

Bethany Church Constitution and Bylaws
1986



I. Church Membership

Section 1. General

This is a Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ which is an affiliate of the Mecklenburg Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and the Southern Baptist Convention. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer him or herself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
- (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church.
- (3) By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist Church when no letter is obtainable.
- (4) By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism from a church doctrinally compatible with Southern Baptists' view of baptism.

Membership is reserved for those who have been baptized by immersion as believers.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Fellowship of Deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

Section 3. New Member Orientation

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

Section 4. Rights of Members

- (1) Unless otherwise directed by the church, every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present.
- (2) Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Section 5. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) Death of the member,
- (2) Dismission to another Baptist Church
- (3) Exclusion by action of this church, or
- (4) Erasure upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination

Section 6. Discipline

It shall be the practice 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 counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition list which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18 and other relate Scripture. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings she;; be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

II. Church Officers and Committees

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church committees shall be members of this church.

Section 1. Officers

The officers of the church shall be: President, one or more Vice Presidents, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and As-

sistant Treasurer. The President and Vice Presidents shall be selected only from those persons serving as Trustees. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary shall be those persons elected as clerk and Assistant Clerk by the church membership. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be those persons elected as such by the membership of the church.

Additional officers of the church shall be the Pastor, the Church Staff, the Deacons, and a Moderator.

(1) The Pastor is responsible for equipping and leading the church for functioning as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will equip and lead the congregation, the organization, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The Pastor is the equipper and leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he works with the trustees, the deacons and church staff to: (a) lead the church i the achievement of it's mission (b) proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers, and, (c) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whoever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one weeks public notice has been given to all members.

A Pastor Selection Committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor and it's recommendations will constitute a nomination. Any church member has the privilege of making recommendations to the Pastor Selection Committee.

The Committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

The Pastor may relinquish the office as Pastor by giving at least two weeks written notice to the church at the time of resignation. The church may declare the office of Pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least one weeks written notice has been given or mailed to each church family. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the Personnel Committee and the trustees or deacons or by written petition signed by not less than one-third of the resident church members. The moderator for this meeting shall be selected by a majority of the voting members present and shall be someone other than the Pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the Pastor so excluded from office, the church will compensate the Pastor with not less than one-twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

(2) Upon recommendation of the Pastor, the ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines after the affirmative vote of a majority of members present. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Those staff members of whom the church requires

evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be recommended to the church by the Pastor and Personnel Committee and called by church action. At the time of resignation at least two weeks written notice shall be given to the church. The church may vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the Pastor and Personnel Committee, such termination being immediate and the compensation conditions begin the same as stated above for the Pastor, except that the amount shall relate to the individuals compensation.

Upon recommendation of the Pastor, non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines a need for their services. The church Personnel Committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the church.

(3) The church shall elect trustees and/or deacons at regular or special business meetings of the church called specifically for such purpose. Trustees shall serve in such capacity until their successors are duly elected and qualified. Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year the assigned term of office of one-third of the number of deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill vacancies and to add the deacons such numbers as the church size warrants. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term as outlined in the Deacon Selection Procedure. After serving a term of three years assignment, a deacon shall be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of at least one

year. there shall be no obligation to constitute as an assigned deacon one who has been a deacon in another church; but in such instances as one might be chosen by this church for assignment as a deacon, his previous ordination by another church of like faith and order shall suffice for this church.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task is to serve with the Pastor and staff in performing the ministerial tasks of (a) leading the church in the achievement of it's mission, (b) proclaiming the Gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (c) caring for the church members and other persons in the community.

(4) The Pastor shall serve as the moderator to moderate all business meetings and the chairman of deacons shall serve as the vice-moderator. In the absence of the moderator, the vice-moderator shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

(5) The church shall elect annually a clerk as its officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, discussion, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indi-

cated in these by-laws. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association.

The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to the assistant clerk or a church secretary who will assist the elected clerk. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained.

(6) The church shall elect annually a church treasurer and assistant treasurer, if necessary, as its financial officer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by a Certified Public Accountant. The treasurer shall be bonded, the church paying for the bond.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of the fiscal yearend its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to the assistant treasurer or a church secretary who will assist the elected treasurer. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained.

Section 2. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee for all church leadership positions shall be comprised of the directors of the particular program organizations, chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons and Pastor. The nominating Committee shall nominate candidates to serve on committees and all other positions in the church except deacons, and present to the church for election.

Section 3. All Other Committees

The standing committees and special committees of this church shall be as the church shall authorize. Additional standing committees may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these by-laws. Committee members shall be recommended by the nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these by-laws. Committee members shall serve on a three year rotation basis with one-third to be elected each year. A description of all committees will be maintained by the nominating Committee and kept in the church office.

III. Church Program Organization

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

(1) The Sunday School shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching program. Its tasks shall be to teach the Biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, perform functions of the church within its constituency, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

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.

(2) The Church Training organization shall serve as the training unit of the church. Its tasks shall be to train church members to perform the functions of the church; train church leaders; orient new church members, teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, and church policy and organization; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Church Training shall be organized by departments for all ages and conducted under the direction of a Church Training Director.

(3) The Church Music organization, under the direction of the Minister of Music, shall be the music education, training, and musical proclamation and praise organization of the church. Its tasks shall be to teach music; train persons to lead, sing, and play music; provide music in the church and community; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The Church Music Program shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

(4) Other program organizations shall be added to the ministries of the church as determined by the church.

IV. Church Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism

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

- (1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- (2) The Pastor, or whomever the Pastor shall authorize, shall administer baptism.
- (3) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper in keeping with the commands of Holy Scriptures at such times as the Pastor deems appropriate. The Pastor or his designs and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper. All who know Jesus Christ as Savior will be invited to participate.

V. Church Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday and at other times as decided by the church. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction,

and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The Pastor or his designee shall lead the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Section 2. Regular Business Meetings

The church shall hold regular monthly business meetings at such time and place as shall be determined by the trustees.

Section 3. Special Business Meetings

The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-week written notice must be given to all members for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, and time and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting a minimum of 72 hours in advance.

Section 4. The Quorum

The quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 5. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

VI. Church Finances

Section 1. Budget

The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts. Annually there shall be opportunity provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from the church members. Offering envelopes will be provided for members' use.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer, or financial secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. Those who have responsibility that involves actual handling of funds shall be bonded, the church paying the bond. (See Article II, Section 2, (6), regarding the church treasurer.)

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

Section 3. Operating Bank Accounts

The church will maintain checking accounts and other accounts at banks or other financial institutions previously approved by the Finance Committee. Bank resolutions granting authority for specific persons to sign checks or orders of withdrawal must be

recommended but the Finance Committee and approved by the congregation in a regular business meeting. The church treasurer shall always be one of those persons authorized to sign on accounts. The corporate secretary shall sign all bank and/or other financial resolutions and affix the corporate seal.

Section 4. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

VII. Purchasing and Selling Real Property

Section 1. Purchasing Real Property

Real property may be purchased in the name of and on behalf of the church by the act of the Trustees after the proposal to so has been presented to the congregation in any regular or special business meeting. The proposal must be passaged by a majority of those members present.

Section 2. Selling Real Property

Real property may be sold in the name of the church by the act of the Trustees upon the vote and approval of a majority of those members present in a regular or special business meeting. The deed of conveyance shall be signed by the president of the church and attested to by the secretary of the church.

VII. Church Affiliations

It shall be the policy of this church to cooperate with the Mecklenburg Baptist Association, the North Caroling Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. Tithes and offerings for these causes and for the expenses of the church

shall be received at the regular services on each Sunday and at such other times as may be determined upon vote of the church.

IX. Doctrinal Statement

The doctrinal statement of this church shall be consistent with the articles states in the booklet “The Baptist Faith and Message” adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, May 9, 1963.

X. To Be Tax Exempt

The term for which the church has been organized and incorporated is perpetual and it shall operate as a tax exempt organization under the United States Internal Revenue Code as amended. In the even of dissolution of the church, the assets thereof shall be liquidated and distributed by first paying all creditors, and all remaining assets shall then be distributed to another Christian organization or organizations which have like faith, belief, and purposes as ours and which qualify as tax exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code.

XI. Amendments

Changes in the by-laws may be made at any regular or special business meeting of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at the previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments shall have a concurrence of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

XII. Incorporation

It is the desire and intent that the church shall operate as a corporate entity not-for-profit pursuant to the North Carolina General Statutes. Accordingly, all references to the “church” herein shall be interpreted to be references to the “corporation” as that term is defined under the General Statutes of North caroling, and the officers of the church, specifically President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, shall have the same definitional meaning and authority to bind the church as the same officers referred to under the said General Statutes.