

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE
CONSTITUTION
Approved by Church Action
February 23, 1997

I. Preamble

We, the members of First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, a non-profit religious corporation organized under the laws of the State of Tennessee, declare and establish this constitution to recognize our heritage, to proclaim and pass on to future generations the principles of our faith, and to conduct the matters of the church in an orderly manner. This constitution defines the freedoms and responsibilities of each member of the church and sets forth the relationship of this body to other bodies.

II. Definition of Church

The Church, the Body of Jesus Christ, includes all the redeemed of all the ages.

First Baptist Church, a local expression of the Church, is a body of baptized believers relating in faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, submitting to the teachings of Jesus Christ, exercising through each believer's individual priesthood the gifts, freedoms, and privileges inherited by each believer through Him, and seeking to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

First Baptist Church is autonomous, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Each member has equal privileges and equal responsibilities.

III. Membership

The membership of this church, without regard to race, color or previous creed, shall consist of persons who have made a public confession of their faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord; who desire to be numbered among His disciples; who subscribe to the faith and practices of this church; and who have been baptized by immersion in obedience to Scriptural command. The membership shall have the sole right to determine who is a member of the church and to discipline its members.

After due examination by the church as to their Christian experience, persons will be received into the membership in accordance with procedures contained in the bylaws following baptism by immersion; by letter from another Baptist church of like faith; by statement of previous baptism by immersion in obedience to Scriptural command; or in absentia. Members shall be removed from the church membership by letter, by death, by personal request, or by exclusion.

All of these means of acceptance and removal are described in the bylaws.

IV. Church Objective

The objective of First Baptist Church is to worship God and to live His redemptive love in Jesus Christ through proclaiming His Gospel, discipling the redeemed for service, and ministering to human hurt and need.

V. Articles of Faith

V.A. We affirm Kurios Jesus – “Jesus is Lord.”

V.B. We affirm that the Bible must be central in the life of the individual and church. Members, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and using the best and most scholarly tools of inquiry, are free and obligated to study and obey Scripture.

V.C. We affirm that every person has forever the right and responsibility to deal with God without the imposition of creed, the interference of clergy, or the intervention of civil government.

V.D. We affirm that this church is free, under the Lordship of Christ, to determine its membership and leadership, to order its worship and work, to ordain whom it perceives as divinely called for ministry, and to participate in the larger Body of Christ, of whose unity and mission we are proudly a part.

V.E. We affirm that Christ shall return again to receive the redeemed into the eternal presence of the Father.

VI. Relationships

The governance of this church is vested in the members duly received and affirmed by the church membership. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. As directed by the Holy Spirit and approved by the church membership, this church will engage with other churches, state organizations, and national organizations of like faith that seek the promotion of Christ’s kingdom through missions, Christian education, and benevolences.

VII. Leadership Positions

Christ is the Head of the church. The Holy Spirit is His administrator. The New Testament leaders of the church are pastor and deacon. Other leadership positions of the church, such as additional ministerial staff, trustees, and program leaders, shall be elected as provided in the bylaws for the purposes of discipleship, administration, evangelism, and missions.

The church elects leaders for the purpose of furthering the work of the church, without creating an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Individual believers surrender neither their freedoms nor responsibilities of priesthood to such leaders.

VII.A. Pastor

The pastor, directed by the Holy Spirit, serves at the call of the church and is responsible for leadership in the formulation and implementation of programs consistent with the teaching of Scripture. The pastor shall actively solicit the wise counsel and prayerful cooperation of leaders, officers, workers, and other members of the church.

The specific duties of the pastor are stated in the bylaws.

The pastor shall be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ duly ordained by this or another Baptist church of like faith.

The call of a pastor shall be by a vote of the church upon recommendation of a church-elected Pastor Search Committee. The call of a pastor shall require an affirmation vote of at least 75% of the persons voting. The method and procedures of voting shall be specified in the bylaws. The members present shall constitute a quorum.

A pastor shall become a member of this church within one month of beginning employment at the church.

The completion of a pastor's ministry shall be at the pastor's request or at the request of the church. The procedures for both of these actions are set forth in the bylaws.

VII.B. Other Ministerial Staff

Ministerial staff shall become members of the church within one month of their employment by the church. Other provisions concerning other ministerial staff are included in the bylaws.

VII.C. Deacons

The office of deacon exists for service and ministry to the membership, for the aid of the pastor, and for watchful care and advice in the affairs of the church.

The spiritual qualifications for and the specific duties of deacon are set forth in the bylaws.

A deacon shall be ordained by this or another Baptist church of like faith and shall be a member of this church for at least one year before being elected to serve as an active deacon of this church.

The active deacons shall be elected by the membership in accordance with the bylaws.

VII.D. Other Leadership Positions

All other leadership positions of the church shall be filled by persons who have demonstrated Christian maturity and who are elected in accordance with the bylaws. Such other leadership positions shall be created and terminated by the church in accordance with the bylaws.

VII.E. Support Staff

The terms of employment of support staff shall be defined in the bylaws.

VIII. Amendments

The Constitution shall be amended by an affirmation vote of two-thirds majority of the members voting by official ballot. Amendments to the Constitution shall be presented as follows:

1. A proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be presented to the moderator in writing for discussion at any regular business meeting of the church.
2. A motion to present the amendment to the church requires an affirmation vote of the majority of the members present at the business meeting.
3. Upon the affirmation vote specified above, the church will be informed of the proposed amendment by notification through the mail at least two weeks prior to the business meeting at which the proposed amendment will next be discussed. The proposed amendment shall be read to the congregation at the end of each morning service on the Sunday preceding the business meeting at which the amendment is to be considered.
4. A motion to present the amendment to the church for final adoption shall require an affirmation vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting at the business meeting, regular or called.
5. Voting shall be by official ballot mailed to members. Ballots shall be returned by a time and method specified on the official ballot. Ballots shall be counted by the Trustees. The Constitution shall be amended by an affirmation vote of two-thirds majority of the members voting by official ballot.

IX. Bylaws

Bylaws are the rules which control, govern, guide and/or mitigate the way in which the church will proceed orderly in all its functions. Bylaws shall be adopted with this Constitution.

Future changes or additions to the bylaws shall follow procedures indicated in the bylaws.