

# Church Constitution - Guide

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## CONSTITUTION OF THE **NAME OF CHURCH**

### ARTICLE ONE – NAME AND ASSOCIATION

This Church shall be known as **NAME OF CHURCH** of **CITY, STATE** having been organized **DATE OF ORGANIZATION** and incorporated **DATE OF INCORPORATION**.

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of the mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist Churches. This church will cooperate with and support the **LOCAL ASSOCIATION** Association and **STATE** State Convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

### ARTICLE TWO– STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Bible is the inspired word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of “THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE” adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We band together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind.<sup>1</sup>

### ARTICLE THREE – COVENANT

(See “Church Covenant – Example and References”)

### ARTICLE FOUR – ORDINANCES

The ordinances of the Church are Believer’s Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper will be observed **MONTHLY, QUARTERLY, etc.** and on special occasions as determined by the Deacons. The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper is open to all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. The pastor, or other representatives appointed by the Board of Deacons, shall preside.

### ARTICLE FIVE – MEMBERSHIP

#### *Section I: Qualification*

Membership in the Church is open to all persons who have publicly testified to their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord and have given evidence of that faith by following the Lord in believer’s Baptism by immersion in water, and who are in agreement with the covenant and the statement of faith of this church.

#### *Section II: Acceptance of Members*

The manner of admission to the Church shall be as follows: (1) by baptism upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ, or (2) by promise of letter from another Baptist church of like faith and order, or (3) by statement of salvation and scriptural baptism by immersion by a church of like faith and

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<sup>1</sup> May use the Baptist Faith & Message for statement of direction and theology. Some churches also include another article that includes a purpose/mission statement.

order. Any person may come as a candidate for membership in the Church at any regular service.

*Section III: Duties and Privileges of Membership*

All members have equal rights and privileges. Only active members of the Church may act and vote in transactions of the Church or hold Church office.

*Section IV: Transfer to the Inactive Membership Roll*

When a member has been inactive for a period of one year, by not attending services, communicating with the Church, or contributing to its support, the church may, upon recommendation of the board of deacons, transfer his/her name to the inactive membership roll. Consideration of such action shall be taken only after a reasonable number of attempts to contact the member to encourage and assist the member in rejoining the active church.

Any person, whose name has been placed on the inactive roll who renews his/her work in the church and takes an active role as a professing Christian, may be restored to active membership by vote of the board of deacons, without further action by the church.

*Section IV: Discipline and/or Removal*

In cases where church discipline must be exercised for any cause, the directions of the Bible are to be observed as found in Matthew 18:15-17 and 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

The purpose of such discipline should be:

-Love for the individual and a desire for God's best in his or her life (Matthew 22:39 and John 13:34, 35)

-For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Proverbs 15:5; 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; 1 Corinthians 4:14; 5:5; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 1:20; 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matt 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22)

-For the instruction and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25)

-For the purity of the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 John 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2)

-For the good of our corporate witness to non-believers (Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10)

-For the glory of God by reflecting His Holy Character (Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12)

### *Section V: Membership Termination*

Membership in the church may be terminated in the following ways: (1) death, or (2) transfer to another church, or (3) exclusion by action of this church, or (4) by written request.

## **ARTICLE SIX -- FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

It is expected that this Church shall be supported through the regular weekly giving of its members.

An offering for the benevolent fund will normally be taken whenever the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is observed. This fund is to be used for the benevolent work of the church as directed by the Board of Deacons.<sup>2</sup>

## **ARTICLE SEVEN – MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH**

### **Annual Meeting**

The moderator (or in his/her absence, the vice-moderator) shall chair all business meetings. In the absence of both the moderator and vice-moderator, the chair of the Board of Management shall act as moderator.

For the purpose of business meetings, a quorum shall consist of 10% of members on the church's active membership list. All members, regardless of age, may vote. Proxy votes shall not be permissible, except by a special motion approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership.

### **Regular and Special Business Meetings**

Regular business meetings shall be held every SPECIFY TIME (ex. the third Wednesday of each month). Furthermore, it shall be permissible to transact routine business of the church at a special business meeting of the church called by the moderator, pastor, or chair of the Board of Management, provided that the intention of conducting business has been announced at the worship service immediately prior. The agenda shall be circulated or made known to the church during the worship service immediately prior to the business meeting.

### **Religious Services**

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday for public worship and for the preaching of the Gospel. Other meetings for worship, preaching, and study may be held at the discretion of the pastor and the Board of Deacons.

## **ARTICLE EIGHT-- AMENDMENTS**

Any member may submit written proposals for constitutional amendments or revisions to the deacons. The deacons shall bring the proposal before all elected officials for review and shall report the decision of the elected officials to the person who submitted the proposal. The elected officials may propose constitutional amendments and revisions to the congregation. The proposal

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<sup>2</sup> The inclusion of a benevolence offering in the Constitution is left to the discretion of the church body.

and the date of the vote must be announced for two weeks prior to the vote, and the text of the proposal must be available for inspection by the congregation during this time. A **two-thirds** majority of votes cast is necessary for ratification of the amendment or revision.

#### **ARTICLE NINE – POLITY**

The government of this church is vested in the body of baptized believers who compose it. It is an independent, self-governing and democratic body.<sup>3</sup>

#### **ARTICLE TEN -- VOTING AND PROCEDURE**

Meetings shall follow the regulations set forth in this constitution and parliamentary procedure as described by Robert's Rules of Order.

**A secret ballot on any issue may be called for upon decision of the majority of those present and voting.**

#### **ARTICLE ELEVEN -- OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

##### *Section I: Officers*

Officers of this church shall include: senior pastor, associate pastors, deacons, moderator, church clerk, financial secretary, treasurer, and two auditors. The church may have as many associate pastors as deemed necessary by the congregation and leadership board. Officers must be active members of the church.

##### *Section II: Deacons*

The church may have as many Deacons as deemed necessary by the congregation and leadership board with a minimum of three deacons. Deacons shall be elected for a term of service of **two (2)** years or until his office is terminated by either his request or that of the church.

A church Deacon must meet the scriptural qualification listed in Acts 6:1-7, and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A Deacon shall demonstrate an exemplary Christian testimony in private, family, and public life; a committed Christian leader and partner of the pastor; supporter and promoter of the church faith, practice, programs, and ministries.

##### *Section III: Committees*

Through the cooperative efforts of the pastor and the personnel committee, all church committees shall be formed as needed. Each committee shall consist of at least a chairperson who is a member in good standing. The only permanently standing committee of this church shall be the personnel committee, and the Budget and Finance committee. Committees shall exist for a reasonable period of time, review its purpose no less than once annually, and dissolve when its purpose is no longer needed.

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<sup>3</sup> Traditionally, the polity of Baptist congregation has been democratic in style. An elder led polity may be desired and should be explained within this article.

## ARTICLE TWELVE— MINISTERS

### Section I:

Pastor – It shall be the Pastor’s duty to preach the gospel, teach the scriptures, administer the ordinances, articulate a vision for the congregation, train and prepare leaders, equip the saints for the work of ministry in order to evangelize the lost, care for the sick and bereaved and in various other ways guide and advance the spiritual welfare of the church. He is to arrange for suitable pulpit supply when absent. He shall be a member of the Leadership Team and shall advise all Ministry Teams as deemed necessary. He shall be called by the church upon recommendation of the Pastor Search Team as provided in Section 3.

### Section II:

Change of Relationship – It shall be the privilege of either the Church or the Pastor to dissolve relations by giving one (1) months notice, or less where both parties are agreed. The dismissal of the Pastor shall be by a **majority** vote by secret ballot at an announced meeting of the Church for that purpose. Previous notice shall be give at two preceding Sunday morning services. Such a meeting maybe called upon the request of the Leadership Team (a **two-thirds** vote of the Leadership Team is required), or upon the request of **ten percent (10%)** or more of the active members.

### Section III:

Upon the resignation, removal, incapacity, or death of the Pastor, a Pastor Search Team shall be formed as follows:

1. two members of the Leadership Team, appointed by the Leadership Team
2. four members from among the Ministry Team Leadership
3. addition, two members-at-large shall be nominated by the Moderator
4. in addition the chair of the deaconate

All of the above nominations shall be approved by the Church.

Pastor Search Team shall be convened by the Moderator, who shall be a member thereof, and it shall elect its own chair and secretary.

It shall be the duty of this team, after seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit, to proceed to procure a prospective pastor whom they shall present to the Church for election. Once appointed, this team will serve continuously until a pastor is called or the team is dissolved.

Pastor Search Team shall be responsible for filling the vacant pulpit each Sunday. It shall immediately recommend to the church the engaging on an interim pastor. The interim pastor shall not be considered for call to the pastorate.

### Section IV:

Election of Pastor – The Pastor shall be elected by secret ballot at a special business meeting of the church called for that purpose. Previous notice shall be mailed and given at tow previous preceding Sunday morning services. A vote of **three-fourths (75%)** of the active members present and voting shall be required to elect. For the purposes of calling a Pastor, a quorum of **twenty-five percent (25%)** of the active membership shall be required.

*Section V:*

Other ministers – Additional ministers may be added to the ministerial staff as deemed necessary upon the recommendation of the Pastor and the Leadership Team.

Candidates shall be interviewed by a committee appointed by the Leadership Team and recommended for approval by **three-fourths (75%)** of the Leadership Team. Final approval will be by vote of the Church. Severance of duties of these same ministers can take place again at the recommendation of the Pastor or by the Leadership Team, with final approval by vote of the Church if desired by the minister in question.

**ARTICLE THIRTEEN- AMENDMENTS**

The church constitution may be amended or revised at any regular or special business meeting upon the condition that the proposed amendment or revision has been submitted to each member in writing at a previous meeting. A **two-thirds** vote of the members eligible to vote shall be necessary to effect a constitution amendment or revision.

**ARTICLE FOURTEEN – DISSOLUTION**

In the event of dissolution of this organization, all unencumbered properties and finances shall be give to another non-profit religious corporation of like faith and practice that is in agreement with the letter and spirit of this constitution. All such decisions regarding this matter would be made by the majority vote of the remaining members of this corporation prior to finals dissolution.