

# **GOOD HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS**

Revised: February, 2012

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**CONSTITUTION  
Of  
GOOD HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH**

**PREAMBLE**

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

**ARTICLE I** Name

This body shall be known as the GOOD HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, Cary, NC 27519, located in western Wake County.

**ARTICLE II** Foundation, Purpose, Vision, and Priorities of Ministry

**SECTION I** Foundation of the Church

The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible (Is 28:16; 1 Co 3:11). The Word of God is the basis by which the church will conduct all its affairs. This Church therefore affirms its faith in the eternal, inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Scriptures of Almighty God as His pure and divine Word (Ps 119:89; Is 40:8; Mk 13:31; Ps 19:7-8; Jn 17:17; 2 Ti 3:16; 2 Pe 1:20-21).

**SECTION II** Purposes of the Church

1. To worship God according to the teaching of His Word (Ps 119; Jn 4:23-24; Jn 17:17; 1 Co 14:26).
2. To practice the New Testament precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ac 2:42-47).
3. To sustain the ordinances as commanded in the New Testament (Mt 28:18-20; Lk 22:19, 20, 1 Co 14:26).
4. To teach and conform to Scriptural doctrines (Ps 119:11; Mt. 28:18-20; 2 Ti 2:1; 2 Ti 4:2, 2 Ti 3:16-17), and
5. To preach and propagate among all peoples the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith in Jesus Christ alone as Savior and Lord (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:47-48; Jn 20:21; Ac 1:8; Ro 10:8-15; 1 Co 1:23- 24; 1 Co 2:1-5; Ep 2:8-9).

**SECTION III** God's Vision of the Church

Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith, provides the ministry priorities for the Church (He 12:2).

1. We celebrate this vision in worship (Jn 4:23-24),
2. We encourage this vision in nurture and education (1 Co 14:26; 2 Ti 4:1-5; 2 Pe 3:18), and
3. We spread this vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (Mt 5:16, 28:18-20; 1 Pe 2:9, 3:15).

## SECTION IV Priorities of Ministry

The priorities of ministry shall be:

1. Discipleship (Dt 6:4-9; Ec 4:9-12; Mt 28:18-20; Lk 9:23; Ro 15:14; 1 Co 11:2; Ep 4:11-16; 2 Ti 2:2).
2. Evangelism (Mt 4:19, 9:38; Mk 1:17, 16:15; Lk 10:2; Jn 3:1-18; Jn 4:27-38; Ac 1:8; Ro 10:14-15; 1 Co 9:22),
3. Fellowship (Ac 2:42; Ro 1:12, 12:10; 1 Jn 1:3-4),
4. Service (Jos 22:5; Mt 4:10, 25:31-46; 1 Co 12:7; Ga 6:10; Ep 6:7; Ja 1:22, 2:14-16), and
5. Worship (Dt 6:4-9; Ps 33:1-3; Mt 4:10; Ep 5:19; He 10:19-25; 1Pe 2:9).

## ARTICLE III Statement of Faith

We affirm the current Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention.

## ARTICLE IV Church Covenant

We humbly submit ourselves to the authority of God's Word in all matters of faith and practice (Ec 12:13).

## ARTICLE V Affiliation

This church shall be in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention. A three-fourths majority vote is required to discontinue cooperation. Good Hope Baptist Church cannot be in cooperation with any agency whose doctrine is inconsistent to the Word of God (Jn 17:17).

## ARTICLE VI Membership

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this Church; who have been baptized by immersion; and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church (Ac 2:41; Ro 6:1-13, 12:4, 5; 1 Co 12:12-31; Ga 5:22-25; Ep 1:22-23, 4:3-16; He 10:24-31).

## ARTICLE VII Leadership and Organization

### SECTION I Authority

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the congregation of the Church is the final authority within this local Church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers to govern the Church. However, the vote of the membership of this Church at a properly

called meeting, as provided in the By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions (Ro 15:14; 1 Co 12:28; Ep 1:22-23):

1. Accept members into the Church or drop members from the Church roll,
2. Affirm God's calling on officers of the Church: Elders who serve as overseers of the Church and Deacons who serve under the guidance of the Elders in performing the ministries of the Church,
3. Effect final discipline of members (reference the Church Discipline Flow Chart) (Mt 18:15-17; I Co 5: 5-13; 2 Co 13:1-2, 10; 1 Ti 5:19; Tit 3:10-11; He:12:11; Re 3:19),
4. Effect final discipline of Elders and Deacons by removing them from office (1 Ti 5:19), and
5. Approve annual budgets of the Church and authorize any expenditure or transaction of the funds or real property of the Church when such expenditures or transactions are not covered by an approved budget (Mt 6:21; Lk 12:34; 1 Co 10:31; Col 3:17). Permitted exceptions are detailed in the By-Laws.

## SECTION II Offices

The offices of the Church shall be Elder and Deacon functioning in accordance with Ac 6:1-7. Their purpose is to biblically oversee, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry. The Elders will adhere to an expository method of teaching and preaching (2 Ti 4:1-2; Ja 3:1; 1 Pe 5:1-3).

## SECTION III Oversight of Church

The oversight of the Church shall be vested in the Elders who are responsible to pray and to teach, to encourage and to guard the place of the Scripture as the standard of belief and conduct in all its affairs (Ac 14:23, 20:28; 1 Th 5:12-13; He 13:7, 17, and 1 Pe 5:1-3).

## SECTION IV Deacons

Deacons serve under the guidance of the Elders in performing ministries of the Church (Ac 6:1-7).

# ARTICLE VIII Validation

## SECTION I Adoption

The adopting by the church of this constitution and by-laws shall repeal all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith, provided, however, that actions taken by the church prior to this date shall be invalidated by the adopting of this constitution and by-laws.

1. A copy of this Constitution and By-laws shall be kept by the Clerk at all times among the records and another copy shall be kept in the Church Office and all amendments to or revisions thereof shall be prepared by the Clerk and attached to copies of the Constitution and By-laws. These shall be made available to the church members generally upon request.
2. This Constitution and By-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members presented and voting at any regular business meeting of the church, or at a specially called meeting called for that purpose and the proposed amendment being inserted in the call, and said proposed change having been laid before the church in writing not less than one month before the time of the proposed action.

**BY-LAWS  
Of  
GOOD HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH**

**ARTICLE I Membership**

This Article deals specifically with church membership and not with the subject of the individual's salvation. Those making a profession of faith in Christ will be introduced as new brothers and sisters in Christ and will be baptized.

**SECTION I Requirements**

The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have given testimony of regeneration by the Spirit of God; who have been baptized by immersion; who have subscribed to the church covenant, Baptist Faith and Message and constitution of this church; who have completed the new member class led by an Elder; and lastly who have been received into membership by simple majority vote of the church at any business meeting (Ro. 12:4-8; Mt 16:15-18; 2 John:10-11).

1. A member of another Baptist Church may be received by simple majority vote of the church at any business meeting upon promise of a letter of transfer from the church where membership resides.
2. Prior members of a Baptist Church who are unable to provide a letter of transfer may be received by simple majority vote of the church at any business meeting granted no divisions with a former church are unresolved.
3. A letter of transfer to unite with another Baptist Church may be issued upon request. All such applications will be reviewed and voted on by the Church at a called business meeting.

**SECTION II Expectations**

Members are expected to be devoted to the teaching of God's Word, to the fellowship of the believers, to the ordinances of the Church, and to prayer (Ac 2:42-46; He 10:24-31). As such, members are expected to faithfully worship corporately and personally, to maintain a personal Bible study and to serve selflessly. As members of the body of Christ, believers are expected to have a ministry they are fulfilling in the corporate life of the church (Ro 12:1-8; 1 Co 12:1-10, 28-31; Ep 4:11-16; 1 Pe 4:10-11).

**SECTION III Discipline**

Discipline shall be a responsibility of each member under the leadership of the Elders as guided by Scripture. Under the heading of "Layman", the document titled Church Discipline Flow Chart details the Scriptural procedure for Church discipline. Community expulsion occurs with a simple majority vote of the Church. The member under question may not vote in any part of the disciplinary process.

**SECTION IV Inactive Members and Non Members**

Members of the church whose attendance and involvement in the life of the church is limited to holiday services or zero attendance of the normal weekly worship for a period of six months without reasonable cause will be designated as an inactive member. Reasonable causes include members experiencing home-bound conditions as well as temporal reasons such as college, travel, sickness, military and work schedule. The Deacons, after appropriate review, will assign inactive member status as justified. Inactive members, who have fallen away from their commitment to the church, will be lovingly pursued with the goal of restoration (Lk 15; Mt 18:15-20). Each situation will have its own unique circumstances and will be addressed by the Deacons accordingly. Inactive

members will remain inactive while the church continues to pursue them. Inactive members will be encouraged to attend the new members class to complete the process of restoration.

1. Inactive members will not be permitted to teach, lead ministry teams or vote in church business sessions.
2. Non members will not be permitted to teach, lead ministry teams or vote in church business sessions.

## **ARTICLE II Church Government**

### **SECTION I Vocational Pastors and Directors**

1. Definition. The vocational Pastors are ordained men. The senior pastor shall serve as an Elder. The vocational Directors are ministerial staff who are either ordained or non-ordained. Both the vocational Pastors and vocational Directors are supported financially by the church (Ac 15:4-6, 20:16-17, 27-31; Ep 4:10-12; Tit 1:5; 1 Pe 5:1-2).
2. Duties. The vocational Pastors and Directors serve under the authority and leadership of the Elders. Directors will not serve as Elders, but will assist the Elders as partners in the ministry. The duties of Pastors and Directors will be approved by the church prior to calling (Ac 6:1-6; Ep 4:12-13).
3. Vocational Call by the Church.
  - a. The members shall call vocational Pastors by ballot upon affirmation by the search committee and the Elders. The search committee will include Elder representation. Neither vocational elders nor directors may serve on this committee. Only one candidate shall be presented at a time. The calling shall be affirmed with a minimum 85% of the vote. Ten percent (10%) of the membership must be present for a valid vote. The vote for vocational Pastor shall be held after Sunday worship service.
  - b. The members shall call vocational Directors by ballot upon affirmation by the search committee and the Elders. The calling shall be affirmed with a minimum 85% of the vote. Ten percent (10%) of the membership must vote for the result to be valid. The vote for vocational Directors shall be held at a called business meeting.

### **SECTION II Lay Elders and Deacons**

1. Calling. The Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for lay Elder and Deacon. The Elders shall provide an Elder candidate form for use by individual members of the Church to nominate candidates. These nominations shall be written and signed by the nominator and nominee. All nominations shall be submitted to the Elders by July 1. In those cases where the Elders conclude that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion. The Elders shall present a ballot of candidates to be voted on individually by the congregation at a called meeting. Candidates are affirmed by a simple majority vote. In the event that the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, the highest vote recipients equal to the number of vacancies shall be affirmed. (Ac 6:3; 14:23; Ti 1:5; 2 Ti 2:2).
2. Terms. Lay Elders and Deacons shall be called by the church for a term of three years. Lay Elders shall serve no more than one term without a sabbatical. Following a one-year sabbatical, Lay Elders are eligible to serve a new term if nominated and elected in accordance with the process defined above in Section II, 1. Lay Deacons are eligible to serve consecutive terms without a sabbatical if nominated and elected in accordance with the process defined above in Section II, 1. The active Elders may call an inactive Elder or Deacon to serve a vacated position until the next scheduled annual election of officers. For purposes of this provision a term during which an Elder or Deacon serves not more than one year shall not be considered a term in office.

### SECTION III The Elders

1. Composition. The Elders shall be composed of men, both lay Elders and vocational Elders. The goal shall be to maintain six (6) Lay Elders with two (2) rotating off/on annually. The minimum number of Lay Elders shall be four (4). (Biblically, women may not serve as Elders and Deacons. These are the only two roles from which women are excluded). The Elders may increase the number of Lay Elders in accordance with the needs of the ministry and subject to nomination and election in accordance with Section II, 1. There shall be at least twice as many lay Elders as vocational Elders.
2. Qualifications. Elders and nominees for Elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible (1 Ti 3: 1-7; Tit 1:5-16; 1 Pe 5:1-4). Candidates shall be members for two years minimum. Candidates shall be a minimum of 25 years of age. Elders are also required to be in agreement with the current Baptist Faith and Message, and this document. No more than one member of any immediate family including in-laws may serve at any time.
3. Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibilities of the Elders are to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word of God in the oversight of this Church and all its affairs. The oversight of the Elders shall include: teaching the Word of God; caring for members; examining prospective members and assimilating new members; guiding the process of Church discipline; examining prospective Elders, Deacons, and Directors; organizing business meetings; leading the work of Deacons and all ministries of the Church. The primary responsibilities of the teaching elder, (the Senior Pastor), are prayer and teaching of the Word. Secondary responsibilities will include visitation, counseling and staff development as time permits. According to the Scriptures, no other responsibilities shall detract from prayer and the teaching of the Word (Ac 6:2-4, 20:28-30; Jn 21:16; 2 Ti 4:1-5; Tit 2:1).
4. Organization. The Elders shall determine the best organizational structure of the Elder team in order to equip the Church to carry out the five Priorities of Ministry of the Church: Discipleship, Evangelism, Fellowship, Service and Worship. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. A quorum is defined as at least one-half of the lay Elders plus at least one-half of the vocational Elders. Vocational Elders are excluded from the quorum in matters pertaining to personal salaries. The Elders shall annually select its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its lay Elders.
5. Discipline. For discipline of an elder, see the attached chart titled Church Discipline Flow Chart under the section "Leader" (Mt 18:15-17; 1 Ti 5:17-20).

### SECTION IV Deacons

1. Composition. The Deacons shall be men. (Biblically, women may not serve as Elders and Deacons. These are the only two roles from which women are excluded). The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church as assessed by the Elders (Ac 6:1-7). Reference Article VII, Section I of the Constitution.
2. Qualifications. Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible, (1 Ti 3:8-12, Ac 6:1-7). Candidates shall be members for two years minimum. Candidates shall be a minimum of 25 years of age.
3. Responsibilities. The Deacons shall assist the Elders in carrying out the five Priorities of Ministry of the Church (Ac 6:1-7).
4. Organization. The Elders may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular Function. Upon request by the Elders, the Deacons shall meet with the Elders as needed to best fulfill their responsibilities.

## SECTION V Trustees

The church shall have at least six members to serve as Trustees whose term of office shall be for three years with one-third elected each year. They shall serve no more than one term without a sabbatical. Following a one year sabbatical, they are again eligible for nomination. The Trustees shall hold in trust or title all church property for the benefit of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property exceeding the approved budget amount without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action. It shall be the function of the Trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents where the signatures of Trustees are required. They are to keep important papers in a safe deposit box, which shall be provided by the church. They shall work under the leadership of Elders and in conjunction with the Finance Team. The title to all property shall be vested in the church Trustees.

## SECTION VI Clerk

The Clerk shall be elected annually by the church upon recommendation of the Nominating Team and Elders. The Clerk's responsibilities are to attend or be represented at all church business meetings, to keep an accurate record of all business transactions, to prepare the annual associational letter, to issue letters of dismissal as authorized by the Elders, and to preserve valuable records that belong to the church. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to see that an accurate roll of the church membership is kept, the dates and methods of admission and dismissal, change in name, and other pertinent information about each member.

## SECTION VII Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected annually by the church upon recommendation of the Nominating Team and Elders. The Treasurer's responsibilities are to maintain the bank accounts, and to disburse monies by check in accordance with instructions from the church. They shall keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and rendering an account regularly to the church. The Treasurer's books shall be audited at least once a year by an outside auditor as arranged by the Stewardship/Finance Team. All books, records and accounts kept by the Treasurer shall be the property of the church. The Treasurer shall upon request meet with the Elders and shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance/Stewardship Team.

## SECTION VIII Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary shall receive the offering envelopes and from these shall give each contributor individual credit as provided in the record system approved by the church. They shall keep record of the receipts by individuals from envelopes for all church offerings. The Recording Secretary shall also be responsible for preparing and disbursing contributory statements to contributing members by January 31st of each year or upon requests.

## SECTION IX Church Financial Expenditures

Expenditures of all church funds shall be confined to limits of the church's adopted Annual Budget. Any expenditure beyond an adopted line item up to \$1,000 must be approved by the Finance Team. Any expenditure beyond an adopted line item up to \$5,000 must be approved by the Elders. Any expenditure beyond the line item exceeding \$5,000.00 shall be approved by the church. Cumulative expenditures beyond 5% of the total budget shall be approved by the church upon recommendation of the Finance Team.

## SECTION X Other Church Positions and Teams

Such other teams as may be necessary and desirable to carry out the work and activities of the church and its organizations shall be selected for a term of one-year by the Nominating Team. These shall be selected before or during the month of August and their term of office begins the first of September.

1. Special teams may be assembled by the Elders as the need arises.

#### SECTION XI Cemetery Provisions

Members and their minor children may be buried in the church cemetery at no cost. Family members of church members may be buried at a cost administered by the church Cemetery Team. No plots will be pre-sold before death. Family members are defined as spouse, parents and children. Exceptions such as past clergy must be approved by the Cemetery Team.

#### SECTION XII Other Employees

When the church has needs for support staff, the Personnel Team shall conduct the hiring process. Elders will have approval responsibility of the individual recommended by the Personnel Team. The church shall approve newly appointed positions and their budget needs.

#### SECTION XIII Service Terms

The following teams will have members serve a three year term with one third rotating off each year: Trustees, Finance/Stewardship, Preschool Governance Board, Grounds, Personnel, and Nominating. Eligibility for nomination will be restored following a one year sabbatical.

### **ARTICLE III Meetings**

#### SECTION I Ministry Related

This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training, prayer and fellowship (Ac 2:42; Ep 4:11-16; 2 Ti 3:16-17; He 10:24-25).

1. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper will be held four times per year at a minimum as scheduled by the Elders (Lk 22:19-20; Ac 2:42).
2. The ordinance of Baptism may be administered as an act of worship during any announced worship service (Mt 28:18-20).

#### SECTION II Business Related

This church shall hold business meetings in August to elect Elders and Deacons, and to approve the Nominating Team's Report to the Church, and in December to adopt the Church Budget. Upon majority recommendation of the Elders, special business meetings may be called at any time with a required two week notification. A Lay Elder will serve as the moderator.

1. Notification of business to be conducted should be made no later than two weeks prior to the meeting. In the case of emergencies, notification shall be made at any of the regularly scheduled services.
2. Business meetings shall be conducted under the Scriptural mandate of 1 Corinthians 14:40 and in compliance with Roberts Rules of Order.

#### SECTION III Quorum

A quorum consists of church members who attend the business meeting.

#### SECTION IV Vote Criteria

Only active members of the church are qualified to vote. Church members must be 16 years of age or older in order to vote. Absentee ballots will be made available to active church members serving in other ministry responsibilities during business meetings. Absentee ballots will be available upon request to active church members who are unable to attend for homebound conditions or for temporal reasons including: college, travel, sickness, military and work schedule. Absentee ballots must be obtained from and returned to any active Elder by the voting member.

End of Constitution and By-Laws

