

**CONSTITUTION
AND
BYLAWS**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF CLARKSVILLE, INC.
CLARKSVILLE, TENNESSEE**

SEPTEMBER 25, 2002

CONSTITUTION

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CONSTITUTION

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CLARKSVILLE, TENNESSEE

PREAMBLE

We, the members of First Baptist Church of Clarksville, Inc., recognize a church of Jesus Christ as a spiritual organization, divinely instituted for the gospel of the Son of God. We believe that we are to look to the New Testament for the principles on which churches are founded and the laws by which they are governed. Therefore, we hereby adopt the following Constitution.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The congregation shall be known as First Baptist Church of Clarksville, Inc.

ARTICLE II

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to know Christ through the worship of God, the teaching of the Bible, and fellowship of believers, so that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we may be like Jesus Christ and make him known to others, for the glory of God.

ARTICLE III

DECLARATION

We declare that we are an assembly of baptized believers under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We are unified by mission and purpose for the worship of Almighty God, and joined in the faith and the fellowship of the gospel. We firmly state that we: (a) Acknowledge Jesus Christ as the only Son of God and Head of the Church; (b) Receive The Holy Spirit as our comforter and guide; (c) Determine matters of faith and practice by applying the Bible as the only standard; and (d) Use Biblical doctrine to rule our personal and corporate conduct.

ARTICLE IV

ARTICLES OF FAITH

This church accepts THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE as defined by the Southern Baptist Convention as a statement of its beliefs.

BYLAWS

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BYLAWS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CLARKSVILLE, TENNESSEE

ARTICLE I

RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

All those who desire to be a member of the Church shall present themselves as a candidate for church membership in one of the following four ways.

1. Public profession of faith in Christ as Savior and upon baptism by immersion.
2. Letter of transfer from another Southern Baptist Church.
3. Statement of former membership in a Southern Baptist Church.
4. Statement of scriptural baptism by immersion.

Candidates will be officially received into the membership of this church upon a motion of the Membership Committee, approved by the Deacon Body and passed by vote of the Church at its next regular meeting.

ARTICLE II

DUTIES OF MEMBERS

It shall be the duty of the members of the church to:

1. Honor, esteem, love, support, pray for and guard the reputations of their ministers.
2. Personally strive to fulfill the mandates of the Great Commission as set forth in Matthew 28:19-20.
3. Cultivate personal holiness and family devotion.
4. Attend the church's regular meetings.
5. Sustain the public worship of Almighty God and the ordinances of the gospel.
6. Contribute to the necessary expenditures of the church, the spread of the gospel to all nations, and the relief of the poor.
7. Watch over and counsel one another in the spirit of brotherly love.
8. Strive for the growth of the whole body in Christian knowledge and holiness.
9. Govern their actions, conversation, and hearts by the precepts of God's Word.

ARTICLE III

DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

Members will be officially removed from the membership of this church in one of the following four ways.

1. By a letter transferring the member's membership to another Southern Baptist Church.
2. By a request of the member that he\she be removed from the church's membership.
3. By notification that the member has joined the membership of another church.
4. By dismissal for cause, pursuant to Matthew 18:15-17.
Dismissal for cause shall require a 2/3rds vote of the Deacon Body.

Members will be officially removed from the Church's membership upon a motion of the Membership Committee, approved by the Deacon Body and passed by vote of the Church at its next regular meeting.

ARTICLE IV

CORPORATE GOVERNMENT

1. Members

The Corporation's membership shall consist of all persons who are members of the Church.

2. Officers

The Corporation shall have the following officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

- (a) The Chairman of the Deacons shall be the President of the Corporation.
- (b) The Vice-chairman of the Deacons shall be the Vice-president of the Corporation.
- (c) The Secretary of the Deacons shall be the Secretary of the Corporation.
- (d) The Treasurer of the Church shall be the Treasurer of the Corporation.

Each officer's term of office shall begin on January 1st and end on December 31st, or until a successor is elected.

3. Board of Directors

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Deacons shall also serve as the Corporation's Board of Directors, however, pursuant to T.C.A. § 48-58-101 and paragraph 13 of the Charter, the Deacon Body shall exercise all the powers and duties that would otherwise be exercised by the Board of Directors and all actions of the Deacons shall be deemed actions of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The Church shall be directed by the Pastoral Staff and Deacon Body working in partnership under the leadership of The Holy Spirit to oversee the spiritual and business affairs of the Church. Together they shall be responsible for setting the policies, maintaining the spiritual direction and managing the business affairs of the Church. They may use committees, standing and ad hoc, ministry teams and others to assist them in leading the Church and managing its affairs.

Section 1. **Pastoral Staff:** The Pastoral Staff shall consist of the Pastor, the Associate Pastors and other Professional Staff. The Pastor and Associate Pastors shall be called by the Church Membership to serve as provided for in Article VI. Professional Staff shall be selected as provided in Article VI, but will not be called by the Church Membership.

A. The **Pastor** shall lead the Church by preaching God's Word and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and by giving leadership to the entire work of the Church.

B. The **Associate Pastors** shall assist the Pastor in carrying out his pastoral duties. The specific number, job descriptions and duties of the associate pastors may change from time to time and shall be designated in the personnel policies of the Church.

C. The **Professional Staff** shall assist the Pastor and Associate Pastors in carrying out their duties. The specific number, job descriptions and duties of the professional staff may change from time to time and shall be designated in the personnel policies of the Church.

Section 2. **Deacons:** The Deacons shall consist of the Active Deacons and Deacon Emeriti. Deacons shall be elected to serve as Deacons by the Church, as provided for in Article VII.

A. **Active Deacons:** The minimum number of Active Deacons will ordinarily not be fewer than forty-eight (48). If the total number should fall below forty (40) in a year, the election process will be followed to fill the vacant positions. The Deacon Body shall determine the number of Active Deacons. The regular term of a Deacon will be three years, beginning in the January following the Deacon's election.

B. **Duties of Deacons:** The Deacons shall be responsible for overseeing the spiritual and business affairs of the Church. Individually, in keeping with his spiritual gifts, each Deacon is charged with the responsibility to be a servant leader in the Church. Deacons shall serve the Church by participating in the various ministries of the Church, by working to meet the administrative or operational needs of the Church, by assisting the Pastoral Staff as they minister to the needs of the congregation, by praying regularly for the Church and its staff, and by pursuing and modeling personal holiness and godliness for the Church.

C. **Deacon Officers:** The Deacons shall have the following officers: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary. Their term of office shall be for 1 year, from January 1st to December 31st or until such time as successors are elected. Deacon Officers shall be chosen as follows: At or before the final Deacon Meeting of each year, the Deacon Officer Nominating Committee shall present to the Deacons a slate of candidates to serve as the Deacon Officers for the next year and the Deacons shall elect their officers for the next year.

The **Chairman** shall be the chairman and moderator of the Deacon Body meetings and shall oversee the work and ministry of the Deacons. The Chairman shall also be an ex-officio member of every committee in the Church and shall serve as the President of the Corporation.

The **Vice-Chairman** shall assist the Chairman in the execution of his duties. If the Chairman should resign or be otherwise unable to fulfill his duties, the Vice-Chairman shall serve as the Chairman for the remainder of the Chairman's term. The Vice-Chairman shall also serve as the Vice-President of the Corporation.

The **Secretary** shall keep minutes of all meetings of the Deacons and ensure that all actions are recorded in written form. The Secretary shall also serve as the Secretary of the Corporation.

The **Deacon Officer Nominating Committee** will be composed of seven (7) members to include the Chairman of The Deacons and six (6) Deacons who have completed their term of service. Members of this committee will be selected by the Deacon Chairman.

Section 3. **Church Treasurer**

The **Treasurer** shall oversee the receipt and deposit of all monies given to the Church and all disbursements of funds as authorized by the Church. The Treasurer and a staff member designated by the Deacon Body must sign all checks. However, if either or both are unavailable, the Chairman of Deacons and/or the Chairman of the Finance Committee is/are authorized to sign in their place. The Treasurer shall also serve as an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee and as the Treasurer of the Corporation.

The Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Church Membership upon the presentation of a candidate or candidates to the Church by the Deacon Body.

Section 4. **Church Clerk**

The **Clerk** shall keep a correct record of proceedings of the church in business session, keep a register of the names of all members of the church, sign all letters of dismissal or removal from the Church membership and be the custodian of all records and papers belonging to the church, including all committee meeting minutes.

The Clerk shall be elected annually by the Church Membership upon the presentation of a candidate or candidates to the Church by the Deacon Body.

Section 5. **Removal of Deacons and Other Church Leaders**

In the event a **Deacon, Church Officer, Committee Member or Other Church Leader** became unable or unwilling to fulfill duties and responsibilities or no longer meet the

qualifications, the individual may be removed from his or her position by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Deacon Body.

ARTICLE VI

SELECTION OF PASTORAL AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF

A. Term: The Pastor and Associate Pastors shall be called by the Church to serve for an indefinite period. They shall be at liberty to resign on giving thirty days notice of their intention. The Church shall have the right to dispense with the services of any of the forgoing by giving a similar notice of thirty days after a majority vote of the Church voting to dispense with said services.

B. Pastor: When a vacancy occurs in the office of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons shall appoint an ad hoc Committee that shall select and nominate a Pastor Search Committee to the Deacon Body. The Deacon Body shall submit the recommended Pastor Search Committee to the Church for approval. When the Pastor Search Committee finds a candidate for the position of Pastor, they shall present that candidate to the Deacon Body, and upon approval, the Deacon Body shall submit the recommended candidate to the Church Membership for a vote to determine whether a call will be extended to the candidate.

C. Associate Pastors: When a vacancy occurs in one of the Associate Pastor positions, the Pastor and Personnel Committee shall search for a candidate to fill the position. When the Personnel Committee finds a candidate for the position, they shall present that candidate to the Deacon Body, and upon approval, the Deacon Body shall submit the recommended candidate to the Church Membership for a vote to determine whether a call will be extended to the candidate.

D. Professional Staff: The Church may have other full and part time Professional Staff Positions as recommended by the Personnel Committee and approved by the Deacon Body. When a vacancy occurs in one of these positions the Personnel Committee shall search for a candidate to fill the position. When the Personnel Committee finds a candidate for the position, they shall present that candidate to the Deacon Body for approval.

ARTICLE VII
ELECTION OF ACTIVE DEACONS AND DEACONS EMIRTI

A. Election Procedure: Each year the Deacon Nominating Committee will seek nominations from the resident members of the Church by announcements in the Church publications and at a minimum of three public worship services. After the nominations are received, the Committee shall review the nominations and remove the names of those who are not eligible to serve as a Deacon. The Committee may add nominees, (not to exceed 25% of the total number of Deacons to be elected), to the list nominated by the Church Membership. Seeking men who are full of faith, wisdom and The Holy Spirit, (Acts 6:3-5), and who are willing to serve as a Deacon, the Committee will then select from the total list of nominees, a slate of candidates equal in number to the number of Deacons to be elected that year, (at least 16). After the slate of candidates is complete, the Committee shall submit the slate of candidates to the Church Membership for approval using a written ballot.

B. Members Eligible For Election: All active resident male members of the Church who are at least 25 years old are eligible to serve as a Deacon of the Church, except the following who shall not be eligible:

- (1) Current Active Deacons.
- (2) Deacons who are in the final year of a full three-year term shall be ineligible for one year.
- (3) Ordained Ministers currently serving in other churches as an interim pastor, evangelist, or substituting in other pulpits.
- (4) Professional Staff Members and full-time employees of the Church during their employment and for five years after the person has left the employment of the church.
- (5) Those who, in the judgment of the Deacon Nominating Committee, do not satisfy the Scriptural qualifications of an Elder or Deacon as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9.

C. The Deacon Nominating Committee: The Deacon Nominating Committee will be responsible for overseeing the process of nominating and electing Deacons each year. Working with the Pastor and Staff, the Committee shall determine the eligibility of all Deacon nominees, and shall meet with all selected Deacon candidates and spouses, to discuss the responsibilities and duties of a Deacon and to determine their willingness to serve as Deacons.

The Committee shall have ten (10) members, including the Chairman of the Deacons, who shall chair the Committee, and nine (9) men who have served at least three years as active Deacons in the Church. Each year, three members shall rotate off, and the Chairman of the Deacons shall nominate to the Deacon Body, three members for election to a three(3)-year term. In the event a vacancy should occur, the same process shall be used to fill the vacancy. No member shall be eligible for reelection to the Committee for two years following his service on the Committee.

D. Deacon Emeritus: A man may be elected a Deacon Emeritus after he has attained the age of sixty-five (65) years and has served as an active Deacon for fifteen (15) years at First Baptist Church, Clarksville. The Deacon Nominating Committee will recommend to the Deacon Body any emeritus candidate. Upon approval the Deacon Body will recommend the candidate to the Church for election as a Deacon Emeritus. The position of Deacon Emeritus shall not expire

for the individual so elected unless required to do so by the Church in a business meeting. Deacons Emeriti may share in the responsibilities and duties of the active Deacons.

ARTICLE VIII

COMMITTEES

Section 1. **Standing Committees:** The Deacon Body may use various standing committees to assist it in the oversight and management of the Church's affairs. Standing Committees may be formed by a recommendation of the Deacon Body, approved by the Church. Standing committees shall be charged with specific duties, responsibilities and shall continue to operate from year to year unless or until the Church, upon recommendation by the Deacon Body, disbands them. The Church clerk shall maintain a current list of committees elected by the Church.

Standing committee members shall be selected by the Church Nominating Committee, approved by the Deacon Body and elected by the church annually. Terms of service for members of standing committees will normally begin on January 1st of each year and shall end on December 31st of that year or until such time as their successors are elected. The Church Nominating Committee shall be nominated by the Deacon Nominating Committee, approved by the Deacon Body and elected by the Church annually.

Section 2. **Ad Hoc or Special Committees:** The Deacon Body, the Pastor, or the Chairman of Deacons may appoint special committees for a specific purpose and a limited time. The Deacon Body shall approve the scope and membership of any such committee.

Section 3. **Committee Procedure:** All committees shall have a written procedure, approved by the Deacon Body, setting forth the committee's purpose, scope of responsibilities, authority to carry out its purpose and duration. Committees may adopt written Policies and Procedures, which shall be approved by the Deacon Body, to govern the administration of the Church's affairs within the scope of the committee's responsibilities. The Clerk of the Church shall keep copies of all committee Policies and Procedures. Once adopted, Policies and procedures may be amended by approval of the Deacon Body.

Section 4. **Committee Members:** The number of members in each committee shall be set forth in the Committee's policies, provided that every committee shall have at least three members. Whenever possible, an Active Deacon or Deacon Emeritus shall chair all committees. Only church members may serve on committees. The Pastor and the Chairman of Deacons shall be ex officio members of all committees. No person shall serve on the same committee for more than three consecutive years.

ARTICLE IX

MEETINGS AND MANNER OF CONDUCTING BUSINESS

Section 1. **Worship:** The Church shall meet regularly, at least every Lord's Day, for the public worship of Almighty God.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed by the Church at least once on a Sunday in every quarter and at other times as designated by the Pastor. It shall be open to all professing Christians who, after examination of their own hearts, wish to participate in accordance with 1 Corinthians 11:28-29.

Section 2. **Membership:** The regular meeting of the Church Membership for business shall be held on the second Sunday or Wednesday night after the Regular Deacon Body meeting, as designated by the Deacon Body.

Special meetings of the Church Membership for transaction of business may be called by the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons, or by the signed written request of at least ten percent (10%) of the resident members. All special meetings shall be conducted at a regularly scheduled worship service.

The Church Membership shall be made aware, in the Church publications, of all Membership meetings and the items to be considered.

Those in attendance at the regular scheduled or special business meetings shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. **Deacon Body:** The Deacon Body shall normally meet at least once a month for the consideration of their specific duties and the general welfare of the church.

Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chairman or upon written request of ten (10) active Deacons.

A quorum of fifty percent of the Active Deacons shall be required to conduct any official business.

Section 4. **Manner of Conducting Business:** The Pastor, any Pastoral Staff Member or Deacon Officer, as designated by the Pastor or any Pastoral Staff Member, shall preside as the Moderator for all business meetings of the Church Membership.

When items of new business are moved and seconded at a Church Membership Meeting, the matter will be referred to the proper committee for study, or if no such committee exists to a Special Committee to be appointed by the Chairman of the Deacons. The committee shall study the motion; bring a recommendation to the Deacon Body at its next meeting and then to the Church Membership at the next business meeting.

The business of the Church will be transacted according to rules of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE X

AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. All Auxiliary organizations must be authorized by the church at a regular business meeting and must be subject to its supervision.

Section 2. All Auxiliary organizations shall, unless otherwise ordered, make full reports to the church annually.

ARTICLE XI

REPRESENTATION IN DENOMINATIONAL MEETINGS

Section 1. Once each year messengers may be sent to represent the Church in the Cumberland Baptist Association with a statement of the condition of the Church and to cooperate with the messengers of other churches in promoting the interests of the Kingdom.

Section 2. Messengers may be nominated and elected by the Church each year to attend the sessions of the Tennessee Baptist State Convention and of the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE XII

AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The Constitution or Bylaws may be amended by vote at any regular membership business meeting, one month's previous notice having been given in writing as to the Article and Section in question and the nature of change to said Constitution or Bylaws.

Section 2. The Clerk and Secretary of the Deacons shall keep this Constitution and Bylaws in duplicate. Any and all changes shall be attached to these copies.

Section 3. The Charter of Incorporation may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present and voting when the Church is sitting in business session as provided by the Bylaws.