

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I: NAME AND AUTHORITY

The First Baptist Church of Forest Park, Georgia is a body of baptized believers which has the New Testament as its authority and guide for faith and practice. The church shall be Christ-centered, pastorally-led, staff-directed, deacon-served, team-advised, and shall have congregational approval as its basic policy. The church is incorporated as a 501(c) (3) under the umbrella of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

(Hebrews 13:17; Acts 6:1-6; Acts 15:22-31; Acts 16:5)

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Striving to be obedient to God's Biblical mandate, we are committed to worship the Risen Christ, to equip the believers for effective Christian living, and to proclaim the Gospel to our community and the world —all to the ultimate Glory of God.

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of **The Baptist Faith and Message** as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (See Article I of the Bylaws)

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and on profession of our faith, 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 enter into covenant with one another as one body of Christ.

We engage by the aid of the Holy Spirit to:

- Walk together in Christian love.
- Strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and spirituality.
- Sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrine, and discipline.
- Cheerfully give and regularly support the ministry of the church through tithes and offerings.
- Seek the salvation of others and lead them to our fellowship.
- Cultivate and maintain personal and family prayer and devotions.
- Instruct our children in Biblical principles.
- Exercise toward each of our members a spirit of brotherly love to the end that the Kingdom of Christ may be promoted to its fullest.
- Maintain sobriety in our habits, integrity in our business, purity in our lives and Christlikeness in our deportment toward all people.

This Constitution and the following Bylaws supersede any previous Constitution and Bylaws of First Baptist Church Forest Park.

BY-LAWS
2022 Revision

ARTICLE I: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1: GENERAL

The Congregation of First Baptist Church, Forest Park will function as a spiritual democracy under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Therefore, every member will have equal rights, privileges and responsibilities in carrying out the God-given tasks of the church.

SECTION 2: CANDIDACY

Any person may offer himself/herself as a candidate for membership in the following ways:

- By profession of faith in Jesus Christ and for believer's baptism by immersion according to the policies of the church.
- By promise of a letter from another Baptist Church.
- By statement of prior conversion experience and a believer's baptism by immersion when no letter is available.

The official vote for church membership shall be taken at the Quarterly Church Business Conference.

SECTION 3: NEW-MEMBER ORIENTATION

New members of the church are expected to participate in the church's new-member orientation provided by the church.

SECTION :4 EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS

Members are expected to:

- Be faithful and obedient to the church covenant.
- Habitually attend the services of this church.
- Conduct yourself in a respectful and reverent manner.
- Give regularly to the support of the church.
- Participate in the ministries of the church.
- Strive to grow daily in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

SECTION 5: RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

Every member of the church may:

- Participate in the ministries of the church.
- Vote in all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference.
- Participate in church ordinances as administered by the church.
- Be informed of the ongoing operation of the church.

SECTION 6: TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- Death of a member.
- Dismissal to another Baptist Church.
- Affiliation with a church of another faith or denomination.
- By written request of member desiring termination.
- Exclusion by church action of a majority vote. **(Matthew 18:15-22)**

ARTICLE II: CHURCH ORDINANCES

SECTION 1: BAPTISM

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor or an Ordained Southern Baptist Minister of The Gospel as approved by the Pastor.
- Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.

SECTION 2: THE LORD'S SUPPER

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least four (4) times per year at the discretion of the Pastor. The Pastor and Deacons shall administer The Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE III: CHURCH OPERATIONS

SECTION I: CHURCH YEAR

The church year shall be from January 1 through December 31.

SECTION 2: CHURCH MEETINGS

A. SERVICES

REGULAR WORSHIP SERVICES - The church shall meet regularly for the worship of Almighty God to include prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism. These services are open to all people and are under the leadership of the Pastor.

SPECIAL SERVICES - Revival services and any other church meetings which are essential to the advancement of the church's mission shall be placed on the church calendar upon approval of the Pastor.

B. BUSINESS MEETINGS (1" Corinthians 14:40; Acts 15:22-31)

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING - The church shall hold regular quarterly business meetings. Written reports will be presented from all areas of church activities. All unfinished and new business shall be attended to at this time. Annual reports will be presented at the first Quarterly Conference of the church year.

SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING - A called business meeting may be convened to consider matters of a significant nature. A one-week notification must be given. The notice shall include the subject, date, time, and place of the special called meeting.

QUORUM - The quorum shall consist of those who are present. The exception being for the call of a pastor, then twenty five percent (25%) of the active roll of membership shall be necessary.

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY - ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

SECTION 3: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

A. FINANCE TEAM

The Finance Team shall consist of five (5) persons, each serving a three year term with no more than two (2) rotating off each year. No member shall be re-elected until at least one year has elapsed.

The Finance Team shall meet once each month for the purpose of reviewing the prior month's financial statement. These financial statements shall contain reports of all monies deposited and dispersed, including certificates of deposit. The Finance Team shall review each budget account and compare the amount budgeted for the year. They should question accounts running substantially over budget to determine if the monies are being properly charged to that account and the possibility of reviewing that budget account for the new year.

The Finance Team shall prepare and submit for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by item the amount needed and sought for the upcoming year. The Budget shall be presented to the church for consideration during the Fourth Quarter of the Fiscal Year.

The Finance Team shall, by vote, make decisions regarding major purchases or expenditures of the church.

The Hoyt G. Farr Scholarship Fund shall be used to educate persons, who are members of First Baptist Church, Forest Park, or whose parents are members of First Baptist Church, Forest Park, who are called to the Ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and desire to be educated at a Southern Baptist affiliated school. The scholarship will be administered by the Finance Team.

It shall be the responsibility of the Finance Team to approve a Counting Team to count each Sunday's receipts. This Team shall consist of three (3) or more members.

B. AUDIT TEAM

An Outside Audit is to be performed by a Certified Public Accountant at a minimum of every five (5) years. The scope and type of audit to be performed is to be determined by the Finance Team

(In **2022** the requirement for an internal audit team to meet once a month was **removed** from the by-laws because these duties are currently being performed by the outside accounting firm who manages our books. Should this contract change, the necessity of an internal audit should be evaluated by the **Finance Team.**)

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH OFFICERS

All Officers of the church shall be members of the church.

TRUSTEES - The church shall elect three (3) trustees to serve as legal officers of the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. They shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any church property with a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signature to legal documents involving sale, mortgage, purchase or rental of property or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

The trustees shall be authorized to sign checks when needed.

MODERATOR - The pastor shall serve as the church moderator. He shall convene and moderate all regular and called business meetings of the church. In the absence of the moderator, the pastor shall designate someone to preside. If the church has no pastor or in the event the pastor or his designee is absent, the chairman of the deacons shall serve as acting moderator.

CLERK - The church shall annually elect a clerk as its clerical officer. It shall be the duty of the clerk to:

- Keep a correct record of proceedings of all business meetings.
- Keep a register of names of all members of the church, including dates of admission, baptism, dismissal and death.
- Compile the Annual Report of the church for the Georgia Baptist Convention.
- Serve as the church historian.

TREASURER

(In **2022** the requirement for a church member to serve as **TREASURER** was **removed** from the by-laws because these duties are currently being performed by the outside accounting firm who manages our books. Should this contract change, the duties of **TREASURER** should be filled by a church member.)

[Should the need arise the previous revision is provided below for future reference...]

The church shall have three (3) treasurers (one treasurer and two assistants) at all times. The church shall elect one treasurer annually to serve a six-year (6) term with one rotating off every 2 years. The assistant with the longest tenure should assume the position of treasurer.

The responsibilities of the treasurers shall be:

- *Review and approve invoices presented for payment when checks are signed (two signatures are required).*
- *Authorized to sign checks.]*

ARTICLE V: CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

PASTOR - The pastor is responsible for leading the congregation in performing the functions of a New Testament Church. He will preach the Gospel, disciple the congregation, lead in ministering to the church and community, and preside at meetings with the rules of order authorized in these By-Laws. He may serve as an ex-officio member of all teams. The pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or at the request of the church.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. When the need arises, a Pastor Search Team shall be elected by the church to seek a suitable pastor. Guidelines and policies (as adopted by the church) for the function of this team are spelled out in The First Baptist Church, Forest Park, Team Handbook.

MINISTERIAL STAFF - The church shall call other ministerial staff as deemed necessary under the leadership of the Personnel Team.

SUPPORT STAFF - All other church staff members are considered as Support Staff. The minister of administration is responsible for guidelines for the administration of the support staff.

ARTICLE VI: PASTORAL SUPPORT

SECTION 1: DEACONS

The deacons shall be the spiritual leaders of the church, whose main focus is to assist the pastor in ministry to the church membership. To serve as a deacon, a man must be a member of First Baptist Church Forest Park, for at least one (1) year, 21 years of age or older, and living the Christian life according to the scriptural qualifications of a deacon as recorded in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The Bible commands, and the church body expects the deacon, and his family, to be actively involved in the educational and equipping ministries of First Baptist Church Forest Park; to be regular in attendance at all worship services; to set the standard in his stewardship of time, talents and tithes; to attend the regular and called meetings of the deacons, and to participate in ministry to and through the church body. The deacon is expected to continue to grow in his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by the personal study of the Scriptures and to increase in his knowledge of the work of the church in the community, state, and through the agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention. He should be a model to the church membership in upholding the high standards of the Church Covenant.

DEACON ELECTION PROCESS

The active Deacon Body will consist of six (6) deacons each serving a three (3) year term with two (2) deacons rotating off each year. A deacon election will be held each year to fill the two (2) vacancies created by the deacons whose terms are ending. Any other vacancies that occur in the Deacon Body will be filled in the next scheduled election. Deacons whose terms are ending will again be eligible for nomination after one (1) year.

Men 21 years of age or older, who have been members of First Baptist Church Forest Park for one year or longer shall be considered to meet the basic qualifications for nomination. Church members should nominate men whom they believe to be spiritually qualified and in whom they have witnessed a servant spirit.

The deacons whose terms are expiring, along with the Senior Pastor (the Election Team), will select a number of candidates equal to twice the number of vacancies to be filled. Nominees will be selected based on the number of nominations received and on qualifications stated in the Constitution and By-Laws (Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13). Those selected will be contacted to review the duties and expectations of a deacon and to determine their willingness to serve. Once the necessary number of candidates have been confirmed, a brief profile of each candidate, including photograph if possible, will be created and made available to church members prior to the election. Candidates will be presented to the church at the next scheduled Quarterly Conference. Each

church member present may cast one vote for each vacancy to be filled. The two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected to fill the new three (3) year terms. Additional vacancies in the Deacon Body will be filled by the remaining candidates in the order of votes received. The Election Team will tally the votes and notify the candidates of the results. Once all candidates have been notified, the results will be presented to the church. New deacons will begin their term in January of the year immediately following their election, in conjunction with the new church year.

SECTION 2: TEAMS (ACTS 15:22-31)

The Standing Teams of the church shall be:

- Nominating Team
- Personnel Team
- Finance Team
- Building and Grounds Team
- Missions Team

Other Teams may be formed as deemed necessary. Team member shall be nominated by the Nominating Team and elected at a church business meeting to take office at the beginning of the church year. Special Teams will be appointed by the Pastor for specific tasks as needed. The Nominating Team will oversee the election of the Pastor Search Team. A church team handbook shall provide guidelines for duties and responsibilities of each team.

ARTICLE VII: CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching; church member training, church leader training, new member orientation; mission education, action and support; and music education, training, and performance. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under the church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all program activities subject to church condition and approval. The church shall provide the human resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

Changes in the Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided each amendment shall have been made available to the church at least one (1) week in advance. Amendments to the Constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of the church members present.