



FIRST BAPTIST
NORTH VERNON

Seeking God Serving Others Sharing Hope

Constitution

First Baptist Church
525 W Hayden Pike
North Vernon, IN 47265
(812) 346-2069

Adopted 10/18/2020

ARTICLE 1: NAME, AFFIRMATION, AND PURPOSE

Section 1.1- Name

This organization shall be known as The First Baptist Church of North Vernon, Indiana Inc (“Church”). There is but one organization and that the Church, incorporated that it may acquire and hold property, manage its own affairs, and adopt such regulations and rules as it deems necessary for its government, in harmony with the Indiana Statutes, under which it was created a corporation, its government shall be vested in the body which composes its membership.

Section 1.2- Affirmation

Under protection by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, we claim the inalienable right of the free exercise of religion. We accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God and as the ultimate authority in matters of faith, doctrine, and Christian living. The Church accepts “The Baptist Faith and Message” as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000 as an affirmation of our basic Christian beliefs and as a general statement of our faith. For purposes of Church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Elders is the Church’s final interpretive authority on the Bible’s meaning and application. Adherence to Biblical principles will be of utmost consideration when making all decisions within the Church, this includes, but not limited to, matters of employment and property use. The use of Church facilities is not a right of membership, and shall only be approved for uses which would not reflect poorly on the Church’s doctrinal stance as stated above.

This Church affirms that marriage is a Biblical institution established by God as clearly described in Scripture. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this statement on marriage and conduct themselves accordingly. Furthermore, this Church, its pastors, staff, and members will not participate in same-sex unions or same-sex marriages, nor shall its property or resources be used for such purposes.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

Section 1.3- Purpose (Mission and Vision)

Our mission is to lead people to be maturing followers of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20)

Our vision is to Seek God, Serve Others, and Share Hope.

- We Seek God by living and encouraging a lifestyle of worship, prayer, and Biblical study (Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 22:37-38).
- We Serve Others by intentionally engaging our community to develop relationships that provide opportunities to share the love of Jesus (John 13:34-35; Matthew 22:39; Colossians 4:5-6).
- We Share Hope by proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and encouraging His Church here and around the world (Romans 15:13; Colossians 1:28; Acts 1:8).

Our mission and vision are only accomplished through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE 2: MEMBERSHIP

Section 2.1-Vote

All active members of the Church may vote on matters presented to the Church. On matters pertaining to the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of property, or on matters pertaining to changes in denominational relationship, the voting age shall be of the legal age of 18. A registered vote may be asked for by the moderator or by motion from the floor.

Section 2.2-Admission

Those seeking membership must, through their actions and words demonstrate a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Applicants agree to adopt the doctrinal views referenced in Section 1.2. Upon publicly expressing a desire to join the membership of the Church, membership will be granted under one of the following conditions:

(A) through baptism by immersion (or by other means if unable due to physical condition) by the Church;

(B) by letter of transfer, from another church of like faith and practice if the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith; or

(C) by testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion in another church of like faith and practice;

Section 2.3-Inactive Membership

An inactive member is one who has not shown interest in the activity of the Church. A member of the congregation will be considered inactive if he or she has not attended at least six (6) Sunday morning or evening worship services in a twelve-month period of time. Members who are homebound, physically incapable, or in nursing homes will be exempt from this attendance requirement.

Inactive members will remain members of the Church until such a time they request dismissal. Inactive members will not have voting privileges in special called or scheduled business meetings of the Church.

Section 2.4-Termination

(A) Transfer: Any member of good standing who desires a letter of transfer may receive it upon his or her request. No member of this Church may hold membership in another church. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member unites in membership with another church.

(B) Withdrawal: Any adult member may terminate (by written request) their membership or the membership of minor dependents of that adult member. Any such requests are to be referred to the Board of Elders for investigation and for recommendation to the Church for action.

(C) Dismissal:

1. It shall be the basic purpose of the First Baptist Church of North Vernon, Indiana, to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Senior Pastor, other members of the Church staff and Elders are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another.
2. Should some situation exist which would cause a member to become a serious concern to the general welfare of the Church, such as immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of the Church commitment and covenant, every reasonable measure will be taken by the Senior Pastor and by the Elders to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the welfare of the Church may be best served by the exclusion of the member, the Church may take this action by a two-thirds vote of valid ballots cast of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose. The Church may then declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the Church.
3. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any disciplinary reason may be restored to membership upon evidence of his or her repentance as affirmed by a two-thirds vote of valid ballots cast of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose.

(D) Death: The membership of an individual will automatically terminate upon his or her death.

ARTICLE 3: OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Section 3.1 Officers and Members of Leadership Committees

All officers of the Church and members of committees must be active members of the Church in good standing.

Section 3.2 The Board of Elders

There shall be a Board of Elders, consisting of five (5) to seven (7) members, including the Senior Pastor as a standing member. The Board of Elders shall nominate its replacements in accordance with

the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. The Church shall have a minimum of two (2) weeks to raise any concerns of Elder nominees with the Board of Elders prior to a confirmation vote by active membership at the annual meeting. Elders will be confirmed by a vote of four-fifths (80%) of those present and voting, provided at least 50 members are present. The vote shall be by secret ballot. The Elder Board must have a majority of non-staff (lay) to staff members. The term of non-staff elders shall not exceed 4 years. Non-staff elders may be elected to additional terms after one (1) year of inactive service. No first degree relatives may serve on the board at the same time. A non-staff elder will be selected as chairman by a majority vote of the board.

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for casting the vision of the Church and ensuring sound theological teaching. The Board shall have general oversight of the spiritual interests of the Church and supervision of the Senior Pastor and all Church committees and boards. They shall aid the Senior Pastor in the performance of his duties and the administration of the Church ordinances; serve as advisers and counsel with the Senior Pastor in all matters pertaining to the discipline, welfare, and spiritual advancement of the Church; appoint interim pastors and directors in the event of vacancies; appoint Search Committees for pastoral or ministerial calls; and oversee the hiring of ministerial assistants. The lay elders shall have oversight of the Senior Pastor.

Minutes of all regular or special meetings of the Board of Elders shall be maintained in confidence and shall not be subject to scrutiny by any person other than the Board members, except when the Board desires to make them public, or whenever so directed by a majority vote of the Church at a business meeting.

All Boards and Committees shall report to the Elders on a monthly basis and produce a written report each quarter to be distributed at membership meetings. The Chairman of the Board or his designee shall serve as moderator of all quarterly membership meetings and special called business meetings. The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to a sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator shall remain impartial in matters of debate but will have a vote on such matters as an active member of the Church.

The Board of Elders is accountable to each other and the Church. Any elder may be removed from office by two-third (66%) vote of the Church at any regular membership meeting or special-called business meeting, provided fifty (50) members are present.

Section 3.3 The Board of Deacons

There shall be a Board of Deacons, consisting of no fewer than twelve (12) members, each of whom shall be elected from the active membership of the Church. The Board shall attempt to maintain its active members in three equal groups, as near as may be possible, each serving a term of three (3) years. Deacons may be elected to additional terms after one (1) year of inactive service. The Board of Deacons shall nominate its replacements in accordance with the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The Board shall choose annually a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary/Treasurer and meet regularly each month. The Chairman should be chosen by the end of the year preceding service. Special meetings may be called by the Elders, Chairman, or Vice-Chairman following notifications to all members of the Board. A majority of the board shall constitute a quorum.

The Board of Deacons shall serve the welfare and needs of the Church. They will aid the pastoral staff in visitations and the administration of Church ordinances. They will maintain the church membership records. The Board will nominate members for positions on boards, committees, and councils except when specified otherwise in this constitution. The Board shall interview each nominee proposed and ascertain his or her willingness to serve if elected. The list of nominees shall be made known to the Church two weeks before the January Business Meeting. As vacancies occur during the year, the Board shall select candidates for the interim positions if deemed necessary by the Church.

They shall maintain and disburse, in confidence and at their discretion, a Fellowship Fund.

Section 3.4 Board of Trustees

There shall be a Board of seven (7) Trustees: two (2) of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years and one (1) elected by and from the Board of Deacons. Trustees are required to rotate off for one (1) year before becoming eligible for another three year term.

The Trustees shall choose annually a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The Chairperson should be chosen by the end of the year preceding service and shall not be the Deacon representative. Records of all meetings shall be kept by the Board. Meetings shall be held regularly, and special meetings may be called at the request of any Trustee or member of the Board of Elders by notifying the chairperson and in turn the other members of the Board of Trustees. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

The Trustees shall have the oversight of all matters of Church buildings, equipment, building supplies, ground improvements, and property; and keeping of the same in good repair. They shall execute all deeds, mortgages, debentures, liens, transfers, leases, and other legal documents, for and on behalf of the Church. The Chairperson shall be the designated signatory for such documents. The Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or encumber any property of the Church without a specific vote of the Church authorizing such action except in cases of normal maintenance and repair of Church property to maintain current function in accordance with Church-approved budget. It shall determine the use of the Church property for all extra or secular purposes. It shall conform to all local, state, and federal statutes and requirements governing the control and use of properties and the conducting of business. It shall have the responsibility of providing bond for those persons deemed necessary to conduct the business of the Church. It shall designate the financial institutions where the funds of the Church shall be deposited.

In the event of an emergency requiring aggregate expenditure in excess of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00), a committee comprised of the Board of Elders, Chairperson of Trustees, and Chairperson of Stewardship Committee will meet to approve by majority vote any such expenditure if time does not reasonably allow for proposal before the Church. This committee will be chaired by the chairman of the Trustees. Five (5) of these members will constitute a quorum and meeting may occur via teleconference or digital means

Section 3.5 Clerk

The Clerk, elected annually, shall:

1. Keep a complete record of the transactions of all business meetings of the Church. The record of the last business meeting shall be available at, and its availability shall be announced at, all regular services for two Sundays prior to any business meeting.
2. Present requests for letters of dismissal to be voted on by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written reports.
3. Assist in preparing denominational reports.
4. Shall deliver immediately to the successor all books and records for which they have been responsible as clerk.

Section 3.6 Treasurer

The Treasurer, elected annually, but on the staff of the Church, shall:

1. Keep a complete detailed account of all money received from the Financial Secretary of any other source, and the manner in which and to whom the money shall have been disbursed.
2. Keep a confidential record of all giving and contributions, sending out reports yearly.
3. Disburse said funds only upon the order of the Church or of any persons or committees authorized by the Church. All transactions shall be made in the name of the First Baptist Church of North Vernon, Indiana.
4. File all required tax forms in compliance with Federal, State, County, payroll, and property tax laws.
5. Have the financial books audited annually by an auditing committee.
6. Make a written report to the Church at all quarterly business meetings of receipts and disbursements.
7. Make available a monthly report of all receipts and disbursements.
8. Shall make all financial records available to the Stewardship committee at all times.

An Assistant Treasurer, elected annually, shall in the absence for any reason of the Treasurer, attend to such duties.

In the absence of both such officers of the Church, the Board of Trustees shall assure that all money collected shall be secured and properly accounted for.

Section 3.7 Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary, elected annually, shall:

1. Assist the treasurer in counting the contributions each week.
2. Deposit such collections weekly in the bank selected by the Board of Trustees and render a statement thereof to the Treasurer.

Two Assistant Financial Secretaries, elected annually, shall attend to such duties in the absence of the Financial Secretary.

In the absence of both such officers of the Church, the Board of Trustees shall assure that all money collected shall be secured and properly accounted for.

Section 3.8 Stewardship Committee

The Committee shall consist of nine (9) members:

1. A chairperson appointed annually by the Board of Elders
2. The Church Treasurer appointed annually by the Board of Elders,
3. One (1) member elected annually by and from the Board of Trustees,
4. One (1) member elected annually by and from the Board of Deacons,
5. One (1) member elected annually by and from the Missions Committee
6. One (1) nominated by the Board of Elders from the church at-large,
7. three (3) members elected from the congregation-at-large to each to serve a three year term.

The chairperson may provide the Elders a list of candidates in October for their consideration for the at-large nominees.

The Committee shall have general oversight of the financial programs of the Church. It shall monitor the financial conditions of the church and keep the financial needs of the church before the membership. It shall recommend methods of raising funds and shall distribute literature and promote the study of Christian stewardship throughout the Church and its auxiliary bodies. It shall prepare an annual proposed budget to be presented to the Church for study and approval for the coming year. A copy of the proposed budget shall be made available to the membership at least seven days prior to the meeting where it shall be considered. It will have oversight of all special offerings or the conducting of special fund campaigns. It may recommend to the Church payment of items not provided for in the budget. It shall develop and communicate compensation packages for any new Church employees and shall perform compensation reviews at least annually for all paid positions in the Church.

The chairperson shall appoint two (2) members of the committee and one (1) active member of the Church at large to serve as an auditing committee. The auditing committee shall make its report by the July business meeting each year except when an independent audit is performed, which shall be conducted at least every 5 years.

Section 3.9 Missions Committee

The committee shall consist of five (5) members. Two (2) shall be elected annually from the membership-at-large to serve a two (2) year term, one (1) member selected by and from the Board of Deacons for one (1) year term. The committee shall choose its own chairperson in the preceding year. The committee shall hold meetings regularly, and shall be responsible for developing and implementing the mission programs and emphasis of the Church. They will direct the disbursement of funds from the approved missions' budget to missionaries, mission organizations, and mission programs. The committee will be responsible for communicating with supported missionaries and mission organizations. They will organize all mission offerings. They will have general oversight of all Church-organized missions trips. They will support the Worship & Outreach Pastor in the administration of local mission programs.

Section 3.10 Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is responsible to the Elder Board and the Church for the overall effort of the Church in leading people to be maturing followers of Jesus Christ by Seeking God, Serving Others, and Sharing Hope. The Senior Pastor shall preach the Gospel, administer the ordinances, watch over the

membership and have in his charge the spiritual welfare of the congregation and the stated services of public worship. The call of a Senior Pastor shall come before the Church at a regular or special-called business meeting of the Church, provided that notice of such a meeting and its purpose has been read from the pulpit two successive Sundays before the meeting.

To extend a call, an affirmative vote of four-fifths (80%) of those present and voting is necessary, provided at least 50 members are present. Only one candidate shall be presented to the Church at a time. The vote shall be by secret ballot. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time.

The term of the office may be ended upon thirty (30) days written notification on the part of the Senior Pastor or the Church.

When the termination of this office is to be considered by the Church, notice of a business meeting for this purpose shall be read from the pulpit for two (2) successive Sundays before the meeting. A vote of two-thirds (66%) of those present and voting, provided 50 members are present, shall make valid termination of said office.

Section 3.11 Ministers and Directors

All ministers and directors are responsible to the Senior Pastor and the Church to accomplish the mission and vision of the Church. The call of a minister or director shall come before the Church at a regular or special-called membership meeting of the Church. An affirmative vote of four-fifths (80%) of those present and voting is necessary provided at least 50 members are present. Only one candidate shall be presented to the Church at a time. The term of the office may be ended upon thirty (30) days written notification. A vote of two-thirds (66%) of those present and voting at a regular or special-called membership meeting, provided 50 members are present, shall make valid termination of said office.

Section 3.12 Ministry Councils

Each minister or director may have a council to advise and help in the planning, coordinating, and carrying out of ministry activities. Ministry Councils shall consist of five (5) members, two nominated by the Board of Deacons from the Church at large to serve a two (2) year staggered term (one nominated each year), two (2) nominated by the corresponding minister or director for a two (2) year staggered term, and one Deacon representative appointed by the Board of Deacons each year.

Section 3.13 Search Committee

When a pastor, minister, or director position must be filled, the Board of Elders shall recommend to the Church at a regular or special-called business meeting the chairperson and names of persons to serve on a Search Committee for the purpose of filling that position.

The Search Committee shall be composed of seven (7) members, representative of the Church body.

The committee shall investigate the merits of persons under consideration in regard to their qualifications, personal character, education, past ministerial record, and preaching ability in determining their fitness for ministry. When a suitable person is found and the committee is in satisfactory agreement, then the committee shall recommend that person to the Church for consideration.

Section 3.14 Special Committees

Special (continuing) and Ad-Hoc (one time) committees may be appointed by the Board of Elders for specific needs upon requests by Boards or Committees to investigate and to make recommendations to the Church. The purpose and scope of such committees must be clearly defined and recorded.

Section 3.15- Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall consist of five (5) members: one (1) Elder representative, two (2) Deacon representatives, one (1) Trustee representative, and one (1) representative from the Stewardship Committee. The Personnel Committee shall meet as human resource issues arise with any paid positions in the Church and make necessary recommendations to address any personnel problems.

ARTICLE 4: MEETINGS

Section 4.1- Worship

Public services will be held Sundays with weekly Prayer Meetings and Bible studies as determined by the Senior Pastor and Board of Elders. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated monthly and at such other times as the Senior Pastor, Board of Elders, and the Church may determine. Special religious services may be held as determined by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders. Public services may be canceled, postponed, or relocated by the Elders in the interest of the well-being of the Church.

Section 4.2- Membership Meetings

There shall be quarterly meetings of the membership, held on a Sunday in January, April, July, and October. The date of the meeting shall be announced at least two successive Sundays before the meeting.

In the event of inclement weather conditions or other natural disaster that would pose a significant threat to the well-being of attending members, the Elders may postpone the meeting to the following Sunday.

Section 4.3- Special Business Meetings

Special Business Meetings may be called by the Board of Elders or on the written petition to the Board of Elders, of any (10) members of the Church along with the specific purpose for the meeting. Notice of these meetings and their purpose must be announced two successive Sundays before the meeting. The only items that can be considered are those specified in the purpose of the meeting.

ARTICLE 5. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Section 5.1- Definition

Any authorized ministry or outreach program that uses the resources or facilities of the Church, or affiliates itself with the Church by name, shall be considered an auxiliary organization of the Church.

Section 5.2- Constitutions

The Constitutions of Auxiliary Organizations will not conflict with the Constitution of the Church.

Sections 5.3- Meetings

Meetings of Auxiliary Organizations shall not be held at such times as will conflict with the business meetings of the Church.

Section 5.4- Written Reports

All Auxiliary Organizations of the Church, being part of the Church's life and program, shall be responsible to the Church, shall keep correct records of their work and funds, and shall make reports to the Church.

ARTICLE 6. GENERAL

Section 6.1- Quorum

In regular Membership Meetings of the Church thirty (30) members shall constitute a quorum. In the case of special business such as calling a pastor, sale or purchase of property, revision of constitution, or assumption of financial responsibilities by the Church above the limits previously set forth in this document, fifty (50) members shall be required for a quorum.

Section 6.2- The Church Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall be the calendar year.

Section 6.3- Records and Books

All records and books of the Church are property of the Church and may be called into possession at any time by a vote of the Church. Upon expiration of their terms of service, all officers of the Church shall turn over to the Church any and all records in their possession.

Section 6.4- Annual Meeting

The January membership meeting shall be the Annual Meeting of the Church. The agenda shall be the adoption of the annual budget, election of officers, the yearly report of the Church Treasurer, written and verbal reports by the various Church officers, boards, committees, and auxiliary organizations, and the transaction of such other business as may be necessary.

Section 6.5- Will of the Church

The will of the Church on any given matter duly expressed by its vote will be carried out by all boards, committees, officers, and organizations in the Church and of the Church.

Section 6.6- Revision

Every fifth year, from the year of adoption, at the January Business Meeting the Board of Elders will appoint a committee of five (5) active members for the purpose of reviewing and making recommendations for updating the Constitution.

ARTICLE 7. AMENDMENTS

Section 7.1- Procedures

These articles (this Constitution) may be amended at any membership meeting of the Church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all members present, provided that the proposed amendment has been read and discussed at the prior membership meeting at least 4 weeks prior. Upon revision, the electronic master copy on file in the Church office shall be updated and any existing hard copies shall be marked obsolete.

Section 7.2- Previous Constitutions

Copies of the previous constitutions, as amended, shall be retained for records of the Church.

ARTICLE 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Constitution supersedes any previous Constitution and amendments of the Church, making them null and void as of the effective date of adoption of this Constitution.