

Constitution & Bylaws



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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 others churches.

I. Name

This body, incorporated under the laws of the state of Alabama, shall be known as Moulton Baptist Church (MBC) located in Moulton, Alabama.

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 that ministers unselfishly to people in the community and the world in Jesus' name.
- To be a church with the purpose of being Christ like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

III. Statement of Basic Beliefs

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the latest doctrinal statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention and accepted by MBC. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation from sin by faith alone in Jesus alone to a lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.

IV. Church Covenant

Since God has, by His Holy Spirit, given us a new birth in Christ, having confessed Him as Savior and Lord, and, since we have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we willingly and gladly enter into a covenant with one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

This covenant binds us together and calls us to make the following commitments to one another.

We commit, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love and watch over one another. We agree to pray faithfully for one another in times of joy and through sickness and difficult times. We will treat each other, at all times, with Christian courtesy and to speak the truth in love and grace. We will avoid being easily offended and be ready to seek reconciliation. We will seek reconciliation and restoration according to the teachings of Scripture and do so without delay.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we commit to maintain personal and family devotions, religiously train our children and partnering with the church seeking for them to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We will assist the church in providing Christian training for our family and others while working to have outstanding Christian fellowship.

We commit to maintain a Christian testimony in the world. We will maintain integrity in our business dealings, faithfully keeping our word, and keeping our anger from overcoming our good sense. We will avoid being involved in gossip, slander, or damaging another person's reputation. We will abstain from the use or sale of intoxicating drinks or beverages. We will use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs, both legal and illegal, while making our community a better place to live. We commit to God's plan for marriage as being between one man and one woman for life. We will uphold this standard by recognizing that God's ideal is that all of human sexuality is meant to be expressed within marriage. We will oppose improper expressions such as pornography, homosexuality, and all other forms of sexual immorality.

As brothers and sisters in Christ we commit to obey the Great Commission. We will give to, pray for, and do missions. We will work to share the gospel in Moulton and around the world. Believing that the Great commission calls us to make disciples, we commit to engage in spiritual disciplines and to model them for new believers and all those growing at Moulton Baptist Church. Our goal is to see people grow in Christlikeness.

We commit to be faithful in attendance at Moulton Baptist Church. When we move from this place, we commit to finding a new church family as soon as possible, seeking where God leads us, and uniting with that body of believers.

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. 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 obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the local Baptist association, the Alabama Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

VI. Amendments

Changes in the constitution may be made at a regular business meeting of the church provided all changes shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendments shall have been made available to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the constitution shall be made by a two-thirds vote of the active members present and voting.

BYLAWS

I. Church Membership

Section 1. *General*

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. *Candidacy*

Any person may offer himself 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 transfer of letter from another Baptist church.
- (3) By statement of faith of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion when no letter is obtainable.
- (4) By restoration for those that have been removed from church membership due to disciplinary action of the church.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the appropriate committee or group, as outlined in Policies and Procedures Manual, for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church.

Section 3. *New Members Orientation*

New members are strongly encouraged to participate in the church's new member orientation.

Section 4. *Rights of Members*

- (1) Every active 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. Active member is defined in the Policies and Procedure Manual.
- (2) Every active member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church. Active member is defined in the Policies and Procedure Manual.
- (3) Every member of the church is encouraged to 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) Transfer to another Baptist church.
- (3) Dropped upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination
- (4) Exclusion due to the disciplinary action of the church

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 exist that 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. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, the policy will be followed which is outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The church may restore to membership any member that has met the qualifications in the Policies and Procedures Manual by a vote of the church.

I. Church Officers and Committees

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

Section 1. *Church Officers*

- (1) Senior Pastor

The senior pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The senior pastor or his designee is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such he works with the staff and the deacons to:

- (a) Lead the church in the achievement of its mission.
- (b) Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
- (c) Care for the church's members and other persons in the community

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's

public notice has been given. The special called meeting will be after the Sunday morning services and a minimum 75% affirmative vote will be required in order for the church to extend the call. A job description shall be written and included in the church's policies and procedures manual. All other policies related to the senior pastor's position are included in the Policies and Procedure Manual. Senior Pastor or his designee is an ex-ficio member of all committees.

(2) Church Staff

The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices. The special called meeting will be after the Sunday morning services and a minimum 75% affirmative vote will be required in order for the church to extend the call. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined and included in the church's policies and procedures manual. All other policies related to church staff positions are included in the policies and procedures manual.

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The church personnel committee shall have the authority to recommend employment or termination of employment to MBC 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. All other policies related to non-ministerial staff members are included in the church's Policies and Procedure Manual.

(3) Deacons

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 pastoral ministry tasks:

- 1) Leading the church in the achievement of its missions.
- 2) Proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
- 3) Caring for church members and other people in the community.

To be eligible for election as a deacon a person shall meet the following requirements:

- 1) Meet those qualifications set forth in the New Testament, including Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- 2) Be at least 21 years of age.
- 3) Have been a resident member of Moulton Baptist Church for at least 1 year.

Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 shall be printed in the church newsletter and in the Order of Worship the week prior to deacon election, along with the names of the serving deacons.

The church shall nominate the candidates for deacon by voting for the required number of deacons for that year in a Sunday morning service. The number receiving the most votes equal to the number of deacons to be elected that year shall be nominated.

Then the Deacon Chairman or his designate, and the pastor, shall determine the nominees' willingness to serve and review the qualifications of deacon with the nominee. Should a nominee be unwilling to serve, the person receiving the next highest number of votes shall be nominated and inquiry will be made as to that person's willingness to serve. This process shall proceed until there has been selected by the church a number of nominees willing to serve equal to the number needed for election that year.

To be nominated, a person must receive a minimum of 15 votes. In the case of a tie, the person with the longest membership tenure will receive precedence.

The deacon nominations will be held on a Sunday in September in the morning worship services. The slate of nominees will be presented to the church for confirmation during a business meeting without further nominations. In the event of less than an adequate number of deacons are elected by the church, the deacons shall follow the policy approved in the policies and procedures manual to make recommendations to the church body to correct the deficiency.

Number, terms of service, qualification, and elections along with all other information regarding deacons are to be found in the church Policy and Procedure Manual.

(4) Moderator

The moderator shall be the senior pastor or designee. The current or agreed upon Robert's Rule of Order is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

(5) Clerk

The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical 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, dismissal, death, or removal, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written officials reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in the bylaws. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association.

The clerk may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to 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) Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of a bill for expenses approved by the 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 a report of the receipts and disbursements since the last meeting. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by a committee or public accountant.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and 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 part of the permanent records of the church.

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

(7) Trustees

The church shall elect three or more trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a vote of the church authorizing such action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

Trustees shall also have the power upon approval of the church to take actions in cases in which legal action has been taken against the church or in cases in which the church decides to take legal action against someone else. They may employ or terminate employment of legal counsel, decide for or against options of mediation, or represent the church in other areas of legal activity.

Other information regarding trustees is contained within the church's policies and procedures manual.

(8) Program Directors

Such organizations as the church considers wise to sponsor, shall upon approval of the church become a part of the organization. The church will then annually elect a director for said program that shall be responsible for the organization, leadership and function of this ministry. All other information related to the function of these positions shall be contained with the church's Policy and Procedures Manual.

Section 2. Church Committees and Teams

The committee organization of this church is meant to assist the church in performing its ministry functions to meet the needs of the members both spiritual and physically. All church committee members shall be elected by the church according to the guidelines in the church's Policy and Procedures Manual. All church committees must be placed in one of two categories.

Standing committees are long term committees in which the church votes annually to replace some or all of the members. All standing committees are not permanent committees in that the church can vote to dissolve the committee if it feels the committee is no longer needed.

Ad hoc committees are temporary committees approved by a church vote and with members elected by the church to fulfill a specified purpose. After the fulfillment of the purpose the Ad Hoc committee will dissolve. Members are generally elected after the formation of the committee and serve until the completion of the purpose. An Ad hoc committee can become a standing committee if so voted by the church and then all policies and procedures for standing committees will apply.

Teams are groups of people appointed by the church through the Nominating Committee for specific functions designated by the church.

More detailed information about standing committees, ad hoc committees, and teams are contained within the churches policies and procedures manual.

II. Church Ministry Organizations

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching; church member discipleship; church leader training; new member orientation; missions education, action, and support; and music education, training, and performance. All organizations related to church ministries shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all ministry activities 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 ministries.

More detailed information about church ministry organizations are contained within the churches Policies and Procedures Manual.

III. Church Program Services

The church shall maintain program services for the purpose of enriching and extending the ministries and programs of the church.

All information about church program services are contained within the churches Policies and Procedures Manual.

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 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.
- (3) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church or at another time so approved by the church.
- (4) A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor, staff, or deacons. If negative interest is ascertained on the part of the candidate, he or she shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism and will not be considered a member of the church.

Section 2. *The Lord's Supper*

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly at times and dates chosen by the pastor and deacons. The observance shall be administered during some morning and some evening services as so determined by the pastor and deacons. The pastor or his designee and the deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper, the deacons being responsible for the physical preparations. In the event of the absence of a pastor the deacons may elect one of their members to administer service or another designee.

All believers are encouraged to attend and participate in all observances of the Lord's Supper.

V. Church Meetings**Section 1. *Worship Services***

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday and Wednesday for the worship of Almighty God. The number of services and times for each service will be at the discretion of the church with policies covered in the Policies and Procedure Manual. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor or his designee shall direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Section 2. *Special Services*

Any church meeting essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar.

Section 3. *Business Meetings*

The church shall hold regular business meetings at least quarterly on a designated date and time.

Section 4. *Special Business Meetings*

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

Section 5. *Quorum*

A quorum consists of those active members that are present and voting who attend the meeting, provided it is a stated meeting and properly called.

Section 6. *Parliamentary Rules*

The current or agreed upon Robert's Rules of Order is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

All other information pertaining to Church Meetings are included within the Policies and Procedure Manual.

VI. Church Finances**Section 1. *Budget***

The Stewardship or other designated committee, in consultation with the staff and church committees shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget. This budget will include all line items and amounts needed for church to conduct its ministries and programs for the coming year. Resources will be provided to assist the members in making regular and all contributions to the church.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. As needed, the church will provide educational materials and emphasis to better disciple all members in this important discipline.

Section 2. *Accounting Procedures*

All funds received by the church shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer or financial secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the treasurer, staff, and financial or stewardship committee.

Section 3. *Financial Year*

Moulton Baptist Church has chosen to operate on a calendar year. Each budget begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.

All other information regarding church finances are included within the church's policies and procedures manual.

VII. Church Policies and Procedures Manual

The church shall maintain a Policies and Procedures Manual to include church policies and procedures deemed important to daily operations of the church. A current copy of the manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use by any member of the church. The church secretary or designee shall maintain the manual. A special (Ad Hoc) committee shall review the manual as needed, with authority to recommend changes for the church to consider. Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual.

Additions, revisions, or deletions of the church policies:

- (1) Initiated by officer or organization:
 - (a) Recommendation of church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the policy relates.
 - (b) Discussion by the church staff member that has oversight of that ministry.
 - (c) Approval by the church
- (2) Initiated by church staff member:
 - (a) Recommendation of the staff member that has oversight of that ministry.
 - (b) Discussion with church officer(s) or organization(s) whose areas of assignment the policy relates.
 - (c) Approval of the church
- (3) Initiated by the church:
 - (a) Recommendation of the church can be approved or referred to a staff member(s) and/or organization(s) to whose areas of assignment the policy relates.
 - (b) All matters referred by the church should be studied and a plan of action or suggested change should be presented at the next scheduled business meeting of the church or at another time agree upon time by the church.
 - (c) All additions, revisions, or deletions to the church policies must be approved by the church

All changes to Policies and Procedure Manual can be made at any regular scheduled business meeting or special called meeting for this purpose in accord to bylaws on church meetings.

VI. Amendments

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

Revised: March 1, 2013
Carrie Wells