

Constitution and By-Laws

First Baptist Church of Frederick

7040 Bowers Road
Frederick, Maryland 21702

Approved January 7, 2018



CHURCH CONSTITUTION

We constitute ourselves as a Baptist Church and establish this constitution to express and propagate the principles of our faith and to govern the body herein named in an orderly manner. This constitution will ensure the liberties of each individual Church member and the freedom of action of this body.

To this end we do hereby adopt and agree to the following: Name, Statement of Faith, Covenant, and By-Laws.

NAME

This body shall be known as The First Baptist Church of Frederick, Maryland.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior:

We believe in God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

We believe that following Christ is central to what it means to be a Christian and that it is our responsibility to practice faith without interference from creeds, clergy or government.

We believe in baptism by immersion as a public profession of faith in Christ and our desire to follow His teaching.

We believe the Bible was written by individuals inspired by God's Holy Spirit, and records God's revelation of Himself to us. It is our sole authority in matters of faith and our personal conduct.

We believe that God has called us to enter not only into a relationship with Him but also into loving relationships with one another particularly in times of crisis or conflict.

We believe that as a church we should be free to determine our own methods for membership, for choosing our leadership, and for our preferences in manner of worship.

We believe that as a church we should find ways to cooperate with other Christians, promote friendship with those who are not of the Christian faith, and defend the rights who choose to live without faith.

We believe that we as Christians and as a church should share our faith in Christ locally and collaborate with those who take the Gospel to other places in the world.

We believe that all who are members of this congregation should worship regularly together, participate in its activities and ministries, and support the Church financially.

We believe that in essential beliefs we should have unity and that in the non-essentials we should have respect for one another.

We believe we should be on the side of justice wherever there is injustice in our community

We believe that as a Baptist Church we have the freedom to affiliate with whatever Baptist organizations we choose that express the principles of Christian faith.

We believe in the independence and separation of Church and State.

To this end we are known as the First Baptist Church of Frederick, Maryland.

CHURCH COVENANT

We are part of this community because of our commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. We have boldly declared our faith in Him and have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As baptized believers, we make these promises to each other:

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we promise to support each other in Christian love as we journey through life.

We promise to actively participate in the life of this church community to show God's love and we will actively work to assure equality and justice for all people.

We promise to be actively learning more about Christ and how we are to live like Him, and to encourage our children, family, and friends to learn how to pursue a Christ-like life.

We promise to help each other in Christian love, to pray for each other, to give loving support in times of need, to be slow to take offense, and to always be ready to heal broken relationships.

We also promise that this spirit of commitment for each other will spill over from this church community into the larger body of believers, and that we will seek to connect with fellow Christians wherever we are. This is the faith covenant that we shall live by and that undergirds the ministry of First Baptist Church.

CHURCH BY-LAWS

ARTICLE ONE - MEMBERSHIP

1. A person desiring to affiliate with First Baptist Church as a member may do so in the following ways.
 - a. By confession of faith in Jesus Christ followed by baptism. Immersion is the mode of baptism practiced by this congregation. Persons with disabilities who are physically unable to be immersed may be offered an alternate form of baptism agreed to by the Pastor.
 - i. A person requesting membership by confession of faith and baptism must receive counsel from the Pastor prior to baptism. The purpose of that counseling should be to explain how one's confession of faith and baptism is a public statement of his/her acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as their Savior and their desire to follow Christ's teachings and example.
 - ii. The Pastor normally administers baptisms. The pastor or others designated by the Church or pastor may baptize individuals confessing their faith as Christians.
 - iii. By statement of a previous confession of faith in Jesus Christ and Christian baptism.
 - iv. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Christian congregation.
 - b. A person desiring to affiliate with First Baptist Church will be received into its fellowship following affirmation by the congregation.
 - c. A person will be removed from the membership roll of First Baptist Church for the following reasons:
 - i. Death
 - ii. Joining another congregation
 - iii. An individual's request to be removed from the membership roll.
 - iv. Action by the Pastor and Deacons, following the New Testament example, on behalf of the church and for its protection. Such action shall be taken with regret of its necessity, only after attempts by the Pastor and Deacons to bring about reconciliation, and with discretion to protect the identity and reputation of the individual.

ARTICLE TWO – CHURCH OFFICERS

1. PASTOR

- a. The Church shall have a Pastor. The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, organization and the Church staff. The Pastor shall supervise all church employees in line with the Policies and Procedures of the FBC Personnel Handbook.
- b. The Pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such, the Pastor works with the Deacons and Church staff to:
 - i. Engage the Church to be a community of worship, discipleship, and mission
 - ii. Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers
 - iii. Care for the Church's members and other persons in the community
 - iv. Present final recommendations of new Deacons to the Nominating Committee

2. THE CALLING OF A PASTOR

A Pulpit Committee shall consist of nine (9) members. The Nominating Committee for that year shall nominate to the Church, in a special called business meeting, nine (9) persons to serve as a Pulpit Committee. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the meeting. The Church will then elect nine (9) persons to serve as a Pulpit Committee. Those nine (9) must include the following:

- a. At least three (3) active Deacons
- b. At least three (3) men and three (3) women

The Pulpit Committee shall elect a Chairperson and Secretary from their number and shall proceed with as little delay as possible to select a Minister of the Gospel whose Christian character and credentials qualify him for the Office of Pastor of this Church. When the committee has made a choice, it shall give at least two (2) weeks' notice to the Church Membership (by mail and in the Sunday bulletin) of the meeting at which time it will submit its report.

At any meeting held for the calling of a Pastor, no name shall be considered, nor any nominations made except that presented by the Pulpit Committee. The vote shall be on the adoption, after discussion, of the report of the Pulpit Committee, and the question put by the moderator shall be "Shall the report of the Pulpit Committee be received, and its recommendation adopted?" If three-fourths (3/4)

of the members present, voting by ballot, vote to approve the Pulpit Committee's recommendation, the moderator shall declare the nominee 'called'. Should the Pulpit Committee's recommendation fail to receive the necessary three-fourths (3/4) vote, the moderator shall declare the nominee 'not called', and shall refer the matter to the Pulpit Committee for further choice. The meeting shall then be adjourned without debate.

3. TERMINATION OF THE PASTOR

The Pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or by the Church's request. At least one-month notice must be given.

II. CHURCH STAFF

The Church shall call or employ such staff members as the Church shall need. A job description shall be written by the Personnel Committee when the need for a staff member is determined. Staff members, other than the ministerial staff, shall be employed by the Personnel Committee.

The ministerial staff shall be recommended to the Church by a Search Committee that includes the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee and employed by Church action,

All employees are governed by the Personnel Committee and are subject to the Policies and Procedures of the FBC Personnel Handbook.

Staff employment (with the exception of the Pastor) may be terminated with a two (2) week notice by the staff member or by the Personnel Committee, with a two (2) week notice to the employee,

III. DEACONS

1. In accordance with the meaning of the work and practice of the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church. The task of the Deacons is to serve with the Pastor and staff in performing pastoral and ministry tasks, to proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, to care for Church members and other persons in the community, and to work with the Pastor and staff to engage the Church to be a community of worship, discipleship, and mission.
2. The number of Deacons shall be contingent on the growth of the Church. Any increase or decrease in number shall be recommended by the current Deacon body.

3. Persons shall be considered for the Office of Deacon based on a personal commitment to Christ without regard to age, sex, or marital status.
4. One-third (1/3) of the Deacons shall be elected each year and they shall serve for three (3) years. Each Deacon will be a member of the Church. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the Church may elect to fill the unexpired term. After serving a term of three (3) years, no Deacon shall be eligible for re-election until the lapse of at least one (1) year.
5. The Deacons shall be organized as a unit, with Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary. They shall meet regularly and may organize themselves as they desire for efficiency in service.
6. All ministries of the Church will be reviewed by the Pastor and the Chair of the Deacons to determine if they align with the vision of the Church. Individuals or groups who wish to pursue new ministries shall write a short description of the proposed ministry, when and where it will occur, how it fits the vision of the Church and the contact person. All ministry descriptions will be reviewed periodically by the Pastor and the staff to ensure continuity of purpose and alignment with the vision and ongoing activities of other ministries for the Church. All ministries must follow standard procedure for procuring resources. Updated descriptions will be available to the congregation.
7. Deacons will actively identify potential leaders and make recommendations to the Nominating Committee.
8. The Chair of the Deacons and the Chair of the Church Council will present nominations to fill the vacancies of the Nominating Committee at the first Business Meeting of each new year.
9. The Chair of the Deacons and the Chair of the Personnel Committee will evaluate the Pastor every May as provided in the Personnel Handbook.
10. Communion is an act of Worship led by the Pastor and Deacons. It is symbolic in nature and commemorates with bread and up all that is meant to draw together faith that Christ took upon Himself the weight of our sin on the cross. The Pastor and Deacons will schedule and serve Communion. Communion is most often served by passing trays of bread and the cup among the congregation. The Pastor and Deacons, however, are free to serve it in other ways that carry through it's meaning. Communion served at First Baptist Church is for all people who look to Jesus Christ as their Savior and seek to follow Him.

IV. MODERATOR

The Moderator shall be the Pastor and will preside at all business meetings of church. In the absence of the Pastor, the Chairperson of the Deacons shall preside. In the absence of both, the Clerk shall call the Church to order and a Moderator pro-tem shall be elected.

V. CLERK

The Clerk shall be elected annually by the Church from the Church membership. The Clerk shall oversee all actions of the Church, except as otherwise herein noted. The Clerk shall oversee the register of the names of members, with dates of admission, transfer or death, together with a record of baptisms. The Clerk shall issue letters of transfer, voted by the Church, preserve and file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these By-Laws the Pastor will meet with the Clerk each January to review their responsibilities according to the By-Laws.

The Clerk may delegate some of the clerical responsibility to the Church Office Manager. All Church records are Church property and should be filed in the Church office.

The Clerk shall take the minutes of all Business Meetings. The Clerk shall maintain an up-to-date copy of this Constitution and By-Laws with all amendments. This copy shall be kept in the Church office.

VI. TREASURER

The Church shall elect annually a Church Treasurer from the Church membership. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to oversee, receive, preserve, and make payment, upon receipt of vouchers approved by the proper authority, all money, or things of value paid or given to the Church, keeping always an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Upon presentation of the annual report at the end of each fiscal year, and its approval by the auditing committee, and its acceptance and approval by the Church, the same shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Church Clerk, who shall keep and preserve it as a part of the permanent records of the Church. The Pastor will meet with the Treasurer each January to review the responsibilities according to the By-Laws.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the oversight of an accurate, current, personal contribution record for each constituent of the Church. Reports of these contributions shall be mailed at least semi-annually to the Church constituency.

The Treasurer shall assign duties or delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to the Church Office Manager as he or she deems necessary.

VII. TRUSTEES

Six (6) Trustees, one third (1/3) of whom shall be elected each year to serve for three (3) years, will hold in trust as the corporate officers the property of the Church until their successors shall be elected. The Trustees shall be staffed by members of the Church. They shall have the actual care of the place of worship and maintenance of the grounds and buildings. They shall have no authority to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the Church authorizing such action.

ARTICLE THREE – COMMITTEES AND COORDINATION GROUPS

All Church committee members shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church unless otherwise indicated in the description following. The Committee members shall serve on a three (3) year rotation system with one-third (1/3) to be elected each year.

1. CHURCH COUNCIL

- a. The Church Council, in consultation with the Pastoral staff, is the primary planning organization of First Baptist Church. The Church Council shall have as its regular members the Chair, the Pastoral staff, the Chairs and/or Directors of all committees (Finance, Trustees, Nominating, Personnel, Worship, Discipleship, Missions as well as the Deacons and the Sunday School Director), and others as deemed proper by the Council.
- b. In planning for growth and ministry, the Church Council shall formulate and recommend to the congregation objectives and goals.
- c. The Church Council will meet at least four (4) times a year with committees and organizations tasked to meet between Council meetings. The Council Chair may call for extra meetings as may be deemed necessary.
- d. The Church Council will review yearly its program organizations and ministries and make recommendations for changes.
- e. To coordinate the many activities of the Church, the Church Council will oversee a master Church calendar that schedules major events, Council and organizational meetings and any other activities where the use of the building is involved. They will keep the office staff updated on the master calendar to ensure the usage of the building is not double booked and all appropriate paperwork on file in the Church office.

- f. The Church Council shall give needed reports in scheduled Business Meetings and refer to the congregation for a vote any action and/or motion authorized in the Regular or Special Business Meeting.
- g. The Chair of the Church Council and the Chair of the Deacons will present nominations for the vacancies on the Nominating Committee at the first Business Meeting of the year.

2. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee coordinates 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. They will work with all program directors, as necessary for recruiting volunteers for open positions. The Nominating Committee shall be staffed by members of the Church. Persons needed to fill open Nominating Committee positions will be solicited from the church by the Church Council/Deacons and voted into their positions at the first Business Meeting of the year.

3. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee shall:

- a. Recruit, interview, and employ qualified persons to fill all staff vacancies and other staff positions, except for the ministerial staff.
- b. Recommend salaries, benefits, hours, and policies regarding vacations, holidays, sick leave, etc., to the Church through the appropriate committee.
- c. Provide written job descriptions for all personnel.
- d. Process problems relating to employee-employer relationships that the Pastor is unable to resolve, bringing recommendations to the Church when necessary.
- e. Survey the need for additional employees and new positions.
- f. The Personnel Committee shall be staffed by members of the Church.

4. FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee shall consist of the Treasurer and six (6) other members selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church for a three (3) year term. The Finance Committee will be staffed by members of the Church. The Pastor and the Chairperson of the Deacons

will select the Chairperson of the Finance Committee (annually). The ministerial staff are ex-officio members of the committee,

Duties include developing and recommending a Church budget, planning and directing the budget subscription, and conducting studies and making recommendations concerning proposed expenditures not included in the budget. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer or the Chairperson of the Finance Committee to present to the Church Council at each monthly meeting a report of receipts and disbursements at the bi-annual business meetings of the Church.

The annual budget shall be presented for discussion to the Church Council and subsequently provided to each Church member one (1) week before presentation for a vote of approval.

Furthermore, the Finance Committee shall review expenditures in terms of approved budget allocations and adjust as necessary to maintain the good credit of the Church; establish procedures for handling offerings, including counting methods; develop and recommend to the Church individuals to conduct an annual audit of all financial records.

In addition, the Finance Committee shall develop and recommend an overall stewardship, information and education plan for the Church.

IV. ALL OTHER COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONAL GROUPS

All committees and organizational groups not specifically described in this document shall be created and maintained in the Programs and Ministries of First Baptist Church document as noted in Article 2, Section 3 – Deacons.

ARTICLE FOUR – PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

All organizations of the Church shall be under Church control. All officers shall be members of the Church and shall be elected by and report regularly to the Church.

1. DISCIPLESHIP

The tasks of the Discipleship Committee shall be to:

- i. Teach the biblical revelation
- ii. Reach the prospects for the Church.

- iii. Lead Church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily
- iv. Provide organization and leadership for special projects of the Church.
- v. Provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination.

The Discipleship Committee will organize the work of discipleship through the Sunday School, Home Groups, retreats and other means thought appropriate to meet the task assigned to it.

II. SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School shall have a Director of Sunday School and two (2) Assistant Directors to be nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Church.

The Sunday School Director will report to the Church the status of the Sunday School at each Business Meeting.

The Sunday School Directors will be members of the Church Council.

The Sunday School Officers will, in conjunction with the Discipleship Committee shall:

- a. Manage the organization of Sunday School classes
- b. Identify and recruit teachers for existing and new classes
- c. Budget for, distribute and see that required literature is provided
- d. See that up-to-date Bible Study Membership and Attendance is reported to the Church staff
- e. Work with teacher training and the use of a variety of materials in classes

III. WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee shall be under the direction of the Minister of Worship in cooperation with the Church Music Council. The council (organist, pianist, and choir directors), shall enlist such leadership as needed.

The music tasks shall be to:

- a. Teach music.
- b. Train persons to lead, sing, and play music.
- c. Provide music in the Church and community.
- d. Provide and interpret information regarding the Church and the denomination.

IV. MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee seeks to discover possibilities for local mission projects, shares findings with the Church, and serves the Church in establishing and conducting mission projects. Additionally, they shall teach missions, support world missions through prayers and gifts, and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination.

ARTICLE FIVE – CHURCH MEETINGS

1. WORSHIP SERVICES

The Church shall meet regularly for worship services as decided by the Church. These services shall be for the entire membership of the Church and for all people.

Special services shall be held as deemed appropriate by the Pastor and/or the Church Council.

2. BUSINESS MEETINGS

Every member of the First Baptist Church is entitled and encouraged to participate in church Business Meetings by addressing questions to the Chair, proposing or making motions or amendments, and voting on all matters of business.

Twenty-five (25) members shall constitute a quorum for regular and called business meetings of the Church, except for the calling of a Pastor, when one hundred (100) members shall be necessary.

Terms of service will begin in January and run through the calendar year. All committees are to meet in January for orientation.

Business meetings shall be held twice a year, in May and November.

- In so far as possible, all items of business will be announced at least two (2) weeks in advance of each business meeting,
- Roberts Rules of Order, latest edition, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church.

In May, among other business that will be presented, the Nominations Committee will present nominations for election for the Finance Committee and charging it with presenting its budget recommendations for the Church in the November business meeting

In November the Finance Committee will present its recommendations for the Church budget that will go into effect on January 1 of the following year. The November business meeting will be on the first Sunday morning following a combined service of traditional and contemporary worshippers. Any major items of business should be announced, if possible, at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

The first meeting of all committees, church officers and organizations will be held after their election. They will review their responsibilities as defined by the Church By-laws and develop an action plan to accomplish them. The Pastor will review the responsibilities as defined in the By-Laws with the Clerk and the Treasurer.

Special business meetings may be held after due notice is given to the congregation by a combination of methods including U. S. mail, electronic communication, Church bulletin and the Church website at least one (1) week prior to the meeting. The purpose of the Special business meeting will be stated in the notice.

ARTIICLE SIX – AMENDMENTS AND REVIEWS

A change in this Constitution may be made at any regular or special business meeting of the Church, providing such proposed change has been presented in writing to the Church membership at least one (1) month prior to the meeting. Amendments to the Constitution shall be by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present.

Amendments to the By-Laws shall be by a majority vote of the members present at any regular business meeting.

In addition, all documents concerning the governance of the Church shall be reviewed every five (5) years or as needed to ensure the smooth operation of the Church, compliance with Church policies and alignment to Church vision and stated mission. These reviews will be conducted by the Church Council and other individuals appointed by the Church.