

Constitution and Bylaws of First Baptist Church, Waldoboro, Maine

Adopted on March 11, 2007

Constitution

Article 1 Name

The name of this church is First Baptist Church, Waldoboro, Maine. It is incorporated under the laws of the State of Maine.

Article 2 Our Purpose

The purpose of this church is to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) and the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40) of Jesus Christ. We shall do so through worshipping God, sharing the good news of salvation with the lost, both at home and abroad, instructing and edifying Christians, expressing Christian faith through serving the needs of people, and building authentic relationships among the saints.

Article 3 Our Character of Government

The head of the Church is Jesus Christ. This church functions under His authority, through the leadership and oversight of God-called elders whom the congregation has affirmed as worthy of this trust.

This congregation believes that the Church is a living organism that belongs to Jesus Christ. All acts of this body will function in direct submission to Christ's authority and lordship as He has commanded through Scripture. Therefore this body is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body.

It is understood that this congregation is at liberty to cooperate as it sees fit with other congregations of like belief.

Article 4 Our Covenant

As a summary of principles for Christian conduct among its members, this church adopts the following covenant;

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, and on 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 of this assembly, purposely and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We purpose therefore, through the enabling of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love;
To strive for the growth of this church in knowledge, holiness, and service;
To give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin;
To sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines;
To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of its ministry;

We also purpose to train our children in the truths of God's Word;
To seek the salvation of our relatives and acquaintances;
To seek to apply biblical truths to our daily lives;
To be just in our dealings, faithful in our commitments, and exemplary in our conduct;
To avoid all gossiping, backbiting, and unrighteous anger;
To be faithful in our efforts to advance the kingdom of God;

We further purpose to watch over one another in brotherly love;
To remember each other in prayer;
To help each other in sickness and distress;
To maintain a spirit of unity, patience and grace;
To be courteous in speech and kind in demeanor;
To be slow to take offense and always ready for reconciliation.

We also purpose that when we leave this local fellowship, we will as soon as possible unite with another church of like faith and practice where we can continue to carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of the Word of God.

Article 5 Our Statement of Faith

We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of all people, and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. (Matt. 5:18; II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:19-21).

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Ex.20:2-3; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 13:14; Psalm 90:2; John 1:1-3; Rev. 4:8; John 16:7-16).

We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true Man having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross, a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He now is our High Priest and Advocate. (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; I Cor. 15:3-4; Heb. 1:3 & 2:7; I John 2:1-2; Mark 16:19).

We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict people, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service. (John 7:38-39, John 14:16-17& 26; John 16:8-14).

We believe that man was created in the image of God, but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained. (Gen.1:26-27; 3:1-24; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12&19; 6:23; John 3:36; I John 5:11-12; John 3:1-8).

We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only grounds for the justification and salvation of all who believe, and only those who receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.(Isa. 53; John 1:12; 3:3 & 16; I Cor. 15:3-4; Rom. 5:1 & 9; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Rom. 3:19-25; Eph. 1:7; I Peter 2:24; Acts 4:12).

We believe that the Lord's Supper and Water Baptism are ordinances to be observed by the Church during this present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation. (Matt. 3:15-16; 28:19; I Cor. 11:23-26).

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the true church, which is composed of all people who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ. (Matt.16:16-18; Acts 2:37-47; I Cor. 12:12-14; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:20-23).

We believe in the personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer. (I Thes. 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-13; John 14:1-3).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting punishment. (I Cor. 15:12-24 & 51-54; Rev. 20:11-15; II Thes. 1:8-9; John 11:25-26; John 3:36; Rev. 21:1-8, 27).

We believe a Christian is a new creature in Christ and is to lead a life glorifying God in accordance with Scripture. (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:12; I Thes. 2:11 & 12).

Bylaws

Article 6 Membership

A. Eligibility:

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who have received the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, who have been baptized by immersion, who subscribe to the covenant and the statement of faith and are at least 16 years of age. If a person is unable to be baptized by immersion, the elders may allow baptism by another means on a case by case basis.

B. Application and Admission:

All candidates for membership shall complete the membership class. Upon satisfactory interview of candidates, the elders will present them to the congregation for affirmation and welcome.

C. Duties:

1. Members shall strive to keep their covenant obligations. They shall endeavor to preserve the unity of the fellowship and the integrity of church doctrine and practice.
2. Every member is expected to regularly attend church worship services, be involved in opportunities for Christian growth and fellowship, seek to find an avenue of service, and be mindful to guard the reputation of Christ and the church in the community.
3. Members are to cooperate with church leadership and give prayer support and encouragement to those who lead church ministries.
4. Members are expected to contribute regularly, as God has prospered them, to the financial needs of the church.
5. Members 18 years of age and older who fulfill the requirements, (Article 6 section C. 1-4), shall have the privilege to vote on those issues presented to the church body at a congregational meeting.

D. Dismissal:

Members may be removed from the church membership roll by the elders in the following circumstances:

1. Death of the member.
2. Upon the member joining another church.
3. Request by the member to be removed from membership.
4. Failure to respond satisfactorily to discipline or restoration attempts by the elders.

E. Discipline:

The church, through the leadership of the elders, is responsible for discipline of its members when needed, with the goal of such action being full restoration into the fellowship and ministry of this body of believers. It is the charge of the elders, as described in Acts 20:28, to “be on guard for yourselves and all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Shepherding includes both care and correction of the flock. Elders may discipline a member who:

1. Demonstrates behavior or beliefs opposed to previously expressed agreement with the church's statement of faith and covenant.
2. Engages in conduct that damages the reputation of Christ and the testimony of the church and which departs from biblical morality.
3. Shows continuing disinterest in the life and ministry of the church.
4. Behaves in a manner that brings disharmony or disunity to the fellowship.

The elders shall faithfully follow biblical guidelines in pursuing these matters and shall instruct members as needed in the scriptural steps of reconciliation and restoration.

F. Absentee Members

An absentee member is a member who is not able to attend our church services for an extended period of time for certain reasons, i.e., home-bound, education, military service, missions, employment. The absentee member will not be eligible to vote or to serve in any elected or appointed position. The absentee member may be interviewed by the elders to regain active member status.

Article 7 Our Organization

A. Elders:

The church's ministry and the shepherding of its members are vested in a group of God-called men called elders in whom the congregation has placed its trust. Elders are called of God to lead, feed, care for, and protect the flock, always acting to guard the integrity of the church and the reputation of Jesus Christ.

The pastoral elder, by virtue of his office, shall be a member of the elders, with vote. He shall be the primary spiritual leader of the congregation and shall lead in a manner consistent with the mission, vision, values, and policies established by the elders. He is responsible to the elders for the execution of his leadership and management responsibilities.

1. All authority not specifically reserved to the membership as a whole (the congregation), in these bylaws, shall be granted to the elders. The following powers are reserved to the congregation:

- a) The congregation shall approve the selection of an elder.
- b) The congregation shall approve the annual budget.
- c) The congregation shall approve, by at least three-fourths of members voting, a decision by the elders to extend a call to a prospective pastoral elder and other full-time salaried vocational ministry staff.
- d) The congregation shall approve a decision by the elders to dismiss the pastoral elder.
- e) The congregation shall approve any decision by the elders to build, buy, sell or encumber real estate.
- f) The congregation shall approve any decision by the elders to incur debt.
- g) The congregation shall approve any recommendation to amend these bylaws.
- h) The congregation shall approve any decision to dissolve the church and conclude the corporation.

2. It is the responsibility of the elders to take such actions and establish such environments as necessary to further the mission of this church in a manner consistent with biblical directives and principles.
3. The function of the elders is to establish policy and assume the responsibility of overseeing the affairs of the congregation. The elders shall maintain a distinction between oversight and management, and shall designate to the pastoral elder and other staff and lay leaders the operation and implementation of the affairs of the church.
4. The elders shall establish and maintain such policies and procedures necessary for the effective and efficient functioning of church operations and ministries. These policies and procedures shall be available to the members.
5. The elders shall be responsible for the exercise of spiritual discipline in accordance with the bylaws.
6. The elders shall consist of the pastoral elder and such other men who meet the requirements of elders established in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The elders shall determine their number consistent with the responsibilities to be carried out and God's evident call on qualified men, but at no time shall that number be less than five, or more than eight. Each elder, with the exception of the pastoral elder, shall be a member in good standing of the church for at least one year before being selected as an elder.
7. The elders shall select their own membership, subject to the following: No selected elder shall begin his service until approved for this position by the church membership at a congregational meeting.
8. A full term of service for an elder is three years, with the intention of 1/3 of the elders completing their terms each year. A subsequent three-year term is possible with elder approval. Following two full terms of service, there must be at least a one-year period before being selected again as an elder, even to fill a partial term. No elder shall serve more than six consecutive years. The pastoral elder is not subject to the two-term limit.
9. A majority of the elders shall be non-employees of the church. Non-employee elders shall not be related to elders who are employed by the church.
10. Any elder not fulfilling the responsibilities of his office, except for good cause (to be determined by the elders) shall be subject to dismissal from his office by a 2/3 vote of all elders.
11. The elders may remove the pastoral elder for cause by a 2/3 vote of all elders. The pastoral elder shall cease to function in that office as of the moment of that vote. However, his removal shall not become effective until approved by a majority of the congregation.

present and voting at a congregational meeting, with written notice of this business item provided 14 days prior to the date of the meeting. If the congregation fails to approve the elders' action, the pastoral elder is immediately restored to his office. If the congregation approves the action of the elders, the pastoral elder is dismissed as of that moment. The elders shall determine terms of severance.

12. Other full-time salaried vocational ministry staff may be removed for cause by a 2/3 vote of all elders.

13. At such time as the position of pastoral elder is vacant, the elders shall establish a pastor search committee whose purpose is to identify and present a properly qualified candidate for this position to the elders for their approval and subsequent approval by the congregation.

14. The elders shall engage and supervise, directly or through others, such staff, and other ministry leadership, as are needed to fulfill the church's mission. The power to engage includes the power to dismiss, subject to the limitations noted in Article 7 section A.

15. The elders, with cooperation and input from ministry staff and church and ministry leaders, shall establish an annual budget for all facets of the church's ministry. The budget shall be approved by the congregation at the annual business meeting. At no time shall total expenditures exceed the total authorized budget by more than 10% without congregational approval.

16. The elders shall serve as the officers of the corporation.

B. Deacons:

The role of deacon is that of a servant. Deacons are called on to help meet the practical and spiritual needs of the congregation.

1. Deacons must possess the qualifications identified in I Timothy 3: 8-13 and Acts 6:1-6.
2. Deacons are selected by the elders and affirmed by the congregation.
3. The term of service of a deacon will be determined by the elders. A typical term will be three years.
4. Deacons assist the elders in the effective shepherding of the congregation and in matters of administration as needed. Deacons may ask women to assist them with their ministry as needed.
5. The deacons shall administer the benevolence fund.
6. Any deacon not fulfilling the responsibilities of his office, except for good cause (to be determined by the elders) shall be subject to dismissal from his office by a two-thirds vote of all elders.

C. Other Ministry Leadership:

1. The elders may appoint members to positions of leadership or service within the church or determine the most efficient and effective manner for positions to be filled with qualified individuals.

2. All such servant leaders shall be men or women of spiritual maturity, good reputation, sound judgment, and with a demonstrated commitment to the purposes and mission of this church.
3. A non-member who attends faithfully and has, through word and deed given evidence of conversion and support of the church's identified mission, and is enrolled in or has completed a church membership class, may serve temporarily in support roles in various church ministries upon approval of the elders or staff designated by the elders. A non-member may not lead, direct, or co-lead any church ministry.

Article 8

Congregational Meetings

A. Services shall be held each Sunday for the purpose of worship, teaching, prayer, and fellowship and at other times determined by the elders. The Lord's Supper shall be observed the first Sunday of each month, or at the discretion of the elders.

B. The annual congregational business meeting shall be held the 3rd Thursday in January at 7 p.m. for the purpose of approving the annual budget for the fiscal year beginning January 1st and ending December 31st, and for consideration of any other business and communication the elders consider advisable to present. If it becomes necessary to reschedule the annual meeting the elders shall assure that the members are notified in advance of the new meeting date. A quorum is not required for the Annual Meeting.

C. The elders may periodically call special congregational meetings as necessary. The quorum, if needed, and exclusive purpose of each special congregational meeting shall be clearly communicated at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. The elders shall determine if a quorum is in order for each special meeting and shall determine the percentage of the membership that must be present at the meeting to establish the quorum.

D. All business conducted at all meetings shall be approved by a majority vote of the members present, unless otherwise determined by the elders or provided in these bylaws. No absentee or proxy ballots shall be permitted.

E. A person, who is not an elder, shall be designated by the elders to moderate a congregational meeting.

F. Robert's Rules of Order, Revised by Henry M. Roberts, shall be the standard in parliamentary procedure upon any challenges of procedural determination brought to the chairman of the meeting with the following exceptions:

- (a) All voting at any congregational meeting of the church shall be by voice or visible vote unless a secret ballot is requested by the elders or a majority of voting members present. Except where otherwise specified or agreed upon, all actions shall be taken by majority vote.

- (b) Unless challenged at the meeting by a majority of those present, the moderator shall have authority over matters of procedure and may adopt a form of procedure suited to the business being conducted.

Article 9 Auxiliary Organizations

All auxiliary organizations shall be subject to the authority of the church, and shall submit policies and programs to the elders for confirmation. Each organization shall make an annual report in writing to the church at the annual meeting thereof.

All auxiliary organizations shall be self-supporting, choose their own treasurers, and submit annual reports of their funds to the church.

No auxiliary organizations shall engage in any practice or hold any policy contrary to the Constitution and Bylaws or written policies of the church. Failure to work in harmony with the church shall be cause for disbanding such an organization, which may be done by decision of the elders.

Article 10 Political Practices

The church shall not endorse any political candidates, and shall not tell parishioners how to vote in any political election. However, the church shall be free to discuss political issues and what the Scriptures have to say about those issues, and may encourage parishioners to be politically active

Article 11 Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the corporation or the termination of its activities, the assets of the corporation remaining after the payment of all its liabilities shall be distributed exclusively to one or more organizations organized and operated exclusively for such purposes as shall then qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under 501©(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and as a charitable, religious, eleemosynary, benevolent or educational corporation within the meaning of Title 13-B of the Main Revised Statutes, as amended.

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of any member, director or officer of the corporation, or any private individual (except the these by-laws may be amended in the future to provide that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to or for

the corporation in carrying out one or more of its purposes), and no member, director, or officer of the corporation, or any private individual, shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets on dissolution of the corporation. (Matthew 16:18b)

Article 12 Amendments

- A. This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by a 2/3 vote of members present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the congregation, provided that written notice of the meeting and content of the proposed amendment is provided at least 14 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- B. The Statement of Faith, article 5 of the Constitution cannot be changed or amended.
- C. These amended Constitution and Bylaws have been approved and adopted on March 11, 2007 by agreement and vote of the church members.
- D. Amendment to Article 6, Section A adopted January 19, 2012.

