

**Adopted December 10, 1997  
Amended August 12, 1998, May 16, 2001  
July 14, 2003, October 4, 2009 and March 12, 2014**

**CONSTITUTION  
OF  
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
OF HARRISONVILLE, MISSOURI**

**PREAMBLE**

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern this body in an orderly manner.

**ARTICLE I - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP COVENANT**

Our church membership covenant is based directly on the teachings of the Bible. It is a statement of commitment that we make to God and to one another as members of First Baptist Church of Harrisonville. It states, "Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the First Baptist Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

**1. I will protect the unity of my church**

- . . . by being of one heart, mind and purpose with my brothers and sisters in Christ
- . . . by acting in love toward other members
- . . . by refusing to gossip
- . . . by following our Lord's teaching on how to reconcile differences with other believers
- . . . by following our leaders

"I [Jesus] pray...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:20-21)

"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together" (Romans 14:19)

"Have a sincere love for other believers, love one another earnestly with all your heart" (1 Peter 1:22)

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs." (Ephesians 4:29).

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that `every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector." (Matthew 18:15-17)

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you" (Hebrews 13:17).

**2. I will share the responsibility of my church**

- . . . by praying for its growth
- . . . by inviting the unchurched to attend
- . . . by warmly welcoming those who visit

“To the church---. . . We always thank God for you and pray for you constantly” (1 Thess. 1:1-2).

“The Master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes, and urge the people there to come so my house will be full’ (Luke 14:23).

“So warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified” (Romans 15:7).

**3. I will serve the ministry of my church**

- . . . by discovering my gifts and talents
- . . . by being equipped to serve by my pastors
- . . . by developing a servant’s heart

“Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you” (1 Peter 4:10).

“[God] gave . . . some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:11-12).

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who . . . [took on] the very nature of a servant” (Phil. 2:3-4, 7).

**4. I will support the testimony of my church**

- . . . by attending faithfully
- . . . by living a godly life
- . . . by abstaining from the use of alcohol and drugs
- . . . by giving regularly

“Let us not give up meeting together . . . but let us encourage one another” (Heb. 10:25).

“Whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Phil. 1:27).

"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18)

“Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering” (1 Cor. 16:2).

“A tenth of [all your] produce . . . is the Lord’s, and is holy” (Lev. 27:30).

**5. I will move my membership to another local congregation when I leave the fellowship of First Baptist Church.**

“Let us not give up meeting together . . . but let us encourage one another” (Heb. 10:25).

**ARTICLE II - NAME**

The name of this church shall be the First Baptist Church of Harrisonville, Missouri. The church shall be affiliated with the Osage River Baptist Association, the Missouri Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

This body meets for worship, teaching and training at 504 West Wall, Harrisonville, Missouri.

### **ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of “The Baptist Faith and Message” (2000) as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. We 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 baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

### **ARTICLE IV – CORE VALUES AND MISSION STATEMENT**

The following value statements represent the core of all that we are and aspire to be at First Baptist Church. They flow from our relationship with Christ and guide our use of time, resources, and efforts. Our love for Christ compels us to be...

#### **Fully Committed**

Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. We surrender our will to His will for our lives on a daily basis, giving Him our best and our all. Every ministry in our church helps people grow spiritually. Our bible study groups on Sunday and throughout the week offer opportunities for believers to experience the life-changing power of God's Word, and discover their spiritual gifts. We encourage every believer to use his or her spiritual gifts in the ministries of the church.

*If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. (Matthew 16:24-25)*

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)*

#### **Biblically Faithful**

Scripture is our final authority. We seek to be innovative and flexible as long as we do not violate the Bible. We teach God's Word with integrity and authority, so that seekers find Christ and believers mature in Him.

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.  
(2 Timothy 3:16)*

## **Heartfelt Worshipers**

Our worship strives to be both accurate (based on the truth of God's Word) and authentic (a heart-felt expression of our spiritual devotion). We focus on God, not ourselves, acknowledging His supreme value and worth in our personal lives and in the worship of our congregation.

*God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)*

*Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. (Psalm 115:1)*

## **Family Affirming**

We support the spiritual nurturing of biblical marriages and families. We believe that the family unit (husband, wife, and children) is God's design for society and is the primary means of teaching godly behavior from one generation to the next generation. Our church is committed to helping families by having strong children's, youth, and adult ministries.

*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit your husbands as to the Lord...For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church...Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. (Ephesians 5:21-6:1)*

## **Relationally Connected**

Authentic sharing, caring, accountability and the meetings of human and spiritual needs happen when people are connected. We share one heart and one mind – the heart and mind of Jesus. We have a responsibility to care for one another and encourage one another to love and good works. Relationships are a vital part of spiritual development, and we believe life change takes place best in small group settings or individual relationships.

*For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them. (Matthew 18:20)*

*We have spoken freely to you...and opened wide our hearts to you...open wide your hearts also. (2 Corinthians 6:11 & 13)*

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:34-35)*

## Passionately Mission-Minded

We believe that we are to be sent into the world just as Christ was sent for all of us. Jesus calls us to be intentional and passionate about sharing the gospel. We believe that God's message of forgiveness is most effectively conveyed within the context of personal relationships, and most often beyond Sunday morning.

*And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:15)*

*As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. (John 17:18)*

## Excellence-Driven

Since God gave His best (the Savior), we seek to honor Him by maintaining a high standard of excellence in all our ministries and activities. We believe that excellence honors God and inspires people.

*...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)*

*...whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.... (Colossians 3:17)*

*Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)*

The mission statement of First Baptist Church is a statement of purpose and process, that is, it describes what our congregation seeks to accomplish in the life of every member as well as how we seek to accomplish it. Our mission statement is derived from our congregational core values and outlines a biblical progression of spiritual development to Christian maturity that begins with worship, leads to spiritual growth and results in Christian service. The six biblical purposes of the Church are embedded in the three parts of our mission statement.

## First Baptist Church:

### Worshiping God, Growing Together, Serving Others



Worship and Praye ⇨



Discipleship and Fellowshi ⇨



Ministry and Missions

## **ARTICLE V - POLICY 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 to said membership.

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.

## **ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS**

Changes in the constitution may be given to the constitution committee for review. If approved by the constitution committee, the changes may be presented to the congregation at any regular business meeting. The constitution committee may also propose changes to the constitution at any regular business meeting. If two-thirds of the members present approve the proposed amendment(s), the change shall be furnished in writing to the members present on the following Sunday morning. Active church members will vote on the amendment(s) at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. Final passage of the amendment(s) requires two-thirds vote of ballots cast.

The constitution shall be reviewed every five years or as necessary by the church constitution committee.

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## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section 1: General**

This is a sovereign and congregational minded Southern 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**

The emphasis of the New Testament is that every believer become identified and committed to a specific local assembly of believers following the leading and direction of God. This commitment is revealed by a believer's attitude, faith, attendance, involvement, giving and submission to that assembly. An individual's decision to seek membership at First Baptist Church should flow from his or her commitment to Jesus Christ and to our congregation.

A person may become a member of this church:

- (1) by profession of faith in Jesus Christ and baptism by immersion;
- (2) by receipt of a letter of recommendation from another Southern Baptist Church;
- (3) by statement of a prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion in a church when no letter is obtainable.

After completing a required instruction and orientation program for new members, candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular business meeting or church service for membership by active majority vote. Questionable cases for membership shall be referred to the pastor and deacon body.

#### **Section 3: Active and Inactive Membership Status**

Active members fulfill the responsibilities of membership as described in the church membership covenant. Inactive members are those who, for reasons other than health or age, fail to fulfill the responsibilities of membership for one year. During that year the pastor and/or deacons will encourage them to become active members of the congregation. If they choose to remain inactive at the end of one year, their membership status will be changed to inactive on the church

membership role, making them ineligible for teaching, committee, and ministry positions, as well as voting at church business meetings.

Inactive members may change their membership status to active by fulfilling the church membership covenant for at least six months, expressing their desire to become an active member by visiting with the pastor, and being approved as an active member by vote of the active members of the congregation at a regular business meeting.

#### **Section 4: Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) upon the death of a member;
- (2) by request of transfer of letter to another Baptist church;
- (3) exclusion by action of this church;
- (4) by erasure upon request of proof of membership in a church of another denomination, or when expressed during a visit by a member of the staff or a member of the deacon body;
- (5) by request of the member.

#### **Section 5: Membership Responsibilities**

Membership responsibilities shall include the following activities (in addition to those described in the church membership covenant):

- (1) Active members of the church are entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business meeting.
- (2) Following the guidelines of the church ministry handbook, active members of the church are eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective leadership, teaching, committee, and ministry positions in the church.
- (3) Active members of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Inactive members may become active members of the congregation following the guidelines set forth in Article I, Section 3 of the bylaws. They may participate in the ordinances of the church during the time they are in the process of becoming active members.

#### **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 member. The pastor, deacons, and other concerned members of the church are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.



## The Pattern and Basis for Discipline

Church discipline is based on the holy character of God (1 Pet. 1:16; Heb. 12:11). The pattern of God's holiness, his desire for the Church to be holy, set apart unto Him, necessitates church discipline. The church is therefore to clean out the leaven of malice and wickedness from its ranks (1 Cor. 5:6-8). The failure to practice church discipline evidences a lack of awareness of the holiness of God. In addition, it ignores the fact that the Lord himself directly disciplines his children (Heb. 12:6) and has given clear instructions in the New Testament for the local congregation to also administer his discipline.

Church discipline must be patterned after and based on the divine commands of Scripture. There are numerous passages which both command and give directives on the how, when and where of church discipline. A failure to exercise this responsibility demonstrates a lack of obedience and belief in the authority of the Bible (1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1).

A final basis for the necessity of church discipline is the testimony of the Church in the world. The world observes the behavior and life of each local congregation, and when the church acts no differently than the world, it loses its credibility and authenticity (1 Pet. 2:11-18; 3:8-16; 4:1-4).

## The Purposes of Church Discipline

- (1) Concern for the glory of God and the testimony of the flock.
- (2) The restoration and building up of the sinning believer.
- (3) The winning of a soul to Christ (if only a professing Christian).
- (4) The purity of the local body and its protection from moral and doctrinally impure influences, knowing a little leaven can leaven the entire lump (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

## Reasons for Church Discipline

According to Scripture, there are five categories which warrant church discipline.

- (1) Difficulties between members (Matt. 18:15-17).
- (2) Divisiveness (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11).
- (3) Disorderly conduct (2 Thess. 3:6-15).
- (4) Sins of the type mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5: incest, immorality, covetousness, idolatry, abusive speech, drunkenness, and swindling (1 Cor. 5:1, 11).
- (5) False teaching. Erroneous teaching and views which concern the fundamentals of the faith, not lesser differences of interpretation (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18; also implied in Rev. 2:14—16; Phil. 3:2-3, 15-19; Rom. 16:17-18).

The key concerns behind the reasons for church discipline are: (a) the holy character of God, (b) the testimony of the flock, (c) the effect upon the unity and purity of the flock, and (d) the edification and restoration of the individual.

## Administering Church Discipline

Scriptural procedure here is clear and specific steps are prescribed. They are as follows:

- (1) Recognize the offense, ensuring that it is a biblical offense which calls for discipline.
- (2) Seek private correction and/or reconciliation with the offender (Matt. 18:15). This is when the problem involves two believers or a small group of believers. The one offended or the one who recognizes the offense is to go privately and try to rectify the problem. If this fails, he is to take witnesses, preferably spiritual leaders, so that if it has to be brought before the whole church it can be firmly proven or established (Matt. 18:16-17). All of this must be done in the spirit of humility, gentleness and patience (Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:24-26).

If an offense involves more than a personal offense between believers and affects the spiritual health and vitality of the congregation, the pastor and church leaders should adhere to Galatians 6:1-2 and 2 Tim. 2:24-26 as they follow the instruction of Titus 3:10 - "Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, having nothing to do with him." Steps 3, 4 and 5 of this section should be followed as Titus 3:10 is implemented.

- (3) If there is no response in repentance and obedience, then members are to withhold intimate fellowship until there is obedience (2 Thess. 3:6, 14). This is to indicate to the offender that his action has caused a rupture in the harmony of the body. Its goal is restoration and the person is still to be counted as a brother (2 Thess. 3:14-15).
- (4) If the person persists after admonition and withdrawal of intimate fellowship, the final step is exclusion from the fellowship and membership of the congregation (Matt. 18:17b), accompanied by public rebuke before all (1 Tim. 5:20; 1 Cor. 2:6; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Rom. 16:17).

If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the active members present at a regular business meeting 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.

- (5) Finally, discipline in the name of our Lord always includes a readiness to forgive. The church must be ready and eager to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm its love to the repentant person (2 Cor. 2:6-8). Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by a majority vote of the active church members, upon evidence of his or her repentance and reformation.

## **ARTICLE II - CHURCH OFFICES**

All persons holding offices, having teaching responsibilities, and serving on committees listed or implied in this document, shall be members of First Baptist Church of Harrisonville.

### **Section 1: Corporation and Corporate Board**

The principal office of the First Baptist Church of Harrisonville, Inc., shall be located at Harrisonville, Missouri. The corporate seal of this corporation shall be kept in a safety deposit box maintained by the church.

The membership of this corporation shall consist of all active and inactive members of the First Baptist Church of Harrisonville, Missouri.

The business and affairs of the corporation shall be managed by its board of directors as authorized and directed by the church. Seven board members shall be elected by the church and will hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the active church members authorizing necessary action, the board shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any church property. The candidates for the board shall be church members recommended by the Team Coordinators and elected by the church. Board members will serve on a rotating basis. The board shall elect a president and secretary and shall meet as necessary.

### **Section 2: Pastor**

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he (1) proclaims the gospel to believers and non-believers, (2) leads the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, missions, education, ministry and application, (3) leads the church in performing its ministries, (4) cares for the church's members and other persons in the community, (5) supervises the ministries of the church staff and employees, and (6) serves as the moderator of the church and is an ex officio member of all church ministry teams and committees.

A pastoral search committee shall be formed when the office of pastor is vacated. The vice moderator of the church shall ask the following committees to nominate nine members of the church (seeking to balance male and female members) to the pastoral search committee:

The Team Coordinators shall nominate two (2) members from its membership;

The deacons shall nominate two (2) members from its membership;

The staff relations committee shall nominate two (2) members from its membership;

The Team Coordinators committee shall nominate three (3) members from the church-at-large, excluding deacons or Team Coordinators.

Voting members of the pastoral search committee shall be at least 21 years of age and members of the congregation for at least 3 years. Youth may serve on the committee as non-voting advisory members.

The church membership, with the vice moderator presiding, shall authorize the formation of this committee at a special or regular business meeting.

Responsibilities of the pastoral search committee shall include:

- (1) securing pulpit supply speakers as needed for the regularly scheduled services of the church;
- (2) recommending, if needed, an interim pastor to the congregation at a special or regular business meeting (the procedure for calling an interim pastor shall be the same as for calling a permanent pastor);
- (3) prayerfully seeking God's man to present to the congregation as a pastoral candidate. The committee's recommendation shall constitute a nomination for consideration by the membership of the church.

The pastoral search committee shall present only one pastoral candidate at a time to the membership of the church. Public notice of a special business meeting for the purpose of electing a pastor shall be given from the pulpit at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of ninety percent (90%) of active members present being necessary to call the candidate as pastor. The pastor shall be elected to an indefinite term of office.

The church staff relations committee will conduct all elections pertaining to staff.

The pastor may resign with at least thirty (30) days notification to the church.

The pastor will conduct a written self-evaluation on an annual basis and discuss that evaluation with the staff relations committee. If there are areas of concern regarding the pastor's ministry at the church that cannot be easily resolved, the staff relations committee will meet with the deacon body to share their concerns. The deacons will attempt to resolve the concerns quickly. If necessary, the deacon body will select a subcommittee consisting of current and former deacon chairmen to develop a written plan for improvement for the pastor using specific, measurable goals. If the concerns remain uncorrected within the time frame agreed upon by the deacon subcommittee and pastor (not to exceed three months), the deacon subcommittee may bring a recommendation to the deacon body to terminate the pastor's ministry at the church. Following discussion and prayer by the entire body of active deacons, a vote will be taken to determine whether or not to recommend the termination of the pastor's employment to the congregation. Three-fourths (75%) of the active deacons must agree to terminate the pastor's employment for the recommendation to be brought to the congregation of active members to vote on the termination of the pastor at a regular or specially called business meeting. Notice of such meeting and its purpose shall be given from the pulpit at least two weeks preceding the meeting. The vice moderator of the church shall preside at the meeting. A majority of the votes cast at the meeting of active members shall be required to terminate the pastor's service to the church. The staff relations committee and church council shall recommend the terms of the pastor's termination for approval by the congregation.

Members of the congregation may meet with the staff relations committee to discuss their concerns regarding the pastor's effectiveness.

### **Section 3: Ministerial Staff**

The church shall call ministerial staff members as needed. All interim and permanent ministerial staff members shall be recommended to the church by a search committee consisting of the staff relations committee, pastor, and other church members who would be able to assist the search committee in the areas of youth, education, music, etc. The search committee in its final form shall be approved by the congregation at a regular business meeting.

Voting members of the pastoral search committee shall be at least 21 years of age and members of the congregation for at least 3 years. Youth may serve on the committee as non-voting advisory members.

The search committee shall present only one candidate at a time to the membership of the church. Public notice of a special business meeting for the purpose of electing a staff member shall be given from the pulpit at least two Sundays prior to the meeting. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of ninety percent (90%) of those active members present being necessary to call the candidate. The staff member shall be elected to an indefinite term of office.

The staff relations committee will conduct all elections pertaining to staff.

The staff member may resign with at least thirty (30) days notification to the church.

After the reviews included in the six-month probationary period of employment, staff members will be evaluated on an annual basis. These evaluations will consist of a self-evaluation by the staff member, a written review by the pastor, a conference between the pastor and staff relations committee to discuss the pastor's evaluation, and a meeting between the pastor and staff member.

These reviews will reveal the staff member's strengths and suggest, if necessary, ways to improve performance. The pastor and staff relations committee will address any areas of concern by developing a specific written plan for improvement with measurable goals. The plan for improvement shall be signed and dated by the pastor and staff member and will be completed within a three-month time frame. If the concerns remain unresolved at the end of this process, the pastor may recommend the termination of the staff member's employment to the staff relations committee, and if the staff relations committee agrees with the pastor's recommendation, the staff relations committee has the administrative authority to terminate the staff member's service to the church. The staff relations committee will report the reasons for its action to the Team Coordinators, which will resolve any financial and miscellaneous issues related to the staff member's termination. Once these considerations have been resolved, the staff relations committee will report the reasons for its actions, along with any financial decisions by the Team Coordinators, to the congregation at the next scheduled business meeting.

Members of the congregation may meet with the staff relations committee at any time to discuss their concerns regarding the effectiveness of the staff member.

#### **Section 4: Church Employees**

Church employees shall be defined in and governed by the personnel policies adopted by the church. Church employees shall be interviewed and selected by the pastor and staff relations committee. The church council and staff relations committee shall determine their compensation according to guidelines established by the church budget.

#### **Section 5: Personnel Policies and Procedures**

Specific issues governing the oversight of ministerial staff and church employees shall be found in the personnel handbook. The handbook shall be reviewed by the constitution committee every five years or as necessary.

#### **Section 6: Deacons**

The scriptural basis for serving as a deacon is found in Acts 6:1-8 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Empowered by the Spirit of God and instructed by the example of Jesus Christ, deacons embody a spirit and lifestyle of servant hood. They work collaboratively with the pastor, seeking creative and tangible ways to minister to the spiritual and material needs of the congregation. Deacons actively promote the unity and spiritual growth of the congregation by fulfilling their purpose statement:

As deacons we will  
actively pray,  
support the pastor,  
and serve  
as we seek to advance the kingdom of God.

#### **Scriptural Guidelines and Congregational Requirements for Service as a Deacon**

A deacon shall be:

- (1) committed to the authority and inspiration of the Word of God, the principles contained in the *Baptist Faith and Message*, and the constitution and by-laws of the church;
- (2) actively involved in the life of the congregation through faithful attendance in Sunday School and worship, tithing, and ministry to others;
- (3) a respected and responsible member of the community, known for his Christian values and lifestyle;
- (4) a male who is at least 21 years old;
- (5) a member of the congregation for at least one year;
- (6) if married, faithful to his wife and committed to the spiritual welfare of his children.

## Deacon Selection

- (1) Each June the deacon body and pastor shall review the needs of the congregation and determine the number of new deacons necessary to meet those needs.
- (2) The deacon body shall conduct a written survey allowing each member of the congregation to nominate up to five individuals to fill the necessary deacon openings
- (3) Along with the pastor, a deacon subcommittee consisting of the current and former deacon chairmen shall review the eligibility and commitment of the individuals nominated by the congregation using the criteria listed above.
- (4) Following the review by the subcommittee, the list of recommended candidates will be brought to the full deacon body at the next regular deacon's meeting for discussion and approval.
- (5) The deacon subcommittee and pastor shall interview potential candidates and their wives to determine their willingness to serve. Interviews will be conducted until there are enough willing candidates to fill the deacon openings.
- (6) At the September business meeting, the deacon body shall present a list of willing nominees to the church body. Active church members will vote (*yes no abstain*) on each nominee. Nominees who receive at least 75% *yes* votes will serve for one year as a deacon-in-training, at the end of which time the deacon body will interview the candidates and their wives.  
Following the interviews, the deacons will vote to reaffirm the candidate's suitability to serve as deacons (a simple majority is required to approve a deacon candidate). Then the church shall ordain them (if non-ordained) or publicly present them to the congregation (if previously ordained).

## Deacon Officers

The chairman of the deacons, the vice chairman, and the secretary shall be nominated by a committee appointed each June by the chairman or elected from the floor. Deacon officers shall be elected in July and take office in September. Officers shall be elected annually and are limited to two consecutive terms to the same office. The chairman of the deacons shall also serve as vice moderator of the church.

## Deacon Responsibilities

According to the New Testament, deacons are servants of the church. Their responsibilities include:

- (1) leading the church in the achievement of its mission;
- (2) proclaiming the gospel to believers and non-believers;
- (3) caring for the needs of the congregation and community;

- (4) supporting the ministries of the church;
- (5) faithful attendance at all regularly scheduled deacon meetings.

### Deacon Emeritus Status

The church shall grant the honor of deacon emeritus status to deacons at their request who have served the congregation faithfully but are no longer able to fulfill their responsibilities. Deacons who choose emeritus status may participate as desired in deacon meetings and activities. If they attend 50% or more of regularly scheduled deacons meetings, they may vote on issues considered by the deacon body.

### Deacon Resignation and Removal from Service

A deacon may resign from his responsibilities or ask for deacon emeritus status at any time. The deacons will vote to determine whether or not to grant his request.

A deacon voluntarily removes himself from the deacon body by failing to attend at least 50% of the regular deacons meetings during a church year (this does not apply to deacon emeriti or to deacons who leave Harrisonville for extended periods of time). A deacon's absence will be excused if he notifies the church office prior to a deacon's meeting.

If a deacon fails to meet the scriptural guidelines and congregational requirements for service as a deacon, the pastor and chairman of the deacons shall meet with him and determine whether or not to recommend that he be removed from service as a deacon by a vote of the deacon body.

### **Section 7: Moderator**

The pastor shall serve as the moderator of the church or at his discretion appoint a moderator. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of the deacons (vice moderator) shall serve as moderator. In the absence of both, the vice chairman of the deacons shall preside.

The moderator shall serve as the neutral chair of all church business meetings. The moderator presides over meetings and ensures that they are conducted according to the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*. If the moderator desires to make a motion he should give the chair temporarily to the vice moderator.

### **Section 8: Church Clerk**

The Team Coordinators shall submit a candidate to the church two weeks prior to a regular business meeting. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of ninety (90%) of active members present being necessary to call the clerk. The clerk shall be elected to a three year term with subsequent terms subject to nomination and election by the church.

The church clerk shall keep accurate minutes of the business meetings of the church, preserve and properly file all letters, reports, and other denominational reports.



## **Section 9: Treasurer**

The Team Coordinators shall submit a candidate for the position of treasurer to the church two weeks prior to a regular business meeting. Approval shall be by an affirmative vote of ninety (90%) of active members present being necessary to call the treasurer. The treasurer shall be called to a three year term with subsequent terms subject to nomination and approval by the church. The church may require and pay for the treasurer to be bonded.

It shall be the duty of the church treasurer to keep an accurate record of all funds received and disbursed, and make monthly and annual reports to the church. The treasurer is authorized to sign checks approved by the guidelines of the church budget or church council (according to church council guidelines in Article III, Section 1).

At the expiration of the treasurer's term of office, he/she shall turn over to the next treasurer all accounts, vouchers, documents, and the balance of the funds.

## **Section 10: Assistant Treasurer(s)**

The assistant treasurer(s) shall be elected annually by a nomination from the Team Coordinators and approval by the church at a regular business meeting. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of ninety (90%) of active members present being necessary to call the assistant treasurer. The church may require and pay for the assistant treasurer to be bonded.

The assistant treasurer shall render such assistance to the treasurer as required. The assistant treasurer is authorized to sign checks approved by the guidelines of the church budget or church council (according to church council guidelines in Article III, Section 1).

# **ARTICLE III - COORDINATE GROUPS**

## **Section 1: Team Coordinators**

The Team Coordinators shall seek to coordinate the activities and expenditures of the church. The Team Coordinators shall be composed of the pastor, ministerial staff and ministry team coordinators in the following six areas: worship, prayer, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and missions. The church treasurer shall meet with the Team Coordinators during the process of developing the annual church budget. The pastor shall serve as chair of the Team Coordinators. Team Coordinators shall serve for a period of time as approved by the congregation at a regular business meeting.

The Team Coordinators shall meet monthly or on call of the pastor as deemed necessary. All matters agreed upon by the Team Coordinators requiring a change in church policy, procedure or expenditure in excess of \$5,000 shall be referred by the Team Coordinators to the church for approval or disapproval. The primary functions of the Team Coordinators shall include:

- (1) To recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals;
- (2) To engage in the following financial management responsibilities
  - a. Prepare and submit to the church a proposed annual budget
  - b. Promote a program of financing the needs of the church, which includes financing surplus funds when available
  - c. Implement a system of accounting that will be adequate for handling and accounting for the funds of the church
  - d. Manage the expenditures of church funds within the limits of the church-approved budget
  - \* All bills shall be paid by check.
  - \* The Team Coordinators shall approve major expenditures at its regular monthly meetings.
  - \* The Team Coordinators shall select one of its members to oversee church expenditures between council meetings. This person shall approve all budgeted expenditures from \$500 to \$5,000.
  - \* The Team Coordinators may at its discretion require the use of purchase orders for acquiring items for the church. When required, a purchase order must be signed by two members of the Team Coordinators.
  - \* Church expenditures shall be made according to fund balances in each account of the budget. A computerized accounting system shall be maintained in the church office to provide daily account balances.
  - \* The Team Coordinators have the authority to change budgeted amounts for various accounts as long as the changes do not affect the total amount of the budget that is approved by the congregation. The Team Coordinators will report these changes to the congregation at a regular business meeting.
- (3) To review and coordinate (when necessary) program plans recommended by church staff, officers, organizations, ministry teams, and committees;
- (4) To recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to ministry priorities;
- (5) To evaluate program achievements annually in terms of church goals and objectives.

## **Section 2: Church Committees, Teaching Positions, and Ministries**

Policies, procedures and responsibilities for all committees are described in the church-approved ministry handbook. The constitution committee shall review the ministry handbook every five years or as necessary.

## **ARTICLE IV - ORDINANCES**

### **Section 1: Baptism**

A person who received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal repentance and faith; who professes Him publicly at any worship service; who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as his or her Lord; and who indicates a desire to join the membership of this church, shall be received for baptism by immersion in water. The pastor, ordained staff, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism.

### **Section 2: The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church and all like believers, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, anticipating his Second Coming.

## **ARTICLE V - CHURCH MEETINGS**

### **Section 1: General**

The church shall meet regularly for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. Special meetings such as revivals, conferences, concerts, etc., shall be held occasionally to further the mission and objectives of the church. All church services shall be placed on the church calendar and will be open for the entire membership of the church and guests. They will be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

Committee meetings are open to all church members unless the committees are meeting in executive session.

### **Section 2: Regular and Special Business Meetings**

Regular church business meetings shall be conducted on a routine basis. A specially called business meeting may be called by the church moderator to consider special matters of a significant nature. A two-week notice of the subject, date, time and location must be given from the pulpit for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable. If at all possible, the pastor should be present at specially called business meetings.

### **Section 3: Quorum**

Fifteen active church members (“active members” as defined in Article I, Section 4) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

### **Section 4: Parliamentary Rules**

The most recent edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised*, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedures for all meetings of the church (business meetings and committee meetings).

### **Section 5: Petitions**

The church shall not use or condone the use of petitions to conduct its business or address any issue of church polity or practice. Instead, the congregation will follow guidelines established by *Roberts Rules of Order, Revised*, the church bylaws, personnel manual, and ministry handbook. Church members who persist in the divisive use of petitions may be subject to church discipline (Article 1, Section 7).

## **ARTICLE VI - CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS**

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching, evangelizing, church member training, church leader training, new member orientation, mission education, and support training. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control, all officers 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 resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

The church program year shall be from September 1 through August 31.

## **ARTICLE VII - LICENSING AND ORDAINING**

### **Section 1: Licensing**

Any male member who in the judgment of the church gives evidence that he is called of God to the work of the ministry may be licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ by vote of the active members of the congregation at a regular business meeting.

### **Section 2: Ordaining**

A man called to serve as a deacon or pastor shall be formally recognized through ordination.

Prior to the ordination of a man called to the Gospel Ministry, the deacon body and pastor will interview the candidate and determine whether or not to proceed with the ordination. Active members of the congregation will vote to approve the ordination at a regular business meeting.

Prior to the ordination of a man called to serve as a deacon, he shall undergo the process described in Article II, Section 6.

The ordination service shall be under the direction of the pastor.

### **ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH MINISTRY GUIDE**

The Team Coordinators shall oversee the development and updating of a comprehensive church ministry guide. The guide shall include the following items: (1) church history; (2) constitution; (3) by-laws; (4) Staff Relations manual; (5) ministry handbook; (6) church safety and security manual; (6) child protection policy and (7) miscellaneous policies and procedures governing various aspects of the operation of the church.

Copies of the ministry guide shall be kept in the church office and safety deposit box, and made available to any member of the church. The church administrative assistant shall maintain the guide. Changes in the manual must be made in accordance with the church constitution and by-laws.

### **ARTICLE IX – 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 his 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 Team Coordinators, subject to the direction of the church. No minister [or employee] of the church shall officiate at any marriage ceremony unless such marriage is consistent with this policy.

### **ARTICLE X - AUTHORITY**

This document supersedes any and all previous documents of the First Baptist Church of Harrisonville and will serve as governing authority unless amended at some future date. The effective date of this document is December 10, 1997, and as amended on August 12, 1998, May 16, 2001, July 14, 2003, October 4, 2009 and March 12, 2014

### **ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS**

Changes in the bylaws may be given to the constitution committee for review. If approved by the constitution committee, changes may be presented to the congregation at any regular business meeting. The constitution committee may also propose changes to the bylaws at any regular

business meeting. If two-thirds of the members present approve the proposed amendment(s), the change shall be furnished in writing to the members present on the following Sunday morning. Active church members will vote on the amendment(s) at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. Final passage of the amendment(s) requires two-thirds vote of ballots cast.

The bylaws shall be reviewed every five years or as necessary by the church constitution committee.