

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
VERSAILLES, MISSOURI 65084

The Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution for the preservation and 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 tenets 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.

Article I: NAME

Section 1. This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Versailles, Missouri, the same being a 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 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 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 MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications for membership: Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and giving evidence of having been born 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 have 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.

Article IV: 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 at Memphis, Tennessee on May 14, 1925 and reaffirmed at Kansas City, Missouri on May 9, 1963.

Article V: 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 cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as it is consistent with our belief, this church will cooperate with and support the association and state convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article VI: 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.

BYLAWS

1. Membership

Section 1. General

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

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

Section 2. 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 in any of the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church
- (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church of like faith and order and acceptable to our own
- (3) By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist Church when no letter is obtainable
- (4) Those who are restored to the roll after having been dropped.

All persons coming for church membership shall be counseled with by the pastor and or deacon committee appointed for such purpose within thirty days, as to their salvation experience and their beliefs as to our Articles of Faith (Article IV) and Purpose (Article II), 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. 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 will be expected to participate in the church's new member orientation program.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death, (2) dismissal to another Baptist Church by letter, (3) exclusion by action of this church, (4) erasure when by choice members request 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 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 such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the welfare of the church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a 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 may upon his request be restored to membership by a vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation.

Section 6. Voting Rights of Members

Every resident member of good standing of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

Section 7. Forfeiture of Good Standing

A person who has not had fellowship in the activities of this church within a period of one year shall forfeit his right to participate in any business activities of this church. Reinstatement of good standing will occur when a member resumes fellowship with any of the activities of this church within a period of one month.

Section 8. Duties of Members

It is the duty of members of this church to keep our covenant obligations before God and each other, to seek to be in some service for the Lord in the work of the church, to be faithful in attendance at the services, to walk uprightly before the world, to give regularly in the appointed way (Malachi 3:8, Matthew 23:23) for the financial support of the Lord's work as He has prospered them, and to maintain Christian love toward one another and a kindly conduct toward all.