

CONSTITUTION

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

I. Name

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Belmont, located at Belmont, North Carolina.

II. Objectives

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our Church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.

To be a Church which ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and the world in Jesus' name.

To be a Church whose purpose is to be Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

III. Statement of Beliefs

We believe:

That our church is autonomous.

In the virgin birth.

Matthew 1:23

That the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

II Peter 1:19 -21

In the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19

In the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.	1 Corinthians 5:3 -5
That our hope is in the risen Lord.	Romans 8:11
In the ordinances of the Lord's supper and baptism immersion.	Luke 22:19 – 20 Matthew 3:11-12
In heaven and hell.	Matthew 13:40-43
That we are all accountable to God.	II Corinthians 5:10
That Jesus laid down His life for our sins.	John 3:16-17
That all people have the freedom to choose Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.	Matthew 7:24-27
In justification by God's grace through faith.	Ephesians 2:8-9
In the security of the believer, once saved, always saved.	John 10:25-30
In the priesthood of believers.	1 Peter 2:9
In communicating with God through prayer.	Isaiah 56:7
In reaching the lost through evangelism and missions.	Matthew 28:19-20
In encouraging and nurturing all Christians.	1 Thessalonians 5:11
That we should love our neighbors as ourselves that we should love one another and forgive one another.	Galatians 5:14, Colossians 3:12 -14

In the stewardship of our time, money, and talents.	Leviticus 27:30
That Christians should be committed to active worship and servanthood in God's Kingdom.	Psalm 95:6, Ephesians 2:10
That all people are acceptable to God regardless of gender, race, social or economic status, nationality, earthly attributes or intellectual ability; therefore, we accept all people.	Acts 10:34-35

* All scripture references are based on KJV version

IV. Church Covenant

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and 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 Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in 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, doctrines and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and spread of pornography; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

V. Polity and Relationships

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership. (See Article I of the Bylaws).

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

This Church is subject 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. Insofar as is practical, the Church will cooperate with and support the Greater Gaston Baptist Association, the North Carolina State Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

VI. Vision Statement

We envision a church built by God on the foundation of Jesus Christ, exalting the Son of God, edifying the children of God, and enlarging the family of God.

VII. Mission Statement

The First Baptist Church of Belmont exists to GO to the unchurched in our community and in our world with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ, to GATHER them into the fellowship of our church family, to encourage them to GROW into mature followers of Jesus Christ, to challenge the growing to GIVE through ministry, and to GLORIFY God with their lives.

GO - Matthew 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..."

GATHER - Matthew 28:19 "...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

Spirit...”

GROW - Matthew 28:20 “...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...”

GIVE - Matthew 22:39 “...Love your neighbor as yourself...”

GLORIFY - Matthew 22:37 “...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...”

A GREAT COMMITMENT TO THE GREAT COMMANDMENT AND THE
GREAT COMMISSION MAKES A GREAT CHURCH

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section I – General

The First Baptist Church of Belmont, North Carolina, hereinafter referred to as the “Church”, is a sovereign, autonomous and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Church is affiliated with the Greater Gaston Baptist Association, the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Church membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of its spiritual and temporal life including, specifically, the right to establish the qualifications for membership.

Section II – Candidacy

Persons may become candidates for membership in the Church by presenting themselves at any regular or special Church service in which an invitation is given. Prospective members shall be received in any of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and, thereafter, by becoming a candidate for baptism by immersion;
- B. By letter, or promise of letter, from another Church of like faith and order;
- C. By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion, if no Church letter can be obtained; and
- D. By restoration, as provided in Section VI, if membership has been terminated by reason of disciplinary action.

“Membership” for purpose of these Bylaws means those persons who are currently members of the Church as evidenced by their names on the Church roll.

Section III – New Member Orientation

All new members of this Church are expected to attend new member orientation which may be held under the direction of the Pastor or a ministerial staff member.

Section IV – Rights of Members

- A. Members of the Church shall enjoy the following rights: Each is entitled to one (1) vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church, provided the member is present for such a vote.
- B. Each is eligible for consideration by the Membership as a candidate for elective office.
- C. Each is eligible to participate in the ordinances of the Church as administered by the Church.

Section V – Termination of Membership

Termination of Church membership, and removal from the Church roll, shall be by death of a member or by vote of the Church members in business session under one of the following conditions:

- A. By granting the request for transfer of a member's letter of another Baptist Church.

- B. Upon receipt of a written request from a member that his/her name be dropped from the membership roll;

- C. Upon receipt of authenticated information that a member has joined a Church of another faith and denomination;

- D. Erasure upon personal request; and

- E. Upon a recommendation from the Deacons for termination of membership only for reason or reasons listed below and approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the Church members present and voting:
 - 1. A member openly denies that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord;

 - 2. A member refuses to abide by the Church's Constitution and Bylaws and commits actions within or outside the Church fellowship that portray a callous disregard for the principles set forth in the Church Covenant; or

 - 3. A member intentionally and habitually in an unchristian manner disrupts worship services or any other Church meetings.

Section VI – Discipline and Reconciliation

- A. Before any action which might result in termination of membership is brought before the Church, every kindly effort of love shall be made for reconciliation in accordance with Galatians 6:1 and Matthew 18:15-17.

- B. Any consideration for termination of membership and reconciliatory action shall be done with every effort for the least embarrassment to the person involved and to the Church at large.

- C. All reconciliatory efforts and recommendations shall be the responsibilities of the Deacons.

- D. Any member considered for termination of membership shall be invited to meet with the current active Deacons. The member shall be notified thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting, in writing, of all charges. The member shall be granted every opportunity to answer the charges and to have others speak for him/her in the presence of the Deacon fellowship.

- E. Should efforts of reconciliation fail, upon recommendation of the Deacons, the charge may be brought up before the congregation, provided the Membership has been notified, in writing, (30) days in advance of the meeting. At this time, the member charged retains the right to again answer the charges and to have others speak for him/her.

- F. In the event that recommendation for termination of membership is brought before the Church, a moderator from outside the Church membership shall conduct the meeting. The moderator shall be selected by the Deacons and shall be a minister or a layman who is known to be a competent moderator.

- G. Any person whose membership has been terminated by a Church membership vote may, upon request, be restored to membership by a vote of the Church upon evidence of his/her repentance and reformation. Such a request will be made to the Deacons in writing, thirty (30) days in advance of the next business meeting. Upon recommendation by the Deacons, the request shall be presented to the Church in a business session for approval by two-thirds (2/3) vote of those Church members present and voting.

ARTICLE II – CHURCH OFFICERS

All persons who serve as officers of the church shall be members of the Church.

Section I – Pastor

Qualifications

The Pastor shall possess the ideals demonstrated in the teachings of the New Testament (1 Timothy 3:1 -7).

General Responsibilities

The Pastor is the spiritual leader of the Church and, as such, shall minister to the spiritual needs of the Church members. In fulfilling this role, he shall:

1. Lead the Church in an effective program of worship, witnessing and evangelism, and Bible study;

2. Proclaim the Gospel to both believers and non-believers;

3. Exhibit concern and compassion for members and non-members of the Church; and
4. Supervise the ministerial staff. The Pastor shall lead them spiritually and see that their duties are performed satisfactorily. It is understood that the Pastor may delegate some of this responsibility to other ministerial staff members.

Specific Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities of the Pastor shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. To deliver sermons which focus on the teachings of Jesus Christ and an understanding of the Old and New Testaments;
2. To counsel with members who have special needs;
3. To lead the Deacons to increase their effectiveness in service; and
4. To keep the Church informed of associational, state and national denominational affairs and all matters of mutual interest between the organizations and the Church.

Election

A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. A Pastor shall be called by the Church upon the recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee. A Pastor's election shall take place at a Church meeting call for that purpose.

The Pastor Search Committee shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one candidate at a time. Election by the Church shall be by written ballot with an affirmative vote of eighty-five percent (85%) (or higher if requested by the candidate) of those Church members present and voting being necessary for a choice. If convenient and appropriate, each candidate shall be encouraged by the Pastor Search Committee to preach at least one sermon to the Church before a vote is taken. Prior to election, the Pastor Search Committee shall have fully disclosed to the candidate that the Pastor's position is being offered and is contingent upon election by the Church.

The salary, conditions of employment, and benefits of the Pastor's position shall be pre-approved by the Finance and Personnel Committees and shall be provided in writing to the candidates by the Pastor Search Committee prior to the election. All arrangements and commitments made by the Pastor Search Committee in discussion with the candidate shall be confirmed in writing as a precaution against any possible misunderstanding of commitments or intentions. These arrangements and commitments shall be disclosed to the Membership prior to the candidate's election. If a change in the Church budget becomes necessary to meet the proposed financial commitments, the Church must approve the revised budget.

Benefits and Remuneration

The Pastor's and all staff salaries, conditions of employment, and benefits shall be reviewed annually by the Personnel and Finance committees, who shall make appropriate changes.

Termination

A Pastor or other ministerial staff member shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the Pastor of the Church as a result of one of the following conditions:

1. By resignation or retirement, upon at least four weeks notice given to the Church;
2. By death; and
3. By dismissal.

When an individual or group believes that there are sufficient reasons to dismiss the Pastor, and desires that action be taken to that end, the following procedures shall be employed in the spirit of Galatians 6:1 and Matthew 18:15 -17, if the matters cannot be resolved by discussion and negotiation between the Pastor and the individual or groups:

- a. The individual or group shall set forth the reasons, in writing, that such individual or group believes are sufficient to dismiss the Pastor or other ministerial staff member and present such reasons to the Personnel Committee, in the presence of the Pastor, for discussion and possible clarification.
- b. If the matters cannot be resolved, the individual or group shall set forth the reasons, in writing, that such individual or group believes are sufficient to dismiss the Pastor or other ministerial staff member and present such reasons to the Deacons, in the presence of the Pastor, for discussion and possible clarification.
- c. If two-thirds (2/3) of the Deacons present at the meeting agree that further investigation and evaluation are in order, a committee of five (5) members shall be selected to conduct an objective investigation. Such "Investigation Committee" shall be composed of the designated leader of the group bringing the charges and four (4) Deacon members. Two of the Deacon members shall be selected by the Pastor and two by the chairman of Deacons.
- d. The results of the investigation and evaluation conducted by the "Investigation Committee" shall be reported to the Deacons in the presence of the Pastor. If the charges against the Pastor are found to be valid, they shall be set forth by the Deacons and the "Investigation Committee" in the form of a written report, with a copy thereof being presented to the Pastor for his review. At this point, the Deacons shall make every effort to reconcile the differences before any further action is taken. If the reasonable period of time, a letter shall be mailed to each resident family on the Church roll notifying them of a special business meeting. The letter shall specify: (1) that the purpose of the meeting will be to discuss and vote on the Pastor's suitability to continue as Pastor, and (2) that all procedures set forth in the Bylaws relating to charges against the Pastor have been adhered to.

Section II – Ministerial and Non-ministerial Staff

Ministerial Staff

Ministerial staff members shall be called upon the recommendation of the Pastor and the special Search Committee and elected at a Church meeting called for that purpose. Individuals shall be considered for employment whenever a ministerial staff position becomes available. The primary responsibility of such staff members shall be to serve under the leadership of the Pastor in the spiritual ministry and life of the Church.

Conditions of employment, duties and responsibilities of each ministerial staff member shall be those agreed upon by the Pastor, the Personnel Committee, and the applicable staff member. The conditions of employment, duties and responsibilities shall be generally as outlined in a job description provided to each prospective ministerial staff member. The job description shall be given to the prospective ministerial staff member in writing before he or she is called and employed. The Pastor and Personnel Committee may jointly alter any ministerial staff member's job description should the needs of the Church change during such staff member's employment.

Non-ministerial Staff

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

The personnel policies of First Baptist Church, Belmont, NC, as set forth in the current Staff Policies for Full-Time Employees, shall act as the governing document concerning situations that may arise relating to all ministerial and non-ministerial staff.

Section III – Fellowship of Deacons

Qualifications

A Deacon shall have been a member of First Baptist Church of Belmont for at least one year immediately preceding the date of election, having reached their 18th birthday, and having indicated, by reputation and by faithfulness, a love for Christ and the Church, and possessing the ideals demonstrated in the teachings of the New Testament (Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Timothy 3:8 -13).

Organization

Responsibilities

The duties of the Deacon group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. To support the Pastor's leadership, the Church ministerial staff and lay leadership of the Church.
2. To engage regularly in reading and studying the Bible, in prayer, in person and in family worship.
3. To study the work of the Kingdom, the Church, and the Deacons.
4. To practice Christian stewardship and to attend regularly all services of the Church.
5. To be regular in attendance at Deacon's meetings and to keep informed in all areas of Church activities.

6. To be faithful in the Deacon Family Ministry Program.
7. To seek new members for the Church through the outreach ministry.
8. To assist existing organizations of the Church in initiating religious services in homes and institutions in the community as the need and opportunity arise.
9. To be active in church ministries, and to enlist the members of the Church in active Christian work.
10. To assist the Pastor in serving the Lord's Supper.
11. To supervise the discipline of members of the Church in accordance with New Testament teachings.
12. To assure a secure Church environment to Church members and visitors during services of the Church.

Number

The Deacon Fellowship shall be composed of 18 Deacons. This number may be changed as necessary to meet the needs of the Church membership upon recommendation of the Deacon Fellowship and approval by a majority vote of the church members in attendance.

Tenure

1. A member of the Deacon Fellowship shall be elected for a three (3) year term, beginning on the start of a new church year. Members of this group shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has passed following the last term of service.
2. Termination of church membership also shall terminate membership from the Fellowship of Deacons.
3. If a member of this group is absent from (3) consecutive meetings without satisfactory explanation, the Deacons may review the situation and take appropriate action.

Meetings

Meetings shall be monthly. Additional meetings may be called at the discretions of the Deacon Chairperson or by the request of the Pastor. *Roberts Rules of Order, Revised*, shall govern the conduct of all meetings. A quorum shall consist of no less than 50% of all active Deacons present at the meeting.

Officers

Annually, upon the election of new Deacons, the body of active Deacons shall elect from among themselves a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and other officers as deemed necessary. They shall further agree among themselves concerning which of them shall be responsible for leadership in the various areas of their responsibility and ministry.

Election Process For The Fellowship Of Deacons

The Church shall elect and, when necessary, ordain scripturally qualified adults to the active diaconate for a term of three (3) years, with one-third (1/3) of the total number to be elected each year. After the completion of a three year term, no Deacon shall be eligible for re-election until one year has elapsed. The active Deacons shall consist of a range of twelve (12) to eighteen (18) adults chosen by an election process as follows:

During the last week of the ninth (9th) month of the current church year, a list of all resident adult church members (except those currently serving as Deacons) along with deacon qualification as stated in Section III, Paragraph One, will be mailed out to all members of the church.

Church members will review the list as they begin to pray about the upcoming election. Members will also notify the church secretary of any names may have been left off the list.

The third (3rd) Sunday of the tenth (10th) month of the current church year, ballots will be distributed to those attending the morning worship. Members will vote for as many candidates as they wish, up to the number of vacancies.

All ballots will be counted after the election by the Nominating Committee.

The candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be asked by the Pastor and /or Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Deacons about their willingness to serve. They will also be counseled as to the scriptural qualifications and responsibilities of the position. If one of the elected candidates chooses not to serve, the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes will be asked to serve, until the positions are filled.

Filling of Vacancies

Vacancies occurring during a term may remain unfilled until the next annual election at which time an extra number of Deacons equivalent to the number of vacancies may be elected. After serving a partial term for two (2) years or more, a Deacon must wait one year before being re-elected to the active group. Should the number of vacancies of Deacons exceed three (3), the procedure described for election of Deacons may be employed to fill the vacancies at a special election.

Section IV – Moderator

Election

The moderator and vice-moderator shall be the current Deacon chairperson and vice-person.

Responsibilities

The moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the Church and shall maintain order according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

The moderator may not speak to an issue or seek to influence individuals on an issue without relinquishing the position to another moderator while so engaging. The moderator shall always act in a fair and impartial manner, and

shall bear in mind that the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Christian brotherhood take precedence in all matters of Christian action. The moderator shall be responsible for assuring that all sides of an issue are allowed consideration.

A vice-moderator shall preside in the absence of, or at the request of, the moderator. In the event that neither the moderator nor the vice-moderator is present at a regular or called business meeting, the congregation shall appoint a moderator pro tem from the Active Deacons in attendance by a simple majority vote of the members in attendance.

Section V – Clerk

Election

The Church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer. Nominations for the office of clerk shall be made by the Nominating Committee. The clerk shall be elected at the regular August business meeting and shall have a one (1) year term of office commencing the following September 1.

Responsibilities

The clerk shall be responsible for:

1. Helping the Church maintain thorough and complete records of its business;
2. Recording and preserving minutes of all business sessions – those that are regularly scheduled as well as those that are specially called.
3. Providing records as requested by the Church historian;
4. Preparing the annual uniform Church letter as requested by the Greater Gaston Baptist Association;
5. Assisting the Church secretary in keeping a register of names of members with dates of admission, dismissal, death or erasure, and a record of baptism;
6. Aiding the pastor in obtaining information from new Church members.

The Church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to one or more assistant clerks, who may be nominated and elected contemporaneously with the clerk, or to a designated staff member who shall assist the elected clerk. All Church records are Church property and shall be kept in the Church office.

Section IV – Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

Election

A treasurer and an assistant treasurer shall be elected at the August meeting of the Church for a term of three years beginning on September 1. Nominations for the office treasurer and assistant treasurer shall be made by the Nominating Committee. No treasurer, after serving a three (3) year term, shall be eligible for re-election until one (1) year after the expiration of the term.

Responsibilities

1. The treasurer and assistant treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks drawn on the Church's bank accounts and evidences of indebtedness authorized by the Church. The Church secretary shall inform the banks regarding the names of the treasurer(s) upon their election.
2. The treasurer shall be responsible for accurate and timely financial records and reports being maintained by the Church and shall work with the Church secretary to this end.
3. The treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee and keep that committee properly informed regarding the financial condition of the Church to assure that the financial records will conform to the actions of that committee and the Church budget.
4. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant. The treasurers shall be bonded, at the Church's expense.
5. The responsibilities of the assistant treasurer shall be to assist the treasurer in performing the duties of the treasurer and to act in his/her stead when the treasurer is absent or incapacitated.

Section VII – Trustees

Election

There shall be a total of three (3) trustees, each serving a rotating three (3) year term. Vacancies shall be filled upon nomination of a new trustee from the Nominating Committee and a majority vote of the congregation in a business session. The new trustee will serve out the unfinished term. Trustees may be elected for consecutive terms.

Responsibilities

The trustees shall hold in trust the title to all property of the Church and shall represent the Church in matters of legal responsibility regarding the disposition and purchase of property. They shall execute all legal documents in relation to the business of the Church as the Church may direct. The signatures of all three trustees shall be required on documents which necessitate signatures of trustees. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property, nor shall they take any action that will make the Church liable financially or otherwise without specific authority given by vote of the congregation. The trustees may call upon the active Deacons for counsel as needed.

The trustees shall maintain an inventory of all legal documents including mortgage loans, property deeds and insurance. These documents shall be kept in a safety deposit box with an inventory filed in the church office. Trustees are responsible for keeping the insurance program up-to-date.

ARTICLE III
Church Committees
Section I – General

The Church shall elect such standing and special committees as may be necessary to carry on the programs of the Church. All committee members must be members of the Church.

The Church may add or terminate standing committees or special committees by majority vote in a business meeting. Notice of a proposed addition or deletion shall be published in the Church newsletter at least one week in advance of the business meeting. Special committees and their membership shall be proposed by and with the consent of the Pastor and Chairmen of Deacons.

Each standing committee shall review the published committee responsibilities on an annual basis and make recommendations for any modifications of the responsibilities. Such modifications shall be submitted to the Nominating Committee for review and then to the Church for approval.

The number of members on each committee shall be as the Church deems appropriate to carry out the work of the committee. The Nominating Committee shall nominate the membership of all standing committees of the Church. Standing Committee members shall be elected for three (3) year rotating terms so that one-third (1/3) of the members are elected annually to serve beginning the following September 1. A vacancy on a committee may be filled for the remainder of the term by a nomination from the Nominating Committee and election by the Church.

After rotating off a standing committee, a person shall not be eligible for re-election to that committee until at least one year has elapsed. A member serving an unexpired term of less than two years shall be eligible for re-election.

The members of a special committee shall serve until their committee charge is fulfilled or until dissolved by action of the Church. Special committees shall be automatically dissolved at the end of three years unless re-appointed by the Church

Each standing committee will be responsible to designate who shall serve as chairman of the committee for that year. The Pastor or his designee shall be an ex-officio member of each standing committee.

All standing committees shall hold their first meeting during the month of September, and each committee shall report to the Church at least once during the year. This report may be at a Church business meeting or through the Church newsletter.

All committees whose function requires expenditure of Church funds shall recommend a budget for consideration by the Finance Committee. If a project or service recommended by the committee is included in the approved budget, the committee shall have authority to expend the money, subject to availability of funds. The committee chairman shall consult with the Finance Committee before committing the Church to a financial obligation.

Unless specifically approved by the Church in a business meeting, the chair of each standing committee shall have served at least one (1) year on the committee before being nominated as chair. The chair of a committee may appoint such other committee officers as may be required to fulfill the functions of the committee.

Ex-officio committee members shall have no vote unless specifically authorized in the description of the committee.

Section II – Special Considerations

The members of the Nominating Committee shall be nominated and elected annually by the Church members, following a process similar to that of electing Deacons.

Section III – Names of Committees

Baptism Committee
Benevolence Committee
Finance Committee
Flower and Decorations Committee
Hospitality Committee
House and Grounds Committee
Library Committee
Long-range Planning Committee
Lord's Supper Committee
Nominating Committee
Nursery Committee
Personnel Committee
Scholarship Committee
Teller Committee
Ushers Committee

Section IV – Structure of Committees

Baptism Committee

This committee assists the Pastor in preparing for and administering the ordinance of baptism.

Benevolence Committee

The Benevolence Committee is primarily responsible for studying the needs of the church families and other persons in the community to which the church ministers. They also will formulate a plan for meeting those needs.

Finance Committee

The purpose of the Finance Committee is to lead the church members to an understanding of and a commitment to, the Biblical concepts of individual and corporate stewardship. This committee must develop a program that includes budget development and administration along with stewardship development.

Flower and Decorations Committee

The committee enhances worship by making appropriate arrangements for decoration of the Church, especially in holiday seasons. Committee members also have weekly responsibilities concerning flowers and plants.

Hospitality Committee

This committee shows kindness, grace and courtesy in planning and hosting major social functions of the Church, with the exception of wedding receptions, bridal showers, or baby showers.

House and Grounds Committee

This committee assists the Church in caring for all property and buildings.

Library Committee

This committee is to unify the Church's efforts in involving media in the life of its members and the work of its program.

Long-Range Planning Committee

This committee develops the Church's program of work for several years. This time period can be for one year or longer, but normally does not exceed five (5) years.

Lord's Supper Committee

This committee assists the congregation in the observance of the Lord's Supper through maintaining a proper inventory of materials and supplies, preparing the elements and serving as an advisory group to the Pastor in the planning of the Lord's Supper Observance.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall lead in staffing all church-elected positions filled by church members, including vacancies which occur during the year.

Nursery Committee

This committee cares for and staffs the nursery for all church events

Personnel Committee

The purpose of the Church Personnel Committee is to help the Church in matters that relate to personnel administration and management. Those matters include employment procedures, salary plans, personnel benefits, personnel services and legal requirements.

Scholarship Committee

This committee solicits applicants and selects recipients for the First Baptist Church Scholarship. This committee will also oversee future scholarship bequests. This scholarship, known as H. Miller and Gladys G. Dunlap Scholarship, was established in 1996 to honor the H. Miller and Gladys G. Dunlap family and to honor and recognize Gladys G. Dunlap for her contributions as an educator and teacher for a number of years and her lifetime of church and community service.

Teller Committee/Receiving Teller

This committee monitors all funds received by the Church, identifies and records source of funds, amounts, and their designated use. All funds are collected, accounted for and deposited weekly in a local federally insured depository. Copies of all documented transactions are maintained in the Church office as source information for recording financial support by Church members.

Ushers Committee

Ushers are men of dignity, poise and friendliness who perform a unique ministry to promote an atmosphere of warmth and hospitality.

ARTICLE IV – CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

Section I – General

The Church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching, church member training, church leadership training, new member orientation; mission education, action and support; and music education, training and performance. All organizations of the Church shall be under Church control. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio officer of each organization and his leadership shall be recognized in each organization. Each organization shall report regularly to the Church, and all program activities are subject to Church coordination and approval. The Church shall provide the

human resources, the physical resources and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

Officers for the organizations listed in Sections II through V below shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church. These officers shall serve one church calendar year. Each officer shall assist the Nominating Committee in enlisting workers in their respective ministries.

Section II – Sunday School

Sunday School is the foundational strategy in the First Baptist Church of Belmont for leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for building Great Commission through Bible study groups that engage people in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry and worship.

The Sunday School shall be organized by divisions, departments and classes, as appropriate, for all ages, and shall be under the leadership of the Sunday School Director, elected by the Church, and the Minister of Education.

Section III – Discipleship Training

There may be Discipleship Training Programs conducted under the direction of the Minister of Education.

Discipleship Training may be conducted on a regular basis at designated times. The tasks of the Discipleship Training Program shall be to reach persons for discipleship training; orient new church members for responsible church membership and equip church members for discipleship and personal witnessing. The program may also teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history and church polity and organization; train church leaders for ministry; and interpret and undergird the work of the Church and the denomination.

Section IV – Woman’s Missionary Union

There shall be a Woman’s Missionary Union (W.M.U.) with such officers and forms of organization as the program requires. The Woman’s Ministry Union shall be the Church’s organization for mission education, mission action and mission support for women, young women, girls and preschool children.

The tasks of the Woman’s Missionary Union shall be to teach missions, to lead persons to participate in missions through prayer, giving and mission action; to provide organization and leadership for special mission projects of the Church, and to provide and interpret information regarding the mission work of the Church and denomination. These tasks shall be under the leadership of the Director of the W.M.U.

Section V – Brotherhood

There shall be a Brotherhood (or Baptist Men) with such officers and forms of organization as the program requires. The Brotherhood shall be the Church’s organization for mission education, mission action and mission support for men, young men and boys.

The tasks of the Brotherhood shall be to teach missions, to lead and to participate in mission activities, to provide organization and leadership for special projects of the Church; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination, and to organize and lead Royal Ambassador Chapters. These tasks shall be under the leadership of the Director of the Brotherhood.

Section VI – Music Ministry

The Music Ministry shall be the music education, training and performance organization of the Church. Its tasks shall be to provide music for the Church and community; train persons to lead, sing and play music; provide organization and leadership for special projects of the Church; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination.

The Music Ministry shall be under the leadership of the Minister of Music and shall have such officers and organization as the ministry requires.

Section VII – Senior Adult Ministry

The Church's Senior Adult Ministry shall be the organization which seeks to involve and minister to the senior adult population of the Church and community. The task of the Senior Adult Ministry shall be to coordinate and encourage programs for senior adults; inform and involve senior adults in the ministries, missions and programs of the Church; and provide activities for senior adults of the Church and community.

The Church's Senior Adult Ministry shall be under the leadership of the Minister of Senior Adults and the Senior Adult Ministry Council whose officers and organization shall be determined as the ministry requires.

Section VIII – Student Ministries

The Student Ministries of the First Baptist Church of Belmont exist to reach non-believing students, to connect them with other Christians, to help them to grow in their faith, and to challenge the growing to discover their ministry and honor God with their lives.

The Student Ministries is under the direction of the Minister of Students and shall have such officers and organization as the ministry requires.

Section IX – Singles Ministry

The Single Adult Ministries of First Baptist Church of Belmont exist to create an environment for all singles for: the evangelization of the lost, the providing of opportunities for Christian fellowship, the promotion of spiritual growth, the providing of opportunities for discovery and use of spiritual gifts in ministry, and the personal and corporate worship of God for all singles.

The Single Adult Ministries are under the direction of a Single Adult Coordinator who may be either a staff member or a layperson. The Single Adult Coordinator will serve as a liaison between the church council, the church staff and the single adult ministries. The Single Adult Coordinator is to be instrumental in the establishing and in the organization of ministry programs to meet the goals of an ongoing, vital and growing ministry for all single adults.

ARTICLE V – MESSENGERS TO CONVENTIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Section 1 – Nominations

In nominating candidates to represent the Church at the annual meeting of the Gaston Baptist Association, North Carolina Baptist State and Southern Baptist Convention, the Nominating Committee shall consider, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. The Pastor, Pastor's wife and at least one ministerial staff member shall be given priority for nomination.

- B. Prospective messengers shall be members who are active in the various phases of the Church including but not limited to, active Sunday School membership, support of the Church through faithful attendance and contribution to the needs of the Church.
- C. When two or more members of the same family request messenger status, the Nominating Committee shall consider nominating only one family member so that more families of the Church may be represented. If vacancies remain after all names have been considered, a second member of a family may be nominated.
- D. Preference shall be given to those who commit to attend the complete convention.
- E. As many as two alternate messengers may be nominated.

Section II – Manner of Election

- A. The Nominating Committee shall solicit names of church members who wish to attend the annual meeting of the Gaston Baptist Association, the North Carolina Baptist State convention, or the southern Baptist Convention as messengers of the Church.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall consider all requests and bring a recommendation to the Church body in a business meeting prior to the convention.
- C. Election shall be by majority vote of those present at the business meeting.

ARTICLE VI – CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council shall serve the Church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting and evaluating the ministries and programs of the Church and its organizations.

The primary functions of the Church Council shall be to recommend to the Church suggested objectives and Church goals; to review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by Church officers, organizations and committees; to recommend to the Church the use of leadership, calendar time and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate achievements in terms of Church objectives and goals.

The Church Council shall be comprised of the Pastor, other ministerial staff, the Sunday School Director, the Deacon Chairman, the WMU President, the Brotherhood Director, Senior Adult Coordinator, Student Ministry Coordinator, Recreation Coordinator, Treasurer, Extended Session Coordinator.

All matters agreed on by the Council which call for action not already approved by the Church, shall be referred to the Church for consideration.

ARTICLE VII – CHURCH ORDINANCES

Section I – Baptism

This Church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly at a 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 Church shall authorize shall administer baptism. The Baptism committee shall assist in the preparation for and the observance of baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.
4. A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Pastor and/or staff or Deacons. If negative interest is ascertained on the part of the candidate, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section II – The Lord’s Supper

The Church shall observe the Lord’s Supper at least quarterly or as deemed necessary. The Pastor and Deacons shall administer the Lord’s Supper, the Lord’s Supper Committee being responsible for the physical preparations.

ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH MEETINGS

Section I – Worship Services

The Church shall have regularly scheduled services for the worship of Almighty God. The focus of these services shall be prayer, praise, preaching, instructions and evangelism. The Pastor or Assistant Pastor or another designated person shall direct the services for all the Church members and for all others who may choose to attend. Special events, recognition and concerns may be held at the worship service with the advice and consent of the Pastor. No worship service may be canceled except upon the concurrence of the Pastor and the Chairman of Deacons.

Section II – Special Services

Revival services and any other Church meetings essential to the advancement of the Church's objectives may be placed on the Church calendar by the Pastor after conferring with the Church Council.

Section III – Regular Business Meetings

The Church shall hold quarterly business meetings on the Wednesday night following the third Sunday of the month. The Chairman of Deacons, in concurrence with the Pastor, may schedule regular business meetings at other Church services by providing church members two (2) weeks prior notice and posted in the preceding weeks' Church bulletin.

Section IV – Special Business Meetings

The Church may conduct called business meetings to consider special matters. A two (2) weeks' notice must be given for such meetings. The notice shall include the subject, the date, the time and the place of the meeting. Special business meetings may be called with concurrence of the Pastor and Chairman of Deacons or upon the request of the majority of the Deacons present and voting at a regular or called meeting of the Deacons.

Section V – Quorum

A quorum consists of Church members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a regular business meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section IV – Parliamentary Rules

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

ARTICLE IX – CHURCH FINANCES

Section I – Budget

The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval a comprehensive by-line budget of funds needed for all Church-related expenses and for funds sought for all missionary and outreach programs.

Church members should have an understanding of, and a commitment to, the Biblical concepts of individual stewardship of tithes and offerings. Offering envelopes shall be provided for member's personal use as an orderly and convenient mechanism for accumulating budgeted funds.

Section II – Accounting Procedures

All funds received by the Church shall first be documented on the Church books by the Church Secretary and then become the responsibility of the Church Treasurer. The Finance Committee shall establish a system of accounting that will be accountable for the handling of all funds. They will provide to the Church membership a quarterly line by line income and expense statement reconciled to line by line budget projection for the subsequent year.

The committee shall make a determination of fidelity/fiduciary bonding needs for Church members/staff involved in handling funds. Bonding costs shall be at the Church's expense.

All financial information is considered personal and confidential, and each committee member pledges to hold it in trust and inviolate.

Section III – Policy on Financial Commitments

Any proposed expenditure of Church funds, not previously budgeted and approved by the Church, must first be submitted to the Finance Committee for its recommendation at least two (2) weeks prior to presentation to the Church for consideration.

Section IV – Fiscal Year

The Church fiscal year shall be January 1 to December 31.

ARTICLE X – CHURCH OPERATIONS MANUAL

A special committee of the Church shall develop a church operations manual to include church policies and procedures and organization charts showing lines or responsibility in the administration of the Church. The manual shall be kept in the Church office and made available for use there by any member of the Church.

The Church secretary shall maintain the manual. The Church Council or a special committee shall review the manual at least annually, with authority to recommend changes for the Church to consider. Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual.

Addition, revision or deletion of church policies requires: (1) the recommendation of the Church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the policy relates; (2) discussion by the Church Council; and (3) approval by the Church.

Procedures may be added, revised or deleted by (1) recommendation of the Church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the procedures relate; (2) approval by the Church Council; and (3) approval of the Church, if the Church Council deems it necessary.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENT

The Constitution and By-laws may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present at any regular business meeting, provided, however, that notice and proposal of such amendment or repeal must be given in writing at the preceding regular business meeting of the Church and published in the Church newsletter.

ARTICLE XII – VALIDATION

The adoption of this Constitution and By-laws shall repeal all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith, provided, however, that no actions taken by the Church prior to this date shall be invalidated by the adoption of this Constitution and By-laws.

A copy of the Constitution and By-laws shall be kept by the Church Clerk at all times and a copy shall be kept in the Church office for review by Church members during regularly scheduled business hours. All amendments to the Constitution and By-laws or revisions thereof shall be prepared by the Clerk and inserted in the official copy of the Constitution and By-laws as they occur.

ARTICLE XIII – MARRIAGE DEFINED

- “We believe that the term ‘marriage’ has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.”

- “We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God as commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.”
- “We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.”
- “We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who served as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.”
- “We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.”
- “We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture or the doctrines of the church.”

The above statements on marriage have been based on the following scripture verses (KJV version):

Genesis 2:21 – 25

Matthew 5:27 -30

Ephesians 5:25 -33

Romans 1:24 -27

Matthew 1:18 -25

1 Timothy 1:8 -11

Ephesians 4:29

ARTICLE XIV – RATIFICATION

The Constitution and By-laws shall be ratified upon two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present at a business meeting called specifically for the purpose of ratification of this Constitution and By-laws.