

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HAPEVILLE

Constitution and Bylaws Committee

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HAPEVILLE
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, 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 its relation to other churches.

I. Name

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Hapeville, located at 612 College Street, Hapeville, Georgia.

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 worshipping 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 persons in the community and world in Jesus' name.

To be a church whose purpose is to be Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

III. Statement of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of “The Baptist Faith and Message” as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963. We 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 baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

IV. Relationships

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It 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 association and state conventions affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

V. Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord 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 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, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage 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 be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage 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 roles of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove 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.

BYLAWS

I. 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

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

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
- (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church.
- (3) By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

Section 3. New Member Orientation

New church members will be expected to participate in the church's new member orientation plan.

Section 4. Voting Rights of Members

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

Section 5. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) death
- (2) dismissal to another Baptist church
- (3) exclusion by action of the church.

Section 6. Discipline

- (1) It shall be the basic purpose of the First Baptist Church of Hapeville 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 counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member towards another.

- (2) Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the welfare of the church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting called for the purpose, and the church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.
- (3) Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has made it necessary for the church to exclude him may, upon his request, be restored to membership by a vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation.

II. Church Officers

All church officers must be members of the church. The officers of this church shall be as follows:

Section 1. Pastor

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 the pastoral ministries in the church. He is administrative director of the church staff and as such he shall work with the staff and deacons to:

- (1) lead the church in performing its tasks;

- (2) lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application;
- (3) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

A pulpit committee consisting of not more than five (5) members shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor. Any member has the privilege of making recommendations to the church pulpit committee. The recommendation of the pulpit committee to the church will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by a standing vote, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus selected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The terms of office of the pastor may be terminated by either the pastor or by the church only after 30 days written notice of such intent or by mutual agreement.

Section 2. Church Staff

Additional ministerial staff members such as minister of education, music, etc., shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs or the need for staff expansion is determined. A job description shall be written when the need for ministerial staff members is determined. Election of any member of the ministerial staff shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

A committee consisting of not more than five (5) members shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable minister. Any member has the privilege of making recommendations to the church committee. The recommendation of the committee to the church will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by a standing

vote, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The minister thus selected shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The terms of office of any staff minister may be terminated by either the minister or by the church only after 30 days written notice of such intent or by mutual agreement.

The church shall employ such other staff members as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined. At least two weeks notice at the time of resignation should be given. Secretaries, custodians, etc, other than ministerial staff shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by church action. The requirement for church membership may be waived in certain cases subject to church action.

Section 3. Deacons

- (1) There shall be one deacon for every fifteen resident church families.
- (2) Any member of the church should feel free to recommend names for consideration as a deacon. The Nominating Committee will search the church roll for qualified members and will consider names recommended by members. The Nominating Committee will then have qualified candidates interviewed by the Pastor and the Chairman of the Deacons or his designee. Deacon qualifications and duties will be discussed. Names of persons qualifying and agreeing to serve will then be presented to the church by the Nominating Committee and elections will be held by secret ballot.
- (3) The deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year the term of office of one-third of the number of deacons shall expire, and election shall be held 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. After serving a term of three years, a deacon shall be eligible for reelection only after the lapse of at least one year. The requirement of a lapse of one year may be suspended

by a vote of the church in regular church conference in the event such a lapse would lead to a shortage of active deacons. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the church from another church where he has served as deacon.

- (4) In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing pastoral ministries tasks; proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers; care for church members and other persons in the community; lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application; and lead the church in performing its tasks.

Section 4. Moderator

The pastor shall serve as moderator at meetings of the church. In his absence, the Chairman of Deacons shall preside, or in the absence of both, the Clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

Section 5. Clerk

The church-elected clerk of the church shall keep in a suitable book a record of the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. He is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. He shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meeting where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office.

Section 6. Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer 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 to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The church may delegate some of these responsibilities to the church financial secretary.

The treasurer's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant elected by the church.

After audit and acceptance by the church, these records shall be kept and preserved as a part of the permanent records of the church.

Section 7. Trustees

Three trustees elected by the church will hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific note of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required. Trustees shall serve on a rotating basis with one new trustee being elected each year for a three year term.

As long as the church remains incorporated or reincorporates and is currently registered with the Secretary of State in good standing, the three trustees shall serve as the corporate officers with the most senior trustee being the president, the next most senior the treasurer, and the least senior the secretary.

III. Coordinating Groups and Church Committees

Section 1. Church Council

- (1) The primary functions of the council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to the program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.
- (2) The council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall have as regular members the pastor, minister of education, minister of music, Sunday School director, Church Training director, Woman's Missionary Union director, Brotherhood director, and Chairman of the Deacons. Committee chairmen and church-elected officers shall serve as ex-officio members.
- (3) All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

Section 2. Committees

All church committee members shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church unless otherwise indicated in the description below. The committee members shall serve on a three-year rotation system with one-third to be elected each year unless otherwise specified. The Pastor and Chairman of Deacons shall be ex-officio members on all church committees.

(1) Nominating Committee

The nominating committee shall consist of six members and shall coordinate the staffing of all church leadership positions that are filled by volunteers. The

nominating committee recommends persons for all volunteer positions to be elected by the church. The Sunday School director, Church Training director, Woman's Missionary Union director, and Brotherhood director shall also serve as ex-officio members of this committee.

(2) Personnel Committee

The personnel committee shall consist of three members and shall assist the church in matters related to employed personnel administration. Its work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, and personnel services.

(3) Properties Committee

The properties committee shall consist of six members and shall assist the church in matters related to properties administration. Its work includes such areas as maintaining all church properties for ready use, recommending policies regarding use of properties, recommending employment of maintenance personnel, and assigning responsibility to appropriate personnel for supervision.

(4) Finance Committee

The finance committee shall consist of six members and shall develop and recommend an overall stewardship information plan and administrate the gifts of church members, using sound principles of financial management.

(5) Public Relations Committee

The public relations committee shall consist of three members and it is to discover the public relations needs and choose the means of communication to persons inside and outside the church. The committee is responsible for

discovering what needs to be communicated and for communicating with the proper audience.

(6) Kitchen Committee

The kitchen committee is to consist of three members and, along with the church hostess, is responsible for formulating and recommending to the church policies for the kitchen and for communicating these policies to the church.

(7) Kindergarten Committee

The church kindergarten committee shall consist of six members and it is to study the needs for, and possibilities of the church's kindergarten program, to help in the organization of this program where it is considered wise, and to serve as a liaison between the church and the kindergarten.

(8) History Committee

The history committee shall consist of three members and it is to preserve and use the historical records of the church. This committee is especially concerned with gathering and preserving available church records, recording full and accurate records, and using the records to help members understand and appreciate their heritage and mission.

(9) Flower Committee

The flower committee shall consist of three members and it is responsible for securing, arranging, and disposing of floral arrangements for church services and for providing flowers for sick and bereaved members. Some of the responsibility may be delegated to the church secretary.

(10) Tellers Committee

The tellers committee shall consist of six members and shall serve under the direction of the finance committee. It shall serve to count funds, and three members shall be required to be present when serving in this capacity.

(11) Benevolence Committee

The benevolence committee shall consist of three members. It shall serve as the contact for requests for benevolent actions. They will seek to lead the church in ministering to persons in need in the church family and throughout the community.

Section 3. Church Ushers

Every regular church usher shall be selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The ushers shall be led by an usher chairman also selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The ushers are to greet people as they enter and leave the church, seat people at the proper time, provide bulletins and/or other materials at the time of seating. The ushers will be attentive to the needs of the congregation and the pastor.

IV. Program Services

Section 1. General

The staff of program services shall be recommended by the church nominating committee for election by the church.

Section 2. Church Recreation Service

The recreation staff will serve the church in seeking to meet the recreational needs of the members and groups. They will provide recreation activities and provide consultation, leadership assistance and resources.

Section 3. Church Library Service

The church library will serve as the resource center for the church. The church library/audio-visual staff will seek to provide and promote the use of printed and audio-visual resources. The staff will also provide consultation to church leaders and members in the use of printed and audio-visual resources.

V. Program Organizations

Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

Section 2. Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Sunday School director for the study of God's word.

The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the biblical revelation; reach persons for Christ and church membership; perform the functions of the church within its constituency; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 3. Church Training

There shall be a Church Training program divided into departments for all ages and conducted under the direction of a general director which shall serve as the training organization of the church.

The tasks of the Church Training program shall be to orient new church members; train church members to perform the functions of the church; train church leaders; teach Christian theology. Christian ethics, Christian history, and church

polity and organization; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 4. Woman's Missionary Union

There shall be a Woman's Missionary Union with such officers and organization as needed. The tasks of the Woman's Missionary Union shall be to teach missions; engage in mission action; support world missions through praying and giving; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 5. Brotherhood

There shall be a Brotherhood with such organizations as needed. This program shall be directed by a director who shall be elected by the church. The tasks are to teach missions; engage in mission action; support world missions through praying and giving; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 6. Church Music Program

There shall be a Church Music program under the direction of the music director. Such officers and/or organizations shall be included as needed. The music tasks shall be to teach music; train persons to lead, sing, and play music; provide music in the church and community; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

VI. Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism

A person who receives 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, shall be received for baptism.

- (1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- (2) Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the church shall authorize. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.
- (3) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
- (4) A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff and deacons. If negative interest is ascertained, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate his second coming.

- (1) The Lord's Supper shall be observed quarterly, preferably the first Sunday of the quarter, or as otherwise scheduled.
- (2) The Lord's Supper shall be observed in the morning worship service.
- (3) The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- (4) The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparation of the Lord's Supper.

VII. Church Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

Section 2. Special Services

Revival services and any other church meetings which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be placed on the church calendar.

Section 3. Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held monthly on the Wednesday following the third Monday of the month, or as otherwise scheduled.

Section 4. Special Business Meetings

A specially called business meeting may be held to consider special matters of significance. A one-week notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable.

Section 5. Quorum

The quorum consists of those who attend 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.

VIII. Church Finances

Section 1. Budget

The finance committee, in consultation with the church council, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and worldwide expenses.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Each new member shall, therefore, be given an opportunity to make a pledge to the church's unified budget; and at least annually plans shall be put into operation for securing a worthy subscription from each member of the church.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer, or financial secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. The officer(s) shall be bonded.

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the finance committee.

Section 3. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

IX. Amendments

Changes in this 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 meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of all members of the church present entitled to vote. Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.