

# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

First Baptist Church  
Wauchula, Florida

Revised and approved March 21, 2018

## PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Convention, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church, and for the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish these by-laws.

## ARTICLE I

### GOVERNMENT

1. The GOVERNMENT of this church shall be vested in the members who support the church ministries, programs, and worship services.
2. The parliamentary procedure of this body shall be governed by the rules as set forth in the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

## ARTICLE II

### SECTION A - MEMBERSHIP

1. Any individual who has made a request to the church in any open meeting assembled for membership, and who has made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and has declared it to be his or her purpose to follow Him as His disciple, by a majority vote of the congregation present shall be received through baptism by immersion into the active membership of the church. The new member shall receive a certificate of baptism.
2. Members of other Baptist churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention who come on promise of a letter from such Baptist churches of like faith and practice by a majority vote of the congregation present shall be received into the active membership of this church.
3. Members of churches, other than those affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, after consultation with and recommendation by the pastor may be baptized by immersion or may make a statement of having received Christ as Savior, and of having been baptized by immersion, may by a majority vote of the congregation present, be received into the active membership of this church.

4. Members may, at their request or upon the request for their letter from a Baptist Church of like faith and practice, be granted a Letter of Recommendation.
5. In the event that a member unites with a group other than a Baptist Church of like faith and practice, he or she will be removed from the church roll.
6. In the event that a member requests his or her name be removed from the church roll, that request shall be granted.

### SECTION B - FAITH AND PRACTICE

The basis for faith is the Holy Bible and the practice of this church is the New Testament, a succinct statement thereof is to be found in the BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000.

### SECTION C - COVENANT

The following is the Church Covenant and is expressive of the hopes and purposes according to which our members should strive to live.

"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, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

"We engage, therefore, 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 doctrine; 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 religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale or use of illegal drugs and from the sale or use of intoxicating drink 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 the principles of God's Word." Matthew 18:15-20

ARTICLE III  
ORGANIZATION

SECTION A - OFFICERS AND DUTIES

1. Pastor

The Pastor, being led by the Holy Spirit, shall be Shepherd of the congregation, overseeing all other staff members. His duties shall be:

- a. Caring for the spiritual needs of the church.
- b. Proclaiming the Word of God from the pulpit.
- c. Administering the ordinances of the church.
- d. Act as moderator of the church in business meetings except when directly involved.
- e. To serve as ex-officio member of all committees, board, or bodies of the church. "Ex-officio" is a Latin term meaning "by virtue of office or position." Ex-officio members of boards or committees, therefore, are persons who are members by virtue of some other office or position they hold. Ex-officio members of boards or committees have exactly the same rights and privileges as do all other members, including the right to vote.

Election of a Pulpit Search Committee

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of Pastor, the Nominating Committee shall recommend to the church a Pulpit Committee consisting of seven members who will without delay seek a successor to fill the office of Pastor. Any candidate for the office of the Pastor of First Baptist Church of Wauchula shall meet the spiritual qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The candidate must also be of the Southern Baptist faith and philosophy. The term of office shall be for an indefinite period of time and shall be terminated by either the Pastor or the church upon a specially called meeting and written notice of one month.

The church body will have the option to review a recommendation from the Personnel Committee and the deacon body for the purpose of selecting an existing professional staff member for the position of Pastor in lieu of a Search Committee.

f. Pastor shall be designated as the Shepherd of the church, and in the event the office of Pastor is vacant, the Chairman of the Deacons will become acting Shepherd.

g. When a vacancy occurs, the Personnel Committee shall appoint an Interim Pastor or a pulpit supply until a new Pastor is called.

h. Any interim Pastor may be considered a Professional Staff Minister.

## 2. Professional Staff Ministers

Whenever a vacancy occurs in a Professional Staff Minister position of the church and the church desires to fill the vacated position, a search committee of seven (7) members will be selected by the Nominating Committee and approved by the church to serve as the Search Committee to fill an existing Professional Staff Minister or fill a newly created one. At least one of these members will be on the Budget Committee, and at least one of the members will be on the Personnel Committee. Any candidate for the office of the said staff member of First Baptist Church of Wauchula shall meet the spiritual qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The candidate must also be of the Southern Baptist faith and philosophy. The term of office shall be for an indefinite period of time and shall be terminated by either the said staff member or the church upon a specially called meeting and written notice of one month. (For details of responsibilities for various ministerial staff see the Personnel Manual.)

## 3. Deacons

The deacons of the First Baptist Church of Wauchula shall be men of spiritual maturity who have a willingness to serve and have been a member of the church for the previous twelve months. Such a man should meet the qualifications set forth in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13. The number of deacons shall be determined by the church business session at least thirty (30) days prior to deacon election. Deacons are to work alongside the pastor to meet the needs of the membership and to uphold the Church Covenant. All Deacons will commit to attend all regular deacons meeting unless providentially hindered. Deacons shall be elected to three (3) year active terms and have one (1) year inactive before being elected to successive terms.

A deacon who has served only part of an unexpired term may not be eligible for election to a full three year term without undergoing a year as an inactive deacon.

### Election of Deacons

- a. The name of every man who is at least 25 years of age, who has been a member of the church for the previous 12 months, who has attended Sunday School a minimum of 50 percent during the current year and who is committed to Christian stewardship

- will be printed in the July Newsletter. Ballots shall be printed with the names of those men who are willing to serve on the deacon body.
- b. The ballots shall be made available in the church office and at each worship service in the month of August. Ballots shall be mailed to the homebound and to other church members upon request.
  - c. Each resident member who is 18 years of age and older shall receive an official deacon ballot.
  - d. Ballots must be returned by the last Sunday in August.
  - e. Any man who did not meet the basic qualification of attendance due to providentially hindering circumstances may, at his request, be considered on an individual basis by a member of the ministerial staff.
  - f. The following names are not eligible for election and will not be found on the list:
    - (1.) Active deacons who are rotating off.
    - (2.) Men who have indicated that they are not interested in serving as a deacon at this time.
    - (3.) Men who do not meet the above standard.
    - (4.) If any name is left off the list by error, the church office should be notified.
  - g. All ballots shall be counted by the active deacons. The number of men who receive the highest number of votes needed to fill the vacancies will be screened by the pastor and the chairman or vice-chairman of deacons to determine their qualifications. If some are determined to be unqualified, the next man or men who receive the highest number of votes will be considered until the number needed plus alternates are approved. The purpose of alternates is to provide for those who are approved but choose not to serve.
  - h. An ordination service for men who will become deacons for the first time and an installation service for all men who are becoming active deacons shall be held in September.

## SECTION B - AUXILIARIES

### 1. Church Council

Their responsibilities are to formulate an integrated and comprehensive church program, to devise a calendar of activities, and to coordinate the work of all the church agencies.

#### Working Together Through the Church Council

The Church Council is a planning, coordinating, and evaluating group through which all church organizations, including committees, may coordinate their activities into one harmonious program of work. It is not an authoritative or administrative group. Once it agrees on a program or a project, the head of one of the church organizations becomes responsible for carrying out the project or program.

## The Work of Church Officers and Committees

The Church Council shall be composed of those persons who hold the following positions in the church:

- a. Pastor, who shall serve as Chairman
- b. Minister of Music
- c. Minister of Youth
- d. Sunday School Director
- e. Chairman of the Deacons
- f. Women's Ministry coordinator
- g. Men's Ministry director
- h. Church Treasurer
- i. Church Clerk
- j. Corporate President
- k. Media Library Center Director

### 2. Corporation Committee

The Corporate Officers of the Corporation Committee shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church to be legal representatives of the church. The officers will act on behalf of the church only after church approval has been given at a business meeting. Each member shall serve on a three year rotating program. This committee is to consist of three members. The chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary are to be the president, vice-president, and treasurer of the First Baptist Church of Wauchula, Incorporated.

### 3. Church Officers

Each officer will be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church for a one year term.

- a. Sunday School Director

The Sunday School Director shall be elected by the church each year and be responsible for the function of the Sunday School.

- b. Women's Ministry

The Woman's Ministry Coordinator shall be elected by the church each year and shall be responsible for the Women's Ministry activities. She shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Missions Committee.

c. Men's Ministry

The Men's Ministry Director shall be elected by the church each year and shall be responsible for the Men's Ministry activities. He shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Missions Committee.

d. Church Clerk

The Church Clerk shall be elected by the church each year and shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of all business meetings and make regular reports as needed.

e. Church Treasurer

The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for receiving all monies of the church. The treasurer shall also oversee the counting and depositing of monies received. This officer has the authority to endorse checks. The Treasurer shall serve on the Financial Accounting Committee as an ex-officio member.

f. Assistant Church Treasurer

The Assistant Church Treasurer shall be responsible for assisting in the receiving all monies of the church. The assistant treasurer shall also assist in overseeing the counting and depositing of monies received. This officer has the authority to endorse checks. The Assistant Treasurer shall serve on the Financial Accounting Committee as an ex-officio member.

g. Orange Blossom Baptist Association Representatives. (OBBA)

The OBBA Representatives shall represent the church at the association meetings representing the needs and concerns of First Baptist Church on the associational level.

h. Media Library Center Director

The Church Media Library Director shall be responsible for implementing the Library/Media Center Committee policies relating to the use and maintenance of books, equipment, and technology. This person will direct a volunteer staff which includes an assistant director and volunteer staff members as needed. The Director shall serve as an ex-officio member of the media Library Center Committee.

## SECTION C - COMMITTEES

The Church Committees shall be divided into three categories: Administrative (policy making committees), Supportive, and Worship. These committees shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. The members will serve alternating three (3) year terms. Each member of an Administrative Committee, or Supportive Committee after serving a three (3) year term, will rotate off the committee for at least one year before serving on this committee again. There are no limitations of service on a Worship Committee.

No church member can serve on more than two committees at a given time; one being the Administrative Committees (i.e., Personnel, Nominating, and Budget/Finance), the other being the Supportive Committees (i.e., all other committees except Ushers and Welcoming). An exception will be the Worship Committee members who may remain on their Worship Committee as well as serving on an Administrative and/or Supportive Committee. All ministerial staff may serve as ex officio member of appropriate committees, however no other paid staff member shall serve on a committee.

### Administrative Committees

#### 1. Budget and Finance

This committee is to be composed of five people. The Budget and Finance Committee will be responsible for all matters related to the planning, developing, and administering of the church budget. It will plan and develop a budget in keeping with the church ministries. It will make the budget available to the church two weeks prior to a special called meeting in December for the purpose of discussing and adopting the budget. The committee will maintain a close vigil on the church income and expenditures to insure funds are disbursed according to the budget. If it should become necessary, this committee will recommend revisions in the operating budget to the church. They will be responsible for reviewing and maintaining, on an annual basis, a Financial Policies and Procedures Manual. The pastor will make an announcement when changes are made. A hard copy of the most current Financial Policies and Procedures Manual will be available for review in the office; in addition, the most recent document will be available on the church website.

#### 2. Nominating

This committee is to be composed of seven people. They have the responsibility of selecting, contacting, and recommending, in consultation with the ministerial staff and/or the appropriate program director, the election of all people who will hold non-paid leadership positions in the church's organizations. When contacting those who will be recommended, they are to inform these of the duties and requirements of the position. Recommendation will be presented at the August business meeting. This committee is further given the



responsibility of selecting special committees (i.e. Pastor Search and additional members for Professional Staff Ministers searches)

### 3. Personnel

This committee is to be composed of five people. They have the responsibility of recommending to the church terms of employment for all paid personnel and professional staff ministers, including salary and benefits of professional staff ministers. They will be responsible for reviewing and maintaining, on an annual basis, a Personnel Manual. The pastor will make an announcement when changes are made. A hard copy of the most current Personnel Manual will be available for review in the office; in addition, the most recent document will be available on the church website.

## Supportive Committees

### 1. Baptism

This committee is to be composed of three men and three women. They are to assist the pastor with all baptisms. They are to maintain and launder the baptism robes.

### 2. By-Laws

This committee is to be composed of five members. They will be responsible for reviewing, drafting, and presenting all by-law changes.

### 3. Decorations

This committee is to be composed of five or more selected individuals as a permanent committee. They are responsible for decorations on holidays or special events in the sanctuary or other church locations.

### 4. Facilities Management

This committee is to be composed of five people. They have the responsibility of maintaining all church buildings, equipment, and furnishings therein. They will recommend to the church the purchase of any major equipment necessary to the function of the church. They are to recommend to the church all policies necessary for the use of church buildings and equipment.

### 5. Financial Accounting

This committee is to be composed of five people. They have the responsibility for all matters relating to the financial procedures for the handling of the gifts of the church membership and other donations. It shall practice sound procedures for receiving, counting, and depositing all gifts to the church. The Church Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are to be ex-officio members of this committee.

## 6. Grounds

This committee is to be composed of five people. They have the responsibility of maintaining the grounds of the church property. They will recommend to the church the purchase of any major equipment necessary to the function of the church. They are to recommend to the church all policies necessary for the use of church grounds.

## 7. Hospitality and Social

This committee is to be composed of a minimum of nine people. They have the responsibility of planning, preparing, and supervising all church related receptions. The committee will also be responsible for securing assistance in planning and serving a meal when needed upon the death of a church member.

## 8. Insurance

This committee is to be composed of three people. They have the responsibility of recommending to the church the best plans of insurance coverage for properties and employees.

## 9. Lord's Supper

This committee is to be composed of six people. They are responsible for the physical preparation of the Lord's Supper, clean-up, and storage of the Lord's Supper materials.

## 10. Media

This committee is to be composed of five people. They have the responsibility for developing and recommending to the church all center policies relating to the use and maintenance of the Center print resources, equipment, and technology. In addition, the committee is responsible for developing the Center annual budget and approving budget expenditures.

## 11. Missions

This committee is to be composed of five people, in addition to the Men's Ministry director and the Women's Ministry coordinator. They have the responsibility of recommending to the church all policies relating to the operation of church sponsored preaching and teaching missions. They are to promote all mission trips, mission projects, mission emphases, and mission offerings. The Women's Ministry coordinator and the Men's Ministry director shall serve as ex-officio members of the Missions Committee.

## 12. Music

This committee is to be composed of five people. They are to assist the Minister of Music in all areas that pertain to the music ministry.

## 13. Preschool

This committee is to be composed of seven people. They shall assist in the planning, coordinating, operating, and evaluating of all programs and ministries for the preschool age children of the church. In addition, they have the responsibility of recommending to the church all policies relating to the use, maintenance, and scheduling of the church preschool department and equipment. The Preschool Sunday School Director will be an ex-officio member of the committee. This committee will be responsible for securing volunteers to supervise preschool age children for worship.

## 14. Senior Adult

This committee is to be composed of seven people. They shall assist in the planning, coordinating, operating, and evaluating of all programs and ministries for the senior adults of the church.

## 15. Youth Advisory Committee

The Youth Advisory committee is to be composed of nine people. The Youth Advisory committee exists to help students and their parents stand firm in their relationship with Christ and to proclaim His love to all of their friends, family, and peers.

## Worship Committee

### Ushers

This committee is to be composed of a number of people to be determined by the Nominating Committee according to need. They have the responsibility of maintaining the comfort of the people attending worship services, helping people find seating, and receiving the offering.

## ARTICLE IV

### MEETINGS

#### SECTION A - WORSHIP

The church shall maintain and hold at least two (2) regular services every Sunday, one in the forenoon and one in the evening, and shall hold a prayer service on every Wednesday night. A service may be advanced, postponed or omitted to meet particular circumstances. Other worship services, religious assemblies, revivals, and prayer services may be held as and when needed.

#### SECTION B - BUSINESS, CONFERENCE, AND CORPORATE

Quarterly business or conference meetings for the transaction of business both, church and corporate, shall be held at the end of Prayer Meeting on the third Wednesday night following the evening worship service. The meeting will be held in September, December, March, and June with an extra meeting in August for the presenting of the Nomination Committee recommendations. The agenda for each business meeting will be available through the Sunday School department and presented from the pulpit on the Sunday preceding the business meeting. In the case of a revival or some other special service interfering with the holding of this regular meeting, it may be postponed until another time by written announcement and/or from the pulpit a minimum of three days before business meeting. Special called meetings may be called by the pastor, chairman of the body of deacons, or upon the written request of not less than (10) percent of resident members. Should such a request be made by (10) percent of the resident membership, the meetings shall be set by the pastor or chairman of the body of deacons and shall be called for the first available business meeting date for which proper notice can be given. Refer to Section E.

#### SECTION C - PLACE

All services and meetings shall be held in the buildings of the First Baptist Church, Wauchula, except as they may be called and notice given to meet and convene elsewhere, in order to meet such special circumstances as may exist, from time to time.

#### SECTION D - NOTICES

A three (3) day notice for a special called meeting shall be given from the pulpit at both services on Sunday, provided that the meeting may be held on the third day thereafter or notice of similar time length may be published in the bulletin. However, when meetings are called upon request of not less than ten (10) percent of the resident membership, or where the following matters are

to be considered, namely, call or termination of pastor, purchase, sale, or encumbrance of real property, amendment of charter or by-laws, and authorization of new construction to cost in excess of one thousand (\$1,000.00) dollars, and transfer of membership, the notice shall be for not less than ten (10) days and publicity shall be given to the purpose thereof, both from the pulpit and in the bulletin.

#### SECTION E - QUORUM

The government of the church shall be vested in the hands of its resident membership. Those members present at a regularly scheduled business or a special called business meeting other than the election or dismissal of a pastor shall constitute a quorum. For the election or dismissal of a pastor, at least ten percent of the resident membership must be in attendance to constitute a quorum. This vote for election or dismissal must take place during a Sunday morning worship service.

In meetings of boards, bodies, and committees, a quorum shall consist of not less than a majority of the members. Committee action shall be by a majority of the members.

#### SECTION F - QUALIFIED VOTERS

All resident members of the church are equally entitled to one vote. Proxies will not be permitted.

### ARTICLE V

#### ORDINANCES

##### SECTION A – BAPTISM

1. A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes Him publicly at any worship service; and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall, at his or her request, be received for baptism. Baptism shall be understood to be:
  - a. Immersion in water
  - b. Administered by the pastor or some other authorized member of the church
  - c. Administered as an act of worship during any worship service
2. The Baptism Committee shall prepare the baptistery and shall assist the candidates as appropriate.
3. A person professing Christ as Lord and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor.

## SECTION B - THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. The Lord's Supper may be observed at any worship service as the pastor, or in his absence the deacons, shall determine.
2. The Lord's Supper shall be open to all believers.
3. The pastor and the deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper. In the pastor's absence, this may be done by an authorized member of the ministerial staff.
4. The Lord's Supper Committee shall be responsible for the physical preparations for the Lord's Supper.

## ARTICLE VII

### AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended by presenting the proposed amendment(s) in writing at a regular church business meeting. Said amendment(s) shall be voted on at the next regular business meeting or specially called business meeting. A majority vote is necessary for passage. Upon passage of given amendment(s), said amendment(s) shall immediately be incorporated into the official By-Laws.

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