

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF VERSAILLES, MISSOURI**

Adopted by the church congregation 09/08/2010

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**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VERSAILLES, MISSOURI**

PREAMBLE

In the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. We declare and establish this constitution for the preservation of the security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner, consistent with the Convention. This constitution will preserve the liberties inherent in each member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith.

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our 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 solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit:

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THIS CHURCH: To walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin.

AS CHRISTIAN STEWARDS: To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

ALONE AND AT HOME: To maintain family and private devotions; to educate our children religiously to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

BEFORE THE WORLD: To walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks as a beverage and the illegal use or distribution of drugs; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

TOWARD ONE ANOTHER: To watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian

sympathy in feeling and 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.

WHEN WE MOVE: We will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

ARTICLE I – NAME

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Versailles, Missouri, the same being a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Missouri.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Our purpose as a church is:

To acknowledge the Lord Jesus as head of the church and to exalt the standard of Christ-like living.

To interpret, preserve and propagate the principles of our faith with its origin and authority in the Holy Scriptures.

To assemble together regularly for reasons of worship, fellowship, preaching of the gospel, teaching of the Scriptures, training and spiritual development of the Christian, and the administration of the church ordinances, namely the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

To evangelize the non-Christian to receive by faith, Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, committing his life in discipleship to Jesus Christ.

To minister both spiritually and physically to the local and world communities in ways of benevolence, prayer, sympathy and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

To cooperate with other churches of like belief and order in carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) by participating with financial support of the Cooperative Program through the Southern Baptist Convention.

To edify the Christian, encouraging his growth in knowledge and grace of our Lord through programs of study and training; affording to the Christian a channel for acts of service to Jesus Christ and total involvement in the ministry of His Church.

ARTICLE III – ARTICLES OF FAITH

The standard of faith and practice shall be that as set forth in the New Testament and incorporated in the Articles of Faith published as "The Baptist Faith and Message" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in session in Orlando, Florida on June 4, 2000.

ARTICLE IV – RELATIONSHIPS

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 Baptist churches. As far as it is consistent with our belief, this church will cooperate to support the association and state conventions affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

This is a sovereign and democratic Southern 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 1. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP. Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and giving evidence of having been born again of the Spirit and having adopted the views of faith and practice held by this church may be received for membership. Therefore, the membership of this church shall consist of persons who accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and who have obeyed Him in the scriptural ordinance of Baptism in accordance with this constitution.

Section 2. CANDIDACY. Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership (after counseling) in any of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church;
- B. By promise of letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church of like order and faith acceptable to our own;
- C. By statement of prior conversion experience and by a scriptural baptism by immersion when no letter is obtainable;
- D. By restoration to the roll after having been dropped.

All persons coming for church membership shall be conditionally accepted by the congregation in the public worship service. The candidate shall be counseled by the pastor and/or deacon committee appointed for such purpose, within thirty (30) days; as to their salvation experience and their beliefs as to our Articles of Faith (Article III) and Purpose (Article II), and before baptism, reception of letter, restoration or inclusion by statement; unless such counseling has been made prior to their presentation.

Section 3. VOTING RIGHTS OF MEMBER. Every resident member, who has been a member for at least thirty (30) days, and is of good standing of the church, is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business sessions, provided the member is present.

Section 4. FORFEITURE OF GOOD STANDING. A person who has not had fellowship in the activities of this church within a period of six (6) months shall forfeit his right to participate in any business activities of this church. Reinstatement of good standing will occur when the member resumes fellowship with any of the activities of this church at least thirty (30) days prior to business meeting. Judgment concerning questions of good standing shall be determined by the deacons and the pastor. Conditions of health will be considered on an individual basis as possible exceptions.

Section 5. NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION. New church members shall be expected to participate in the church's new member orientation program, as it is provided by the church.

Section 6. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP. Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- A. Death
- B. Dismissal to another Baptist Church by letter
- C. Exclusion by action of the Church as recommended by the Deacons and approved by two-thirds majority vote of members present at a specially called business meeting.
- D. Erasure, by choice, when a member requests it, or when they unite with another church to which this church does not grant letters.

Under no circumstances in any of the above instances, other than death, will a member be removed from the church roll without a vote of the church. A permanent record shall be maintained of all names removed from the church roll.

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Section 7. DUTIES OF MEMBERS.

- A. To keep our covenant obligations before God and each other;
- B. To seek to be in some service for the Lord in the work of the Church;
- C. To be faithful in attendance at the services;
- D. To walk uprightly before the world;
- E. To give regularly in the appointed way (Malachi 3:8 and Matthew 23:23) for the financial support of the Lord's work as He has prospered us;
- F. To maintain Christian love toward one another and kindly conduct toward all.

Section 8. CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS. All missionary and other organizations within the church must be organized with the consent of the church and labor under its control.

Section 9. WORSHIP.

- A. Public services shall be held regularly on the Lord's Day and at other times to be scheduled by the church.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at least once each quarter.

- C. Occasional religious meetings, such as revival, may be held at the discretion of the church council.

Section 10. BUSINESS.

- A. At any regular meeting for worship, the church without special notice, may conditionally receive candidates for membership.
- B. The business meetings shall be held on the second Wednesday evening of March, June, September, and December. The *Annual Business Meeting* shall be the September business meeting.
- C. At all business meetings, whether regular or special, ten members representing at least ten different families shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If any business meeting cannot be held at the scheduled time, it may be postponed not more the two weeks.
- D. Secret ballot will be used in voting on the call of paid ministry personnel, nomination of deacons and Pastor Search Committees. It shall also be used when requested and approved by a majority on any matter of business.
- E. Special business meetings shall be announced a minimum of three (3) times at regularly scheduled church services, two of which shall be Sunday morning services. The purpose of this meeting shall be clearly stated and no other business shall be discussed. Special business meetings may be called for the following reasons:
 - 1. When requested by the pastor, deacons, or church council.
 - 2. When called by the church secretary/clerk upon written applications of ten (10) members representing ten (10) families.
 - 3. When there are motions pertaining to the purchase of church property of over \$5,000.00.
 - 4. When voting for the purpose of Pastoral or Ministerial call. This shall be voted on at Sunday morning worship service. The church shall vote on only one candidate at a time for Pastor. Vote shall be by secret ballot with a minimum of a three-fourths (3/4) affirmation being necessary to call the pastor. Moving expenses shall be paid by the church. (See Article VII. Sec. 4 and Article VIII.)

ARTICLE VI – SENIOR PASTOR AND DEACONS

Section 1. SENIOR PASTOR shall be chosen by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a special business meeting called for that purpose. (Refer to Article V. Sec. 10. E. and Article VII Sec. 5. E.) The pastor shall serve until the relationship is mutually terminated and notice is mutually agreed upon by the church. (See Article VIII Sec 1. and Sec. 2.)

DUTIES. The pastor shall be the spiritual overseer and director of the church. The duties shall be to:

- A. Preach the Gospel.

- B. Lead the deacons, the congregation, the organizations and the church staff to perform their tasks of engaging in a fellowship of worship, witness, education and ministry.
- C. Proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers.
- D. Care for the church's members and other persons of the community.
- E. Encourage family worship and Bible study.
- F. Administer the church ordinances.
- G. Promote missions and afford opportunity for contributions.
- H. Serve as ex-officio member of all committees.

Section 2. DEACONS. One deacon shall be elected for each fifty (50) active members of the church including homebound members and those in residential care. These deacons will be ordained for life, but their tenure of service will be at the pleasure of the church. They shall be elected by the church. The option to implement three (3) year terms on a rotation system, whereby one-third (1/3) of the terms expire each year is left to the discretion of the deacons.

Deacons shall be nominated by the church by secret ballot and be screened by a Deacon Screening Committee composed of three (3) deacons and the pastor. This Committee shall present the approved candidates for election by the church. If the church selects anyone who has not been previously ordained, an ordination service is to be held for him.

- A. A deacon shall meet the Biblical qualifications as set forth in 1 Timothy 3: 8-13.
- B. He must have been a member in good standing of the First Baptist Church, Versailles, Missouri, for the last full year.
- C. An active deacon must attend at least three (3) church activities each month.
- D. Deacons shall meet monthly.
- E. Deacons shall organize themselves as needed to carry out their tasks.
- F. Deacons may be deemed inactive only by a vote of the church in a regular business session.

ARTICLE VII – CHURCH COUNCIL

Section 1. COUNCIL PURPOSE.

- A. The church council is a duly elected and representative body, which shall represent the church and act in its place in matters designated in these bylaws.
- B. The council will be responsible to function in the best interest of God and the congregation in all matters of the church, including business and legal affairs.
- C. The church council is the board of trustees of the church and shall assume all the legal responsibilities of such a board as required by civil law. (See Article VII Sec. 5.)

- D. The church council shall monitor, evaluate, and govern all ministries of the church.
- E. The church council may refer any item of business to the church at a regular business meeting of the voting members of the church, or at a special meeting as provided in these bylaws. (See Article V. Sec. 10)
- F. **The church council is responsible to the church for all its actions, and will be subject to review in any regular or duly called business meeting of the voting members of the church. A majority vote of the voting members of the church in an official meeting shall be binding upon the council.**

Section 2. COUNCIL MEETINGS.

- A. An organizational meeting of the council shall be held within one month following each annual business meeting of the voting members of the church.
- B. The council shall meet monthly at a regular time and place as decided by the council. Exceptions are to be determined by the administrative committee.
- C. A majority of the elected members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP.

- A. Qualifications for council members
 - A. Council members, in addition to meeting the regular church voting requirements, must be stable Christian people who have been voting members of this congregation for a minimum of three (3) years.
 - B. Leadership ability.
 - C. Genuine interest in The First Baptist Church of Versailles and its programs and ministries.
 - D. Harmony with the purpose and objectives of the church and its pastoral staff.
 - E. Believes in the Biblical standard of tithing, and practices such to the best of their ability.
 - F. Time to invest in the ministry of the church.
 - G. Be a voting member of the church.
- B. The council shall be composed of eight members at large to be elected by the voting members of the church in their annual business meeting, plus the senior pastor. Other members of the church's pastoral staff shall be ex-officio members of the council. (ex-officio – nonvoting)
- C. Council members shall be elected for a two-year term of office, and shall not serve for more than three (3) terms (six years) in succession as members of the council
- D. The nominating committee shall so arrange the original nominations that the terms of office of four members of the council shall come to expiration each year. There shall not be more than one voting member or ex-officio member on the church council from any family. This shall apply especially to husband and wife, brother and sister, parent and child.

- E. Resignation and Expulsion. The church council may, at any time, first request resignation of, expel or dismiss any member of the council without a meeting of the members of the congregation, when such a member has lost interest, failed his duties, conducted himself in a way unbecoming to a Christian, or for any other reasons it may deem sufficient grounds for expulsion. Action to expel shall require a three-fourths (3/4) affirming vote of the members of the council. Expulsion from the council shall not affect a member's relationship to the church.
- F. Vacancies. All vacancies in council membership shall be filled by nominations from the nominating committee (Article IX) and voted on by the council itself until the next regular church business meeting.

Section 4. COUNCIL OFFICERS.

- A. At its annual organizational meeting the council shall elect the following four officers from among its own membership: moderator, assistant-moderator, secretary/clerk, and treasurer.
- B. The four elected officers, along with the senior pastor, shall constitute the administrative committee of the council. The four elected officers shall serve as the personnel committee. The senior pastor shall have ex-officio responsibilities with regard to personnel matters.
- C. The officers of the council shall also be the officers of the church.
- D. Powers and Duties of the Officers
 - 1. The Moderator
 - a. Shall preside at all meetings of the church council and its administrative committee when present.
 - b. Shall have power to call special meetings of the council and regular and special meetings of the members of the church as provided in these bylaws.
 - c. Shall call to order all business meetings of the members of the church.
 - d. Shall have power to execute notes, bonds, debentures, trust indentures, contracts, deeds, mortgages, leases, and other instruments for the church, when such has been authorized by the church council.
 - e. Shall have power to do such other acts as the president of a corporation is authorized by law to do, including such other acts as he may be directed to do by the church council.
 - 2. The Assistant-Moderator
 - a. Shall preside over the meetings of the council and its administrative committee and shall have power to fulfill all other powers and duties of the moderator in his absence, or when so authorized by the council.
 - 3. The Secretary/Clerk
 - a. Shall see that a record is kept of the proceedings of the council and of the church business meetings.

- b. Shall be responsible to ensure that church bylaws are on file and that appropriate care be taken of official church papers, deeds, etc.
- 4. The Treasurer
 - a. Shall ensure the counting and transactions of the church moneys and shall give regular reports to the church council.
 - b. Shall be responsible to ensure that checks are issued in accordance with the provisions of the church budget, or as adjusted by the council.
 - c. Shall ensure that all the financial affairs of the church are handled in accordance with procedures adopted by the council.

Section 5. COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES.

- A. Church Ministries. The council shall work toward and endeavor to lead the congregation in fulfilling its Christian ministry under the leadership of the pastor and the Holy Spirit.
- B. Chairpersons. The council shall choose from among its members the chairpersons of the following departments, boards, or committees: Ministries, Missions, Christian Education, Building and Grounds, and/or any other committee it deems necessary to function in the best interest of the congregation in order to carry out the ministries and needs of the church. A hired staff person serving as ex-officio of the council may serve as chair of a department, board, or committee.
- C. Budget. The council will receive from the staff and chairpersons of departments, boards, or committees proposals regarding the church budget before the annual business meeting of the church. The council will further study the needs and resources and make final budgetary proposal to the church for its adoption in the annual business meeting.
- D. Legal Business Affairs. As the board of trustees, the council will assume all the responsibilities of such a board as required by civil law.
 - a. Except as otherwise provided herein, this board (church council) shall have full charge and control of all property, effects, and assets of the church with full power to regulate, use and control the same for the benefit of the church. Said board shall specifically have authority and power to act for and on behalf of the church in the purchase, acquisition, selling, conveying, leasing, mortgaging or other disposition of property, real or personal, and shall have the power to borrow money, issue sell or pledge bonds, promissory notes, bills of exchange debentures, and other obligations and evidences of indebtedness, secured or unsecured, and otherwise be responsible for the business activities of the church. Any transactions that exceed approved church budget must be brought before the voting members of the congregation for approval prior to entering into any agreements or contracts.
 - b. The church council shall not have the power to sell any real property without an official vote of approval by a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of the voting members of the church who are present in an official

- church business meeting. The council shall be responsible for safeguarding the title and/or ownership of all properties of the church.
- c. It shall be the duty of this board (church council) to enact necessary resolutions authorizing the treasurer, moderator, and/or other persons to sign or co-sign checks for withdrawals of church funds on deposit with banks.
- E. Pulpit Committee
- a. The church council shall constitute a pulpit committee whenever the church is in need of a senior pastor.
 - b. They shall be responsible for filling the pulpit with supply and interim ministers when the church is without a senior pastor.
 - c. They are encouraged to ask the Lamine Baptist Association and/or the Missouri Baptist Convention for counsel and advice.
 - d. After proper study and prayerful consideration of the persons available for the pastorate, the council will propose the name of pastoral candidate to the church for their consideration. Only one name shall be presented to the congregation at one time.
 - e. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of approval by voting members (Article V. Sec. 10. E. 4.) is required to call a senior pastor. A unanimous call should be attempted after three-fourths (3/4) affirmation vote has been reached.
 - f. If a three-fourths (3/4) vote of approval is not attained, the council shall prayerfully seek agreement on another minister and shall propose another name to the church.

ARTICLE VIII – PASTOR AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Section 1. **SENIOR PASTOR.**

- A. The senior pastor is the called leader of the congregation. Recognition of the direction of the Holy Spirit by both pastor and people constitutes a compatible placement of the pastor as God's chosen leader of the congregation. The senior pastor shall be chosen according to instructions in these bylaws. (See Article V. Sec. 10. E. 4. and Article VII. Sec. 5. E.) He shall assume full responsibility for the direction of leadership for the church in close cooperation with the church council. His role is that of earned leadership. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees (except the council of which he has voting rights and responsibilities) of the church and shall be notified in advance of all meetings whether or not he is able to attend.
- B. The senior pastor shall assume full responsibility for the direction of leadership and shall work closely with the church council in sharing his goals and objectives, and in seeking to find the best thinking of the council regarding the work of the church. The council shall put forth every effort to become a team working with him for the fulfillment of these goals, and for the success of God's Church.
- C. The senior pastor shall call a special meeting of the council or any department, board, or committee for emergency action as he deems necessary by making a

verbal request for such a meeting to the moderator or chair of the designated group.

Section 2. RETENTION OR DISMISSAL OF SENIOR PASTOR.

- A. If a minimum of twenty-five (25) voting members object to the continued leadership of the senior pastor they may present their objections in writing over their signatures to the church council where the objections shall be carefully studied by the church council. If no solution is reached and assistance or consultation is necessary, the Lamine Baptist Association and/or the Missouri Baptist Convention shall be contacted for assistance in conflict mediation. In this event, a member/leader of either or both of these organizations shall be invited by the moderator of the church council to be present at a meeting of the council and those requesting the meeting. If no solution to the problem is reached, the council shall bring the matter to the church, and shall be responsible to call and conduct the meeting in keeping with these bylaws as provided in Article V. Section 10. The decision of the church shall be final.
- B. The decision to remove the senior pastor from office shall require a majority vote of the voting members present and voting. If the vote is for removal, a period of sixty (60) days including pay and benefits shall be allowed for termination of the pastorate. If there has been an obvious defection of character resulting in the loss of recognized ministerial status, the removal shall be immediate, and the church shall have no further financial obligation. The church council shall have the power to extend the sixty-day (60) period of the pastorate, and/or the pastoral privileges and pay any benefits if they deem it advisable.
- C. If the senior pastor or the church council should desire a vote regarding his continued leadership, the vote may be taken in a regular or duly called special business meeting of the church.
- D. Should the senior pastor feel inclined to terminate his leadership he shall present his resignation to the council, which in turn shall arrange with him to have it presented to the church in a proper manner. The resignation should provide for a minimum of thirty (30) days before vacating the pastorate unless other arrangements are worked out to the satisfaction of both the church council and the pastor.

Section 3. PASTORAL AND SENIOR LEVEL STAFF.

- A. Pastoral and senior level personnel may be selected by the senior pastor with ratification by the council
- B. Such personnel may include:
 - a. Associate pastors to serve in such areas of the church program as the senior pastor and council deem advisable.
 - b. Business Manager
 - c. Other program directors
 - d. Administrators

- C. Associate pastors and all senior level staff members are ultimately responsible to the senior pastor.
- D. The senior pastor is responsible for the hiring and placement of staff within the limits of existing budget.
- E. Associate pastors and other senior staff members are ex-officio members of the council and ex-officio members of committees of their responsibility.
- F. Termination of personnel shall be in accordance with the established personnel policy as approved by the council.

ARTICLE IX – NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- Section 1. **NUMBER OF MEMBERS.** The nominating committee shall consist of three (3) or more voting members of the church to be recommended by the administrative committee and ratified by the council, plus the senior pastor. The nominating committee will seek the advice and assistance of the pastoral staff in carrying out the responsibilities of the committee.
- Section 2. **TERM LENGTH.** The terms of office will be for one year, and member shall not serve for more than four years in succession, except for the senior pastor.
- Section 3. **DUTIES.** They shall make nominations for the church council, which are subject to the review and approval of the church council.
- Section 4. **REQUIREMENTS.** Members of the nominating committee, in addition to meeting the regular church voting requirements, must be stable Christian people who have been voting members of this congregation for a minimum of three (3) years.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended, altered, or changed by a three-fourths (3/4) affirming vote of the church voting members present at a regular or special meeting of the voting members of the church. A copy of the proposed amendments, alterations, or changes and notice that action will be taken thereon shall be provided the congregation as a whole at least one week prior to such regular or special meetings.

ARTICLE XI – FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year for the church shall begin on January 1, and end December 31.

ARTICLE XII – ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER

Roberts Rules of Order shall be followed at all business meetings of the church voting members, council, departments, committees, or groups.

