

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF ERATH BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this Association shall be called Erath Baptist Association

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this Association is to encourage cooperation among the churches and to assist them in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)

ARTICLE III – STRUCTURE

The Association has four main components, which consist of:

- A) The cooperating churches which form the reason for the Association's existence.
- B) The messengers from the cooperating churches, which are the governing body of the Association and which meet in at least one annual session each year.
- C) The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is the key leadership team that coordinates the overall program of the Association. They conduct the business of the Association between annual meetings in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws and as directed by the messengers. The ELT provides the means by which the Association can have a comprehensive, well-balanced program that is custom designed to reflect the priorities of this Association.
- D) The Advisory Board which is responsible for the nominating of the ELT and will act in an advisory capacity for the Association.

ARTICLE IV – LOCAL CHURCH AUTONOMY

The Association shall never have nor assume any authority over any local church, but it is for counsel and cooperation only. The complete autonomy of the churches shall always be recognized.

ARTICLE V – COOPERATING CHURCHES

Section 1. The Association is for the benefit of Baptist churches cooperating with the mission and evangelistic purpose of the Association.

Section 2. Any church desiring to cooperate with this Association shall send a letter of petition to the Executive Leadership Team of the Association at least six months before the annual meeting. The ELT shall form a Petition Committee to examine the church. If upon examination the church is found to be sound in doctrine and cooperative in nature, the ELT will recommend the church for membership at the annual meeting. Notice of the recommendation shall be sent to the member churches at least two months prior to the annual meeting. Upon receiving a majority vote from the messengers, the church will be welcomed as a cooperating church and its duly elected messengers may be seated.

Section 3. Cooperating churches shall:

- A) Send messengers to the Association's annual meeting.
- B) Contribute financially to the Association.
- C) Submit an annual church profile.

Section 4. The Association reserves the right to withdraw fellowship from any church that may become unsound in doctrine or uncooperative in nature. Should it be necessary to exercise the provision of this section, the ELT shall appoint a committee, which shall carefully, and in the spirit of Christ, investigate the matter. This committee shall report its findings to the ELT and the Advisory Board. If the Advisory Board recommends withdrawal of fellowship, it shall send a written notice to the church involved as well as all cooperating churches at least two months before the annual meeting. A two-thirds majority vote of messengers at the annual meeting shall be required.

Section 5. Doctrinal soundness shall be defined as being in agreement with the general principles of any version of the Baptist Faith and Message adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention at any time in history.

ARTICLE VI – MESSENGERS

Section 1. The annual meeting of the Association shall be composed of messengers from cooperating churches. A quorum for the annual meeting is made up of churches who meet the requirements of a cooperating church according to Article 5 Section 3 subsections B and C of the Constitution.

Section 2. Messengers shall be elected on the following basis: four (4) from each cooperating church, with one (1) additional messenger for each 25 resident members or fraction thereof above the first fifty (50) resident members provided that there be no more than twelve (12) elected messengers from each church.

Section 3. Cooperating churches are encouraged to send to the Association Office prior to the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE VII – EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Section 1. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will function as the officers for the Association and shall consist of a Director, Treasurer, Fellowship Chairman, Discipleship Chairman, Missions Chairman, the Baptist Student Ministry Director at TSU, and two other at large members. They shall perform the usual duties of such office from the beginning of the new associational year.

Section 2. The ELT may succeed themselves in office.

Section 3. The nominating of the ELT shall be approved by the Advisory Board at least one month prior to the annual meeting. They are subject to review and election by the messengers at the annual meeting.

Section 4. The ELT shall conduct all business of the Association between annual meetings of the Association in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and in accordance with the directing of the messengers as approved in the annual meeting, with all its actions subject to review and change by the messengers at the annual meeting of the Association.

Section 5. The ELT shall have power to fill vacancies that may occur among officers, committees, organizational heads, or team leaders between sessions of the Association and to make a complete report to the Association.

Section 6. The ELT will act as Trustees for the Association for purposes of conducting legal business and signing legal documents for and on behalf of the Association. They shall hold any Association property in the corporate name of the Association.

ARTICLE VIII – ADVISORY BOARD

Section 1. The Advisory Board shall consist of the ELT of the Association, Pastors and Ministerial Staff of all cooperating churches, and one member elected by each cooperating church.

Section 2. The Advisory Board shall meet at least once a quarter and any such additional meetings as necessary. The Association's ELT Director shall be empowered to call special meetings of the Advisory Board. Each member should be notified at least three days before such meetings.

Section 3. A Director of Missions may be employed by the Association and is an ex officio member of the Advisory Board, all committees and teams.

ARTICLE IX – COOPERATION

The Association may choose to cooperate with any Baptist entity within the boundaries of the Association's stated purpose and statement of doctrinal soundness. Such cooperation must be approved by the messengers in the annual meeting.

ARTICLE X – FINANCES

Section 1. The right of churches to designate their gifts to the cooperative work of the Association shall be recognized and shall be applied faithfully where designated; however, the Association will expect the cooperating churches to provide funds to meet necessary operating expenses as adopted in the Association budget during the annual meeting.

Section 2. All money received will be disbursed as designated, as authorized by the Association in the annual session, or as authorized by the ELT.

Section 3. The fiscal year for the Association will begin on January 1 – December 31.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS

Article IV, Local Church Autonomy, shall never be subject to change. The other articles may be suspended, amended, or repealed by a two-thirds majority vote of duly certified messengers present and voting at the annual meeting provided that such suspension, amendment, or repeal has been presented to the ELT and Executive Board at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Adopted: October 16, 2011