

CONSTITUTION of FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ANOKA, MINNESOTA

*Unanimously adopted by the congregation on July 12, 1992
including the Article II. Doctrinal Statement – G Revision
from the July 20, 2008 Amendment Vote.*

BY-LAWS

THESE BY-LAWS are intended to guide the ministry of First Baptist Church under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE I. PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY AND OBJECTIVES

A. Philosophy of Ministry.

1. Purpose.
The purpose of First Baptist Church of Anoka is to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24), to edify believers (Eph. 4:12), and to evangelize the lost (Acts 1:8).
2. Primacy of the Scriptures.
The Scriptures, including the Old Testament and the New Testament, are the supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice (II Tim. 3:16).
3. Authority in the Church.
The final authority for the ministry of the church (Eph. 4:12,16), for the safeguarding of doctrine (I Tim. 3:15), and for church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20) rests with the congregation.
4. Priesthood of the Believer.
The church is a fellowship of regenerate believers, all of whom constitute a holy priesthood, chosen by God for the ministry (Eph. 4:12; I Pet. 2:5,9). The contribution of every member-priest is indispensable to the ministry of the body (I Cor. 12:21-24).

B. Objectives.

In accordance with our purpose, our objectives are:

1. To conduct corporate worship services, looking to the Holy Spirit, so that God is praised and glorified by each one in attendance and that believers are edified in terms of faith, hope and love.
2. To admonish believers, trusting God to instill in them the conviction that a truly Godly life extends beyond the corporate activities of the body and that their lives should glorify Him and manifest His presence in all they say and do.
3. To shepherd the local body by creating and promoting structures, ministries and opportunities which provide for:
 - a. Meaningful fellowship, encouragement, exhortation, and support for all ages in our church.
 - b. Assimilation of new members and visitors into the church body.
4. To edify the local body through quality Christian education for all ages in our church so that God may equip and prepare them to exercise their spiritual gifts and to communicate the Gospel.
5. To minister to and communicate the Gospel to the surrounding communities and to the ends of the earth by sending and supporting missionaries.

ARTICLE II. DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

- A. We believe in one God (Deut. 6:4), eternally existent as God the Father (Deut. 33:27; Rom. 1:20), God the Son (John 1:1, 8:58), and God the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, Heb. 9:14).
- B. We believe that the Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is God's inerrant, inspired and infallible Word, and is the supreme standard and final authority for all conduct, faith and doctrine (II Tim. 3:16).
- C. We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1), in His virgin birth (Matt. 1:23), in His sinless life (Heb. 4:15), in His miracles, in His substitutionary and atoning death (II Cor. 5:21; Rom 5:8-11), in His bodily resurrection (Rom 1:4), in His ascension to the right hand of the Father (I Pet. 3:22), and in His imminent, personal and visible return for His church (I Thess. 4:14-17).
- D. We believe that man was created in the image of God, but by willful transgression became sinful and is justly under the condemnation and wrath of Almighty God (Gen. 1:27 and 3:6; Rom. 5:18).
- E. We believe that the only salvation from this guilt and condemnation is through faith in the righteousness and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-25), and that this salvation is the free gift of God's love and grace (Eph. 2:8). We believe that saving faith is more than simple mental assent to the Gospel. Saving faith involves genuine repentance and conversion; repentance being defined as a turning from that which is wrong and conversion as a turning toward Jesus by allowing Him to indwell as Lord (Rom. 10:9).
- F. We believe in the Holy Spirit and His ministry of revealing Christ to us (John 16:13-14), convicting us of sin (John 16:8), regenerating repentant sinners (John 3:5), and by His presence and power, sanctifying the lives of the redeemed (II Thess. 2:13). We further believe that those united with Christ through His death and resurrection are no longer slaves to sin (Rom. 6:13-14). Being set free, we are empowered by the Spirit to live a new life of righteousness (Gal. 5:1, 22-25).
- G. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the ordinances of baptism (Matt. 28:18-20) and the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:23-26). Baptism by immersion is to be administered only upon profession of faith in Christ, thereby declaring our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior. The Lord's Supper is only for believers, is to be preceded by careful self-examination, and is in remembrance of the Lord's death until He comes.
- H. We believe that the Church is a living, spiritual body of which Christ is the head and of which all regenerated people are members (Col. 1:18; I Cor. 12:13-14). We believe that a visible church is a company of baptized believers associated for worship, work, and fellowship. All believers are ministers of the gospel of grace (I Pet. 2:5,9), and as such we are commanded to reach a lost world for Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20).
- I. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust: the just, having been redeemed by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be with Him throughout eternity in glory (I Cor. 15:20-23); the unjust, having died impenitent and unreconciled to God, to eternal punishment and separation from God (Rev. 20:12-14).

ARTICLE III: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- A. Eligibility.**
Candidates for membership must have received Christ as their personal Savior and Lord, have been baptized by immersion, and be in agreement with the doctrinal statement in Article II of these By-Laws.
- B. Approval.**
The elders, after meeting with membership candidates and being satisfied of their eligibility, shall recommend them for membership to the congregation. Candidates are

accepted by a majority vote of those present and voting on the recommendation. This vote may occur at a regularly scheduled Sunday morning worship service without prior notice.

C. Privileges.

1. Membership is expected to provide the opportunity for the following:
 - a. Mutual edification and encouragement.
 - b. Acceptance as a fellow minister of God's grace.
 - c. Opportunities to engage in works of service so the body of Christ may be built up.
2. Members eighteen years old or older may vote on all matters brought to the congregation.

D. Responsibilities.

1. Members should strive to live in the power of the Spirit and strive for unity in the faith (Eph. 4:30).
2. Members should strive to faithfully meet together for worship and to exercise their spiritual gifts in the ministry (Heb. 10:25).
3. Members should pray for one another (Eph. 6:18).
4. Members should contribute financially to the ministry of the church as God enables them (I Cor 16:2).

E. Term of Membership.

Members shall be asked to reaffirm their desire to maintain their membership prior to the annual business meeting.

F. Termination of Membership.

1. Members who desire to disaffiliate with the church may do so by withdrawing their membership in writing to the council.
2. All efforts shall be made to resolve church discipline matters in ways which restore members to fellowship following Biblical guidelines. Should it ever become necessary to dismiss anyone from membership for cause, a majority vote of the membership present and voting at a business meeting called for such purpose shall be required.

ARTICLE IV: ORGANIZATIONAL YEAR / CHURCH MEETINGS

A. Term.

All terms for church officials shall begin on May 1 and terminate on April 30.

B. Budget.

The budget shall be planned to cover a fiscal year beginning April 1, concluding March 31.

C. Business Meetings.

1. All business meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise preempted herein.
2. Notification of all business meetings shall be posted or published on the two Sundays prior to the meeting.
3. Regular business meetings.
 - a. The annual business meeting shall be held during the third or fourth week of April as determined by the council. At the annual meeting, the budget for the coming year shall be adopted, officials shall be elected and confirmed, and the state of the church shall be considered. Any other business may also be conducted.
 - b. Quarterly business meetings shall be held during the third or fourth week of July, October, and January, as determined by the council. Financial reports shall be given at quarterly meetings and any other matters may be considered.
4. Other business meetings.

- a. Additional business meetings may be called by the council.
 - b. Members may call a business meeting by presenting a petition to the council stating the purpose of the meeting and containing the signatures of ten voting members.
 - c. When a special meeting is called, the purpose for the meeting shall be included with the publication of notice required in item number two above.
5. Quorum
Twenty-five voting members shall constitute a quorum at business meetings. No business requiring a vote shall be conducted in the absence of a quorum.

ARTICLE V: CHURCH OFFICIALS

A. Designation of Officials.

1. The elders and the pastors. There shall be one elder for each 25 members or fraction thereof.
2. A council of seven deacons or deaconesses comprised of not more than three deaconesses (hereinafter referred to as the “council”) and chaired by a deacon.
3. Those who lead committees, organizations, and ministries which facilitate the work of the church.

B. Duties of Officials.

1. The elders, together with the pastors, should:
 - a. Shepherd the flock (I Pet. 5:2-3).
 - b. Edify the flock by teaching the Word and discipling believers (I Tim. 3:2).
 - c. Be examples to the flock (I Pet. 5:3).
 - d. Refute false doctrine and false teachers (Titus 1:9-11).
 - e. Visit those in need (James 1:17).
 - f. Anoint and pray for the sick (James 5:14).
 - g. Be men of prayer (Col. 1:3).
 - h. Be servants to the flock in all humility (Matt. 23:11).
 - i. Be available for consultation at the request of the council.
2. The Council of Deacons and Deaconesses.
The council shall:
 - a. Provide for the day to day governance of the organization as authorized by the congregation.
 - b. Prepare an annual budget for approval by the congregation at the annual business meeting.
 - c. Appoint all personnel, committees, or commissions needed to conduct the ministry effectively.
 - d. Hire church employees as authorized by the congregation.
 - e. The chairman of the council shall serve as moderator at church business meetings and shall be the legal and official representation of the church as needed.
3. Committee and Ministry Leaders
The duties of the leaders of various committees and/or organizations within the church shall be determined by the groups they lead unless the council has established specific expectations for them.

C. Qualifications of Officials.

1. All those who have been members of the church for a minimum of one year, who have reached legal voting age and who outwardly manifest the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives are eligible to serve as church officials.

2. Officials are expected to sincerely strive to bear the fruits of the Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23 and to avoid the acts of the sinful nature as listed in Galatians 5:19-21. The “and the like” clause in verse 21 shall be understood to include such things as the recreational use of drugs (including alcohol and tobacco), pornography, gambling, and other current vices.
3. Those chosen to serve as elders shall meet the qualifications given in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
4. Those chosen to serve as deacons shall meet the qualifications given in I Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13, and Acts 6:3; those chosen to serve as deaconesses shall also meet the qualifications given in I Timothy 3:11.

D. Selection of Officials.

1. Nominating Committee.
 - a. The council shall appoint a nominating committee of five prior to the January quarterly meeting. Members of the council shall not be eligible for the nominating committee.
 - b. This committee shall present candidates for all open offices prior to April 1.
 - c. Persons nominated must consent to serve before their names may be presented.
 - d. Additional nominations for any office other than elders may be made from the floor at the annual meeting if prior consent to serve has been obtained.
 - e. Deacons and deaconesses shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church by majority of the votes cast. Elders shall be confirmed by 75% approval of those present and voting.
2. Members of committees, organizations, and ministries shall be appointed by the council and pastor. These groups shall select their leaders.

E. Length of Terms.

1. The elders shall serve for terms of three years. Reconfirmation by 75% of those present and voting is required for additional terms. The number of terms shall be unlimited.
2. The deacons and deaconesses shall serve for terms of three years. One-third shall be elected annually. Two consecutive terms may be served. After serving two consecutive terms, members must wait one year before becoming a candidate again.
3. Elders are not precluded from serving as deacons.
4. Elders, deacons, deaconesses, and other officials other than the pastor may be removed from office for cause by a majority vote of those present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose.
5. All resignations must be submitted in writing to the council.

ARTICLE VI: CHURCH EMPLOYEES

A. Pastor.

1. Selection.
 - a. When the office of pastor is vacant, the congregation shall appoint a search committee of seven persons to seek a candidate for the position.
 - b. Candidates must meet the requirements for church officials and elders (except for the one year of membership) outlined in Article V of these By-Laws. Additionally, they must be in agreement with the Philosophy of Ministry in Article I and the Doctrinal Statement in Article II.
 - c. The candidate shall be presented to the congregation at a meeting called for the purpose of introducing him. This meeting shall provide an open forum in which questions from the membership are sought.

- d. A subsequent meeting shall be held for the purpose of voting on a recommendation to issue a call. An affirmative vote of seventy-five percent of those present and voting shall be required to issue a call.
- 2. Duties.
In cooperation with the elders and the council, the pastor shall:
 - a. Provide spiritual shepherding to the congregation.
 - b. Provide leadership for outreach to the community and the world, as they are integral to the church's mission.
 - c. Coordinate all church ministries.
 - d. Serve ex-officio on all boards and committees. He shall have no vote in that role.
- 3. Termination
 - a. A pastor may be dismissed by a majority vote of those present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose.
 - b. All resignations must be submitted in writing to the council.

B. Associate or Assistant Pastors.

- 1. Selection.
 - a. When the congregation determines that additional or supplementary pastor(s) are needed, the senior pastor shall seek candidates for the position(s).
 - b. The elders, with the pastor, shall serve as an interview committee for prospective candidates.
 - c. Before recommendation to the church, the candidate shall be presented to the congregation at a meeting called for the purpose of introducing him. This meeting shall provide an open forum in which questions from the membership will be sought.
 - d. A subsequent meeting shall be held for the purpose of voting on a recommendation to issue a call. An affirmative vote of seventy-five percent of those present and voting shall be necessary to issue the call.
- 2. Duties.
Associate or Assistant Pastors will minister as directed by the pastor and the council.
- 3. Termination.
 - a. Associate or Assistant Pastors may be dismissed by a majority vote of those present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose.
 - b. All resignations must be submitted in writing to the council.

C. Other Employees.

- 1. Other employees may be appointed and dismissed at the discretion of the council.
- 2. All resignations must be submitted in writing to the council.

ARTICLE VII: CHURCH FINANCES

A. Budget.

- 1. The budget of the church shall be prepared by the council, and it shall be submitted to the membership at least one week prior to the annual meeting. The leaders of all committees and ministries shall present their requests to the council.
- 2. The budget shall be presented for adoption at the annual meeting. A majority affirmative vote of those present and voting is needed for adoption.

B. Disbursements.

- 1. The church treasurer, under the supervision of the council, shall have authority to disburse funds in conformity with the budget. A variation of ten percent of a budgeted amount is considered to be in conformity.

2. For unbudgeted items, the council shall have authority to increase the annual budget by \$2,500 or less without congregational approval. Modifications in excess of \$2,500 must have congregational approval.
3. Any purchase or sale of real estate must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose.

C. Funding.

This church shall be funded by donations and the increase or appreciation of donations.

ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS

A. Denominational Affiliation.

This church may affiliate with denominational organizations, but it shall not relinquish self-determination or autonomy in any sphere of its ministry. It shall not enter into any relationship requiring the relinquishment of property ownership.

B. Interdenominational Organizations.

The church may join interdenominational groups for the purpose of joint ministry and fellowship. Such associations should entail no doctrinal compromise.

ARTICLE IX: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

A. Method of Amendment.

Proposed amendments to this Constitution may be submitted by any member. The proposed amendment must be submitted in writing to the council at least three weeks prior to an annual or quarterly business meeting. The proposal will be discussed at the business meeting, but no vote will be taken until the next regular business meeting is held.

B. Approval of Amendment.

The congregation will vote on proposed amendments after the conditions above have been met. A two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting is required for approval.

ARTICLE X: DISSOLUTION

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director, or officer of the corporation or any private individual and no donor, member, director, or officer of the corporation or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets. Upon dissolution, all assets of the corporation must be distributed to one or more organizations that (1) is/are in agreement with Articles I and II of these By-Laws; and (2) is/are qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.