

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH BALDWIN, MISSISSIPPI
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
REVISED 2016**

PREAMBLE

The First Baptist Church of Baldwin, Mississippi affirms the Bible as the infallible, inspired Word of God and is the ultimate authority in the matters of faith, doctrine, and Christian living. This Church affirms “The Baptist Faith and Message” adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention June 14, 2000 as our basic Christian beliefs and as a general statement of our faith.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the Church is “First Baptist Church of Baldwin, Mississippi”.

ARTICLE II. AFFILIATION

This Church is an autonomous congregation of believers that shall operate in cooperation with the Lee County Baptist Association, The Mississippi Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE III. SLOGAN

A great commitment to the great commandment in Matthew 22:37-39 and to the great commission in Matthew 28:19-20 will grow a glorious church.

ARTICLE IV. MISSION

To glorify God by growing Disciples

ARTICLE V. VISION

For all members to become fully devoted followers of Christ through the process of Gathering, Growing, and Going:
Gathering faithfully in worship
Growing spiritually through small groups
Going boldly to share Christ

ARTICLE VI. CHURCH COVENANT

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the infallible Word of God contained in the Bible. Any person who meets guidelines may seek membership. All candidates for membership shall be presented to the church at any regular church service by public confession of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and accepted by vote of the church. Before an applicant shall be baptized, the Pastor or the moderator in his absence shall thoroughly examine such applicant as to their confession of faith and make recommendation as to their acceptance. Persons who present themselves for membership from another denomination shall be counseled by the Pastor to examine their faith and belief. Every member will strive for purity and godliness as we abstain from backbiting, excessive anger, intoxication, pornography, homosexuality, promiscuity, abortion, adultery, and recreational drug use.

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of

the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly, and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body is Christ. We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

ARTICLE VII. MARRIAGE

The Church recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. The Pastor and Staff shall only perform and participate in weddings, whether on or off church property, which are consistent with this statement. The use of buildings, equipment, and grounds is restricted to members in good standing (see Baptist Faith and Message) for events and activities consistent with the Church's statements of faith and practice. (Genesis 1:27 and 2:7, 18-19) and (Matthew 19:4-6)

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this church is vested in the body of the believers who compose it and is not subject to any other ecclesiastical body.

ARTICLE II. CHURCH MEMBERS

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions.

Every member of the church who meets the qualifications for the office is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for the elective offices in the church.

It is the policy of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, other members of the church staff and deacons are available for council and guidance. The Pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the member's present is required for the church to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. The church may restore to membership any person by vote of the church upon evidence of the person's repentance and reformation.

A member may be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death of the member.
2. Transfer to another Baptist Church with letter
3. Inactive member: Loss of contact or failure to respond over a two-year period.
4. Exclusion by action of the church following the example in Matthew 18.
5. Erasure upon a member's request.

**Definition of member in good standing: A member who is active in attendance and follows the faith, practice, and belief of the church as interpreted by the Pastor and Deacons.

REFERRING MATTERS OF CONCERN: When members of the church have matters that concern them, they should go to the Pastor or one of the deacons to express their concern. The deacon body shall be the final resolution of the matter.

ARTICLE III. CHURCH MEETINGS

The Church shall meet each Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening for worship. The Pastor shall direct all services.

All special meetings are to be placed on the church calendar by the church staff or church member in good standing.

Business Meetings

The Church shall hold regular quarterly business meetings. The Bible and Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings.

The Church may call special business meetings to consider special matters. A one week notice must be given for the special meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, date, time and place of the called special business meeting.

The quorum for business meetings shall consist of those church members who attend the meeting provided it is properly called. Any meeting called for the incurring of debt, or purchasing or sale of property must be scheduled on Sunday morning. It must be announced a minimum of one week in advance. Changes in the Constitution and By-laws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided each amendment has been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment has been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting.

Amendments to the Constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of the church members present.

Amendments to By-Laws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

ARTICLE IV. ORDINANCES

The Church shall observe 2 ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

BAPTISM

The Church shall receive for baptism any person within the guidelines for members who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior at any public worship service. Baptism shall be by immersion only. The pastor or any ordained man of the church shall administer baptism. Baptism shall be administered during any worship service of the church.

LORD'S SUPPER

The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper quarterly and shall be administered by the Pastor and Deacons. The chairman of the Deacons and his wife are responsible for the preparation of the Lord's Supper and the cleaning and storage of the equipment used

ARTICLE V. CHURCH FINANCES

Members should follow the Biblical example of tithing their money and time.

All funds received through tithes, offerings and special gifts shall go through the Church Treasurer or Financial Secretary and be recorded in the church books. All those responsible for the actual handling

of the funds including the Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Couriers shall be bonded with the church paying for the bonds.

The records shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Church Clerk or designated Church Secretary, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of permanent records of the church.

The Church shall operate under a unified budget system and the same shall guide all expenditures. Reports are to be made to the Budget and Finance Committee and Deacons each month, then made to the church membership.

Adequate accounting and handling of the funds are the responsibility of the Budget and Finance Committee.

The fiscal year of the church will run from October 1 to September 30.

The Budget and Finance committee shall prepare and submit to the church an all-inclusive yearly budget.

ARTICLE VI. ACCEPTANCE OF DESIGNATED GIFTS

All designated gifts are reliant upon the approval of the Treasurer, Budget and Finance committee and deacons.

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH OFFICERS

All who serve as officers of the church, the ministerial staff, those who serve as officers, teachers, and workers of organizations, and those on Church Councils and Committees shall be members of this church.

The officers of this church shall be the Pastor, the Church Staff, the Deacons, a Clerk, a Treasurer, and Trustees.

PASTOR

The pastor shall be the spiritual leader and chief operating officer of the church to function as a New Testament church. (See Baptist Faith and Message)

He shall lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The Pastor shall serve as the preacher and senior Bible teacher.

TREASURER

The Church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer. The Church may delegate the clerical responsibilities to a Church Financial Secretary, and Budget and Finance Committee for final authorization and approval of disbursements.

The Treasurer shall be bonded, with the church paying the bond.

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of receipts and disbursements of the preceding meeting.

The Treasurers' report and records shall be audited annually by an Auditing Committee or public accountant.

CLERK

The Church shall elect a Clerk annually. The Clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The Clerk is responsible for taking minutes of all business meetings and reading the minutes at the next business

meeting for approval or change by the Church.

The Clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association.

The Church may delegate the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary who will assist the elected Clerk. All church records are church property and should be kept in the church office.

TRUSTEES

The Church shall elect three Trustees to serve as legal officers of the church. They shall hold in trust the church property.

They shall have authority over official documents specific to matters approved by the Church. They shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, exchange, purchase, or rental of property and other securities, or other legal documents related to church approved matters.

DEACONS

In accordance with the meaning of the word “deacon” as practiced in the New Testament, deacons are to be the servants of the church. Their task is to serve with the Pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministries' task of leading the church in the achievement of its mission, proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and caring for the church's members and other persons in the community.

MINISTERIAL STAFF

The Pastor and Personnel Committee may request the need for additional ministerial staff positions.

Every Ministerial Staff Member will work under the supervision of the Pastor. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. All staff members must give evidence of a personal call from God to their field of ministry.

NON-MINISTERIAL STAFF

With the approval of the Personnel Committee and the financial approval of the Budget and Finance Committee, the Pastor shall employ the non-ministerial staff. After due process according to the personnel policies and the approval of the Personnel Committee, the pastor has the authority to terminate any non-ministerial staff member.

ARTICLE VIII. CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday school shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching programs.

The Sunday school shall be organized by departments and/or classes, as appropriate for all ages and shall be conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director elected by the church. Sunday school director shall be elected by the church annually.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

The Women on Mission shall be the mission education for women, girls, and preschool children. This will include teaching about local, state, national, and international missions along with prayer, Bible reading, giving and service. The group shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires. Women's ministry director shall be elected by the church annually.

MEN'S MINISTRY

The Men's ministry shall be the mission education for men, young men and boys. This will include

teaching about local, state, national, and international missions as well as Bible reading, giving, and service. The ministry shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires. Men's ministry director shall be elected by the church annually.

Discipleship Training Director

The Discipleship Training Director shall be responsible for small group Bible studies related to new member training, topical Bible studies, and fellowship groups. Discipleship training director shall be elected annually by the Church.

MUSIC

The Church music ministry, under the direction of the Minister of Music, shall be the music education training, and performance organization of the church. Its task shall be to teach music; train persons to lead, sing, and play music; provide music in the church and community; provide and interpret information and insure that all music is in accord with our faith.

ARTICLE IX. CHURCH COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

Councils and committees will perform the specialized work of the church. Councils, with representatives from applicable organizations, shall plan and coordinate the program of the church. Committees shall perform specialized work as assigned.

The nomination to membership will be done by the Committee on Committees for election by the church. The Committee on Committees shall select the chairperson for each committee.

Councils and Committees may be formed and dissolved by church action, by recommendation of the Committee on Committees, Constitution and By-Laws Committee, or Church Staff.

ARTICLE X. PERSONNEL POLICIES

The Church is the body of Christ, redemptive in nature, directed in purpose to carry out the Great Commission. It is of utmost importance that policies and procedures be implemented for the work of the Church to be effective. All Church employees will be expected to adhere to these guidelines.

Work week: The normal work week is forty hours 8:00-4:00 Monday through Thursday and until noon on Friday; however the employee working 32 hours or more is considered full-time with full-time benefits. One hour is granted for lunch for all employees.

Sick leave: Sick leave for full-time employees shall be granted upon recommendation of the Pastor and Personnel Committee. Sick leave is to be defined as actual working days. It is to be accrued on the basis of one day per month of employment, maximum of 12 days. Absences for funeral, medical, dental appointments and serious illness of immediate family can be considered sick leave up to a maximum of six days each year. Any days beyond six days will be considered vacation time and recorded on the personnel record as such. Sick leave may not be taken as vacation, will not accumulate, nor will a terminated employee be paid for any accrued sick leave.

Leave for jury duty: When an employee is called for jury duty or to serve as a witness in behalf of the church, time off with pay is granted. The employee may retain the juror's fee. Employees are expected to report for work if the jury duty does not require their full-time service for each day of duty.

Leave without pay using Family Medical Leave Act guidelines: The Pastor and Personnel Committee may grant leave without pay to regular full-time employees for special circumstances not provided for in the foregoing leave allowances. Purpose for such leave would include extended illness, maternity leave, military service or extended education in one's field of ministry.

Emergency leave: Emergency leave because of death within the immediate family may be granted not to exceed one week. Immediate family includes spouse, child or parent.

Vacation: Vacation for full-time ministerial staff is to be provided as follows: Two weeks' vacation per calendar year (unless decided otherwise at time of call) One week may be taken after six months Three weeks' vacation after five years at First Baptist Church of Baldwyn or completion of 10 years full-time ministry service in a church field. Vacation for full-time employees (other than ministerial) is to be provided as follows, based on continuous service: Two weeks' vacation per calendar year One week may be taken after six (6) months Three weeks' vacation after ten (10) years. Beginning at 20 years, one day per year will be added up to a maximum of four weeks' vacation per calendar year. Days of vacation shall be accrued on a per ratio basis the first year of employment. Thereafter, vacations shall follow the calendar year. There will be no vacation time until after three months of employment. One week may be taken after six months of employment. Vacation time does not accumulate from one year to the next, nor can one use vacation time that will be earned the following year. All vacations are to be scheduled with approval of the Pastor. All employees must take a continuous week of vacation at one time during the year. The church believes that all full-time employees deserve a vacation away from the job, therefore, pay will not be granted in lieu of vacation. Upon termination, any employee will be paid for any fractional vacation accrued from January 1 to the date of termination.

Training Programs: The church staff members are encouraged to increase their job knowledge and skill. Tuition and other expenses for special training courses deemed of benefit to the church may be approved by the Pastor and Personnel Committee.

Recognition for Tenure: Full-time staff members will be given gifts every 5 years of service as recommended by the Personnel committee and Budget and Finance Committee.

Annual physical examination: Beginning at age 45 and annually thereafter, ministerial staff members are required to have an annual physical examination at the church's expense.

Conference leave (secretarial staff): Each full-time secretary will be allowed up to five working days per calendar year as conference days. Conference days may be used for: Chaperone spiritual training/enrichment trips for children, youth, or senior adults, or personal enrichment conference such as Ridgecrest, Gulf Shores, etc., Teaching/leading church-related conferences on the association, state, or national level. State secretarial training conference or the bi-annual national Southern Baptist Secretaries Convention

Employee Appeal Procedure: Harmony and understanding among personnel is essential to maintain an effective organization and a desirable work environment. When differences cannot be resolved the following procedures should be followed. Staff member will have the situation reviewed by the Pastor. If following this discussion a satisfactory solution is not achieved, the staff member may refer the problem in writing to the Personnel Committee. The decision of the Personnel Committee is final.

Health Insurance: First Baptist Church will pay the full-time employee portion of the health

insurance. The employee will be given the option to accept or decline insurance. If it is declined the amount of the insurance premiums adjusted as needed, decided by the Budget and Finance Committee, will be added back to the compensation package. The Personnel committee will obtain health insurance quotes for each full-time employee based on an 80/20 payment with \$1000 deductible and get an average as to be used as compensation. The employee may then purchase his/her own insurance.

Holidays: The holidays to be observed annually by full-time employees are: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Friday after, Two days at Christmas, Martin Luther King Day, and President's Day.

Resignation: Employees who provide First Baptist Church with at least two weeks' notice (four weeks for ministerial staff) of intent to leave employment will be paid any unused vacation for which they may be eligible after working out their notice. Vacation may not be used in lieu of notice.

Retirement: First Baptist Church will contribute the employer's part of social security and contribute 10% of annual salary for the employee for retirement with Guidestone.

Worker's Compensation: First Baptist Church maintains Worker's Compensation Insurance on all employees. Any accidents must be reported to the Financial Secretary within 24 hours.

Ministerial Compensation: The personnel committee will negotiate with ministerial employees on a case by case basis regarding pay, housing, and other benefits deemed reasonable and customary.