

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF CLEMSON
SOUTH CAROLINA**

First Approved August, 1974
Last Revision Approved – May 23, 2007

First Baptist Church, Clerk

First Baptist Church, Moderator

CONTENTS

MISSION STATEMENT 3

CHURCH COVENANT	3
CONSTITUTION	4
ARTICLE I Name and Purpose	4
ARTICLE II Covenant, Cooperation, and Government.....	4
ARTICLE III Membership.....	5
ARTICLE IV Officers and Duties.....	5
ARTICLE V Committees	6
ARTICLE VI Meetings.....	6
ARTICLE VII Church Finance	6
ARTICLE VIII Adoption and Amendments.....	6
BYLAWS	7
ARTICLE I Organization	7
ARTICLE II Church Officers	8
ARTICLE III Program Organization	12
ARTICLE IV Church Committees.....	12
ARTICLE V Church Council.....	13
ARTICLE VI Non-Ministerial Church Staff	13
ARTICLE VII Meetings.....	13
ARTICLE VIII Church Policies	14
ARTICLE IX Adoption and Amendments.....	14

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
CLEMSON, SOUTH CAROLINA**

MISSION STATEMENT

First Baptist Church of Clemson, an inclusive community of faith, seeks to worship, glorify, and serve God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, both locally and globally.

CHURCH COVENANT

Having accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our 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, and having been received into the family of this Church, we do hereby covenant:

- To honor God with our lives, seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness, supporting the total mission of our Church with our prayers, time, abilities and money.
- To live as disciples, seeking ever to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- To attend and support the worship of this Church, its ordinances, discipline and doctrine.
- To labor together in Christian fellowship, exercising brotherly love toward one another, praying for each other, being mindful of and sharing one another's joys, burdens and sorrows, and always being slow to take offense and eager for reconciliation.
- To live as Christians in the world, being just in our dealings and faithful in our obligations.
- To regard as of the household of faith all who worship Christ as Lord, and while holding to our Baptist convictions and heritage, seeking with all Christians a unity of spirit and purpose.
- To live as Christians in our homes, engaging in family and individual devotions, teaching our children by instruction and example that Christ is Savior and Lord.
- To endeavor by example and effort to win others to faith in and commitment to Christ.
- To become active members of another church when circumstances require our separation from this one.

Part A

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I Name and Purpose

Section 1. The name of this Church shall be the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF CLEMSON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

Section 2. First Baptist Church of Clemson, an inclusive community of faith, seeks to worship, glorify, and serve God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, both locally and globally.

ARTICLE II Covenant, Cooperation and Governance

Section 1. The fellowship of the First Baptist Church of Clemson adopts the Church Mission and Covenant provided herein as a guide for the personal commitment of its members.

Section 2. This Church accepts the Scriptures as our authority on faith and practice. We accept the Articles of Faith endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention in May 1963 and recorded in The Baptist Faith and Message as an informational statement of our Baptist heritage. The Church also values other confessional statements of the Christian community that bear witness to our Lord.

Section 3. The Church governance shall be independent, autonomous and congregational in organization and polity. Congregational participation in Church governance shall be achieved through a system of standing and special committees functioning with the guidance of, and in concert with the Senior Minister and the ministerial staff; working together under the leadership of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the objectives of church ministries and programs.

Section 4. The Church has an affiliation with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist Convention of South Carolina. Minimal affiliation is maintained with the Southern Baptist Convention. Voluntary associations are also in place with the Covenant Baptist Association and several local Human Service organizations. The Church continues to maintain traditional ties with other Baptist, Ecumenical and/or Human Service organizations it deems appropriate. The Church shall designate representatives to the assemblies of these organizations as appropriate.

ARTICLE III Membership

Section 1. Church members are those who, having professed faith in Christ and desiring to associate with a body of believers, have been baptized and received into a church family by a majority vote, present and voting, and pledge of ministry of its members. As a family of Christian believers, this Church may receive as new members all those professing faith in Christ and requesting baptism by immersion. This Church will also receive members by transfer of letter from another church or by statement of previous membership in another church providing membership in that church required profession of faith in Christ and baptism in some form. Members may be received at any scheduled worship service.

Section 2. Members shall be expected to be faithful in all the duties of Christian life, to be regular in attendance at the services of the Church, to give regularly and systematically to its support, and to share in its ministry.

Section 3. This Church shall delete from its membership roll those who are deceased, those who unite with other churches and those who may request membership to cease.

Section 4. This Church shall provide a Watchcare Program for individuals who wish an informal affiliation without transferring membership from their home church. This may be of particular interest for college students, but not restricted to these individuals.

ARTICLE IV Officers and Duties

Section 1. The officers of this Church shall be the Moderator, Senior Minister, other Ministers, Deacons, Clerk, Treasurer, and Trustees.

Section 2. This Church shall have such other officers as are needed to carry out its purposes. The duties of such officers shall be those connected with the offices they fill according to the instruction of the Church.

Section 3. All officers shall be elected as provided in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE V Committees

The Church shall establish standing and special committees to carry on its work. The Nominating Committee shall be nominated by the Church Council. All other committees

(except designated special committees) shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee. All committees, with the chair designated, shall be elected by the Church. Standing committees and their duties shall be listed in the Committee Manual along with the general qualifications and election procedures. The Nominating Committee shall review the duties and needs for each committee as needed and make appropriate recommendations to the Church in business session. No Church committee shall be elected until the duties of that committee have been written and approved by the Church. Each committee will review its methods of operations and policy statements as needed and recommend appropriate changes in line with operational procedures.

ARTICLE VI Meetings

Section 1. The Church shall hold regular meetings for the purpose of worship, teaching, training, and fellowship. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once each quarter, at the discretion of the Senior Minister. The ordinance of baptism shall be observed at the discretion of the Senior Minister .

Section 2. The Church shall conduct at least one regular business meeting during the first month of each quarter. Special business meetings may be scheduled by the Moderator as requested by Committees, organizations or other groups of at least ten Church members.

ARTICLE VII Church Finance

Section 1. In order to provide for a good Church accounting system with sufficient internal control for the protection of those who handle the funds and for the protection of the funds, appropriate officers and committees shall be provided and their duties described in the Bylaws and Committee Manual. Monthly reports of income and expenditures will be prepared by the Stewardship and Finance Committee and provided to the Church membership.

ARTICLE VIII Adoption and Amendments

Section 1. This Constitution shall be considered adopted and in effect when approved by two-thirds of the members present and voting at a meeting called for the purpose of adopting a Church Constitution, provided that the proposed Constitution shall be made available to the membership and notice of the meeting shall be given to the Church at least thirty (30) days prior to the time the vote is taken.

Section 2. This Constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the Church or one called for that purpose, provided that such amendment, alteration or repeal be given in writing to the Church at least thirty (30) days prior to the time that the vote is taken.

Section 3. All previous Church policy actions contrary to the provisions of this Constitution are hereby rescinded.

Section 4. The Chair of the Deacons shall appoint a committee at least every third year to review the Constitution of the Church and present recommendations to the Church.

Part B

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I Organization

Section 1. The Church year and the fiscal year shall be concurrent with the calendar year. The program year for the Sunday School shall coincide with the public school year; and the Women's Missionary Union shall begin September 1 and end August 31.

Section 2. The Church is organized to provide leadership for the congregation, identify activities and areas of service, establish procedures which enhance efficiency and continuity of programs, and provide an orderly means of initiating new programs and discontinuing those that are no longer needed.

There are four types of organizational units: Church Officers, Program Organizations, Church Committees, and the Church Council.

ARTICLE II Church Officers

Section 1. **Moderator:** The Moderator is the Chair of the Deacons who shall chair all business meetings, both regular and specially-called meetings. The Moderator will conduct the meetings in such a manner as to achieve unity while respecting that individuals may have differences in opinions.

The Moderator shall:

1. Guard and build the fellowship of the Church;
2. Keep order;
3. Appoint a Parliamentarian;
4. See that the business matters are voted on after adequate discussion and are clear enough to be carried out after the meeting;
5. Provide operational leadership in cooperation with other ministers and staff in the absence of a permanent Senior Minister.

Section 2. **Senior Minister:** The **Senior Minister** shall be an ordained Baptist minister, called by the Church upon recommendation of the Search Committee to serve until the relationship is dissolved by either the Senior Minister or via the termination policy. Election of the Senior Minister shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose. The vote will be by secret ballot. At least one (1) week's notice shall be given to the congregation. A majority affirmative vote of those present and voting at the meeting shall constitute a Call. The relationship may be terminated by the Senior Minister's resignation or by the majority vote of the members present and voting at a called business meeting of the Church after due notice of the purpose of such a meeting has been given to the congregation. In either case, thirty (30) days notice of the termination shall be required. The Senior Minister shall be the spiritual leader of the Church and shall lead the Church as it carries out its purpose, the Church officers and committees as they accomplish their tasks, and the Deacons as they assist in the performance of ministerial responsibilities. The Senior Minister shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Church, shall provide direction and coordinate the work of the ministers of the Church, shall be responsible for the worship services and the administering of the ordinances, and shall serve in whatever ways deemed to be in the best interests of Christ's Kingdom. In summary, the Senior Minister with God's help uses his/her talents to lead the Church in accomplishing its work.

Section 3. **Ministers:** This Church shall call ministers as needed to carry out its purpose. These ministers shall be recommended to the Church by a special Search Committee nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church. A general position description must be approved by the Church prior to initiating the search process. A detailed job description shall be prepared by the Personnel Committee for each position after soliciting input from the membership and ministerial staff. Prior to calling a minister, the candidate, the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee will review and agree upon the position description which shall be presented to the Church at the time of nomination of the candidate.

The election and termination procedures described for the Senior Minister also apply to all other ministers. The vote on all ministers will be by secret

ballot.

The ministers shall be responsible to the Church for the activities in their respective areas, as they minister and work under the direction of the Senior Minister and in cooperation with the appropriate Church committee(s). They may be appointed by the Senior Minister to assist in the Senior Minister's work as an ex-officio member of church committees.

Section 4. Deacons: There shall be twenty-four (24) Deacons who serve for staggered terms of three (3) years with one-third of the membership to be elected each year. No Deacon is eligible to serve again until a period of one (1) year has elapsed, except in the case of filling an unexpired term. At the time of election of Deacons each year, the Deacons who are rotating off the active Deacons shall be designated by lot as numbers one through eight. If a vacancy occurs, Deacon number one will immediately become a full member of the active body. If a second vacancy occurs, Deacon number two will be activated, and so on. Deacons so activated will serve until the next regularly scheduled election of Deacons, at which time all unexpired terms will be filled by action of the Church. A Deacon who serves one year of an unexpired term as defined above will be eligible for election to a full three-year term during the election of Deacons in the same year that he or she is serving. At any regularly scheduled election of Deacons, the Deacons may nominate and the Church may elect to the Office of Honorary Deacon for Life any member of the Church who has a long and honored career and who has served as Deacon for a period of at least ten (10) years.

All adults (18 years of age and over) who have been members of this Church for at least one (1) year as of the balloting date shall be eligible for election to the Deacons. There shall be only one (1) elected deacon per household at any given time.

On or before the first Sunday in November there shall be made available to the membership a list of those eligible to serve as Deacons and a form on which to record the names of members to be voted on for the office of Deacon. Members will vote for two persons for each position to be filled. These ballots will be returned to the Church office, placed in the ballot box or deposited in the offering plate at the Church on or before the close of the Evening Worship Service two weeks after the initial ballots have been distributed. Those receiving the highest number of votes, and who express a willingness to serve, will be declared nominated. Members will then be informed by mail (through the TIE or by letter) of those nominated for their consideration. Nominated individuals will be presented on a ballot at the conclusion of the morning worship service on a Sunday designated for

voting. Members will vote for one person for each position to be filled. Absentee ballots will be provided on request. Those receiving the highest number of votes will be declared elected.

When more than one-third (1/3) of the Deacons are to be elected, one or more to fill unexpired terms, the full-term Deacons will be the ones receiving the highest number of votes. Those filling the unexpired terms will be the ones receiving the next lower number of votes. The preparation of the list of those eligible to serve as Deacons and the list of nominees will be under the supervision of a Committee appointed by the Chair of the Deacons. A Committee of Deacons appointed by the Chair will also count the election ballots and report names of those elected to the church at the next regularly scheduled business meeting for inclusion in Church Minutes.

The duties of the Deacons shall be to minister in concert with the Senior Minister and other Ministers to the spiritual and religious needs of the Church and its members through the Family Ministry and other Programs. They also shall have the power to act for the Church in other matters not involving a change in policy or polity. However, in all instances final decisions will be made by the congregation. In the case of a question about the interpretation or administration of Church policies, the Deacons shall be consulted for an opinion.

The organization of the Deacons shall be as determined by the Deacons themselves. Specific operational procedures and governance of the Deacons shall be published and available to the Church. The Chairman of the Deacons shall appoint a Deacon as the Deacon Liaison Member on each of the Church's Committees. The Deacon Liaison would not be a voting member of a committee unless they are also an elected member of that committee.

Section 5. Church Clerk: The Church Clerk shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected annually.

Duties:

1. Record, in permanent form, the transactions of the Church business meetings and maintain a complete set of reports and minutes which shall be available in the office of the Church Secretary;
2. Request letter from other churches for persons who unite with this Church and provide letters of transfer when requested;
3. Maintain an accurate roll of the Church membership;
4. Prepare an annual summary of the Church's activities which is maintained to provide a history of the Church.

Section 6. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer: The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected annually and shall be

ex-officio members of the Stewardship and Finance Committee. Each shall be bonded in an amount recommended by the Stewardship and Finance Committee and approved by the Trustees of the Church.

Duties:

1. Receive and verify the summary of receipts and bank deposit slips from the counters;
2. Disburse funds after receiving properly signed vouchers and supporting documents;
3. Maintain proper records of all deposits and disbursements with attached vouchers;
4. Reconcile monthly bank statements and prepare quarterly and annual statements of receipts and disbursements, and a balance sheet, which are presented to the Stewardship and Finance Committee and to the Church;
5. Convert stocks and bonds.

Section 7. Trustees: There shall be three Trustees to hold in trust the title of all real property of the Church and represent the Church in all legal matters where any process of law is required. In these matters the Trustees are to act only as directed by a majority of the Church present and voting in a business meeting.

At least annually, the Trustees will review all aspects of the property and liability insurance program of the church, determine needs, and obtain coverage. All policies and records relating to this insurance will be retained and maintained by the Trustees. The Trustees will review and approve the amount of bondedness for the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

The Trustees shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected on a rotating six (6) year term with one Trustee being elected every other year.

All records and documents reviewed by the Trustees and copies of minutes of their meetings shall be kept on file in the Church Office. A written report of Trustee's activities will be submitted for each Quarterly Business Meeting.

ARTICLE III Program Organization

The Program Organization Directors are elected annually and may serve successive terms. Each Director is responsible for the contribution of the respective organization to the total program of the Church. Directors shall submit a written quarterly report to the Church, submit a proposed annual budget to the Stewardship and Finance Committee, be responsible for the disbursement of the budgeted money and serve on the Church Council. The tasks assigned to each Program Organization are as follows:

Section 1. The Sunday School Program: Teach the Bible, lead in reaching prospects for the church, lead church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily, provide organization and leadership for special projects of the Church, and provide information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

The Sunday School Council will be responsible for the Sunday School program. The Council will be composed of the Sunday School Director, the Associate Director, the Outreach Director, the Sunday School Secretary, and a representative chosen by each age-division education committee (Preschool, Children, Youth, College and Adult). The Minister of Education shall be an ex-officio member. The Council shall assume responsibility for the organization of the Sunday School program including class designations, submission of prospective teachers to the Church for consideration and for providing educational training of all teachers as necessary.

Section 2. The Woman's Missionary Union: Teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through praying and giving, provide organization and leadership for special mission projects of the Church.

ARTICLE IV Church Committees

Section 1. All elected committee members shall be members of First Baptist Church Clemson.

Section 2. The responsibilities and organizations of Church Committees are presented in the Committee Manual.

Section 3. Ex-officio members of Church Committees participate fully in committee activities with voting privileges; however, Church Ministers may not vote. Note: Ex-Officio members are defined as members of a committee by virtue of their office. When a member ceases to hold the office, their membership on that committee terminates automatically.

ARTICLE V Church Council

Section 1. The Church Council is a planning and coordinating organization through which all Church organizations, including committees, coordinate their activities into one harmonious program of work. It assists the Church by coordinating suggested actions to secure maximum effort and by preventing overlap in program plans before they are recommended to the Church.

Section 2. The Council is composed of the Senior Minister, other Ministers, the Chair of Deacons, Treasurer, Administrative Coordinator, Education Coordinator, Fellowship Coordinator, Ministry, Mission, and Evangelism coordinator, Worship Coordinator, Sunday School Director, and the W.M.U. Director. The Senior Minister will serve as Chairman.

Section 3. Duties:

1. Review, assess and coordinate suggested program plans and policies and actions of the Church officers, program organizations and committees; and provide for adequate communication among these units;
2. Schedule planned programs according to the Church calendar;
3. Nominate the Nominating Committee.

ARTICLE VI Non-Ministerial Church Staff

Section 1. The Church shall establish staff positions such as secretaries, organist, librarian, custodians, and nursery workers to support the Church's ministry.

Section 2. The Senior Minister or one of the other Church Ministers shall supervise each staff employee.

ARTICLE VII Meetings

Section 1. The format for the worship services is the responsibility of the Senior Minister with the assistance of other Ministers and other appropriate staff.

Section 2. The Chair of the Deacons shall serve as Moderator and shall preside at all business meetings. The Chair may appoint another member of the Church, preferably the Vice-Chair or another Deacon, to serve as moderator when necessary. The members present at a regular or duly called business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. The Church in business session shall be guided by Robert's Rules of Order. The order of business shall be established by the Moderator. Issues may be brought to the attention of the membership during a business meeting; however, no issue can be voted on without appropriate notification of the membership. If the issue requires a change in Church policy, Constitution and By-laws, or it will have a significant impact on Church operations, the Moderator may send it to an appropriate committee for study prior to a vote. Any time a previously planned and announced secret ballot is to be used in connection with any vote except the call of a Senior Minister or minister, absentee ballots will be made available to the Church membership. Any person who is unable to attend by reason of illness, infirmity, or absence from the city may secure an absentee ballot by contacting the Church office. Absentee ballots are not intended for use by those who simply do not wish to attend the business meeting.

Section 4. Church members unable to attend any scheduled business meeting because of other Church duties may vote on any issue coming before the congregation for a vote. Members should notify the Moderator of their desire to vote on a particular issue.

Section 5. Special business meetings must be announced publicly at a service of the Church or in church newsletters or by other written communication at least seven (7) days prior to the called meeting. No other matter may be considered at the meeting except that for which it was called and previously announced.

ARTICLE VIII Church Policies

Section 1. Certain general operating procedures shall be written as Church policies. A Policy Manual containing complete set of policies will be maintained in the office of the Church Secretary. Church policies may be proposed by the Deacons, Church officers, committees or individual members for adoption by the Church. In the case of a question about the interpretation or administration of Church policies, the Deacons shall be consulted for an opinion.

Section 2. The Chair of the Deacons shall appoint a committee at least every third year to review the Policy Manual and present recommendations for revisions if needed to the Church.

ARTICLE IX Adoption and Amendments

Section 1. The Bylaws shall be considered adopted and in effect when approved by two-thirds of the members present and voting at a meeting called for the purpose of their adoption, provided that the proposed Bylaws shall be made available to the membership and notice of the meeting shall be given to the Church at least thirty (30) days prior to the time the vote is taken.

Section 2. These Bylaws may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the Church, provided that such amendment, alteration or repeal be given in writing to the Church at least thirty (30) days prior to the time the vote is taken.

Section 3. All previous Church actions contrary to provisions of these Bylaws are hereby rescinded.

Section 4. The Chair of the Deacons shall appoint a committee at least every third year to review the By-Laws of the Church and present recommendations to the Church in the first business meeting of the calendar year.

