

# **CONSTITUTION**

11/24/13

## **PREAMBLE**

For the purpose of preserving and making secure the principles of our faith and to the end that this body be governed in an orderly manner, consistent with the accepted tenets of the missionary Baptist churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the church, and to set forth the relationship of this body to other bodies of the same faith, we do declare and establish this policy.

## **ARTICLE I - NAME**

This body shall be known as the **FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH**.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

Our church exists to reach people of all ages with the love of Jesus Christ, to help each person grow in their personal relationship with Jesus and to develop and empower them for ministry service in the body of Christ.

## **ARTICLE III - ARTICLES OF FAITH**

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any Statement or Article of Faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000. We join ourselves together as a body of believers committed to sharing the good news of salvation to a lost world. We believe that salvation comes by grace through faith in Christ Jesus as Ephesians 2:8-9 remind us in the scripture. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

## **ARTICLE IV - CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been called out and led by the Holy Spirit to follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and 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 joyfully covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We commit to use the Bible as our guide to life and to conduct ourselves in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ. As a result we will contribute cheerfully, generously,

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 nations.

We commit to live out the church's purpose statement which is:

"Our church exists to reach people of all ages with the love of Jesus Christ, to help each person grow in their personal relationship with Jesus and to develop and empower them for ministry service in the body of Christ".

We find the best way to accomplish this purpose is to love God and love people.

If the Lord moves us away from this body of believers, we will unite as soon as possible with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP**

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive 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 1. Admission of Members**

#### **A. Qualifications:**

The membership of this church shall consist of those who have been born again and have followed Jesus our Lord, in scriptural baptism, having been baptized by this church or a church of like faith.

#### **B. Manner of admission:**

1. By baptism upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ.
2. By letter from another church of like faith.
3. By statement of salvation and scriptural baptism.
4. By restoration.

#### **C. New members may be received at any Sunday morning worship service.**

### **Section 2. Duties**

Members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to Christian life, to faithfully attend the services of this church, to give regularly for its support and its causes, and to share in its organized work. The covenant we make with each other shall be as stated in Article IV of this constitution. All active members shall have equal rights and privileges.

### Section 3. Voting Privileges

Every member of the church is entitled to vote in all elections and on all questions submitted to the church, provided the member is present.

### Section 4. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in any of the following ways:

1. By death.
2. Request of Membership Letter by another church of like faith.
3. If a member in good standing requests to be released from his/her covenant obligations to this church or if a disciplinary reason arises the church shall patiently and kindly endeavor to secure their continuance/repentance in its fellowship. Such requests may be granted/deemed necessary and their membership terminated.
4. By a member uniting with another church to which we cannot grant a letter of recommendation.
5. Remaining on the Non-resident Member role for over a one year period.

### Section 5. Inactive Members

For assessment of ministry and compiling the church letter, a member who has attended or initiated contact with the Church within the past year will be considered an active member. A member who has not attended or initiated contact with the Church for a period of one year may be placed on an inactive member roll following an attempt to notify that member in writing of this action.

At six month intervals, the Pastor and deacons will review the membership of the church to identify those members that have not attended at least one Sunday morning worship service during the previous twelve months. A listing of any such members will be prepared. If at all possible, the Pastor or a Deacon will contact (visit, telephone, letter) the member to:

1. Encourage the member to become active.
2. Determine said member's intentions regarding his/her church relationship.
3. Explain that non-attendance will result in the members' being classified as "inactive."
4. Explain that "inactive" members lose their right to vote in business sessions and other church privileges.

If after being contacted by the assigned family Deacon/Pastor, the inactive member does not indicate his/her intention to become active, said name shall be presented in regular business session as a candidate for the "Inactive Members" roll. By the affirmation vote

of the majority of those present and voting, said name will be placed on the “Inactive Members” roll.

Total responsibility of initiating and monitoring this procedure resides with the Pastor and Deacons.

## **ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS**

### **Section 1. Weekly Meetings**

Weekly meetings will be held for worship, teaching, and training.

### **Section 2. Business Meetings**

A regular business meeting will be held each month to discuss the spiritual and material condition of the church.

### **Section 3. Special Business Meetings**

Special business meetings may be held at any time as authorized in the By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE VII - CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **Section 1. Officers**

Officers of this church shall be: all Pastoral staff, Deacons, three trustees, a Clerk, Treasurer, Worship Leader, Sunday Morning Bible Study director, Awana Commander, Women’s Ministry leader, Men’s Ministry leader, Youth Director, Children’s Ministry leader and Preschool Director.

### **Section 2. Departments and Standing Committees**

The functions of this church shall be performed through its officers and the following departments and standing committees: Sunday Morning Bible Study, Women's Ministry, Men’s Ministry, Tellers Committee, Personnel Committee, Church Council and Stewardship Committee.

### **Section 3. Terms of Office and Duties**

Terms of office and duties of the departments and committees shall be as prescribed in the By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE VIII - DISCIPLINE**

Section 1. Rules

Should any unhappy differences arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in Matthew 18.

Section 2. Offenses

Should any case of gross breach of covenant, or of public scandal occur, the Deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense; and if this effort fails, shall report the case to the church.

Section 3. Spirit

All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance; but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

Section 4. Restoration

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation, or upon satisfactory explanation of his/her continued absence.

**ARTICLE IX – ORDINANCES**

Section 1. Ordinances

The ordinances of this church shall be Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Section 2. Observance

The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once each quarter and at such other times as desired by the church. Baptismal services will be conducted as candidates are accepted and when scheduled by the Pastor.

**ARTICLE X - VOTING AND PROCEDURE**

Section 1. Quorum

A minimum of twenty (20) percent of the resident membership shall constitute a quorum, except for calling or dismissing a Pastor. A majority vote of members present and voting shall decide all matters except as otherwise stated in this constitution and in the By-Laws.

Section 2. Refusal

In the case of motions that the chair or moderator considers to be dilatory or frivolous or injurious to the church, he may refuse to allow a vote or postpone the vote until the next meeting unless overruled by the church; a 3/4 majority vote is needed to overrule the moderator.

Section 3. Guide

Robert's Rules of Order - Revised shall be the guide to all business procedure except where the constitution and By-Laws make certain procedure mandatory.

**ARTICLE XI - POLICY AND DOCTRINE**

Section 1. Church Government

The government of this church is vested solely in its membership. It is under the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist Churches. To this end, appropriate By-Laws shall be adopted in order to implement the Baptist doctrine of local autonomous church government.

Section 2. Church Status

This church is incorporated as a non-profit institution.

Section 3. Final Authority

This church accepts the Scripture as its complete and final authority in matters of faith and practice.

**ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. Procedure

This constitution may be changed, repealed, or amended by a 3/4 affirmative vote of those members present and voting. Any member may propose a change or amendment provided he or she does so in a regular business meeting and presents to the church clerk a copy of the change. The proposed change shall be placed in the Sunday Worship Guide at least two times during the next month and attention called to the announcement from the pulpit. The change or amendment will be voted upon at the first regular business meeting after the meeting in which the proposal was made.

**BY-LAWS - PURPOSE**

The purpose of the following set of by-laws is to implement the basic principles set forth in the constitution.

## ARTICLE I – MEETINGS

### Section 1. Meetings of the church shall be as follows:

- A. Services of worship will be held every Sunday morning.
- B. Classes, small groups and other training/fellowship will be held at various times throughout the year. These will be on a regular schedule as dictated by the ministry leaders and church leadership.
- C. Revival services and special worship services will be held as authorized by the church.
- D. Regular business meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of each month. The Pastor, or in his absence, the chairman of Deacons will serve as moderator for all business sessions, regular or special. If both are absent, the church will elect a moderator *pro tempore*.
- E. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor or by the Deacons. At least seven (7) days notice must be given in writing stating the place, time, and purpose of the meeting. Inclusion in the Sunday Worship Guide, will meet this requirement.

### Section 2. The regular monthly business meeting agenda will include, but is not limited to, the following business:

- A. To receive and act upon reports and recommendations from the Church Council, church officers, or church program organizations.
- B. To receive and act upon reports and recommendations from those standing committees required to make periodic reports to the church.
- C. To review the financial condition of the church as presented in the monthly financial statement.
- D. To review the current status of church membership, resident and non-resident, and act upon requests for church letters.
- E. To review the current status of church goals, special offerings and incomplete projects.
- F. To give opportunity for presentation of new business.

### Section 3.

The program of the church and its regular and stated meetings as outlined herein shall take precedence over all meetings and programs of any organizations within or without the church.

## **ARTICLE II - CHURCH OFFICERS**

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

### Section 1. Pastor

#### A. Duties

1. The Pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff in performing their tasks. A major concern of the Pastor is to perform pastoral responsibilities. The Pastor is the leader of worship, proclamation, education, and pastoral ministries. The Pastor shall be responsible for seeking the evangelist for revival services after discussion between Pastor and Deacons and will present the evangelist to the church for acceptance.
2. The Pastor shall have charge of the worship and prayer services and shall preside at all business meetings of the church except where the Pastor is personally involved. In the absence of the Pastor, the chairman of the Deacons or chairman *pro tempore* shall preside.
3. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and organizations, unless otherwise specified, and shall appoint any committee not otherwise provided for.

#### B. Election

1. 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 shall be given.
2. A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable Pastor, and their recommendations will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three fourths of those present being necessary for a choice.

### C. Absences

1. The Pastor shall have two (2) weeks paid vacation each year. After five (5) years the Pastor will receive three (3) weeks; after ten (10) years the Pastor will receive four (4) weeks. The Pastor will not miss more than four (4) Sundays during any calendar year for the purpose of vacation or evangelistic campaigns. Vacation time should be arranged to be completed during weekdays after the four above Sundays have been used.
2. When the Pastor is called away from the church for evangelistic campaign(s), he may with pay, serve fourteen (14) days without prior vote of the church.
3. If called to military duty, he may serve fourteen (14) days with pay, and without prior vote of the church.
4. The Pastor shall announce to the church his estimated time of departure for the above activities at least thirty (30) days in advance, unless agreed upon by church action.

### D. Termination

1. The Pastor shall be called indefinitely. However, should grievances arise a petition for the resignation of the Pastor, containing the signatures of at least 25% of the total resident membership must be presented to the church. The chairman of the Deacons shall then call, as soon as possible, a special meeting of Deacons at which the spokesman for the group and the Pastor will be present. After an opportunity of airing grievances and prayerfully seeking to follow the will of God, and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Deacons will vote regarding the petition. A majority affirmative vote of the Deacons will cause the petition to be presented to the church to be acted upon. The chairman of Deacons will then call for a special business meeting of the church to be held on a Wednesday evening giving at least seven days prior written notice to the membership. The chairman of the Deacons shall preside over the meeting. Fifty (50) percent of the resident membership shall constitute a quorum. An affirmative vote of 75% of those present and voting to accept the petition for the resignation of the Pastor, will mean that the Pastor's services have terminated and he will vacate facilities within thirty (30) days. He will be so notified in writing by the chairman of the Deacons and be advanced his regular salary as outlined in the budget equal to thirty days pay.
2. In case of the resignation by the Pastor, he must give the church thirty (30) days written notice, unless agreed upon by church action.

## Section 2. Church Staff

This church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined. Vocational staff members other than the Pastor shall be recommended to the church by the Personnel Committee and voted on by church membership.

## Section 3. Deacons

### A. Qualifications

1. For a man to qualify as a Deacon, he must have first proved himself to be sound in doctrine, loyal to the practices and works of this church, a tither, pure in speech, and exemplary in deportment.
2. He must possess the practical and spiritual qualifications as set forth in the New Testament. (Ref. 1 Timothy 3 and Acts 6)

### B. Number

1. There should be a minimum of three (3) Deacons, if qualified men are available.
2. Additional Deacons may be elected to the body as the church directs.

### C. Selection

1. The Pastor and active Deacons will each year consider all the resident male members over twenty-one years old as to whether they possess all of the qualifications of a Deacon as outlined in Item A, Section 3 of these by-laws.
2. Prior to the election, at least one week's notice must be given in the Sunday bulletin listing the names of those being considered.
3. A ballot shall be prepared by the Deacons listing the names of those they recommend to serve the church as a Deacon. Between the August and September regular business meetings on a Sunday morning the active resident membership shall cast a secret ballot indicating their acceptance or rejection of each man recommended to serve as a Deacon. Each man receiving a majority of votes in favor of his election will be considered as elected.
4. The Deacons shall determine the area of service the newly elected Deacons will fill.

### D. Term of Service

1. All Deacons will serve a full three-year term from the time of election, except as follows: upon death, resignation, or transfer from this area; and availability of qualified men.
2. The church will elect a qualified man as soon as possible to fill any vacancy. This will be accomplished three months prior to the vacancy when possible in order to allow the new Deacon an opportunity for training and to give continuity to the Deacon body.
3. Deacons completing a three-year term will be inactive one year before becoming eligible for re-election.

#### E. Duties

1. In accordance with the meaning of the word and practice of the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the church. They shall have the oversight of the discipline of the church being ever guided by the principles as set forth in Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15. The Deacons will be free to call upon any member of the church to aid in any manner.
2. When the Pastor must be absent from the pulpit and a supply Pastor has not been provided for by him, the Deacons will secure a pulpit supply preacher. If circumstances permit, the Deacons will seek the advice and counsel of the Pastor prior to contacting anyone to fill the pulpit. The Deacons will have authority to offer the pulpit supply preacher a reasonable remuneration in line with the current budget without action of the church. The Deacons will be responsible for securing a supply preacher when the church is without a Pastor prior to the election of a pulpit committee. A supply preacher will not serve more than thirty (30) days without the approval of the church.
3. The Deacons will assist the Pastor in the administration of the church ordinances.

### Section 4. Other Church Officers

#### A. Trustee

1. The church shall elect at least three active members to serve as trustees. Their term of office shall be for three (3) years. Vacancies will be filled as they occur. Having served as a trustee during a previous term will not disqualify a member for re-election.
2. The trustee shall be provided by law and action of the church, hold in trust the title of all property of the church and shall represent the church in all matters

of legal responsibility regarding the purchase and disposal of church property. They shall execute all legal papers relating to the church and to the community as the church may direct. The trustees shall perform additional duties that the church may assign.

3. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action; neither shall they have any control over the use of the church property except by the vote of the church.

#### B. Clerk

The church clerk shall keep permanent minutes of business meeting proceedings and a register of the names of the members, including those who join through the missions, with the dates of admission, dismissal or death, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church.

#### C. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

1. The Treasurer, and in his absence the assistant Treasurer, shall have general supervision of the collection of church funds and shall be responsible for disbursement of church funds.
2. The Treasurer shall cause all the financial records and accounts of the church to be audited annually by competent auditors and shall present or cause to be presented to the church the written report or reports of any audit so made.

#### D. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall handle the clerical work of the finances of the church. This includes the preparation of checks for signatures; posting the amounts of gifts directly from the envelopes to the individual statements; preparing and mailing out individual member's quarterly statements with amounts contributed; making bookkeeping entries; and preparing and typing the monthly financial statements.

#### E. Church Council

##### 1. Definition

- a. The Church Council is an advisory and correlating agency through which all organizations and committees may coordinate their activities into one harmonious program of work.

- b. It assists the congregation by coordinating suggested actions to secure maximum effort, and by making suggestions to prevent overlapping in program plans before they are recommended to the congregation.
- c. It is not an authoritative or administrative group.

## 2. Membership

- a. The Church Council shall be composed of the Pastor as Chairman, the Worship Leader, Chairman of the Deacons, Sunday Morning Bible Study Director, Awana Commander, Women's Ministry leader, Men's Ministry leader, Church Clerk, Chairman of Trustees, Children's Ministry leader, Senior Adult Ministry leader and Youth Director.
- b. After the membership of the church has grown to 100 resident members, two at-large members should be added to the Church Council by vote of the congregation.
- c. Persons filling the positions indicated automatically become members of the Church Council.

## 3. Organization

The Pastor shall serve as chairman, and the Chairman of the Deacons shall serve as vice-chairman.

## 4. Meetings

- a. The Church Council shall meet monthly.
- b. The Council shall determine the time of their monthly meeting.

## 5. Duties

- a. Plan the church calendar of activities for each church year and publish a monthly calendar of activities.
- b. Formulate and recommend to the congregation, suggested church objectives and goals.
- c. Develop and recommend to the congregation, strategies for reaching church goals.

- d. Review and coordinate suggested program plans and actions of church officers, organizations, and committees; and provide for adequate communications among church officers, organizations and committees.
- e. Review and report as appropriate to the congregation, the use of resources in terms of the needs of church programs as they work toward the achievement of the objectives and goals of the church.

### **ARTICLE III – CHURCH FINANCE**

#### **Section 1.**

This church shall follow the unified budget plan in its program of finance. Receipts from all sources shall be channeled into one treasury. The budget of the church shall be so defined that records of all expenditures and distributions of the church and its related organizations shall be adequately provided for.

#### **Section 2.**

The church should contribute at least ten (10) per cent of its gross receipts, excluding designated money, to missions through the Ohio Baptist Associations and the Cooperative Program. The exact amount will be determined by the annual budget.

#### **Section 3.**

The financial program of the church is viewed completely when this article is considered along with the duties outlined for the office of Treasurer and Stewardship Committee.

#### **Section 4.**

Organization heads shall approve purchases prior to submission to the Stewardship Committee.

#### **Section 5.**

In addition to other duties assigned by the church, the Stewardship Committee shall be charged with the responsibility for budget planning, promotion, and budget education the church would deem necessary.

### **ARTICLE IV - LICENSING AND ORDAINING**

#### **Section 1.**

Any member may be licensed to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, who has stated he feels the call of God to the work of the ministry, and receives two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting in a regular business meeting.

A licensed minister may be ordained if he has been called by a Southern Baptist church or mission to serve as Pastor. He must be examined by a council of local Southern Baptist pastors who will report to the church on the candidate's qualifications. If found qualified, the church will decide by ballot whether or not he should be ordained. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of those members present and voting at the special business meeting is necessary for ordination.

## **ARTICLE V – AMENDMENTS**

### **Section 1.**

These by-laws may be changed, repealed, or amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting, except the part that deals with the calling or ordaining of a Pastor, which requires three-fourths affirmative vote of those members present and voting. Any member may propose a change or amendment provided he/she does so in a regular business meeting and presents to the church clerk, a copy of the change. The proposed change shall be placed in the Sunday Worship Guide at least two (2) times during the next month, and attention called to the announcement from the pulpit. The change or amendment will be voted upon at the first regular business meeting after the meeting in which the proposal was made.

## **ARTICLE VI - FACILITY/CHURCH GROUNDS**

### **Section 1.**

Special use of the church grounds or facility (classrooms/gym) is reserved for active members with prior approval from the Pastor and trustees. Any member given approval for a special event is responsible for complete clean up and set up back to the original configuration. All core ministry activities take precedent and have priority over special requests. The church reserves the right to deny any request for any reason up to and including weddings, personal parties and community events.

### **Section 2.**

Alcoholic beverages of any kind are prohibited on all church grounds and in all facilities.