

Constitution and By-Laws
of
The First Baptist Church, Fredericktown, Missouri
Adopted September 12, 1984 and revised in part September 3, 1986, October 8, 1997
and January 19, 2014.

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

I. Name

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Fredericktown, Missouri.

II. Statement of Church Purpose

Our purpose is to help people enjoy life through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a loving church family.

III. 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 most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We therefore engage, 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 doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to strive to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, back-biting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

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 Savior to secure it without delay.

We, moreover, engage that when we remove 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 principles of God's Word.

IV. Statement of Basic Beliefs

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted by the Southern Baptist convention in 2000. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.

V. Polity and Relationships

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This church 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 is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the association, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

BY-LAWS

I. Church Membership

Section 1: Qualifications

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who:

1. Confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
2. Have received scriptural baptism
3. Are committed to the doctrinal teachings and the spiritual objectives of this church.
4. Agree to abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of this church.
5. Are in general agreement with the faith, practice, and mission purpose of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Section 2:

1. Members shall be received into this church on the following basis:
 - A. On confession of faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.
 - B. By letter of recommendation from other Baptist churches of like faith and order.
 - C. By statement of faith as to their salvation experience and baptism.
 - D. Any person who has not received Christian baptism shall be baptized before being received as a member.

“Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord’s Supper.”

--The Baptist Faith and Message

2. Persons seeking membership in this church body who meet requirements of Section 1, will be presented to the church in worship by the pastor. Acceptance will be majority vote of the church body.
3. The pastor may delay presentation of requests for membership to allow counseling.

Section 3: Duties of Members

Members are expected:

1. To be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life.
2. To habitually attend the worship services of this church.
3. To give regularly for its support and its causes.
4. To share in its work and ministry.

Section 4: Rights of Members

1. Every active member 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.
2. Every active member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidate for elective offices in the church.

Section 5: Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death of the member
2. Joining another Baptist Church
3. Exclusion by action of this church
4. Erasure upon request
5. Placing membership in another church

Section 6: Discipline

It shall be the practice of this 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. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

Section 7: Inactive Membership

1. Any member who fails to attend a church service for a period of 2 years will be placed on the Inactive Roll. Should this person return to actively attending any church service, after a period of one month they will automatically be restored to the Active Church Membership Roll.
2. Should an Inactive Member request a transfer of their church membership to a church of like faith they shall be restored to the Active Church Roll and a letter be granted.
3. The Department Leaders shall evaluate the church roll each January to determine active membership. Any member who has moved from the church field or not been to church in two years will be placed on the Inactive Roll at this time.

II. Church Officers and Committees

Section 1: Ordained Officers

1. Pastor
 - A. The pastor of this church shall be a regularly ordained minister of the Southern Baptist Convention and one who concurs with the Baptist Faith and Message.
 - B. The pastor shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the church and shall be its true shepherd. He shall minister to the church at all regular and appointed times of worship and service, and to the individual members whenever possible.
 - C. The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time. The relationship may be terminated by either party or by mutual consent, with the church and pastor seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit at all times.
 - D. Should the need arise, the deacons and personnel committee shall bring recommendation to the church calling for the pastor's dismissal. Vote shall be by ballot, with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present necessary to validate the dismissal. This may be transacted at a regular or special business meeting. In either case, the purpose and time of the meeting shall be published by mail, in the church bulletin, and by public announcement in the Sunday services prior to said meeting. A quorum for such action shall consist of twenty-five percent of the Active membership.

- E. The pastor shall serve as moderator of the church business meetings.
- F. The pastor shall serve as ex-officio member of all church committees.
- G. The pastor shall be given two weeks revival time, each year with pay.
- H. The pastor may attend the meetings of the Missouri Baptist Convention, Missouri Baptist Evangelism Conference and the Southern Baptist Convention; the expenses for attending these meetings being defrayed by the church.
- I. The pulpit supply shall be paid by the church in the following instances: vacation, attendance at convention, revivals.
- J. Compensation and benefits will be reviewed by the personnel committee who will make recommendations to the finance committee and/or the church.
- K. When a vacancy occurs, a Pastor Search Committee shall be elected by the church. This committee shall consist of five members. Each member present at the business meeting will be given a ballot upon which he may vote for up to five persons. The five persons receiving the most votes will make up the committee. Should an elected person decline to serve, the person with the next highest number of votes will be elected to the committee. When there is a tie for fifth position on the committee, an immediate vote will be held to determine who shall serve.

The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary to call a pastor. This may be transacted at a regular or special business meeting. In either case, the purpose and time of the meeting shall be published by mail, in the church bulletin, and by public announcement in the Sunday services prior to said meeting. A quorum for such action shall consist of twenty-five percent of the Active membership.

2. Deacons

A. Eligibility

To be eligible for the deaconship, a man must meet the scriptural requirements of Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13. He shall have been a member of The First Baptist Church, Fredericktown, for at least one year prior to nomination. He shall agree with the beliefs expressed in this constitution.

B. Nomination

Candidates shall be nominated by ballot. Each resident church member shall be provided a ballot. The member may nominate as many candidates as has been specified in advance by the church. The ballots shall be counted by the deacons.

C. Election

After nomination by the church, eligible candidates shall be interviewed by the pastor and deacons. Eligible candidates who are willing to serve, will be recommended to the church by the deacons for election to the deaconship.

D. Ordination

Upon election by the church, the candidate will be set aside for ordination. If the person has been previously ordained, he will be placed on an active status.

E. Term of Service

1. Deacons shall not serve actively for an indefinite amount of time, but shall be on a rotation system. This system shall be determined by the Deacons and approved by the church body.

2. A deacon may be placed on inactive status at his request because of disability. The status of Deacon Emeritus may be granted by a majority vote of deacons. If a deacon fails to fulfill the eligibility qualifications set forth in these by-laws or is continually negligent in performing the duties of a deacon, after faithful efforts have been made by the pastor and deacons to bring such deacon to repentance and amendment, he may be placed on the inactive Deacon status by vote of the Deacons or asked to return his ordination certificate.

F. Duties

Deacons shall:

1. Promote unity of spirit and fellowship in the church.
2. Serve as a council to advise and confer with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church.
3. Arrange for the pulpit supply in the event of the absence of the pastor or his inability to serve, or when the church is pastorless.
4. Prepare and serve the Lord's Supper.
5. Have the oversight of the discipline of the membership in counsel with the pastor, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament. They are to be guided by the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5:9-13, and I Thessalonians 5:12-14.

G. Organization

The deacons may organize and serve in a manner decided upon by the group to effectively carry out their duties.

Section 2: Other Church Officers

1. Moderator

The pastor shall be the moderator. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of the deacons or ordained staff shall preside; or, in the absence of both of these, the clerk shall call the church to order and a moderator pro tem shall be elected.

2. Church Clerk

Annually, the church shall elect a clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church.

3. Church Treasurer

Annually, the church shall elect a church treasurer as its financial officer.

The treasurer shall:

1. See that all offerings are deposited and offerings are recorded.
2. Have oversight (with the aid of the Finance Committee) of the financial records kept by the church secretary.
3. Make sure checks are signed by appropriate members.
4. Be responsible for the reporting of all receipts and disbursements to the church each month.
5. Serve on the Finance Committee.
6. May also serve as the church secretary.

4. Trustees (Corporation Officers)

- A. The Trustees shall consist of a President, Secretary (Church Clerk) and a Treasurer (Church Treasurer). The Trustees shall be elected annually and they may succeed themselves.
- B. The Trustees shall hold in trust all legal documents, such as Titles, mortgages, and insurance papers, for which a bank safety deposit box shall be provided by the church.

The Trustees shall sign all legal documents involving transactions authorized by the church.

5. Staff

The church may call staff as it feels necessary to aid in the work of the church.

Section 3: Committees

1. Standing Committees

Standing Committees are those committees that continue year after year

A. Finance Committee

This committee shall consist of four members and the Church Treasurer. The Treasurer being excepted, these committee members shall be elected for a term of two years, two members being elected each year.

Duties:

1. Develop and recommend an annual budget to the church.
2. Consider all financial matters that shall come before the church and recommend such expenditures as they deem proper and wise.
3. Recommend special offerings for church approval.
4. Review the church's financial status periodically and make recommendations to the church with regard to budget revisions and other financial adjustments as needed.

B. Nominating Committee

This committee shall consist of three members appointed by the moderator. The Nominating Committee shall nominate members for all church positions and committees except for the Pastor, Staff and Deacons.

1. Nominations for officers, directors, teachers, leaders, committee members may be made from the floor previous to the election, provided the person being nominated has been contacted and has consented to serve in the position if elected.
2. All who serve in elected positions in the church shall be Active members of the church.

C. Personnel Committee

This committee shall consist of three members.

Duties:

1. Recommend additional staff positions.

2. Prepare and update job descriptions.
3. Recruit, interview, and recommend prospective employees.
4. Annually review the compensation and benefits of employees and staff members and make recommendations to the Finance Committee and/or the church.
5. Develop and recommend policies and procedures and administer policies and procedures, once they are adopted.
6. Keep staff and church informed on legal and governmental requirements.

D. Special Committees

Special committees are established for a specific purpose for a limited time and shall be nominated and elected by the same procedure as other committees.

III. CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching for the purpose of evangelism and training. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control, all Department Leaders being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all program activities subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall provide the human physical, and financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

IV. DEPARTMENT LEADERS

The Department Leaders shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations.

The primary functions of the Department Leaders shall be:

1. To recommend to the church suggested objectives and church goals.
2. To review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by Department Leaders, organizations, and committees.
3. To recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities.
4. To evaluate achievements in terms of church objectives and goals.

Regular members of the Department Leaders Team shall be the pastor, other church staff members, chairman and vice-chairman of the Deacons and directors of church program organizations as nominated and elected by the church.

All matters agreed upon by the Department Leaders which call for action not already approved shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

V. INCORPORATION

The title to the property of this church shall be vested in a corporation consisting of members of the First Baptist Church of Fredericktown, Missouri, acting through the Trustees under the Article of Incorporation under the laws of the State of Missouri.

VI. CHURCH FINANCE

1. The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit an annual budget to the church for adoption prior to the new fiscal year. The committee shall invite and encourage recommendations and suggestions from church organizations, committees, church officers, and individual members regarding items for the proposed budget. Upon adoption by the church, the budget shall be the financial guide for the year.
2. Receipts from all sources shall be kept in one account unless otherwise designated by the Finance Committee and approved by a vote of the church. From the General Account shall be paid all local expenses as the church may direct and in accordance with the schedule adopted by the church. All mission and benevolence offerings shall be remitted at least monthly as well as any specifically designated gifts.
3. All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the treasurer (or other designated persons) and be properly recorded on the books of the church. The expenses of all organizations, as approved by the church, shall be paid from the General Account as heretofore provided.
4. Special offerings may be sought and promoted by the church or by any of its organizations only upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee and approval by the church. Individuals may give special offerings at any time as they may choose.
5. It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular and proportionate gifts according to the ability of the member to give. It is also understood that this church believes that the Scriptural way of supporting the church is with tithes and offerings, and no other program for raising funds will be permitted at any time.
6. The Church Financial procedures shall be as follows:
 - A. To maintain an adequate system of accounting of all financial transactions.
 - B. To maintain a record of individual contributions and to report to individuals each quarter.

- C. To oversee the church's financial situation, keeping expenditures within approved budget and actual income, recommending revisions in budget when necessary.
- D. To make available to the church membership a monthly written report of all financial transactions.

7. The church fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

VII. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1: Worship Services

1. Regular Worship

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday and any other times deemed best by the church for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services.

2. Special Services

Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's purpose shall be placed on the church calendar.

3. Lord's Supper Observance

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper the first Sunday of each quarter, unless otherwise scheduled by the church. The pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper.

Section 2: Business Meetings

1. Regular Business Meetings

The time and frequency of the regular business meeting shall be determined by the church.

2. Special Business Meetings

The church may conduct special business meetings to consider matters of urgent nature and significance. The pastor, or the deacons, or trustees, or any committee may call for a special business meeting. The notice shall be announced at the morning and evening services on the Sunday preceding the day set for the special meeting. The notice shall include the purpose of the meeting, the date, the time, and the place.

3. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of five percent of the Active membership of the church, and shall be necessary for the transaction of business at the regular and special business meetings. A quorum of twenty-five percent of the Active membership is required for the calling or the dismissal of the pastor.

4. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

VIII. WEDDING SERVICES

Marriage Policy:

Our statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message (2000), expresses our fundamental biblical conviction that Christian marriage is, by definition the spiritual and physical uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive covenant commitment for their joint lifetime. Christian marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church.

As such, this local church believes that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual observances of worship of God who created this divine institution. As worship services, weddings on church property shall be officiated by one or more ordained ministers of the gospel. The church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations may be made by the Pastor, Deacons or Department Leaders, subject to the direction of the church.

IX. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and By-laws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church, or at a special called meeting for that purpose. However, any change to this Constitution and By-laws, must be read or presented in printed form in the public worship hour on the Lord's Day prior to the vote being taken.

Articles III, IV, and V, entitled "Church Covenant", "Statement of Basic Beliefs" and "Polity and Relationships" shall be changed only by two-thirds of the Active members of the church being present in the business meeting and at least three-fourths of those present voting in favor of the proposed change. The proposed change shall be presented in writing to the church membership at least one month prior to church action and the proposed change shall be read from the pulpit on the Sunday preceding the business meeting where proposed change shall be voted on.