

## **CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS**

### **First Baptist Church of Donelson**

#### **CONSTITUTION PREAMBLE**

We hereby draw up and establish the following constitution, to supersede all other constitutions, so that our church may operate and function in a Christ-like manner.

#### **ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this church shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Donelson, 2526 Lebanon Pike, Nashville, Tennessee 37214.

#### **ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by making disciples of all nations. Beginning in Donelson and stretching to the unreached peoples of the earth, we will seek to make disciples by going to them with the gospel of Jesus Christ, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe everything Jesus commanded.

Under the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit and following New Testament church patterns this church shall prayerfully seek to attain its purpose through:

- **Worship**; that is, to be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing his person, and responding in obedience to his leadership,
- **Evangelize**; that is, to be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, in our community, and throughout the world,
- **Discipleship**; that is, to help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man,
- **Ministry**; that is, to minister unselfishly to persons in the community and throughout the world in Jesus' name,
- **Fellowship**; that is, to experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and with fellow believers,
- **Application**; that is, to be Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing the total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

Our mission statement is: **"Evangelizing the lost, and equipping God's people to live and to model a Christ-like lifestyle to the glory of God."**

Our motto statement is: **"Dying to Self, Living to Serve."**

Adopted February 2017

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

#### **1 – Faith**

The Holy Bible is the full and final authority for all our doctrines, beliefs, and practices. We accept the formulated statement approved by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000, entitled, [The Baptist Faith and Message 2000](#). (These booklets are available to every member through the church office.) We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost humanity.

#### **2-Ordinances**

The ordinances of the church are baptism by immersion upon a profession of faith and the Lord's Supper. Regarding the taking of the Lord's Supper, everyone, whether a member or not, shall be a baptized believer and shall examine himself with a repentant heart before partaking.

### **ARTICLE IV - CHURCH COVENANT**

Since we have committed ourselves to Jesus Christ and have experienced the acceptance, forgiveness, and redemption of God our Father, we covenant together as members of this church that, with God's help through the guiding presence of His Spirit:

We will walk together in brotherly love.

We will show loving care for one another and encourage, counsel and admonish one another.

We will assemble faithfully for worship and fellowship and will pray earnestly for others as well as for ourselves.

We will endeavor to bring up those under our care "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4b ESV)

We will seek, by Christian example and personal effort, to proclaim Christ to others and to encourage their growth toward Christian maturity.

We will share one another's joys and endeavor to bear one another's burdens and sorrows.

We will oppose all conduct which compromises our Christian faith and will uphold high standards of Christian morality.

We will prove the reality of our conversion by living godly, fruitful lives.

We will maintain a faithful ministry of worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry, and fellowship.

We will be faithful stewards of our resources and abilities in sharing the gospel with people of all nations.

As a result of this covenant relationship, we will earnestly seek to live to the glory of God who brought us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

## **ARTICLE V - CHARACTER**

### **1. GOVERNANCE**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. This church affiliates with the Nashville Baptist Association, Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention or their successors.

### **2. DOCTRINE**

This church receives the Scriptures as its sole authority in matters of faith and practice. This church holds to The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as its statement of faith.

## **ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS**

Changes in this Constitution must be made in writing at any regular Business Meeting of the church in the form of a motion. If the motion to amend the constitution receives two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of all the members of the church present entitled to vote, the proposed amendment is sent to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for review.

If the Constitution and Bylaws Committee finds the proposed amendment in good order, the Committee will bring the proposed amendment and, any other needed changes in the Constitution to affect the amendment, in writing to the next regular Business Meeting. If the Committee finds the proposed amendment out of good order, they will report back to the next regular Business Meeting the reasoning for their ruling.

Any amendment found in good order will then be voted on in the next regular Business Meeting with all needed changes in the Constitution to affect the amendment noted. The amendment will be considered passed by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of all the members of the church present entitled to vote.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP**

#### **SECTION 1 - GENERAL**

First Baptist Church of Donelson is a sovereign 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 the church and the conditions of such membership.

#### **SECTION 2 - CANDIDACY**

Any person may present himself/herself as a candidate for membership in this church, through any of the following ways:

##### **1) On Profession of Faith in Jesus Christ**

If you have professed faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, upon subsequent baptism by immersion, and completion of our New Membership class or meeting with representatives of the New Members Committee, and signed the membership covenant, you will be received.

##### **2) By Transfer of Letter**

If you are a Christian and have been baptized by a Southern Baptist church, we will receive you upon transfer of your membership and completion of our New Membership class or meeting with representatives of the New Members Committee, and signed the membership covenant, you will be received.

### **3) By Statement of Your Christian Faith**

If you have professed faith in Jesus Christ, have been baptized by immersion, and have completed our New Membership class or have met with representatives of the New Members Committee, and signed the membership covenant, you will be received.

Candidates wishing to become members must follow these steps:

1. Read and agree with the Constitution of the Church
2. Read and agree with [The Baptist Faith and Message 2000](#).
3. Attend a New Membership class or meet with representatives of the New Members Committee.
4. Read and sign, without any reservations, the membership covenant.
5. Provide testimony of their conversion and desire to join themselves in membership to First Baptist Church of Donelson, Nashville, Tennessee through oral, video, or written form.

Candidates for membership will be voted on during the church's regular Business Meeting. A majority vote of all the members of the church present entitled to vote shall be required to affirm and accept such candidates to membership.

### **Membership Covenant:**

I, the undersigned, hereby do declare of my own accord and without reservation that I agree with the following and covenant with the existing Body of Believers of First Baptist Church of Donelson, Nashville, Tennessee to the same.

1. I have read and agreed with the Constitution & By-Laws of the Church.
2. I have read and agreed with [The Baptist Faith and Message 2000](#).
3. I covenant to fully support the ministry of First Baptist Church of Donelson, Nashville, Tennessee through my attendance, giving, prayers, and service.
4. I covenant to live a holy life submitting my daily life to the authority of the Word of God found in the Bible.
5. I covenant to intentionally build relationships with the other members of First Baptist Church of Donelson, Nashville, Tennessee, seeking to encourage and hold them accountable, as I expect them to do with me.
6. Recognizing that I am still sinful and that it is possible that I would, in the future, engage in sin, become disorderly, or in some way begin to bring

shame on the Church, I submit myself to the authority of this Church and any discipline it would deem necessary.

7. I covenant to submit to and support the pastors and other recognized leaders of the Church. (Heb. 13:17)
8. I covenant to seek to preserve the unity of this body. If I ever find that I can no longer in good conscience stand in unity, I further covenant to withdraw myself from the membership at First Baptist Church of Donelson, Nashville, Tennessee instead of seeking to cause controversy.

### **SECTION 3 – BUSINESS MEETINGS**

The church will meet monthly in regular business meetings except for the months of June and December. Business Meetings shall be held on Sunday evenings on a date of the month set per the calendar needs of each month.

The moderator may call special Business Meetings after consulting with the Church Council.

All Business Meetings shall be conducted under the principles of Robert's Rules of Order.

All Active and Inactive members ages 16 and above will be allowed to vote during Business Meetings. When a member reaches the age of 16 years, they will be invited to attend a New Members Class and affirm the Membership Covenant to become a voting member of the Church.

### **SECTION 4 – INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP ROLL**

Inactive Members are church members who are homebound, in the nursing home, away in college, serving in the military or other life issues beyond their control. Their membership will remain on the rolls of First Baptist Church of Donelson, Nashville, Tennessee as inactive members until they request their letter be transferred, membership dropped, or are deceased.

### **SECTION 5 - ABSENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP ROLL**

Absent Membership includes members who have moved away or members who habitually absent themselves from the church except as stated in section 4. These will be placed on the absent church membership roll.

Members who move away shall, as soon as possible, furnish the Church Clerk their new address. Members shall promptly join another local church in their new location. Members who do not join a local church will be removed from the active membership roll after one year from their last resident attendance.

Those on absent church membership status will not have rights to vote in any conference of the church.

The Church Clerk shall at least once a year study the membership rolls and make a list of absent members. The Ministry Team shall examine the needs of these members and counsel with them about their spiritual needs and duties. They shall attempt to reclaim and enlist these into active membership.

Those on the absent church member roll may reactivate their membership by attending a New Members class and signing the Membership Covenant.

## **SECTION 6 - TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this church may be terminated in one of the following ways:

- (1) By transfer of membership by letter to another Southern Baptist Church of like faith and practice. Upon request from the church to which the member desires to unite, a letter of transfer of membership shall be granted and sent to the receiving church clerk.
- (2) By notification of having united with another church other than a Southern Baptist church of like faith and order.
- (3) By written request of a person that his own membership relation to the church be dissolved. If such a request should be made, the pastor and deacons shall together investigate and attempt to reclaim the member. If the pastor and deacons are satisfied said person cannot be reclaimed, they will recommend to the church that the request is granted, but no letter of membership can be granted in such cases.
- (4) By disciplinary action of the church. The church may terminate membership by a majority vote but only after one-month notice that such action will be taken, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance.
- (5) By death.

## **ARTICLE II - CALLED OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1 – LEAD PASTOR**

#### **A. DUTIES**

1. The Lead Pastor shall faithfully preach the Word of God by means of diligent prayerful study.

2. The Lead Pastor shall lead the church to accomplish the purpose of the church through Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Ministry, and Fellowship.
3. The Lead Pastor will proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
4. The Lead Pastor will care for the church's members and other persons in the community.
5. The Lead Pastor will lead all members of the Ministry Team to accomplish the purpose of the church in their given areas of ministry.

#### **B. QUALIFICATIONS OF LEAD PASTOR**

1. A pastor shall conform to the biblical requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. He should be a man of high character, above reproach in his home and the community. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and to rebuke those who contradict it.
2. Since pastors are to shepherd or govern the church (1 Peter 5:1-4), a pastor should be a man who leads by example. He should be a man who can provide oversight both to individuals and the church as a whole.
3. A pastor must sign the Church Membership Covenant.
4. A pastor must agree to teach in accordance with and without reservation, [The Baptist Faith and Message 2000](#).

#### **C. PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the position of pastor, a selection committee shall be appointed to seek out a suitable man for that vacancy. A Pastor Selection Committee shall be chosen by secret ballot at a special meeting called for this purpose. The Pastor Selection Committee will be composed of church members eligible to vote.

Church members shall have the opportunity to cast their ballot for eight persons. The selection committee shall be the two persons who received the largest number of ballots of eight persons, one male, and one female, from each of the following age groups:

1. Youth – ages 16-19
2. Young Adult - ages 20 to 39.
3. Middle Adults - ages 40 to 59
4. Senior Adults - ages 60+

The committee will elect its chairman.



The recommendation of the committee will constitute a nomination for the pastor position. Any church member has the privilege of making recommendations to the selection committee. The committee shall bring, to the consideration of the church, only one name at a time. The election shall be by ballot, and the affirmative vote of four-fifths of those members present and voting being necessary for a call.

#### **D. TERM OF OFFICE**

The Lead Pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. He shall give at least two weeks' notice to the congregation at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities.

### **SECTION 2 – OTHER CALLED MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS**

The Ministry Team will be made up of those that the church deems necessary to accomplish the purpose of the church.

#### **A. DUTIES OF MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS**

1. Ministry Team members shall lead the church to accomplish the purpose of the church through Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Ministry, and Fellowship.
2. Ministry Team members will proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
3. Ministry Team members will care for the church's members and other persons in the community.
4. Ministry Team members shall work together under the direction of the Lead Pastor.
5. Specific duties for each Ministry Team position shall be outlined in a job description approved by the congregation.

#### **B. QUALIFICATIONS OF MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS**

1. Ministry Team members should be persons of high character above reproach in their family and the community. A Ministry Team member must be able to teach and lead in their areas of responsibility.
2. Ministry Team members must sign the Church Membership Covenant.
3. Ministry Team members must agree to teach and minister in accordance with and without reservation, [The Baptist Faith and Message 2000](#).

#### **C. MINISTRY TEAM MEMBER SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Whenever the church finds a need to fill or create a position of ministry, a selection committee will be elected by the church to seek out and recommend

to the church a suitable person to fill the position. This process will happen during the regular business meetings of the church.

The Selection Committee will automatically include two members of the Personnel Committee and one member of the Stewardship Committee plus four (4) additional persons who are leaders in or active participants in the area of ministry in which a Ministry Team Member will be serving.

The Lead Pastor shall serve as an ex officio member of the Ministry Team search committee.

The Committee on Committees will recommend to the church a proposed slate of qualified persons to serve on the Search Committee. The four (4) persons who receive the largest number of ballots will be elected. Any church member has the privilege of recommending someone to the Committee On Committees. The election will be by secret ballot.

After the election of the Search Committee, any church member has the privilege of making a recommendation to the committee of a possible candidate for the position. The election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of four-fifths ( $\frac{4}{5}$ ) of those members present and voting, being necessary to a call.

#### **D. TERM OF OFFICE**

The Ministry Team member shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The Team member shall give at least two weeks' notice to the congregation at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities.

### **ARTICLE III - ELECTED OFFICERS**

All elected officers must be members of the church at the time of their election and through their term of office.

#### **SECTION 1 – DEACON BODY**

The deacon body will determine the appropriate number needed, but the number will not be less than fifteen (15), provided eligible candidates are available. The deacon body shall organize itself and elect its officers to accomplish ministry.

## **A. DUTIES OF DEACONS**

In accordance with the meaning and practice of the New Testament, the Deacon Body are to be the servants of the church.

1. Members of the Deacon Body are to serve with the Pastor in ministering to the physical needs of the church for the pastor to more fully devote himself to the ministry of the word and prayer.
2. Members of the Deacon Body shall lead the church to accomplish the purpose of the church through Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Ministry, and Fellowship.
3. Members of the Deacon Body will proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
4. Members of the Deacon Body will care for the church's members and other persons in the community.
5. Members of the Deacon Body will assist the Pastor in serving the Lord's Supper.
6. A deacon is a servant to the church and to the pastor of the church. A deacon should be full of the Spirit and wisdom. A deacon is to protect the unity of the church and relieve the pastor from other duties so that he might devote himself to prayer and the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:2-4)

## **B. QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS**

1. A deacon shall conform to the biblical requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. He should be a man of high character, above reproach in his home and in the community.
2. A deacon must sign the Church Membership Covenant.
3. A deacon must agree to teach in accordance with and without reservation, [The Baptist Faith and Message 2000](#).

## **C. DEACON ELECTION PROCESS**

Every two years, the Deacon Body will initiate the Deacon Selection Process consisting of:

1. The Deacon Body receives recommendations from the church body for affirmation of current deacons and selection of new deacons.
2. Evaluation of the recommendations by a select committee of current deacons.
3. Those recommendations of the church, both current deacons and purposed new deacons that fit the qualifications, will be invited to a special meeting to examine the qualifications and current responsibilities of the deacon body. At this meeting, each purposed deacon will indicate their desire to be brought before the church as a nomination for deacon.

4. The church will approve the list of nominations. If there are more nominations than needed for service, the ones receiving the top votes, will be selected.

## **SECTION 2 – MODERATOR**

The Lead Pastor shall serve as moderator of all church conferences. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

## **SECTION 3 – CLERK**

The church shall elect a clerk annually.

### **A. DUTIES OF CHURCH CLERK**

1. The Church Clerk will keep a suitable record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided.
2. The Church Clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of the members, with dates of membership and date of dismissal.
3. A record of baptism will be kept.
4. The Church Clerk shall issue letters of demission voted by the church.
5. The Church Clerk shall preserve on file all communications and written official reports.
6. The Church Clerk will give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws.

All church records are church property. All church records, except the records of individual or family contributions or gifts, shall be made available for review by any member of the church.

## **SECTION 4 – TREASURER**

The church shall elect a treasurer annually.

### **A - DUTIES OF TREASURER**

1. The Treasurer is responsible for overseeing the process to receive, preserve, and pay out all money or things of value paid or given to the church.
2. The Treasurer shall render, at regular business meetings, an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month.
3. The Treasurer works with the Audit Committee to evaluate all financial processes bi-annually.

4. The Treasurer works with the Stewardship Committee to prepare an annual church budget to be brought to the church for approval in the November regular business meeting.

#### **SECTION 5 – TRUSTEES**

Six trustees, elected by the church, will hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of at least fifty percent of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required. Trustees shall serve on a rotating basis, with two new trustees being elected each year. The Deacon Body recommends the two new trustees for the church approval.

#### **ARTICLE IV – COMMITTEES**

Church committees exist to administer church policies, to expedite business per church instructions, and to propose policies for church approval. All committees are established based on specific needs and are activated upon election.

All committee members and committee chairpersons shall be recommended by a six-member Committee-on-Committees and elected by the church unless otherwise indicated below. Committee-on-Committees members shall be nominated by the Deacon Body and elected by the church at a regular business meeting. All standing committee members including those on the Committee-on-Committees shall serve on a three-year rotation system with one-third to be elected each year. A Committee member may not succeed himself until an interim of at least one year has passed. The pastor shall serve as an ex officio member of all standing committees except the Audit Committee. Other Ministry Team members shall serve as ex officio members of committees as outlined in their job descriptions or as requested by the pastor.

Committee titles and job descriptions are defined in the Church Committee Directory.

#### **ARTICLE V – DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

The normal decision-making process for First Baptist Church of Donelson, Nashville, Tennessee includes the following.

- The Church Council will meet each month in which a business meeting is held. The Church Council consists of the Ministry Team, the Chairman of Deacons, the Church Treasurer, the Church Clerk, and the Chairs of the

Stewardship, Property, Personnel and Missions Committees. Chairs of other committees may attend Church Council at any time.

- The annual approval of the church budget constitutes approval for committees and ministries to spend per their budget without further approval of the church. Each committee and ministry will remain aware of current giving patterns of the church in making spending decisions. Any needed budget spending outside the approved budget will be brought to the Church Council for discussion.
- The Church Council will review current church issues. Any issues that need to be brought before the church for approval during the regular business meeting will pass through the Church Council. Any request for budget spending outside the approved budget will need to come to the church for approval during a regular church business meeting.