

Bylaws
Of
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Jefferson City, Tennessee
Originally Adopted, November 14, 2004
Revised on January 15, 2006
Revised again on January 17, 2016
Revised again on January 22, 2017
Revised again on April 23, 2017
Revised again on October 17, 2021

PREAMBLE

A. History. On May 8, 1841, Black Oak Grove Baptist Church and Oakland Baptist Church met at Mossy Creek Ironworks to merge and become one. This church was named Mossy Creek Baptist Church, which became First Baptist Church of Jefferson City on January 8, 1902, when the town changed its name. First Baptist Church has been incorporated since November 18, 1918. The charter filed with the State of Tennessee is the operative legal “constitution.”

B. Organization. The First Baptist Church of Jefferson City is an organized body of baptized believers, equal in rank and privilege. The authority for decisions of the church rests in the hands of the church members. The church may delegate authority to staff members, corporate officers or church committees, but all actions are subject to review by the church as a whole. The pastor, church staff, members, deacons and officers elected by the church are all servants of the Lord and of the church. No individual or group has any authority to act for the church without the church’s authorization. The church recognizes no authority over it other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. Purpose. The First Baptist Church of Jefferson City recognizes the Bible as the inspired Word of God and its guide for ministry. Its purpose is to seek and to follow God’s will and to develop ministries that serve as a channel for God to work out His will through the members of this church. By providing opportunities for the corporate worship of God (including the regular observance of the ordinances), the church acknowledges that its purpose must be aligned with God’s eternal purpose.

Mission is at the heart of all church ministries, a mission that includes benevolent ministry and evangelism to persons at home and abroad. Additionally, the church seeks to accomplish its purpose by providing programs of Bible study and Christian development. Believing that God’s purpose is not accomplished in a vacuum, this church seeks to cooperate with other churches and organizations whose purposes are consistent with the purpose of this church.

D. Effect. Upon adoption, these bylaws shall supersede all previous bylaws and/or constitutions, such previous documents being hereby revoked in full.

ARTICLE I
Name and Privileges

Section 1. This church shall be known as First Baptist Church of Jefferson City, Inc., located at 1610 Russell Avenue, Jefferson City, Tennessee. It is a non-profit organization incorporated under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Tennessee.

Section 2. On all matters that come before the church for action, each member is entitled to one vote.

ARTICLE II
Church Membership

Section 1. Definition of Membership

Membership of this church shall consist only of those persons who have made a public profession of their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord and have subsequently been baptized. The membership reserves the right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Methods of Becoming a Member

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

- (1) By profession of faith in Christ as Savior and by requesting baptism. The mode of baptism administered by this church shall be immersion unless the candidate is physically unable to be immersed. In such cases the mode of baptism will be left to the pastor's discretion.
- (2) By the transfer of membership from another Baptist church.
- (3) By statement of a previous conversion experience and baptism. If the candidate is coming from another denomination, any question regarding the candidate's previous baptism shall be settled by the pastor in consultation with the candidate.
- (4) In absentia. When the person desiring membership cannot be present for valid reasons, he or she may be presented by a family member or a close friend.
- (5) Watch Care: Designed for persons (such as students) who desire the fellowship and support of a church without moving their church letter (voting privileges do not come with watch care).
- (6) Associate Member: For persons who retain two homes and are in this area for only a part of the year; membership can be left at their home church and can, for the time in the local area, be a member at First Baptist Church (voting privileges do not come with associate membership).

Section 3. Rights of Members

Every member of the church is entitled to one vote in all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in a business meeting. Ratification of all questions shall require a simple majority except where otherwise indicated. All voting shall be conducted as described in Article III.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) By death of the member.
- (2) By request of transfer of letter to another church.
- (3) Erasure upon request or proof of membership in another church or denomination.

Section 5. Discipline

The basic disciplinary purpose of this church shall be to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other ministerial staff members and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemptive rather than punitive action will be the primary attitude governing the relationships between members. Should some serious condition arise that would cause a member to become a detriment to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem, in keeping with Matthew 18. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by 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 (2/3) vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership.

ARTICLE III Organizations, Ordinances and Meetings

Section 1. The church provides meetings and organizations for worship, education, evangelism and benevolence ministries.

Section 2. The ordinances of the church shall be the Lord's Supper and baptism. The Lord's Supper and baptism shall be observed at such times as determined by the ministerial staff. All believers are invited to participate as our church observes these ordinances.

Section 3. The regular business meetings of the church shall be held quarterly, the third Sunday of January, April, July and October. If circumstances necessitate a change in this schedule reasonable notice will be provided to the membership. Financial, membership, and reports from major organizations, such as Sunday School, Music and Mission Groups will be presented at these meetings.

Section 4. Except as otherwise set forth by the bylaws, the pastor or the trustees may request called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A notice of at least seven (7) days will be given for the called business meeting with the exception of matters that require immediate attention.

Section 5. All questions shall be settled by a majority of those members voting unless a different percentage is dictated by these bylaws or by Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 6. Participating and voting by remote means. If the Church Advisory Council determines that an emergency situation exists, they may arrange for church members who cannot attend a business meeting to participate and vote by remote means. In such situations, the Church Advisory Council will determine the process for an emergency vote.

Section 7. All questions of procedure not provided for in these bylaws shall be determined according to the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order. An abbreviated edition of Robert's Rules of order may be provided to the officers, for clarification.

ARTICLE IV Church Year and Corporate Officers

Section 1. The church fiscal year shall begin January 1 of each year and continue through December 31.

Section 2. The trustees shall function as the legal representatives of the church. There shall be three (3) trustees elected by the church, who shall be resident members of the church. In addition to their corporate duties (which shall always be subject to the authority of the church membership), the trustees will be responsible for acquisition of church property. Trustees shall serve three-year terms with one member rotating off each year. Nomination for trustees shall be made by the Committee on Committees at or before the trustee term of office each year. In making nominations for trustees, the Committee on Committees shall nominate a chairperson and vice chairperson to be elected at the same meeting.

Section 3. The chairperson and vice chairperson of the trustees shall constitute the corporate officers of the church bearing the same titles. The church clerk shall hold the corporate office of secretary. When the signatures of corporate officers are required, any two of the above corporate officers (chairperson, vice chairperson or secretary) may sign legal documents obligating the church upon any actions authorized by the church membership.

ARTICLE V Pastor, Ministerial Staff and Church Staff

Section 1. Pastor

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor shall lead the congregation, church committees, and program organizations of the church. Along with the Personnel Committee, the pastor shall be responsible for the supervision of the ministerial staff and the church staff; however, he or she may delegate such responsibilities as he or she deems appropriate for effective organization and expedient operation. The pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he or she works with the deacons, church committees and the ministerial staff to lead the church in the performance of its tasks:

- (1) To engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and proclamation;
- (2) To proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers;
- (3) To 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. The vote to extend a call shall take place at a special business meeting called for that purpose. Notice of at least seven (7) days shall be given of such meeting through public announcements at prior services and publication in any regular church newsletter distributed to the membership.

A pastor search committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor. Formation of the Pastor Search Committee shall be as follows: The Committee on Committees will select nine (9) members of the church to be nominated in business meeting for approval.

Upon formation, the Pastor Search Committee will exercise all diligence in its task. The Committee on Committees will select the chairperson who shall report the committee's progress to the congregation. The chairperson of the search committee will name a vice chairperson and secretary.

The recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring only one name at a time to the church for consideration. Election shall be by ballot, and an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those voting shall constitute a call and election of the pastor.

The pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the resignation of the pastor or by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members at a business meeting called for that purpose by the trustees.

Section 2. Ministerial Staff

The ministerial staff shall be those ministerial personnel elected by the membership of the church at a business meeting. A job description shall be written when the need for such a staff member is determined.

The Committee on Committees will be responsible for forming the search committee to fill any such vacancies, permanent or interim, with guidance and consultation from the pastor, ministerial staff, Church Advisory Council and those committees working most closely with the ministerial staff position that has been vacated.

Permanent ministerial staff members will be presented to the church by search committee. The recommendation of that search committee will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring only one name at a time to the church for consideration. Election shall be by ballot, and an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those voting shall constitute a call and election of the ministerial staff member.

A permanent ministerial staff member shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the resignation of the staff member or by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members at a business meeting called for that purpose by the Personnel Committee.

Section 3. Church Staff

As previously stated, the pastor and the Personnel Committee are responsible for supervision of the church staff, but may delegate such duties as deemed necessary. The Personnel Committee is responsible for filling non-ministerial vacancies in the church staff in consultation with the ministerial staff members and/or committees with which the vacant staff position most closely works. Recommendations for resignations and terminations of church staff members will be the responsibility of the Personnel Committee.

ARTICLE VI
Deacons, Other Church Officials, Committees and Teams

Section 1. Deacons

The deacons are charged with ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of church families. Through their personal example and compassionate service, they provide spiritual leadership to the church and facilitate harmony and unity within the church body.

The number of deacons elected each year shall be based on the number of family units in the church so that each deacon is responsible for approximately 10 families. Deacon terms shall be staggered so that one-third of the deacons rotates off each year. Deacons may be either male or female. They must be at least 21 years of age and should have been members of this church for at least one year.

Deacons shall be elected in the following manner. Beginning on the first Sunday in September, church members will be invited to nominate candidates to serve as deacons. These nominations must be submitted in writing on the form provided by the church. Nominations will be accepted in the church office through the end of the month. No member may nominate a candidate without first getting that candidate's permission. Once nominated, the church assumes that the candidate will serve if elected.

On the first Sunday in October a sample ballot of deacon nominees will be available to all church members. On the second Sunday in October the deacon election shall take place following the morning worship service. Those deacons who receive the highest number of votes will fill the current full-term. Once elected, deacons will begin their term of office on November 1 of the year elected.

Once elected, a deacon shall serve a three-year term. Deacons may serve consecutive terms if elected again by the church. Newly elected deacons who have not been previously ordained shall be ordained by the church. Deacons who have been previously ordained in this church or in another church of like faith need not be re-ordained.

Deacon officers shall be elected at the first meeting after new deacons are elected. The current group of officers shall present a slate of nominees to be voted on by the entire deacon body.

Section 2. Moderator, Moderator-elect, Parliamentarian, Church Clerk and Assistant Church Clerk

The congregation will elect a Church Moderator, Moderator-Elect, Parliamentarian, Church Clerk and Assistant Church Clerk for a one-year term. The church Committee on Committees shall present nominees for election before their term starts. The church clerk shall keep a record of all the actions of the church and shall see that such records are secured in the church office.

These offices are eligible to be elected to successive terms.

Section 3. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers

The treasurer and assistant treasurers shall be elected at a business meeting of the church, before the treasurers' term shall begin, on January 1. The recommendation shall come from the Committee on Committees. The treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Budget and Finance Committee. The term of office shall be three (3) years.

Section 4. Church Committees and Teams

A Church Committee is a group of church members elected for a governance function and which establishes and oversees policies, actions and business affairs of the church.

The necessary committees and their duties for the work of the church shall be approved by the church. A list of the members of the committees shall be printed and made available at the April meeting. Committees shall be added or deleted by vote of the church upon recommendation of the Committee on Committees. All committee members, officers and teachers of the church shall be presented for election before the term of office is to begin. The term of those elected shall begin immediately upon their election.

The Committee on Committees shall be responsible for maintaining job descriptions for all approved committees. At least one ministerial staff member shall be assigned as a liaison to each approved committee.

A Ministry Action Team is a group of church members along with regular attenders, who actively serve an area of ministry in First Baptist Church which is not currently being addressed by a committee. The formation of a Ministry Action team will be approved by the Church Advisory Council.

Section 5. Terms of Office and Election Procedures

A. The term of officers and church program leadership shall be one year, unless specifically stated otherwise in these bylaws or approved by the church membership.

B. All church officers, church program leaders, committee members and team leaders shall be elected in a church business meeting.

C. The Committees on Committees shall annually present a slate of nominees for all committee and leadership vacancies before their term of office begins. Nominations shall also be open from the floor. All committee members and team leaders shall be resident members of First Baptist Church of Jefferson City.

1. Each church committee shall have a designated number of members elected for a designated term except as otherwise specified in these bylaws.

2. Vacancies occurring during the year shall be filled by recommendation to the church by the Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committees shall bring a nomination of an individual at a regular business meeting of the church.

D. The Nominating Committee/ Committee on Committees shall bring to the church, at a business meeting, prior to the beginning of the program year, nominations for all church officers and church program leadership for the following program year. The term of those elected shall begin immediately upon their election, unless indicated otherwise.

E. Nothing herein shall prevent any member from nominating other persons for any office or committee.

F. All nominees shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast at said business meeting.

G. Church program, committee, and other vacancies which occur during the year may be filled by the church membership as necessary in regular business meetings or special meetings called for that purpose.

ARTICLE VII Church Advisory Council

Section 1. The Church Advisory Council shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations.

The primary function of the Church Advisory 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. The Church Advisory Council is not a policy making body. The council will serve as a catalyst and coordinator for the purpose of leading the church in the performance of its ministries, in keeping with church approved priorities.

Section 2. The members of the Church Advisory Council shall be as follows: members of the church ministerial staff, deacon chair, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, chair of the Property and Transportation Committee, chair of the Personnel Committee, chair of the Missions and Evangelism Team, chair of the Committee on Committees, Sunday Bible Study Coordinator, Church Administrator, Moderator, Church Clerk and 3 members elected at large. Other representative staff or leaders of the church may be added, at the recommendation of the Church Advisory Council and approval of the church body.

The chairman of the Advisory Council shall not be a church staff person and the chair shall be elected on an annual basis from the non-staff Council membership.

ARTICLE VIII Offerings

Opportunity shall be given in suitable ways for the members and congregation to give tithes and offerings to the church. Any offering given to the church must be contributed for causes endorsed by the church. Information about all contributors shall be kept confidential. The specifics of handling this procedure shall be determined by the Teller Committee.

ARTICLE IX Cooperating Relationships

Because the church is a cooperating Baptist church, the church shall undertake to send messengers to the conventions or bodies it supports. Any church member who notifies the church office of his or her intention to be a messenger to any given denominational meeting shall be deemed a duly elected messenger from our church. The church's quota of messengers will be filled on a "first come" basis until our quota is filled. Any person expressing intent to be a messenger after the quota is filled will be a substitute messenger and will be activated to messenger status if one of the previously qualified messengers is unable to serve.

ARTICLE X Miscellaneous

Section 1. The church may not purchase or lease real property, borrow money, or voluntarily encumber its assets without approval of a majority of members voting at a regular business meeting or at a special called business meeting for that purpose.

Section 2. Unless the church is dealing with a matter requiring immediate attention, no motion pertaining to the expenditure of church monies in excess of \$1,000 or motions affecting church procedures are eligible for final approval at any business meeting unless notice of said motion has been given to the membership in the regular church newsletter or other means. The determination of “a matter requiring immediate attention” shall be made by a consensus of the church moderator and the Trustees.

Section 3. All church financial records shall be audited during the first quarter of every third year by an independent certified public accountant.

ARTICLE XI Amendments

Changes in the bylaws may be made at any regular or called business meeting of the church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting. Copies of proposed amendments shall be made available to the congregation one month prior to the business meeting at which the vote takes place. Amendments to the bylaws shall have the concurrence of two-thirds (2/3) of the members voting at said business meeting.

Amendments to these Bylaws were presented as a motion from the Church Advisory Council, at Church Ministry Night on Sunday, October 17, 2021. This document contains the Bylaws, as amended by vote of the church membership on October 17, 2021.

Members of the Amendment Team: John Burton, chair, Julia Bass, Ray Dalton, Dave McNeely, Kristy Snyder.

Members of the Church Advisory Council: Jean Love, chair, Bill Ellis, John Burton, Clark Measels, Ross Brummett, Ken Morton, Ann Porter, Karen Smith, Chad Hartsock, Ricke Hester, Nnette Measels, Pam Hester, Merci Rowlett.