested by a Baptist congregation to ordain a member of

FBC who has been called as their Minister, the following procedure shall be followed: the Church will express its approval to enter into the ordination process by a vote of three-fourths of the members present at a Business Meeting of the Church. The Church shall invite the Associational Council on Ordinations to examine the Candidate concerning his fitness for the Ministry. In the event the Association has no such Council, this Church shall invite representatives of neighboring Churches to examine the candidate and report to the Church. Upon receiving a recommendation for ordination from the Ordination Council, the church may vote to confirm the ordination. If confirmed the Pastor will plan an ordination service for the minister candidate.

Section 4. Affiliation with Associations and Conventions

We recognize that there is mutual helpfulness in the Association of Churches who are in agreement in Faith and Practice such as to encourage the spirit of Fellowship and Good Will. We also recognize that there have been devised, through the voluntary cooperation of Churches of like Faith and Order, organizations whose purpose it is to implement the Missionary, Educational, and Benevolent interests and obligations of the individual Christian and his Church Family.

Believing that the South Roanoke Association of Baptist, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and the Southern Baptist Convention are organizations which have as their sole purpose the promotion and support of Missions, Evangelism, Education and Benevolence of the character and in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution and the Articles of Faith of this Church, we therefore agree to participate in these organizations through our duly elected messengers and our support of the causes which these organizations represent.

Section 5. Property Holding

It is agreed that the securing and maintaining of real property, buildings and equipment by this Church shall be for the express purpose of providing facilities for Public Worship and for the engagement upon the Missionary, Evangelistic, Educational, Benevolent and Social interests of this Church. The use of these properties must be in harmony with the character and in the spirit of the Constitution and Articles of Faith of this congregation.

If at any time this Church shall determine to alter the quality of its Beliefs and Practices so as in important respects to be at variance with the character described in the Constitution and in said Articles of Faith: if the decision is by less than unanimous vote of those present at a regular Business Meeting of the Church, after at least four weeks' notice to the members of such meeting (said notice shall be published in the local daily paper once each week for four successive weeks, preceding such meeting) the exclusive rights to all Church property shall irrevocably vest in that part of the congregation which shall agree to continue to use said property for the purposes which it was originally purchased and has been to that time maintained and used.

Section 6. Gifts of Personal Property

When personal property is accepted by the Church the same shall become the absolute property of the Church to be used or disposed of in its sole discretion.

ARTICLE VII - ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1.

This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when three-fourths of the members present and voting at the Business Meeting at which vote is taken shall vote in favor of same. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty days after formal presentation of the Constitution to the Church.

Section 2.

This Constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the Business Meeting at which vote is taken, voting in favor of the proposed amendment. Such Business Meeting must have a quorum present, with a quorum defined as 10% of the resident members of the Church as maintained by the Church Clerk. The proposed amendment shall be presented to the Church Clerk at least thirty days prior to the time the vote is taken, and notice giving date of meeting shall be published in the Church bulletin and newsletter four successive weeks prior to date of voting.