

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
OF
MT. CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this Constitution and these Bylaws to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the Mount Carmel Baptist Church body in an orderly manner. This Constitution and these Bylaws will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this Church body in relation to other churches. All previous actions, customs, and procedures of this Church have either been embodied in or deleted from this document in their entirety and, therefore, become null and void with the adoption of this document, dated July 29, 2018, except in the case of legal obligations of the Church.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – NAME

This body shall be known as the Mount Carmel Baptist Church f/k/a Mount Carmel-Deer Park Baptist Church, located at 8645 Kenwood Road in Cincinnati, Ohio, hereinafter the "Church."

ARTICLE II – OBJECTIVES

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our Church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.

To be a church that ministers unselfishly to people in the community and the world in Jesus' name.

To be a church with the purpose of being Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of “The Baptist Faith and Message” as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the Church are Believer’s Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (See Article IV of Bylaws).

ARTICLE IV – CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and 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 the 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 spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; 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 encourage family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian walk; to seek the salvation of our kindred and our acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to be Christ-like in all things recognizing that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in us; to live our lives in accordance with the will of God as revealed through His word and through the life of Jesus Christ; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to love one another; to pray for one another; to aid one another in sickness, loss and distress; to encourage one another; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

ARTICLE V – POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it and who recognize Christ as the head of the church. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the Church, unless otherwise specified by Church action.

This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this Church will cooperate with and support the Cincinnati Area Baptist Association, the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS

Changes in this Constitution may be made at any regular or special business meeting of the Church provided the proposed revision(s) shall be made available to Church members at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Amendments to the Constitution shall be by three-fourths vote of the Church members participating.

BYLAWS

If any conflicts between the Constitution and these Bylaws exist, the Constitution shall take precedence.

ARTICLE I – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church.

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer himself/herself as a candidate for membership in this Church. All such candidates shall be presented to the Church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith at baptism according to the policies of this Church.
- B. By receipt of a letter of recommendation from a church of like faith and order.
- C. By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion as a believer.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the Church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of participating Church members shall be required to elect such candidate to membership.

Section 3. New Member Orientation

New members of this Church are expected to participate in the Church's new member orientation.

Section 4. Rights of Members

- A. Every member of the Church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church during a regular or special business meeting, provided the member is a meeting participant.
- B. Every member of the Church is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for elective offices in the Church.
- C. Every member of the Church may participate in the ordinances of the Church as administered by the Church.

Section 5. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- A. Death of the member.
- B. Letter transfer of membership to another church of like faith and order.
- C. Exclusion by action of this church, subject to Section 6 below.
- D. Removal upon request by member.
- E. Removal by proof of membership in another church.

Section 6. Discipline

It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, other members of the Church staff and the Deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should the Pastor and/or Deacons determine that some serious condition exists which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, the Pastor and/or Deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the Church to take action to remove a member, a two-thirds vote of the members participating in a special called or regular business meeting may declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the Church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The Church may restore to membership any person previously removed, upon request of the removed person, and by two-thirds vote of the participating Church members at a regular or special called business meeting, upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation having been presented to the Pastor and/or Deacons.

ARTICLE II – CHURCH OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

All who serve as elected teachers/officers of the Church and those elected to serve on Church committees shall be members of the Church.

Section 1. Church Officers

The Officers of this Church shall be the Pastor, the Church Staff, the Deacons, a Moderator, a Clerk, a Treasurer, and Trustees.

- A. The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the Church Staff to perform their tasks.

The Pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such he works with the Deacons and Church Staff to:

- i. Lead the Church in the achievement of its mission.
- ii. Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
- iii. Care for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

A pastor shall be nominated, elected and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs.

To seek out a suitable pastor, a Pastor Search Committee shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the majority of Church members participating at a regular or special called business meeting. The Pastor Search Committee's recommendation will constitute a nomination. The Pastor Search Committee shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one name at a time.

The election of a Pastor shall take place at a special business meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's prior notice has been given. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members participating being necessary for election and call. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or by the Church's request. He shall preside at meetings of this Church, and, if so designated, shall serve as Moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized by these Bylaws.

- a. The Pastor may relinquish the office as pastor by giving at least two weeks notice to the Church at the time of resignation.
- b. The Church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a special business meeting called for that purpose, for which at least one week's notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the Personnel Committee and the Deacons, or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident Church members. The moderator of this meeting shall be designated by the resident Church members present by majority vote, and he/she shall be someone other than the Pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the resident Church members present being necessary to declare the office vacant. The Church will consider compensation to the Pastor of not less than one twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and any compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days. The Church retains the right to vacate the office of pastor without compensation those guilty of moral failure, as determined by three-fourths vote of the Deacons and Personnel Committee.

- B. The Ministerial Staff shall be called and employed as the Church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Staff members shall be recommended to the Church by the Personnel Committee and elected at a regular or special called business meeting by three-fourths vote of participating members. Ministerial staff may resign having provided at least two weeks notice to the Church. The Church may vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee, such termination being immediate. The Church will consider compensation to Ministerial Staff of not less than one twelfth of his/her total annual compensation, which compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days. The Church retains the right to vacate the office of ministerial staff without compensation those guilty of moral failure, as determined by three-fourths vote of the Deacons, Personnel Committee and Pastor.

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the Church determines the need for their services. The Church's Personnel Committee shall have the authority to employ and terminate the services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the Church.

- C. The currently serving Deacons will recommend the number of deacons that the Church requires each year. Unless otherwise specified, deacons shall serve a three-year term on a rotating basis.

The Nominating Committee will solicit recommendations from the Church membership for deacon candidates. Those Church members recommended as candidates will be referred to the Pastor and currently serving Deacons to determine eligibility for nomination, according to the Biblical standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9. The resulting nominated individuals will be offered as candidates for election at a regular or special called business meeting.

To be elected deacon, the nominees must receive an affirmative vote of at least 50% of the participating Church members. When elections for deacons take place and the number of deacons nominated exceeds the number of deacons to be elected, those receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected to fill the vacancies. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the Church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term. There shall be no obligation to include as a deacon one who has been a deacon in another church; but in such instances, one's previous ordination by another church of like faith and order shall suffice for this Church.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the Church. Their task is to serve with the Pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministry tasks of:

- i. Leading the Church in the achievement of its mission.
- ii. Proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
- iii. Caring for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

- D. The Moderator shall be the Pastor, except where prohibited in the Constitution and/or Bylaws. In the absence of the Moderator, the Chairman of Deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the Clerk (as described in Article II, Section 1, Subsection E) shall call the Church to order and preside over the election of an acting Moderator.
- E. The Church shall elect as its clerical officer a Clerk. The Clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The Clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, transfer of membership or removal, together with a record of baptisms. The Clerk shall identify members as either resident or non-resident members. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted upon by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all business meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these Bylaws. The Clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the Church to the Cincinnati Area Baptist Association. Portions of the Clerk's duties may be delegated with the approval of the Personnel Committee and Pastor.
- F. The Church shall elect a Treasurer who shall also serve as the chairperson of the finance committee. The church may also hire an accountant to perform the financial work of the Church. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer or the accountant to receive, preserve and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the Church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer as the chairperson of the finance committee to render to the Church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding quarter. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant. The Treasurer shall be bonded, the Church paying for the bond. Portions of the Treasurer's duties may be delegated with the approval of the Finance Committee and Pastor.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by majority vote of the participating members of the Church in a business meeting, the records are Church property and shall be kept in the Church office.

- G. The Church shall elect three Trustees to serve as legal officers for the Church. Upon approval of the Church in a business meeting, authorizing each action, the Trustees shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any Church property. When the signatures of trustee are required, all three (3) Trustees shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

Trustees shall serve for three years with at least one new Trustee being elected every year.

Section 2. Church Committees

The committees of this Church will consist of standing and non-standing committees. Standing committees shall be created to serve specific ongoing needs of the Church. The standing committees shall be a Nominating Committee, a Personnel Committee, a Finance Committee, a Missions Committee, a Stewardship Committee, and a Daycare Committee. When the Church decides that the services of a standing committee are no longer warranted, said standing committee may be dissolved by a majority vote of Church members participating in a properly called business meeting. A non-standing committee may be created by the Church to serve a specific temporary need of the Church. A non-standing committee shall be dissolved by a majority vote of Church members participating in a properly called business meeting when the committee's original purpose has been accomplished.

Members of all Church committees will be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected from the membership of the Church. No committee, standing or non-standing, shall consist of less than three (3) members. After serving a complete term of three (3) years, a committee member should rotate off the committee for one (1) year before being eligible for reelection to that committee. Standing committee members shall serve on a three-year rotation basis with one-third to be elected each year.

The Pastor shall be a voting, ex-officio member of all committees.

ARTICLE III – CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The Church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching; church member training, church leader training, new member orientation; mission education, action and support; music education, training and performance; and buildings and grounds ministry. All organizations of the Church shall be under Church control, and they shall report regularly to the Church. All program activities shall be subject to Church coordination and approval, and the Church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs. The Church shall elect annually from its membership persons to fill the various offices and places of leadership and instruction within the Church organizations.

ARTICLE IV – CHURCH ORDINANCES

Section 1. Baptism

This Church shall receive for baptism any person who has repented of his/her sin and received Jesus Christ as Savior by faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- B. The Pastor, or whomever the Pastor and/or Deacons shall authorize, shall administer baptism.

C. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper monthly, unless otherwise scheduled by the Church. The Pastor and Deacons, or whomever they shall authorize, shall administer the Lord's Supper. The Deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations.

ARTICLE V – CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The Pastor shall direct the services for all the Church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Section 2. Special Services

Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the Church's objectives shall be placed on the Church calendar.

Section 3. Regular Business Meetings

The Church shall hold regular business meetings on a quarterly basis, as notice is given.

Section 4. Special Business Meetings

The Church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-week notice must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme emergency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, the time, and the place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting.

Section 5. Quorum

The quorum consists of those members who participate in the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church.

ARTICLE VI – CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1. Budget

The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the Treasurer and be properly recorded on the books of the Church. Those who have responsibility that involves actual handling of funds shall be bonded, the Church paying the bond.

Section 3. Fiscal Year

The Church's fiscal year shall begin January 1 and end on December 31.

ARTICLE VII – OPERATIONS MANUAL

A non-standing committee composed of a representative from each standing committee of the Church shall develop an Operations Manual ("Manual") to include Church policies and procedures in the administration of the Church. The Manual shall also include job descriptions for the pastor and all other employed staff persons and shall delineate specific responsibilities of all standing committees of the Church. The Manual shall be kept in the Church office and maintained by the Church secretary. The Pastor shall review the Manual at least annually to determine if additions, revisions or deletions are required, and if so, shall recommend that a non-standing committee consider and make the suggested changes.

ARTICLE VIII -- AMENDMENTS

Changes in these Bylaws may be made at any regular or special business meeting of the Church provided the proposed revisions have been made available to members of Church at least two weeks prior to the meeting. All resident members shall receive additional notice of the proposed revisions at least two weeks prior to the meeting, with written copies of revisions available upon request. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be by simple majority.