

**Constitution
First Baptist Church
Camden, Arkansas**

Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

Article I. Name

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Camden, Arkansas located at 348 Washington, N.W., and incorporated under the laws of Arkansas on September 10, 1991.

Article II. Purpose Statement (amended May 10, 2006)

The First Baptist Church of Camden, Arkansas exists for the Glory of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:31) and to encourage Christians to embrace a Great Commitment (Mark 8:34) to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and the Greatest Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40) in order to empower a Great Church (Acts 2:41-47)!

Article III. Statement of Beliefs (amended May 10, 2006)

The First Baptist Church of Camden, Arkansas believes in and will uphold the five following fundamentals of the Christian faith:

1. The Holy Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is inspired, infallible and inerrant in the original manuscripts.
2. Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary with God as His Father and was therefore fully God and fully man.
3. Jesus Christ's death on the cross was the substitutionary atonement for the sins of all humanity.
4. Jesus Christ was bodily resurrected from the grave on the third day and then ascended to His Father in heaven.
5. Jesus Christ will bodily return some day for His church, those who have received Him as their Lord and Savior.

Article III. Statement of Beliefs cont.

Furthermore, this local church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Southern Baptist Convention that was adopted as The Baptist Faith and Message on June 14, 2000 in Atlanta, Georgia including the Report of the Baptist Faith and Message Study Committee to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article IV. Affiliation

This church will cooperate with and support the Liberty Baptist Association, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention as long as we feel that such cooperation is the best way to further the Kingdom of our Lord and to glorify His name.

Article V. Polity (amended May 10, 2006)

The First Baptist Church of Camden, Arkansas regards the Holy Bible as it's sole authority in matters of faith and practice. The government of this church is democratic and is vested in its members. The membership of this church shall be composed of baptized believers whose names appear on the roll.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This church is subjected 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.

Article VI. Amendments

Any member(s) may introduce an amendment to change the Constitution in a regular business meeting, provided that any such motion to amend or repeal shall be presented in written form. The deacons shall review the suggested changes in counsel with the member(s) who introduced the motion. The deacons shall report and make recommendations at the next regular business meeting.

Written copies of the proposed changes shall be printed in the Messenger or mailed to the church family five (5) days prior to voting on the amendment(s).

The Constitution shall then be amended in a subsequent regular business meeting with a minimum of three-fourths (3/4) majority of the members present and voting.

**By Laws
First Baptist Church
Camden, Arkansas**

**Article I.
Membership**

Section A. General

The membership of First Baptist Church shall consist of persons who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and who have been biblically baptized. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of each membership.

Section B. Candidacy

Any person may offer himself or herself as a candidate for membership in this church by coming forward during a public invitation at the end of any regular church worship service and speaking to the pastor or by speaking to the pastor personally in another setting.

Candidates may join First Baptist Church in one of the following ways:

1. Salvation – By professing your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and following Him in biblical baptism by immersion.
2. Transfer of Membership – By transferring your letter of membership from another Southern Baptist Church.
3. Statement of Faith – By statement of your faith in Jesus Christ and that you have been biblically baptized by immersion after salvation.
4. Baptism – By statement of your faith in Jesus Christ from another denomination that does not practice biblical baptism by immersion after salvation. This is a statement of faith in Christ and a willingness to be biblically baptized.

After presentation, candidates for membership are voted upon, subject to validation of conditions of candidacy in accordance with Section B, paragraphs 1-4 above, they shall become members.

A Church Orientation class shall be offered as needed.

Section C. Rights of Members

1. Each 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 or provision has been made for absentee voting.
2. Each member of the church is eligible for consideration as candidates for the elective offices in the church unless otherwise restricted by qualifications imposed by the church.

Section D. 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 exist 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 accord with Matthew 18:15-17. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting is required.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded upon request of the excluded person and by two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

Section E. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in any of the following ways: (1) death, (2) transfer to another Baptist church, (3) personal request of the member in writing, (4) membership in another denomination, (5) exclusion by church action (see Section D above).

Article II. Officers

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

Section 1. Pastor

The role of the Pastor shall be to:

- a. Lead the church to function as a New Testament Church.
- b. Oversee the church staff and congregation as they perform their tasks.
- c. Lead the pastoral ministries of the church working with the church staff, deacons, and congregation to proclaim the Gospel.

1. Calling of the Pastor - upon recommendation of the Pastoral Search Committee, the Pastor shall be extended a call provided that there is a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the members voting. Voting shall be by written ballot.

2. Termination of the Pastor - the pastor relationship may be terminated by mutual consent of the pastor and church at any time with reasonable notice being given or upon his death. The church may terminate the pastor's service immediately by issuance of not more than three months salary provided that a special meeting called for that purpose be held, with written notification having been sent to each family informing them of the meeting. A majority vote of the members voting shall be necessary to constitute the dissolution of the pastoral relationship.

Section 2. Deacons

1. Purpose: The deacons are an ordained body in the church specifically authorized in God's Word to be servants of a New Testament church (Acts 6:3-7 and I Timothy 3). Deacons should promote a spirit of unity in the church. When problems arise within the body, the deacons with the pastor should handle the issues swiftly and spiritually. Deacons should see themselves as a Spiritual body, meeting the needs of the pastor and the church.

2. Membership:

- a. Active Deacons: the active deacon body shall consist of twelve members. A full term on the active deacon roll shall be three years. After completing a three-year term, each deacon shall rotate to the reserve roll. If a deacon is removed from the active roll, the unexpired term will be filled at the next election for the balance of the vacant term.
- b. Reserve Deacons: One-third of the active deacons shall rotate off the active roll to the reserve roll for one year, after which they shall be automatically eligible for re-election to the active roll. All ordained deacons not serving as an active deacon will be considered on the reserve roll.

3. Election: A Deacon Election committee shall oversee the election of deacons in accordance with the church's manual on Committees and Ministry Teams (process updated summer 2008).

Section 3. Clerk

The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer. The Nominating Committee prior the beginning of the church-operating year, shall present the clerk for election to serve a one-year term beginning with the start of the church operating year. 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, dismissal, death or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve or fill all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated by 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 a church secretary to assist the elected clerk.

Section 4. Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer. The Nominating Committee, prior to the beginning of the church-operating year, shall present the Treasurer for election to serve a one-year term beginning with the start of the church-operating year. 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 account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The treasurer may

designate responsibility to the financial secretary as necessary. The treasurer shall always be a full voting member of the finance committee.

Section 5. Trustees

The trustees shall be a standing body (consisting of the chairman of deacons, clerk, and treasurer) which may be called upon by the church to serve in an investigative or advisory capacity, and when thus serving, shall be empowered to bring recommendations regarding the subject matter then being dealt with to the church for action or restraint of action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, purchase, or rental of property and other legal documents where the signatures are required and when such action has been approved by the church membership.

Article III. Committees

Section 1. General

The church shall establish committees and ministry teams as needed to carry out its work. The purpose, composition, function, term of rotation, and activity of each committee and ministry-team shall be approved by a minimum of a three (3/4) majority vote of the members present and voting. These documents will be maintained in the church's Manual on Committees and Ministry Teams.

There shall be three (3) groups of committees as outlined below.

Section 2. Standing Committees

The standing committees of the church shall be the nominating committee, personnel committee, committee on committees, budget/finance committee and youth committee.

Section 3. Ministry Teams

All other committees, as deemed necessary, are designated as ministry teams to be staffed with a chairperson who, when a need arises, would enlist the appropriate number of team members for the task at hand.

Section 4. Other Special Committees

Committees other than standing committees may be formed and elected by the church to meet specific needs. These committees include, but are not limited to, the Pastor Search Committee, the Interim Pastor Committee, and the Deacon Election Committee. Committee descriptions shall be in accordance with Section I above.

**Article IV.
Organizations**

Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church. It is understood that the pastor is an ex-officio officer of all the organizations, and his leadership is to be recognized in them.

Section 2. Ministries

The church shall endeavor to minister in the followings ways:

1. Worship
2. Evangelism
3. Discipleship
4. Missions
5. Fellowship

**Article V.
Church Meetings**

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall ordinarily meet each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for the worship of God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor shall direct the services.

Section 2. Business Meeting

The church shall ordinarily meet the Wednesday night after the second Sunday of each month for the purpose of conducting business.

Section 3. Called Business Meetings

The pastor or chairman of deacons may call a special business meeting to consider matters of special nature and significance. Notice of a called business meeting shall be announced in a previous service. The notice shall include subject, date, time, and place. Only the matters contained in the notice shall be considered.

**Article VI.
Church Staff**

This church shall call or employ such staff members as needed. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined. Ministry staff members other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by church action.

**Article VII.
Moderator**

The moderator shall be the pastor and shall preside over all business conferences. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of deacons shall preside, or in the absence of both, the church clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected. The moderator shall be the absolute authority to refer any motion or matter of business initially presented at the business conference to the appropriate committee(s) for study and recommendations prior to it being voted on by the church. *Roberts Rules of Order* shall govern all business conferences.

**Article VIII.
Church Calendar**

Section 1. Church Year

The church operating year shall be September 1 to August 31.

Section 2. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall be as defined in Article VIII - Church Finances.

**Article IX.
Church Finances**

Section 1. Budget

The finance committee shall prepare and submit a budget to the church for approval.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds received shall be administered by the church treasurer or financial secretary and be properly recorded in the books of record. Those who have responsibility in handling of church funds shall be bonded, with the church paying the bond. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the finance committee.

Section 3. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall be from January 1 to December 31.

**Article X.
Maintenance**

The clerk shall be responsible to ensure that the original copy of the church's Constitution and By Laws and any amendments be placed in the church's safe deposit box.

After amendments and changes have been approved by the church, the Constitution and By Laws shall be updated with the amendments and changes.

A current amended copy of the above documents are on file in the church office and are available for distribution.

Article XI. Church Ordinances

1. Baptism

The church may receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior, who professes Him publicly and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

Baptism shall be by immersion in water. The pastor or whomever he shall authorize shall administer baptism. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.

2. The Lord's Supper

The church shall ordinarily observe the Lord's Supper at least once a quarter. The Lord's Supper may be served during any worship service. The pastor and the deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper may be taken by those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior.

Article XII. License and Ordination

First Baptist Church can license and/or ordain to the Gospel Ministry those who give satisfactory evidence of their Christian experience and purpose, who give testimony of their compelling sense of Divine Call to Christian service and whose views prove consistent with the Christian faith and the Baptist beliefs.

Candidates for licensing or ordination shall be recommended by the pastor, examined by the deacons, and confirmed by a minimum of three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the members present and voting at a business meeting.

Article XIII. Conflicts with Articles and By Laws

In the event that any conflict or possibility of conflict arises between the church's Constitution and these By Laws and the Articles of Incorporation of the church, the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation shall prevail over and preempt the operation of the church's Constitution and the By Laws.

In the event of any conflict or possibility of conflict arises between the church's Constitution and these By Laws and the provisions of the Manual on Committees and/or the Policy and Procedure Manual, the Constitution and the By Laws shall be considered the governing authority.

Article XIV.
Amendments

Any member(s) may introduce an amendment to change the by Laws in a regular business meeting, provided that any such motion to amend or repeal shall be presented in written form. The deacons shall review the suggested changes in counsel with the member(s) who introduce the motion. The deacons shall report and make recommendations at the next regular business meeting.

Written copies of the proposed changes shall be printed in the Messenger or mailed to the church family five (5) days prior to voting on the amendment(s).

The By Laws shall then be amended in a subsequent regular business meeting with a minimum of three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the members present and voting.