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# 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 relation to other churches.

### I. NAME

- 1) This body shall be known as the *First Southern Baptist Church*, located at Goshen, Arkansas.

### II MISSION

To go into our communities, towns, state, country and world, bringing the sinner to Jesus and disciple the saint for the glory of God.

- 1) 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.
- 2) To be a worshipful fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing his person, and responding in obedience to his leadership.
- 3) To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers. To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.
- 4) To be a church which ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and the world in Jesus name.
- 5) 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

*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. 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.*

### IV. CHURCH COVENANT

- 1) 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 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.

- 2) 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, doctrines, and discipline; 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 excessive 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.
- 3) 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 rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.
- 4) 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.

## V. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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. This church shall always remain a Southern Baptist Church. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the association, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

## VI. MARRIAGE

### SECTION 1

Our statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message (2000)<sup>1</sup>, expresses our fundamental biblical conviction that Christian marriage is, by definition, the spiritual and physical uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive covenant commitment for their joint lifetime. Christian marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church. As such, this local church believes that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual observances of worship of God who created this divine institution. As worship services, weddings on church property shall be officiated by one or more ordained ministers of the gospel. The church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations may be made by the pastor, or church council, subject to the direction of the church.

No minister or employee of the church shall officiate at any marriage ceremony unless such marriage is consistent with this policy.

## VII. 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 shall be by two-thirds vote of church members present. Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

# BYLAWS

## I. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

### SECTION 1. GENERAL

- 1) 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.
- 2) The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership

### SECTION 2. CANDIDACY

- 1) 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 church service for membership in any of the following ways:
  - By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
  - By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church of like faith and order.
  - By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable.
- 2) Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the membership committee for investigation and 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

- 1) New members of this church are expected to participate in the church's new member orientation.

### SECTION 4. RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

- 1) 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.
- 2) Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church.
- 3) Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

### SECTION 5. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 1) Membership shall be terminated in the following way:
  - death of the member
  - dis-mission to another Baptist church,
  - exclusion by action of this church, or
  - erasure upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

## SECTION 6. DISCIPLINE

- 1) 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 counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.
- 2) Should some serious condition exist which 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 accord 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 pervaded by 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 this 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.

#### PASTOR

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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, and care for the church's members and other persons in the community.
- 3) 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, of which a least one week's public notice has been given.
- 4) A pastor selection committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. Any church member has the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Elections shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. 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 if designated may serve as moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized in these bylaws.

- 5) The pastor may relinquish the office as pastor by giving at least a two week 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 at least one week public 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 for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and he shall be someone other than the pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by 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 this total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

#### MINISTERIAL STAFF

- 1) 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 of God to minister shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and called by church action. At the time of resignation at least two weeks' notice shall be given to the church. The church may vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the personnel committee, such termination being immediate and the compensation conditions being the same as for the pastor, except the amount shall relate to the individual's compensation.

#### NON-MINISTERIAL

- 1) Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for the services. The church personnel committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of the 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.

Until such time that the church's membership increases to warrant the rotation system, we will follow the system described below.

#### DEACON QUALIFICATIONS

- 1) A deacon shall be a male member of the church who has attained the age of 21 years; he shall faithfully and actively support all the activities of the church. He shall possess the scriptural qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13.
- 2) He shall have been ordained by this church, or by a Baptist church of like faith and order.
- 3) 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 a deacon.
- 4) After a period of not less than three months a person who has been an ordained in another church of like faith and order may be seated as an active deacon by vote of the church in a regular business meeting upon the recommendation of present deacons and pastor after they have obtained a written recommendation of a former pastor or church clerk.

- 5) Any deacon who becomes unable to serve because of age or health may be placed on inactive status upon his request or upon the recommendation of the deacons and the vote of the church.
- 6) Any deacon who willfully fails to perform his duties will be counseled by a committee from the deacon body. If reconciliation is not obtained he will be asked by this committee to voluntarily submit his resignation as a deacon. If he does not do this, then his name may be removed as a deacon by vote of the church upon recommendation of the deacons.

#### DEACON ROTATION

- 1) The church shall elect deacons by ballot at regular business meetings of the church. There shall be one deacon elected for assigned service for every twelve to fifteen church families.
- 2) Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year the assigned term of office of one third of the number of deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill vacancies and to add to the deacons such numbers as the church size warrants. 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 assignment, a deacon shall be eligible for reelection only after the lapse of at least one year. There shall be no obligation to constitute as an assigned deacon one who has been A deacon in another church; but in such instances as one might be chosen by this church for assignments as a deacon, his previous ordination by another church of like faith and order shall suffice for this church.
- 3) 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 ministries tasks of leading the church in the achievement of its mission, proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and caring for the church's members and other persons in the community.

#### MEETINGS

- 1) The deacons shall meet on Monday following the first Sunday of each month, except when conditions warrant a change to another date selected by the deacons and pastor.
- 2) Other meetings may be called by the pastor, and/or the officers of deacons, provided an earnest effort is made to notify each deacon.

#### ORGANIZATION

- 1) The Chairman of deacons shall be elected by the church upon the recommendation of the church nominating committee. He may serve one year and shall not be re-elected for a period of one year.
- 2) The deacons shall elect other officers as the need occurs.

#### OTHER OFFICERS

##### 1) MODERATOR

- a) The church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

##### 2) CLERK

- a) The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provide. The clerk shall be

responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dis-mission, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dis-mission voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all 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 association. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary who will assist the elected clerk. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained.

### 3) TREASURER

- a) The church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer. 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 treasure to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. 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. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of the fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

### 4) TRUSTEES

- a) The church shall elect three trustees to 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, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.
- b) Trustees shall serve on a rotation basis, with one new trustee being elected each year.

## SECTION 2. CHURCH MINISTRIES AND COMMITTEES

### 1. The committees of this church shall be

- a. Nominating Committee
  - i. coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions filled by volunteer workers, unless otherwise specified herein. Persons considered for any such positions shall first be approved by the nominating committee before they are approached for recruitment. The nominating committee shall present to the church for election all who accept the invitation to serve.
- b. Personnel Committee
  - i. assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration, including those called by church action. Their work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, other compensation, policies, job descriptions, and personnel services.
- c. Properties Committee



- i. assists 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, consulting with the personnel committee and the church staff regarding the needs for, and the employment of, maintenance personnel, and regarding the assignment of supervisory responsibility to appropriate personnel.
  - d. Finance Committee
    - i. develops and recommends an overall stewardship development plan, a unified church budget, and budget subscription plans. It advises and recommends in the administration of the gifts of church members and others, using sound principles of financial management. It works with the treasurer in the preparation and presentation to the church of required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church.
  - e. Long-Range Planning Committee
    - i. Assist in giving direction and aid in planning future needs in the church. This would include needs that arise with regard to building space, personnel and equipment.
- 2. The ministries of the church
  - a. Ministries which the Church feels are needed to make Church activities and programs operate in a satisfactory manner
  - b. To form or dissolve a ministry team, a committee or officer of the Church at a regular or legally called meeting, members may bring forth a motion (with description, roles and responsibilities), to convene or dissolve the team. A majority vote of members present shall approve the motion for such ministry, committee or officer. The ministry, committee or officer may have a time limit specified to the completion of a task applied if deemed necessary.
  - c. Description, roles and responsibilities of ministries, committees and officers shall be added and removed as part of the church policies as ministries, committees and officers are approved and/or dissolved
  - d. Examples of ministries
    - i. Missions ministry
    - ii. Children's ministry
    - iii. Youth ministry
    - iv. Adult ministry (Women and Men)
    - v. Development ministry (Outreach and Marketing)
    - vi. Hospitality ministry (Kitchen/Hostess)
- 3. Committee and Ministry team membership and duration
  - a. All church committee and ministry members shall be recommended by the church nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these bylaws. Committee members shall serve on a three-year rotation basis with one third to be elected each year.

### 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; and music education, training, and performance.

All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all program activities subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs. All teachers of this church shall be active members or member of a likeminded church.

Record of programs shall be maintained in the Church Operations Manual.

## IV. CHURCH COUNCIL

- 1) The Church council shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations.
- 2) The primary functions of the church council shall be to recommend to the church suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate achievements in terms of church objectives and goals.
- 3) Regular members of the church council shall be the pastor, other church staff members, directors of church program organizations; media center director, recreation director, chairman of deacons, church officers, and chairmen of church committees.
- 4) All matters agreed upon by the council which call for actions not already approved shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

## V. CHURCH ORDINANCES

### SECTION 1. BAPTISM

- 1) 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.
- 2) Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- 3) The pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and observance of, baptism.
- 4) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.
- 5) 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. THE LORD'S SUPPER

- 1) The church shall observe the Lords Supper quarterly,- unless otherwise scheduled by the church or Pastor. The pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper, the deacons being responsible for the physical preparations.

## VI. CHURCH MEETINGS

## SECTION 1. WORSHIP SERVICES

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday and Wednesday 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 advancements of the church's mission shall be placed on the church calendar.

## SECTION 3. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS

The church shall hold a regular business meeting quarterly or monthly on Sunday or Wednesday night, as deemed by the Pastor and Church Council. Regular business meetings shall not be changed for six months from the first meeting after the change in schedule. The regularity, day, and time will be set by the Church Council and Pastor. While approval of the church is not necessary, it is encouraged.

## 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 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 opportunity to know of the meeting.

## SECTION 5. QUORUM

The Quorum consists of 10 members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

## SECTION 6. PARLIAMENTARY RULES

*Roberts Rules of Order, Revised*, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church.

# VII. 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 other expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for members.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Annually there shall be opportunity provided to secure worth commitments of financial support from the church members.

## SECTION 2. ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands to the church treasurer, or financial secretary, 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.

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 church fiscal year shall run concurrently with the calendar year.

## VIII. CHURCH OPERATIONS MANUAL

A special committee of the church shall develop a church operations manual to include church policies and procedures and organization charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use there by any members of the church. The church secretary shall maintain the manual. The church council or a special committee shall review the manual at least annually, with authority to recommend changes for the church to consider. Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual.

- 1) Addition, revision, or deletion of church policies requires:
  - a) the recommendation of the church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the policy relates, and
  - b) discussion by the church council and
  - c) approval by the church.
- 2) Procedures may be added, revised, or deleted by:
  - a) recommendation of the church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the procedures relate,
  - b) approval by the church council
  - c) approval of the church, if the church council deems it necessary.

## AMENDMENTS

*All previously passed amendments have been incorporated into the new Constitution and By-Laws*