

**CONSTITUTION OF MARSHALL  
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

Updated: October 23, 2023

By the Messengers in the 2023 Annual Meeting

**ARTICLE I. NAME**

This Association shall be known as the Marshall Baptist Association, Incorporated.

**ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE**

The Marshall Baptist Association exists to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the cooperative effort of her member churches. The local church exists to glorify God through making disciples of all people. Our Association exists for the churches. Our purpose can only be achieved through the advancement of the Kingdom of God through the local church.

A vision without a strategy can never be achieved. Our strategy and framework for ministry can be defined by three simple words:

**Encourage**

Within the MBA, a core mission is to uplift and strengthen local pastors and church leaders. A primary focus lies in fostering meaningful fellowship among these leaders, fostering a sense of unity. Our dedicated MBA Leadership Team, comprised of both paid and volunteer members, is devoted to providing consistent encouragement and support to pastors and church leaders. Through unwavering dedication, we aspire to be a constant source of inspiration for those who guide our congregations with dedication and compassion.

**Equip**

At the heart of our Association's purpose is the provision of abundant resources aimed at empowering local pastors and ministry leaders. Our focus rests on delivering practical and unwavering support for church strengthening and revitalization endeavors. With a forward-looking approach, we prioritize assisting churches in navigating the evolving landscape of media and technology in the coming decade. As a dedicated Association, our commitment remains steadfast: to equip pastors and leaders of the local church with the tools they need to thrive and succeed.

**Engage**

At the core of our MBA's vision is the unification of our churches' strength to amplify evangelism and missions on both local and global scales. Serving as a vital resource and hub, our MBA plays a pivotal role in facilitating church planting endeavors within

Marshall County. With proactive leadership, we strive to bridge the gap between active and inactive churches, ensuring alignment with the Association's overarching vision and strategy. Through these efforts, we foster a dynamic environment of engagement that propels us towards shared goals and a collective mission.

### **ARTICLE III. ARTICLES OF FAITH**

The Articles of Faith of the Association are the same as those adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, on June 14, 2000, known as the Baptist Faith and Message.

### **ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this Association shall be open to such Baptist churches that voluntarily subscribe to *the Latest Revision of the Baptist Faith and Message*, the faith and practice of the Association, and are duly accepted into the fellowship as set forth in the By-Laws of this Association.

### **ARTICLE V. MEETINGS**

The Association shall hold an Annual Meeting in October of each year. The date and place shall be determined by the Moderator, the Vice Moderator, and Associational Mission Strategist (AMS). Special meetings may be called under the conditions stated in the By-Laws.

### **ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

Officers of this Association shall be the Moderator, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator, Treasurer/Clerk, and Chairman of Trustees.

### **ARTICLE VII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee shall consist of Association Officers, Program Directors, Chairmen of all Committees, Pastors of all Churches, and One Lay Member from each church. This Executive Committee shall have the authority to act for the Association between Annual Meetings in accordance with the By-Laws.

### **ARTICLE VIII. RULES OF ORDER**

Roberts Rules of Order shall be used as the Rules of Order for the Association.

### **ARTICLE IX. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

The Constitution may be amended by consent of two-thirds of messengers present and voting at two successive Annual Meetings.

## **ARTICLE X. BY-LAWS**

This Association shall have By-Laws to aid in carrying out the purpose and objectives of this Constitution. Amendments to the By-Laws may be made at any regular meeting of the Association by two-thirds of the messengers present and voting provided that the proposed amendment(s) were presented in writing at a prior session of the Annual Meeting or at a prior meeting of the Executive Committee.

### **BY-LAWS MARSHALL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

Updated: October 23, 2023

By the Messengers in the 2023 Annual Meeting

The Association is a family of churches that voluntarily join together to encourage, strengthen and help each other in their common commitment to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

## **ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1: Procedure for Obtaining Membership**

Churches desiring membership in the Association are asked to demonstrate their willingness to cooperate by actively participating in and financially supporting the mission of the Association and the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention for a period of at least three months under the watch care of the Executive Committee.

Prior to petitioning, churches must have had at least one year of existence as a church or a mission for the Credentials Committee to do an evaluation.

Upon presentation of a "Petitionary Letter," the Credentials Committee shall make a thorough investigation, and after consultation with the petitioning church, make recommendations to the Executive Committee for action concerning watch care status until voted into membership by the Association at the Annual Meeting. No church shall be accepted into membership that is not represented at the session when the vote is taken.

### **SECTION 2:**

Each Member Church shall be considered an active member of the Association who completes the Annual Church Profile (ACP), financially supports the Association, and attends at least one meeting, either the Annual Meeting or an Executive Committee meeting in a 12-month period. Failure to do so will cause the member church to have an inactive status.

Any member church that remains inactive for a period of two consecutive years shall cause the Association or its Executive Committee to ask the Credentials Committee to discuss with the local church its intentions and desires to remain a part of the Association, seek to restore fellowship, and make an appropriate report to the Association.

### **SECTION 3**

The Association shall determine the propriety of retaining in its union any church which has become unscriptural in its doctrine or practices, or which ceases its cooperative relationship with the Association, The Alabama Baptist Convention, or The Southern Baptist Convention. Questions of this nature shall be channeled to the Credentials Committee which after careful study shall bring recommendations to the Association or the Executive Committee.

## **ARTICLE II - MESSENGERS**

### **SECTION 1:**

Each church shall be entitled to three messengers for the first fifty members with one additional messenger for each additional fifty members or fraction thereof. No church may have more than ten messengers. The Pastor of each member church may be one of the authorized messengers.

### **SECTION 2:**

Alternate messengers may be elected by the church to represent the church in case of absences of duly elected messengers.

### **SECTION 3:**

In the event special called meetings are necessary, the messengers to the preceding meeting shall constitute the membership of the special session, except in cases in which new messengers are certified by the churches.

## **ARTICLE III - MEETINGS**

During the Annual Meeting as described in Article V of the Constitution, the following guidelines shall prevail:

### **SECTION 1:**

A quorum shall be reached at the Annual Meeting when twenty percent of the active member churches are represented.

## **SECTION 2:**

Should the absolute necessity arise for a full meeting of the Association between regular Annual Meetings, the Executive Committee is empowered to call such a meeting, providing that at least two full weeks' notice, including two Sundays, be given to member churches.

## **SECTION 3:**

A record of the proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association shall be printed in the "Annual" each year. This "Annual" shall be distributed to individual churches according to the number requested and funds provided for them.

## **SECTION 4:**

At the beginning of the Annual Meeting, the Moderator, in consultation with the Vice Moderators, shall appoint a Parliamentarian who shall serve for the duration of the Annual Meeting and for the Executive Committee for the ensuing year.

# **ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS**

## **SECTION 1: Election of Officers**

- A. During the Annual Meeting there shall be elected a Moderator, First Vice Moderator, Second Vice Moderator, and a Treasurer/Clerk. Those nominated must be active members of active churches in the Association. These shall be nominated from the floor and elected by the body. Their duties shall begin with the close of the Annual Meeting and continue until their successors are elected and installed. They shall perform the duties and functions of their offices as outlined in these By-Laws.
- B. Officers shall not serve as Ministry Directors or Standing Committee Chairpersons.

## **SECTION 2: Moderator**

### **A. Term of Office:**

The Moderator shall be elected for a term of one year and shall only be eligible to succeed himself for one ensuing term. After vacating that office for one year, he is eligible to serve another term if elected.

### **B. Qualifications:**

1. The Moderator should be a person with a deep sense of spiritual values and a commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord.

2. The Moderator should have a cooperative spirit concerning the work of the Association and the denomination so that he will actively support and promote the work.
3. The Moderator should have a working knowledge of the structure of the Association.
4. The Moderator should be familiar with parliamentary procedure and have knowledge of the Constitution and By-Laws.

C. Responsibilities:

1. The Moderator shall preside at meetings of the Association and its Executive Committee.
2. The Moderator, in consultation with the Vice Moderators, shall appoint the following committees including the chairpersons for each:
  - a. Committee on Committees *which is* composed of ~~six~~ *three* members.
  - b. Search Committee for the Associational Mission Strategist (AMS), when necessary. The committee shall be composed of seven members. (See duties of respective committees in Article VIII Section I: (A, B, and C)
3. The Moderator shall be an Ex-officio member of the Association's Committees.
4. The Moderator may appoint committees as the Association, or the Executive Committee considers necessary.
5. The Moderator shall support and promote the work of the Association in conjunction with the Associational Mission Strategist (AMS) and Committees by whatever means are available.
6. The Moderator shall be the chairman of the Executive Committee.

**SECTION 3: First Vice Moderator**

A. Term of Office: Same as Moderator

B. Qualifications: Same as Moderator

C. Responsibilities:

1. The First Vice Moderator shall preside in the absence of the Moderator, or at his request at meetings of the Association or the Executive Committee.

2. The First Vice Moderator shall be responsible for the introduction of new pastors, staff members, and new Executive Committee members at the Executive Committee meetings.
3. The First Vice Moderator shall assume the Moderator's office in the event the office is vacated prior to the expiration of a term.

#### **SECTION 4: Second Vice Moderator**

- A. Term of Office: Same as Moderator
- B. Qualifications: Same as Moderator
- C. Responsibilities: The Second Vice Moderator shall assume the First Vice Moderator's office in the event the office is vacated prior to the expiration of a term.

#### **SECTION 5: Parliamentarian**

- A. The Parliamentarian shall be selected by the Moderator and Vice Moderators and shall serve at the Moderator's pleasure during the meeting of the Association and the Executive Committee. There shall be no limit on the number of terms he/she may serve.
- B. Roberts Rules of Order Revised shall be the basis of parliamentary decisions governing meetings of the Association or its Executive Committee.
- C. The Parliamentarian is not an officer of the Association.

#### **SECTION 6: Treasurer/Clerk**

- A. Terms of Office: There are no limitations as to the number of consecutive terms for which the Treasurer/Clerk may be elected.
- B. Qualifications: Treasurer
  1. The Treasurer should have a cooperative spirit concerning the work of the Association.
  2. The Treasurer should be one who has demonstrated faithfulness in the stewardship of responsibilities.
  3. The Treasurer should be a person who knows and practices good business procedures and is capable of maintaining an orderly set of financial records of all financial transactions.
  4. The Treasurer shall be qualified to be bonded.

C. Responsibilities: Treasurer

1. The Treasurer shall receive, properly credit, and deposit all monies of the Association, keeping accurate records of such transactions.
2. The Treasurer shall pay all bills properly authorized by the Associational Mission Strategist (AMS), Ministry Directors, and Committee Chairpersons and their respective areas of work to the limits of the budget.
3. The Treasurer shall make regular reports to the Association at the Annual Meeting, to the Executive Committee, and to the Budget Committee. Individual copies may be secured from the Association Office.
4. The Treasurer shall be bonded immediately upon assuming office and thereafter as long as he/she holds this office.
5. The Treasurer shall keep on file in the Association Office monthly reports of all financial transactions.
6. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Budget Committee.

D. Qualifications: Clerk

1. The Clerk should have an aptitude for recording and preserving records.
2. The Clerk should be one who has demonstrated faithfulness in the stewardship of responsibilities.

E. Responsibilities: Clerk

1. The Clerk shall record and preserve all transactions of the Association and the Executive Committee.
2. The Clerk shall obtain reports from member churches of the Association to be used in compiling statistical records for publication in the Annual Minutes.
3. The Clerk in office at the opening of each Annual Meeting shall complete the minutes of that meeting and supervise the preparation, publication, and distribution of the Annual. This is to be done in cooperation with the Associational Mission Strategist (AMS).

**SECTION 7: Assistant Treasurer/Clerk**

A. Assistant Treasurer:

1. All the qualifications and responsibilities of the Treasurer shall apply to the Assistant Treasurer. He/she shall assist the Treasurer, as needed, in the performance of his/her duties, and shall be authorized to sign checks and pay bills in the absence of the Treasurer.
2. The Assistant Treasurer shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and is not an officer of the Association.

**B. Assistant Clerk:**

1. All qualifications and responsibilities of the Clerk shall apply to the Assistant Clerk. He/she shall assist the Clerk in the performance of his/her duties as needed.
2. The Assistant Clerk shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and is not an officer of the Association.

**SECTION 8: Trustees**

**A. Election**

Trustees shall consist of six members who will serve terms of three years each, with two members being elected each year. These shall be presented by the Nominating Committee for approval of the Association at its Annual Meeting.

**B. Responsibilities**

1. Trustees shall be the agents, as required by Law to act for the Association in matters duly appointed by the Association or its Executive Committee. They are to sign all deeds of conveyance, execute all notes, bonds, or mortgages, and intervene in all suits, by the authority of the Association.
2. The Trustees are responsible for buying and selling properties as approved by the Association.
3. The Trustees shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Association properties, other than the camp property.
4. The chairperson of the Trustees is an officer of the Association, but other Trustees are not officers of the Association.

**ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**SECTION 1: Membership**

- A. All pastors who hold membership in a member church, interim pastors; one duly elected lay person from each church; plus, the officers of the Association, trustees, parliamentarian, Associational Mission Strategist (AMS), all standing committee chairpersons, and ministry directors are members of the Executive Committee.
- B. The churches may designate alternate lay members to attend Executive Committee meetings if duly elected representatives are unable to attend.
- C. Program Directors and Committee chairpersons may designate any member of their committee or program of work to serve in their stead at any meeting of the Executive Committee.

## **SECTION 2: Officers**

- A. The Moderator of the Association is the chairperson of the Executive Committee. The Vice Moderators shall serve as Vice-Chairpersons.
- B. The Clerk of the Association shall serve as Secretary to the Executive Committee.

## **SECTION 3: Meetings**

- A. The Executive Committee shall meet once a quarter as set forth in the calendar of activities of the Association.
- B. Special sessions of the Executive Committee may be called by the Moderator or Associational Mission Strategist (AMS) with a two-week prior notice being given and the purpose of the special session being stated.
- C. Members present and voting shall constitute a quorum except when meeting to deal with the purchasing or selling of property, the borrowing of money, or executing any deed, mortgage, or trust. In such cases, a two-week notice in writing shall be given to the Executive Committee members of each church stating the purpose of the meeting. A quorum of twenty percent of the active member churches shall be necessary to transact any financial business at such a meeting. A vote of two-thirds shall be considered binding.

## **SECTION 4: Authority**

The Executive Committee has full authority to act for and on behalf of the Association between Annual Meetings, except as expressly prohibited in the Constitution and By-Laws, or by instruction of the Association in Annual Session. According to Article III Section 2 of the By-Laws the Executive Committee shall have the authority to call a full meeting of the Association.

## **SECTION 5: Reports**

The Executive Committee shall present to the Annual Meeting a report of all actions taken during the previous year and make such recommendations as considered appropriate.

## **ARTICLE VI – ASSOCIATION STAFF**

The Association shall employ such personnel as deemed necessary to carry on its work and ministry. These shall include the following:

### **SECTION 1: Associational Mission Strategist (AMS)**

The Executive Committee upon the recommendation of the Associational Mission Strategist (AMS) Search Committee shall employ the AMS. The Associational Mission Strategist shall be a member of and lead the Association Staff. The AMS shall be accountable to the Executive Committee. For the job description see Personnel Committee files. Copies of these files may be obtained at the Associational Office.

### **SECTION 2: Retreat Center Director**

The Executive Committee upon the recommendation of the Personnel Committee shall employ the Retreat Center Director in consultation with the Associational Mission Strategist (AMS). The Retreat Center Director shall be a member of the Association Staff and accountable to the AMS. For the job description see Personnel Committee files. For Retreat Center policies see Retreat Center Committee files. Copies of these files may be obtained at the Associational Office.

### **SECTION 3: Other Personnel**

The Association upon recommendation of its Personnel Committee and by action of the Executive Committee shall employ such ministry and clerical staff as needed for carrying on an effective ministry. The Associational Mission Strategist (AMS) shall approve all recommendations for hiring full-time or part-time staff.

### **SECTION 4: Staff Policies**

The Personnel Committee shall maintain staff policies, salary, and benefit schedules, job descriptions, and other related matters concerning the employment of the Associational Staff. Such policies shall be on file at the Associational Office and available upon request. (See Personnel Committee - Article VIII Section 2m.)

## **ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES**

### **SECTION 1: Committees Appointed by the Moderator**

- A. Committee on Committees (See Article IV Section 2. C [2])
1. This Committee shall be composed of three members.
  2. The Committee on Committees shall nominate all standing committees for election by the Association in the Annual Meeting. They begin serving at the end of the Annual Meeting in which they were elected and serve until the end of their term.
  3. All standing committees shall be elected on a three-year rotating basis with staggered terms unless otherwise indicated in the By-Laws. The Committee on Committees shall use its discretion in allowing members of committees who rotate off a committee to be returned to that committee.
  4. All standing committee members must be members of churches in the Association. No two members of any standing committee shall be members of the same church.
  5. Chairpersons of the Committees are nominated by the Committee on Committees. No person shall serve as chairperson of more than one committee at the same time.
  6. Chairpersons shall be responsible for calling and conducting meetings of their respective committees and shall be responsible for maintaining and filing appropriate reports.
  7. The Committee on Committees shall nominate the following standing committees.
    - a. Audit
    - b. Budget/Finance
    - c. Retreat Center
    - d. Campus Ministry
    - e. Christian Life.
    - f. Constitution and By-Laws
    - g. Credentials
    - h. Nominating
    - i. Personnel

j. Resolutions

B. Search Committee for Associational Mission Strategist (AMS), when necessary.

1. The Committee shall be composed of three pastors, two laymen, and two women. The chairperson of the Personnel Committee shall be one of the seven members.
2. The Committee shall consider the qualifications as described in the MBA Personnel Policies and Procedures in selecting the prospective Associational Mission Strategist (AMS).
3. The Committee shall interview and recommend to the Executive Committee the employment of a person as Associational Mission Strategist (AMS).

**SECTION 2: Standing Committees**

A. Audit Committee

1. The Committee shall be composed of three members with experience in accounting procedures.
2. The Committee shall make an annual audit of the financial records of the Association.
3. The Committee shall make a report to the Annual Meeting.

B. Budget/Finance Committee

1. In addition to the Treasurer of the Association, the Committee shall be composed of five members.
2. The Committee shall review all budget requests which should be submitted to this committee for the ensuing year.
3. The Committee shall prepare a proposed budget which shall be presented to the Executive Committee at its September meeting for study and to the Association for adoption at its Annual Meeting. It shall cover income and expenditures for the fiscal year January 1 – December 31.
4. The Committee shall supervise and administer the budget in cooperation with the Treasurer. The Committee will meet as necessary prior to Executive Committee meetings to review the current budget and make suggestions as to necessary adjustments.

### C. Retreat Center Committee

1. This Committee shall be composed of five members who shall be responsible for overseeing the operation of all camp properties and related programs the Association may have. Members may be re-elected without limitation of tenure.
2. The Committee shall work with the Retreat Center Director in:
  - a. Developing suitable facilities to meet the needs of the programs of the Association.
  - b. Scheduling and utilization of these facilities.
  - c. Generally developing and promoting long-range plans and goals for the Retreat Center.
3. Regular reports on program development and finances shall be made to the Association and the Executive Committee.
4. The Committee shall be responsible for recommending rules and procedures for the use of the Retreat Center to the Executive Committee and/or the Association. (Rules for the use of the camp are available at the Association Office or at the Retreat Center.)

### D. Christian Life Committee

1. The Committee shall be composed of fifteen members divided into the following five subcommittees of three members each.
  - a. Family Issues
  - b. Health Issues
  - c. Citizenship, Legislative and Judicial Issues
  - d. Human Needs Issues
  - e. Lifestyles Issues
2. The Committee shall have the responsibility of informing member churches of opportunities for Christian influence to be exerted upon local, state and national policies which relate to moral standards and ethical principles.
3. The Committee shall seek to provide the means of infusing our community and society with the spirit of Christ through appropriate seminars, articles in local papers, and by whatever other avenues it considers appropriate.

4. The Committee will work in conjunction with the Alabama Baptist and Southern Baptist Christian Life Commissions in areas of mutual concern, and other entities with similar concerns.

#### E. Constitution and By-Laws Committee

1. The Committee shall be composed of three members.
2. The Committee shall review and study the Constitution and By-Laws annually and make such recommendations as needed to the Association.
3. Member churches or messengers desiring change(s) in the Constitution and By-Laws should direct their request(s) to this Committee, which in turn will make recommendations as appropriate.
4. This Committee in consultation with the Executive Committee shall determine the frequency of publication and re-distribution of amended Constitution and/or By-Laws.

#### F. Credentials Committee

1. The Committee shall be composed of three members.
2. The Committee shall be responsible for designing and providing a petitionary letter form for use by a church or a mission desiring to become a member of the Association.
3. The Committee shall meet with churches making application and make recommendations to the Executive Committee. See By-Laws Article I Section I.
4. The Committee shall be responsible for carrying out Article I Section 3 of the By-Laws.

**WATCHCARE DEFINED:** Watch-care status includes all rights and privileges of member churches, with the exception of voting privileges.

#### G. Nominating Committee

1. The Committee shall be composed of ~~six~~ three members.
2. The Committee shall nominate six trustees. Two are to be nominated each year. These are to be presented in the Annual Meeting.
3. The Committee shall nominate the Assistant Clerk and Assistant Treasurer and present them to the Association at its Annual Meeting. (See Article IV Section 7)

4. The Committee shall present a full report, in printed form, to the Association at the Annual Meeting.

#### H. Personnel Committee

1. Membership: The Committee shall be composed of five members who shall serve terms of three years, with two members being elected each year.
2. Duties:
  - a. The Committee shall survey periodically the need for staff members.
  - b. The Committee shall prepare and review position descriptions for all staff personnel and shall make recommendations to the Budget-Finance Committee concerning salaries and benefits, vacations, holidays, sick leave, and job-related activities. Cost of living and possible merit increases shall be considered.
  - c. The Committee shall consider the recommendations of the Associational Mission Strategist (AMS) in the selection and termination of other staff personnel.
  - d. The Committee shall recommend the termination of the Associational Mission Strategist's (AMS) employment if this should become necessary.
  - e. The Committee shall serve as a counselor for staff personnel and shall consider staff grievances and appeals.
3. Meetings: Records and Reports
  - a. The Committee shall meet once a year and may hold additional meetings as it considers advisable.
  - b. The Committee shall keep a written record of its meetings.
  - c. The Committee shall make such reports and recommendations as it desires to the Executive Committee.

#### I. Resolutions Committee

1. The Committee shall be composed of three members.
2. The Committee shall receive resolutions made in writing by messengers, and after prayerful consideration of their appropriateness shall make a report to the Association during the last session the Annual Meeting.

3. The Committee shall also bring resolutions of appreciation, etc.
4. The Committee shall also function during the entire year and handle all matters referred to it by the Executive Committee.

### ***ARTICLE VIII – MINISTRY DIRECTORS***

To accomplish the mission and ministry of the Association, the Associational Mission Strategist (AMS) along with the Moderator, and Vice Moderator shall recommend to the Executive Committee ministry needs, for their approval.

The Association shall select ministry leaders annually guided by the recommendations of the Nominating Committee. There will be no restrictions on the number of terms they can serve. Each ministry leader shall have the authority to ask for volunteer help from member churches to accomplish their ministry goals and objectives. All ministry leaders shall be responsible to the Executive Committee and provide a written report of their ministry activity. For the ministry description and responsibilities see the ministry job description files. Copies of these files may be obtained at the Associational Office.