

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We, as members of First Baptist Church, Sayre, OK, declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith as Southern Baptists 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 relation to other churches.

I. Name

This body shall be known as First Baptist Church, Sayre, located at 504 North 4th Street in Sayre, Oklahoma.

II. Objectives

- To be a body of believers in Christ 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 make disciples by helping 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 Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

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 on June 14, 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 VI of the Bylaws for details)

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 covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We pledge 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, doctrines, and discipline; 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 to all peoples.

We also pledge to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further pledge to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover pledge that when we move from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

V. Polity and Relationships

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership. (See Article I of the Bylaws for details of church 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 no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Beckham Mills Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

****BYLAWS****

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.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Candidacy

The membership of this church shall consist of such persons as confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord, and have followed the Lord in scriptural baptism. Any person may offer himself or 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:

- By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of the church.
- By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church.
- By statement of conversion experience and scriptural baptism when no letter is available.

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.

Section 3. New Member Orientation

New members are encouraged to participate in the church's new member orientation.

Section 4. Rights and Responsibilities of Members

- Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections on all questions submitted to the church in business meeting, provided the member is present.
- Members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life; and also to attend habitually the services of this church, to give regularly for its support and causes, and to share in its organized work.

Section 5. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- Death of member.
- Transfer to another Baptist church.
- Removed from membership by action of this church.
- Removed from membership upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

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 deacons are available for spiritual guidance. The attitude of members towards one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist that would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accordance with *Matthew 18*. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be conducted in a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

II. Church Officers and Committees

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church committees shall be members of the church and agree with the Baptist Faith and Message.

Section 1. Church Officers

The officers of this church shall be:

1. Pastor
2. Ministerial Staff
3. Deacons
4. Moderator
5. Clerk
6. Treasurer
7. Trustees

Pastor

The Pastor should meet the Biblical qualifications listed in *I Timothy 3:1-7* and *Titus 1:5-9*. The Pastor shall be ordained by a Southern Baptist Church.

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 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:

- Lead the church in the achievement of its mission.
- Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
- Care for the church's members.

A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose. At least one week's public notice will be given.

A Pastor Search committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of 90% of those present being necessary to extend a call. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. He shall preside at meetings of this church, and serve as moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized in these Bylaws.

The pastor may relinquish the office as pastor by giving at least two weeks notice to the church at the time of resignation. The church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which a one week's public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of two-thirds of the active deacon body, or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident church members. The moderator for this meeting shall be the chairman of the deacons. In his absence the moderator will be selected by the members present by majority vote. The moderator 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 members present being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor so excluded from office, the church will compensate the pastor with not less than one-twelfth of his annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than 30 days.

Ministerial Staff

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. Those staff members of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call from God to minister shall be called by church action. Such action shall be taken upon recommendation of a committee elected by the church for that purpose.

The ministerial staff member may relinquish the position by resignation. At the time of resignation, not less than a two-week notice shall be given to the church. The church may vote to vacate such position upon recommendation of a majority of the deacons or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident church members, such termination being immediate, and the compensation conditions being the same as for the pastor, except that the amount shall relate to the individual's compensation.

Deacons

Qualifications:

- A deacon and his wife should meet the Biblical qualifications listed in *I Timothy 3:8-13 and also Acts 6:1-7*.
- Men eligible for ordination shall have been members of this church for at least one year. A deacon's wife must also be a member of this church.
- If a man has been ordained in a Southern Baptist Church, with that ordination having not been rescinded, the church may designate him as an active deacon after six months of membership and active service upon recommendation by the deacon body.

Responsibilities:

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

- They shall proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
- They shall care for church members and other people in the community.
- They are to be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.
- They shall serve as a council of advice and conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. With the pastor they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the salvation of souls, the development of Christians and the extension and growth of the Kingdom of God.
- In counsel with the pastor, and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct in accordance with the New Testament teaching, they are to have oversight of the discipline of the church, being guided always by the principles set forth in *Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 5:9-13; I Thessalonians 5:12-14*. The deacons shall be free to call upon any member of the church to aid in disciplinary action.
- The deacons shall serve as a pulpit supply committee, in case of absence or inability of the pastor, subject to advice from and conference with him. In any period when the church is without a pastor, unless the church shall otherwise provide, the deacons will lead in facilitating the ministries of the church. They will assist the church in initiating the process for securing a pastor. See the "Pastor" section of these Bylaws for the selection process.
- The whole body of deacons shall be organized as a unit for the consideration of all

larger problems and general policies. The intent of these Bylaws is not to vest in the deacons a “Board of Directors” type authority. But instead, identify them as men who have been set aside by God, and ordained by the church, to a life of service to this local body of believers. They are to lead by example, as a unified body, and serve as a source of spiritual guidance.

- The deacons shall have opportunity to review any larger expenditure and consider making a recommendation to the church.
- The deacons shall meet regularly each month on a date set by them for such meeting.

Status:

- **Active:** A deacon shall be considered in active status as long as he participates in the ministries of the church and deacon body.
- **Honorary Life Membership:** The church members shall or may from time to time, promote to Honorary Life Membership any deacon who by reason of age or infirmities shall, after honorable service, no longer be able to render active service.
- **Reserve:** A deacon shall be considered in reserve status when a leave of absence is requested for reasons of his health, his family’s health, or other personal reasons. This requires approval of two-thirds majority confidential vote of the deacon body in attendance at a regularly scheduled meeting and shall be reviewed annually.
- **Resigned:** A deacon who does not desire to be an active member may choose to resign. In the case of a fallen brother, the biblical procedure for correction is to be followed in accordance with *Matthew 18:15-17*.

Deacon Selection Process:

The church membership shall from time to time elect such deacons as they may determine the church shall need.

1. Whenever the need for additional deacons becomes apparent, the church will be asked by the pastor and current deacon body to begin the selection process. The deacons will select three men from the current deacon body to work with the pastor during this process.
2. The church will designate in advance a Sunday morning worship service to be dedicated for the purpose of nominating deacon candidates.
3. Prior to this date, the pastor will preach a sermon addressing the qualifications of a deacon and his wife. A current list of deacons will be made available to the church membership.
4. During the Sunday morning worship service that has been designated for the nomination process, each member present will be asked to nominate as many men as they think are qualified to serve as a deacon. Vote will be by secret ballot.
5. After the ballots are cast, the deacon selection committee will tally the votes.
6. To constitute an official nomination, a candidate must have received a minimum of 10 votes.

7. A letter will be sent to each nominee to give them notice that their name has been placed in nomination to be voted upon in the final election. Scriptures will be listed and a copy of the church By-laws concerning deacons will be given to each prospect. They will be asked to use these tools along with prayer to help them decide if they will accept the nomination and be placed on the final ballot. A return slip will be enclosed along with a time frame indicated for them to give their answer.
8. The pastor and selection committee will interview the nominees and their wives as appointments can be scheduled.
9. After the interview process, the pastor and the regular deacon body will meet and make a recommendation as to the maximum number of deacons that may be selected.
10. The final vote will be on a Sunday morning and the church membership will be asked to vote for as many members from the final list as the Lord leads them to. If only one name comes to mind, then that is all for whom they should vote.
11. The selection committee will tally the votes after the vote is taken. Only those men who receive a minimum of 51% of the vote will be selected, not to exceed the maximum number of new deacons that was established in advance.
12. The pastor will notify the selected candidates. Training for deacon service and ordination will follow.

Moderator

The pastor shall serve as moderator in all business meetings except as otherwise indicated in these Bylaws. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the church clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

Clerk

The church clerk shall be elected annually by the church after being nominated by the Nominating Committee. The clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation for legal purposes, keeping all minutes, and records of the church. All church records are church property and should be kept in the church office.

Treasurer

The church treasurer shall be elected annually by the church after being nominated by the Nominating Committee and serves as chairperson of the Finance Committee. The treasurer shall be responsible for the monthly financial report showing the receipts and disbursements and shall oversee the work of the financial secretary. It shall be the duty of the treasurer and financial secretary to render to the deacons at their monthly meeting and to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized financial report. All books, records, and accounts kept by the treasurer and the financial secretary are viewed as property belonging to the church. The treasurer's report and records may be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant. The church shall maintain insurance covering anyone handling funds.

Trustees

Upon recommendation by the Nominating Committee, six trustees shall be elected by the church to serve on a rotating basis. One new trustee will be elected each year to serve a six year term. A seventh trustee shall be nominated from the deacon body by the deacons annually and elected by the church. These seven trustees shall serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, at least two shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

Section 2. Church Committees

The standing committees of this church shall be a Nominating Committee, a Personnel Committee, a Building and Grounds Committee, a Budget and Finance Committee, a Global Missions Committee, and such other regular and special committees as the church shall authorize. All members of standing church committees shall be recommended by the church Nominating Committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these Bylaws.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of the called church staff, Sunday School Director, Life Group Leader, AWANA Director, and four members selected by the church. The four members selected by the church will serve for two years, with two individuals rotating off each year. During a normal business meeting, at least four individuals will be nominated by the church with the two members receiving the highest number of votes being elected to serve on the committee. The Nominating Committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions filled by volunteer workers, unless otherwise specified herein. Individuals considered for any such positions shall first be approved by the Nominating Committee before they are approached for recruitment. Any individual considered for a teaching position should be in agreement with those statements made in the Baptist Faith and Message. The Nominating Committee shall present to the church for election all who agree to faithfully serve.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall have the following duties related to staff members that have been called by church action to serve in our church, such as Pastor, Ministers of Music, Education and Youth.

- Work with the Finance Committee in recommending salaries and benefits packages.
- Write job descriptions as needed in consultation with deacons and pastor.

The Personnel Committee shall have the following duties related to all other paid employees.

- Cooperate with the pastor and any affected committees to hire and terminate employees as needed.
- Work with pastor, staff, any affected committees, and deacons to survey the need for additional positions, create a proposed job description, and submit these to the church for approval.
- Work with the Finance Committee in recommending salaries and benefits packages.
- Assist the staff in providing oversight and serve as a means of advice concerning the needs in their work.

Building and Grounds Committee

The Building and Grounds Committee shall assist the church in matters related to properties administration. Its work includes such areas as maintaining all church properties for ready use and recommending policies regarding use of properties. This committee is authorized to use the funds budgeted for maintenance and repairs.

Budget and Finance Committee

The Budget and Finance Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- Solicit input from all church programs, organizations, and committees for budget requests.
- Prepare and submit the annual itemized budget to the deacons for review and then to the church for approval.
- Assure the handling of funds meets financial standards of accountability.
- Recommend budget adjustments to the deacons and the church during the year.

Global Missions Committee

The Global Missions Committee will assist in educating, involving, and directing the church in its missions endeavors. They will also:

- Work with the pastor and staff in planning and promoting direct missions involvement which includes local, state, North American, and International missions.
- Recommend mission expenditures to the Budget and Finance Committee.
- Recommend goals for mission offerings.

III. Church Ministry Organizations

The church shall maintain ministries of Bible teaching; church member training; church leader training; new member orientation; mission education, action, and support;

and music education, training, and performance. All organizations related to the church ministries shall be under church control with all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all ministry activities subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall prayerfully undergird these ministries while providing the human, physical and financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these ministries.

Sunday School

The Sunday School shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching ministry. Its tasks shall be to teach the biblical revelation, reach people for Christ and church membership, minister to the needs of those the Lord brings into the church's realm of influence and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The Sunday school shall be organized by departments and/or classes, as appropriate for all ages.

Church Music Ministry

The Church Music Ministry shall be under direction of the Minister of Music. The primary goal of the music ministry should be to promote the use of musical instruments, our voices and our hearts to praise and worship Almighty God. This shall be accomplished through music education, training, and providing music in the church and community. The ministry shall also provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The Church Music Ministry shall have such officers and organization as may be required.

VI. Church Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- Baptism shall be by immersion with water.
- The pastor, or other ordained men who the pastor or church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and the observance of, baptism.
- Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.
- A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff or deacons.

Section 2. Lord's Supper

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly and as otherwise scheduled. The ordained men of the church shall administer the Lord's Supper, the deacons being responsible for the physical preparations.

VII. Church Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, and at other times scheduled for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, teaching, and evangelism shall be among the elements of these services.

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 to address the routine business of the church on a minimum of a quarterly basis. These meetings should be either held on a fixed schedule throughout the year, or announced to the church at least one week in advance.

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 to the church for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, and time and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have an opportunity to know of the meeting.

Section 5. Quorum

The quorum consists of a minimum of 15 members of the church, provided it is a properly called business meeting according to Sections 3 and 4 above.

Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

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

VIII. Church Finances

Section 1. Budget

The Budget and Finance Committee shall prepare an annual budget itemized with amounts needed for all local and other expenses. The proposed budget will be submitted to the deacons for review and on to the church for approval. Offering envelopes will be provided for members' use.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. The biblical doctrine of stewardship should be emphasized throughout the year.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer or financial secretary, under the supervision of the church treasurer, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. Those who have responsibility that involves actual handling of funds shall be insured by the church. (See Article II, Section 1 regarding the church treasurer.)

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Budget and Finance Committee.

Section 3. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall be January 1st to December 31st.

X. Amendments

Changes in the Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the Constitution and accompanying Bylaws shall be by two-thirds vote of church members present.

This Constitution and By-laws were duly adopted in a regular business meeting of the members of the First Baptist Church of Sayre, Oklahoma, on the 16th day of December, 2012. Existing Constitution Bylaws dated August 10th, 1960, were used for reference and guidance.

Note: It was recorded in the 1960 Bylaws that the church was incorporated in 1905, as reflected by the Charter and Articles of Incorporation