

**CONSTITUTION
AND
BY-LAWS
OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
LITTLEFIELD, TEXAS
NOVEMBER, 2002**

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

This Constitution is established to preserve the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This Constitution when adopted by the Church shall set aside all past actions as may conflict with this document.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as First Baptist Church of Littlefield, Texas, located at 400 East 6th St., Littlefield, Texas, 79339, and is incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas. First Baptist Church is registered as a non-profit organization.

II. OBJECTIVES

- Reaching others and building believers to love and worship Jesus Christ.

III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. First Baptist Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message, dated 2000.

IV. RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other denominational body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical this church will cooperate with, and support those entities necessary to carry out God's plan at First Baptist Church.

BY-LAWS

I. GOVERNMENT

First Baptist Church is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of spiritual and temporal life of this Church. It shall be governed by the congregation, the officers, and the office of senior pastor.

II. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. **Membership**

The membership of this church shall consist of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been scripturally baptized; acknowledge substantial agreement with the faith, practice, and covenant of this Church; and have been received into the fellowship by regular church action.

Section 2. **Candidacy**

Any person may become a candidate for membership in this Church and may be presented to the Church and voted upon for membership at any regular service in any of the following ways:

- a) By public profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this Church.
- b) Transfer of a letter of membership from another Baptist Church.
- c) Upon a statement of prior conversion and biblical baptism according to policies of this Church.
- d) Restoration to the roll after having been dropped.

Section 3. **Rights of Members**

- a) Every member of the Church is entitled to vote at elections and on all questions submitted to the Church in conference, provided the member is present or special provision has been made by the Church for absentee balloting.
- b) Every member of the Church is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for elective offices of the Church in conformity with Church policies.

Section 4. **Termination of Membership**

Members shall be terminated in the following ways:

- a) Death of the member.
- b) Transfer to another Baptist Church.
- c) Exclusion by action of this Church.
- d) Dropping from the roll on request of the member.
- e) Dropping from the roll those who unite with churches of other faiths.

Section 5. Annual, Quarterly, and Special Meetings of Members

- a) An annual meeting shall be held at the last quarterly business meeting. No notice of annual meetings is required.
- b) A quarterly business meeting will be held on the third Sunday night of one month in each quarter. No notice of such meetings is required.
- c) Special meetings of the members may be called by the pastor, the deacon body, or by 10% of resident members by request in writing. The subject of such special meeting as well as the date, time, and place, shall be given by announcement in the Sunday worship services immediately prior to the special meeting.
- d) The quorum consists of those members who attend the regular or special meetings. Unless otherwise required elsewhere in these by-laws, a majority of the members present are required to vote for a motion to pass.
- e) The most recently revised version of Robert's Rules of Order is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all regular and special business meetings.

III. CHURCH OFFICERS, DEACONS, AND STAFF

Section 1. The officers of this Church shall be members of this Church and shall include:

- a) Pastor
- b) Clerk
- c) Trustees
- d) Treasurer

Section 2. Pastor

- a) The pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church. The pastor will lead the congregation and the staff to perform their tasks. He will be responsible for over-seeing the day to day ministry of the Church. The pastor will serve as moderator at all Church business meetings. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside. The pastor is an ex-officio member of all standing committees.
- b) 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. The election will be announced from the pulpit on a Sunday morning at least one week prior to the election. The election shall be held on a Sunday morning by written ballot, with 3/4 majority of votes necessary for approval.
- c) A Pastor Search Committee shall be elected by the Church to seek out a suitable pastor. The committee shall consist of five (5) persons and two (2) alternates. Where applicable, the spouses of those members selected shall also serve. The committee shall be chosen by the members of the Church.

The election of the committee shall be announced from the pulpit on a Sunday morning at least one week prior to election. The election shall be on a Sunday morning and shall be by written ballot. The committee shall elect its own chairperson. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one prospective name at a time. The recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee shall constitute a nomination.

- d) The pastor may relinquish his office by giving at least two weeks notice to the Church.
- e) A pastor may be dismissed by the Church on the grounds of immoral conduct, preaching or teaching false doctrine, or financial impropriety. Such action shall be accomplished by the same voting procedure as was followed when he was called.
- f) Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor, the Church shall compensate him with severance pay of no less than 1/12th of his annual compensation.

Section 3. Ministerial Staff

- a) Ministerial staff shall be called as the Church deems necessary. Ministerial staff other than the pastor shall be recommended by the Pastor and the Personnel Committee and voted on by the Church.
- b) Non-ministerial staff shall be employed, as the Church deems necessary. Non-ministerial staff shall be recommended by the Pastor and the Personnel Committee.
- c) A written job description shall be afforded to all ministerial and non-ministerial staff members.
- d) A staff member may resign his/her position by giving at least two weeks notice of resignation.
- e) The pastor with the concurrence of a majority of the Personnel Committee at a meeting called for that purpose, with the staff member invited to attend, shall have the authority to terminate the services of ministerial and non-ministerial staff.

Section 4. Deacons

- a) Deacons of the Church shall be ordained to provide spiritual leadership for and service to the fellowship of the Church. They shall guard the unity of the spirit within the Church and shall recommend establishment of policies concerning material interest of the Church and its ministries, subject to the will of the Church. Deacons shall be agents of mercy. Deacons shall be servants to the Church.
- b) The Church Shall elect the number of deacons desired by the Church from time to time. Elections shall be by a 3/4 majority of Church members present by written ballot during a Sunday morning service.
- c) A deacon who submits a written request may become inactive. The deacon body upon a majority vote may request a deacon be removed from active status.
- d) First Baptist Church recognizes deacons for active service from Baptist

- e) Churches of like faith and order. A deacon may be recognized upon completion of a six-month observation period following his membership into this Church. Recognition of an active deacon is by recommendation of the deacon body to the Church. A 3/4 majority vote of the Church members present shall entitle the deacon to serve as part of the deacon body of this Church.
- f) If a question arises concerning the character or actions of a deacon, the matter will be referred to the pastor and the chairman of deacons for review. If action is deemed necessary, the matter will be recommended by the deacon body to the Church. Any action taken shall require a 3/4 majority vote of the members present and voting.

Section 5. **Clerk**

- a) The Church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer.
- b) The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a record of all official actions of the Church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk, in cooperation with the church secretary shall keep a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, transfer of letters and deaths, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk, in cooperation with the church secretary shall issue letters of transfer, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give notice of all meetings where notice is required.
- c) All Church records are Church property and shall be kept in the Church office.

Section 6. **Trustees**

- a) The Church shall elect annually three or more trustees to act for the Church in legal matters.
- b) The trustees shall hold in trust the property of the Church. Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property or service valued in excess of \$1000.00, nor incur any obligation in excess of \$1000.00, without specific vote of the Church authorizing such action.
- c) When signatures are required, at least two trustees shall sign such documents.

Section 7. **Treasurer**

The Church shall elect annually a Church Treasurer who shall serve until a successor has been elected. The treasurer's duties shall be delegated by the Stewardship Committee.

IV. COMMITTEES

First Baptist Church shall elect and maintain various standing and special committees as are deemed beneficial to the administration and function of the Church. Committee

members shall be members of the Church.. The functions of the standing committees shall be described in the Policy and Procedures manual of the Church.

V. CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The Church may maintain programs of Bible teaching; child care; Church member training; Church leader training; new member orientation; mission education, action and support; music education, training, and performance; and ministries of the MAC center. All organizations related to the Church program 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.

VI. CHURCH ORDINANCES

Section 1. Baptism

This Church may receive for baptism all persons who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior, by personal faith, who profess Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicate a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Baptism shall be by immersion in water and shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.

Section 2. Lord's Supper

This Church shall observe the Lord's Supper in accordance with church policies. The pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper.

VII. AMENDMENTS

Changes in the By-laws may be made at any 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 or upon request. Amendments to the By-laws shall be adopted by a 3/4 majority vote of Church members present.

VIII. OPERATION AND DISSOLUTION

First Baptist Church of Littlefield is organized and operated primarily for the purpose of engaging in religious worship or promoting the spiritual development and well-being of individuals. It is to be operated in a way that does not result in accrual of distributable profits, realization of private gain resulting from payment of compensation in excess of a reasonable allowance for salary or other compensation for services rendered, or realization of any other form of private gain.

The Church pledges its assets for use in performing the organization's religious functions. It directs that on discontinuance of the Church by dissolution pr otherwise, the assets are to be transferred to a charitable, educational, religious, or other similar organization that is qualified as a charitable organization under Section 501©(3), Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

ADOPTED: _____, 2002.

_____ Clerk