

CONSTITUTION
OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
VERSAILLES, MISSOURI 65084

The 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 doctrines of the New Testament and the tenents of the Southern Baptist 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 Saviour, 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.

- Section 1. FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THIS CHURCH: 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 comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine; to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; and
- Section 2. 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.
- Section 3. ALONE AND AT HOME: We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances:
- Section 4. 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 Saviour.
- Section 5. TOWARD ONE ANOTHER: We further engage 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 Saviour, to secure it without delay.
- Section 6. WHEN WE MOVE: We moreover, engage that when we move from this place, 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 non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Missouri.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Our purpose as a church is:

- Section 1. To acknowledge the Lord Jesus as head of the church and to exalt the standard of Christ-like living.
- Section 2. To interpret, preserve and propagate the principles of our faith with its origin and authority in the Holy Scriptures.
- Section 3. To assemble together regularly for reasons of worship, fellowship and preaching of the gospel, the teaching of the Scriptures, and the training and spiritual development of the Christian; and the administration of the church ordinances, namely the Lord's Supper and Baptism.
- Section 4. To evangelize the non-Christian to receive by Faith, Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, committing his life in discipleship to Jesus Christ.
- Section 5. 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.
- Section 6. To co-operate 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 Co-operative Program of World Missions through the Southern Baptist Convention.
- Section 7. 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 Memphis, Tennessee, on May 14, 1925 and reaffirmed at Kansas City, Missouri, on May 9, 1963.

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 obligations of mutual counsel and co-operation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as it is consistent with our belief, this church will co-operate with and support the association and state conventions affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

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 1. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP: Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour 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 the by-laws of 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 a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church of like order and faith acceptable to our own,
- C. By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist Church, when no letter is obtainable, and
- D. Those who are restored to the roll after having been dropped.

All persons coming for church membership 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.

Should there be any dissent in the public vote or an unacceptable conclusion upon counseling. The pastor and deacon committee will make a recommendation to the church within thirty days (30). A three-fourths vote of church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

Section 3. 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 4. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP: Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- A. Death,
- B. Dismission to another Baptist Church by letter,
- C. Exclusion by action of the church,
- D. Erasure, when by choice, members request it, or when they unite with another church to which this church does not grant letters.

(Termination of Membership Section continued:)

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

Section 5. DISCIPLINE: It shall be the basic purpose of the First Baptist Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption, rather than punishment shall be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another.

Should some serious condition exist, which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem. All 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 two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose; and the church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has made it necessary for the church to exclude him, upon evidence of his repentance and reformation, may, upon his request, be restored to membership by a vote of the church.

ARTICLE VI: ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

The officers of this Baptist Church shall be: Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, Financial Secretary, Clerk, Moderator, Sunday School Director, Church Training Director, Woman's Missionary Director, Brotherhood Director, and others, as deemed necessary, may be added by a vote of the church.

THE PASTOR: Shall be chosen by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's notice publicly has been given.

Whenever a vacancy occurs, a pulpit committee shall be elected by the church and election shall be by ballot. Any member of the church has the privilege of making an additional nomination, if he desires.

The pastor shall serve until the relationship is mutually terminated by a two weeks' notice.

DUTIES: The pastor shall be the spiritual overseer and director of the New Testament church,

- A. His first duty being to preach the Gospel;
- B. He will 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 of ministry,
- C. Proclaiming the Gospel to believers and unbelievers;
- D. Caring for the church's members and other persons of the community and
- E. He will encourage family worship and Bible study.

(Duties of Pastor Section continued)

- F. It will be his duty to administer the church ordinances.
- G. And present at stated times, the various claims of missions and afford opportunity for contributions to these objects.
- H. He shall be exofficio member of all committees.

The pastor shall have two (2) weeks annual vacation, date agreed upon by he and the church. The pastor shall have one day off each week; he shall be granted the privilege of holding Revival Meetings, limited to two (2) weeks annually, including two Sundays. The pastor and his wife shall have the privilege of attending the Southern Baptist Convention and the State Convention meetings, with their expenses paid, at the rate budgeted, and other denominational conferences, within limitations of the budget.

OTHER STAFF AND FULLTIME STAFF PERSONNEL HIRED FOR MINISTRIES: Shall have duties and salary as described by a committee, appointed for that purpose, and shall have vacations and Revival times as described for the Pastor.

CHURCH CLERK:

- A. He shall be elected annually,
- B. Shall keep a register of the names of members, with the dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of all baptisms;
- C. Shall keep in a suitable book a record of all actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided;
- D. Shall notify all absent officers, members of committees, and Messengers of their election or appointment;
- E. Shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church.
- F. Preserve on file, all communications and written official reports and
- G. Shall give, when necessary, legal notices concerning any meetings.

CHURCH TREASURER:

- A. Shall be elected annually,
- B. It is his duty to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by the financial secretary, all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements;
- C. Payment of bills for local work and denominational or other causes shall be remitted at least monthly by check, by the treasurer;
- D. Render to the deacons at each monthly meeting, an itemized report of all receipts and all disbursements for the preceding month, and this report shall be read in the monthly business meeting of the church and;
- E. Prior to the rendition of the annual report to the deacons, the treasurer shall submit this report to the trustees for their audit and upon completion of the audit, the trustees will sign the report before it goes to the church for acceptance.

(Church Treasurer - continued).

All books, records and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered the property of the church and shall be open for inspection at all times by any member of the church. The treasurer shall upon election of his successor promptly deliver to the chairman of the deacons, all books, records and accounts pertaining to his work.

CHURCH FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

- A. Shall be elected annually,
- B. Shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the counting committee, (counting committee to be selected by the deacons);
- C. Shall give each donor individual credit as provided in the improved record system offered by the Sunday School Board, or other acceptable system;
- D. Will fill out the sheet for the monthly balance and report found in the record book, which will indicate receipts from envelopes, plate or loose and miscellaneous or special offerings;
- E. Shall be responsible for preparing and mailing the quarterly statements to all contributing members;
- F. Shall record in a suitable book all totals received through all channels of the church offering and also credit each object in the accepted budget with its quota or percentage of the receipts and;
- G. Will draw all vouchers for payment of accounts and see that the several objects keep within their allotted amounts.

A general order may be made by the church directing the financial secretary to draw orders at stated intervals in favor of persons drawing regular salaries or for payment of mission money for their designated offices. All bills coming through the church shall be reviewed by the Financial Review Committee and those which are not provided for in the general order, shall go automatically to the church clerk for investigation; if he approves and the church votes, he then draws the order, the clerk signs it, and writes a check to pay the bill or bills.

The Financial Secretary has no responsibility for keeping the money of the church.

MODERATOR:

- A. Shall be elected annually,
- B. By means of nominations from the floor and voting by secret ballot and,
- C. Shall conduct all business of the church.

In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of the deacons shall preside, or in the absence of both; the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected from the congregation.

SELECTION COMMITTEE:

Shall be composed of four (4) members; The Moderator and three appointed, by the Moderator (one of the three being from the Active Deacon Body) and presented in the May business meeting, each subject to church approval, for a term of one year.

- A. It shall be the duty of this committee to nominate, prior to the beginning of the church year and subject to church approval, the members of all standing committees, not otherwise provided for,
- B. It shall be the duty of this committee to name any special general committees as the need may arise.
- C. The committee shall name the chairman of each committee and failure to do so will cause the first member of each committee to automatically become chairman for that committee.

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS:

Shall be appointed annually by the Selection Committee, at least three months prior to the annual meeting for the election of officers, consisting of the pastor, (ex-officio), and five others, whose duty it shall be to bring to the church nominations for officers.

THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH SHALL BE ELECTED AS FOLLOWS:

- A. The Committee on Nominations, provided for above, shall turn in a list of nominations for the Directors of the Departments (Sunday School, Church Training, Woman's Missionary Union, and Brotherhood) at the business meeting at least two months before the annual meeting. These, after being elected, shall become a part of the committee on nominations to assist in selecting the departmental officers, which shall be elected one month ahead of the annual meeting.
- B. Then the Committee on Nominations shall complete the roster of other officers and workers to be elected at the annual business meeting, whose duties shall be described and designated by approved denominational standards and materials.
- C. The Officers of the church shall be elected annually by the church, and shall hold as truth, the Articles of Faith.
- D. When the completed roster of officers and workers have been elected, they shall be trained and prepared to take their offices with the beginning of the new year October 1. In all of these different elections, any person is free to make additional nominations from the floor.

TRUSTEES:

Shall be three (3) in number and

- A. Shall hold all church property in trust for the congregation;
- B. Shall be responsible for giving oversight to and care for such property;

- C. They shall be the legal advisors to the church and sign all legal documents in the church's name.
- D. The trustees shall audit the church treasurer's books at the end of the church year and sign for presentation for approval of the church.

The trustees each serve for three (3) years, they are elected so that only one's term of office expires each year and that, unless death or other vacancy occurs, no two trustees will be elected in any year.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

Shall be composed of six (6) members, five of whom shall be nominated by the Selection Committee and the other a deacon from the Active List, subject to church approval, for a term of three years, two to rotate off each year and a system of three year rotation began. It shall be the duty of this committee:

- A. To supervise the maintenance and repair of all buildings and equipment;
- B. To recommend to the trustees, improvements in equipment and permanent decorations,
- C. To supervise the cleanliness of the building; and to see that the lawn and other outside appearances are attractive and cared for.
- D. This committee is prohibited by the church from allowing the use of any rooms or part of the building to any classes, organization or auxiliary of the church for any dinner, entertainment or program, for the purpose of profit-making, provided nothing is contained herein to prohibit a collection or charge for the meal to meet its actual cost. It is the purpose and aim of the church to finance itself and the Kingdom by tithes, offerings, and voluntary contributions.
- E. This body has no legal duties and are subject to the Trustees and therefore, to the church body.

DEACONS:

One Deacon shall be elected for each fifty (50) members of the church, or major fraction thereof. These deacons, when ordained, 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 for a three (3) year term on a rotation system, whereby 1/3 of the terms expire each year. They shall be eligible for re-election, after one year off the Active Deacon List.

Deacons shall be nominated by the church and be screened by a Deacon Screening Committee made up of three (3) Deacons and the Pastor. This Committee shall present the approved candidates for election by the church. If the church selects any one 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 I Timothy 3:8-13.

(Deacon section continued)

- B. He must have been a member of the First Baptist Church, Versailles, Missouri, for at least one year.
- C. Deacons shall meet monthly.
- D. Deacons shall be selected as needed.
- E. Deacons shall organize them selves as needed to carry on their tasks;
- F. Shall select the Deacon Screening Committee from their ranks.

Section 6. POWER OF THE CONGREGATION

- A. All government of the church shall be by a majority of members, attending any stated or regularly called meeting, except for business relating to church property, Pastoral or Ministries Call, or major finances, which shall be brought before voting members of the congregation at Sunday Morning Worship Service.
- B. All missionary and other organizations within the church must be organized with the consent of the church and labor under its control.

Section 7. DUTIES OF MEMBERS:

- A. It is the duty of members of this church 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. And to maintain Christian love toward one another and kindly conduct toward all.

Section 8. WORSHIP:

- A. Public services shall be held regularly on the Lord's Day and at such other times to be scheduled by the church as needed;
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each quarter and;
- C. Occasional religious meetings, such as Revival and other, may be held at the discretion of, and voted by the church.

Section 9. BUSINESS:

- A. At any regular meetings for worship, the church without special notice, may act upon the reception of members as candidates for membership, or upon the dismissal of members to other churches.

(Section 9, Business continued).

- B. The pastor, may and shall, when requested by the deacons, trustees, or a standing committee, call from the pulpit three times, special business meetings, and the particular object of the meeting being clearly stated in the notice.
- C. Special meetings of the church may be called by the clerk upon written application of ten members, representing ten families, specifying the object thereof, which notice shall be read three (3) times at the public Services.
- D. The business meeting shall be held on Wednesday evening after the first Sunday, of each month, and at the meeting in August, the church letter to the Association shall be approved and Messengers elected. At this and all other business meetings, business that is provided by these Articles or by the by-laws may be transacted.
- E. 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.
- F. If any business meeting cannot be held at the scheduled time, it may be postponed not more than one week.
- G. Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall be the Parliamentary Guide for all business meetings.
- H. Secret ballot will be used in voting on the call of paid personnel, election of deacons and Pulpit Committees, and secret ballot shall be used when requested and approved by a majority on any matter of business.

We, the undersigned members of the First Baptist Church, Versailles, Missouri, 65084, Done this _____ day of _____ 1979.

Signed: