

**First Baptist Church of Clinton, Inc.
900 College Street
Clinton, North Carolina**

The Constitution and By-Laws

**Revised June 2009
Adopted July 12, 2009**

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.

Name

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Clinton, Inc., 900 College Street, Clinton, North Carolina 28328.

Basic Beliefs

We believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Mankind. We also believe and affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Objectives

Our objectives include, but are not limited to, the following:

To be an organization empowered by the Holy Spirit to share the Gospel with others.

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

To study, practice, and teach the scriptures.

To be a church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living, emphasizing total commitment of life, to the Lordship of Christ.

Ordinances

The ordinances of this church are baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper.

Policy and Relationships

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who constitute its membership.

All auxiliaries or groups shall be approved by the church. These auxiliaries must report to and be accountable to the church.

This church is autonomous. It is not subject to any other ecclesiastical body. However, it recognizes and sustains the necessity of mutual counsel and cooperation with other Baptist churches. It also recognizes the need to practice Christian Unity worldwide.

This church is affiliated with the Western Union Association, and the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

BY-LAWS

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General Baptist

This is a sovereign democratic church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-governance in all phases of its spiritual life. The establishment of conditions of membership is the exclusive right of this church.

Section 2. Membership

Individuals may be received into membership by any of the following methods and receive the right hand of fellowship, subject always to the vote of the church:

1. **By Baptism** - an individual who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and adopts substantially the views of faith and principles of the church may be baptized by immersion and received into the fellowship of the church upon successful completion of the New Member Orientation class;
2. **By Letter** - an individual who is in substantial accord with the views of faith and the principles of the church may be received by letter or recommendation from any other Baptist Church.
3. **By Experience** - a believer of worthy character who has formerly been a member of a Christian church having been baptized by immersion, but who for sufficient reason cannot present a letter from that church, but who is in substantial accord with the views of faith and principles of this church may be received upon a statement of experience;
4. **By Restoration** - an individual who has not been an active member of this church may be restored to active membership upon the affirmative vote of the church and completion of the New Member Orientation class;
5. **By Watch care** - an individual who is an active member of a Christian church and who is residing temporarily in this community may be received into the membership of the church for the period of his/her temporary residency. This person is not eligible to hold leadership positions in the church without a change

- in his/her membership status.
6. **By Outreach** - persons who are confined or shut-in may request membership. When the request is submitted, the Pastor and two Deacons shall visit and examine the person for membership. They shall report back to the church body for a vote. After the affirmative vote of the church, the person will be extended the right hand of fellowship.

Section 3. New Member Orientation

New members to the church (non-Baptist) will attend “**New Member**” training session(s) conducted by the pastor and/or his/her designee, to receive instruction concerning the Church’s Policies and Procedures and **Baptist Doctrine**. New Member(s) may be those persons who have not had the opportunity to receive formal training in Baptist Doctrine and/or those persons who would like to reacquaint themselves with this doctrine and the procedures of this church. After the training has been completed, the church will extend the right hand of fellowship to the new member(s).

Section 4. Rights of New Members

1. To Vote - All members are entitled to one vote. The members must be present to exercise this privilege to vote.
2. To serve as an officer or as a committee member.
3. To observe ordinances and participate in the activities of the church.

Section 5. Termination

1. Members may be terminated in the following ways:
 - a. Lack of interest as evidenced by not attending and no financial support for a one-year period of time. After this period, the members name and membership status will be purged from the church roll.
 - b. Withdraw his/her membership by written notice.
 - c. Live or teach in a manner contrary to the Baptist Doctrine.
 - d. When members voluntarily remove themselves from fellowship with this church, they must re-establish their membership to again be a member with all membership privileges. Restoration to membership will be based upon the criteria of membership being fulfilled. Upon recommendation of the Pastor, Deacons, and Board of Trustees, membership requirement may be waived when satisfactory completion of requirements have been attained.
 - e. Members who have voluntarily removed their membership and seek to

return to this church will not hold positions of leadership until a six month probationary period has been observed. Prospective members meeting these criteria will neither hold tenure nor be eligible for leadership positions in church boards or auxiliaries until their probationary period has been observed.

f. Death of the member. There are no rights of survivorship inherent in membership in this church. Obligations and privileges cease upon death of the member.

2. Terminated members will receive a formal letter stating such from the church.

Section 6. Conflict Resolution

All members have the right to expect that when differences arise, a fair and equitable method shall be used to solve any issue. In keeping with the Biblical tenets of Scripture, the first step is for the two individuals to prayerfully attempt to settle their differences. Should either or both of them not be satisfied with the results, the next step is to solicit a consultation with the Deacon(s). Should either or both of the parties not be satisfied with the results, the matter will be directed to the attention of the pastor for assessment. Finally, should either or both of the parties not be satisfied with the results, the congregation is convened to settle the issue(s). Both parties present the issues so that adequate understanding of the conflict can be adjudicated. In keeping with Scripture, this is the final step in this process and should neither party be satisfied, the church will prayerfully retire this conflict as unsolvable and allow the two parties to seek additional means of redress outside the bounds of this document and scripture. The church shall neither be held liable for any prescriptive adjudications in the conflict nor shall the church be required to go beyond the confines of this process in the matter.

ARTICLE I.

The officers of this church shall be the pastor, deacons, trustees, treasurer, clerk (secretary) and chairpersons of committees and boards. These persons shall also make up the **Executive Board** of the church.

Section 1. General Qualifications

These officers shall be persons in good standing with the church and shall exemplify qualities of leadership and dedication to the church's objectives.

Section 2. Election

These officers shall be reviewed annually at the December Church Conference, excluding the Pastor, Deacons and Trustees. All officers are subject to the will of the church and can be removed from office by majority vote of the voting membership at an official church conference. The congregation shall elect them upon the recommendation of the organization committee or upon nomination and confirmation.

Section 3. Vacancies and Resignations

1. If the pastor is led to resign, he/she shall give his/her resignation in writing to the church at least 30 (thirty) days prior to his/her leaving. If the church should ask for the pastor's resignation, it shall give the pastor a notification in writing that he/she has 10 (ten) days to vacate the pulpit. The pastor shall be paid his/her agreed allowance. The pastor is still the pastor until the 10 (ten) days expires. Or, if the church chooses, it may pay the pastor, in advance, for the 10 (ten) days and declare the pulpit to be vacant immediately. Further obligations will cease upon termination of the agreement between the church and the pastor.
2. Other officers may also vacate their positions by written resignation. When an officer feels that he/she can no longer perform his/her duties for whatever reason, he/she should resign. The church must vote to accept the resignation.
3. If any officer should become ill or incapacitated over an extended period of time and is unable to perform his/her duties, their assistants shall take his/her places until the next election. If there are no assistants, the church shall fill the vacancies in an official church conference.

Section 4. Duties of the Officers

1. Pastor
 - a. The pastor shall be the Spiritual Leader of the congregation.
 - b. He/she shall be the one to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people.
 - c. He/she shall administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - d. The pastor shall be the "under" shepherd of the flock and shall exercise oversight in the church.
 - e. He/she shall spiritually feed and care for the congregation as a preacher, teacher, leader and counselor.
 - f. He/she shall perform marriage ceremonies, visit the sick, officiate at funerals, represent the church at various meeting and be involved in community projects and conventions.
 - g. He/she shall organize the work of the church and direct it in co-operation with the church staff.

- h. He/she shall see that all matters voted on by the church are implemented.
- i. He/she is the ex-officio head of some boards, groups and committees in the church.
- j. He/she shall have the power to appoint committees, but the committee must be confirmed by the church.
- k. The pastor is the interpreter of God's word and must have a broad knowledge of church policy, especially in the areas of discipline and doctrine.
- l. He/she shall preside at church conferences and over the Executive Board.
- m. He/she shall perform all other duties pertaining to the office of pastor as agreed upon by the congregation at an official church conference.

2. Deacons

- a. The deacons shall be the pastor's helpers in all spiritual, business, and church matters.
- b. They shall assist the pastor in carrying out the work of the church.
- c. They shall be ordained.
- d. The deacons shall assist the pastor in administering the ordinances.
- e. They shall visit the sick, widows and members in need.
- f. They shall ensure that the pastor's needs are met.
- g. They shall be even-tempered and if married, be a good example in their home life.
- h. They shall be persons of high morals, ideals and practices.
- i. They shall relieve the pastor of less exacting responsibilities.
- j. In the pastor's absence, the deacons are responsible for filling the pulpit and arranging for the payment of the honorarium, with consent of the pastor. In an emergency situation, the deacons should have the ability to render a gospel service in the absence of the pastor.
- k. They shall visit the pastor in the study before services to inquire about his needs, be advised by him and pray with him.

- l. The deacons shall have the spiritual and material growth of the church at heart and explore ways to make this happen.
- m. Any deacon who becomes 70 (seventy) years of age may, at his/her own request and by approval of the church, become a Deacon Emeritus.
- n. They shall perform all other duties pertaining to the office of deacons.

3. Trustees

- a. The trustees shall have the responsibility of caring for the property of the church.
- b. They shall hold in trust the material possessions accruing to the church.
- c. The local Baptist church holds title to all property that is donated to it or purchased by it.
- d. They shall handle all legal and financial details relating to the church.
- e. Trustees shall handle the offerings of the church membership
- f. They shall sign deeds, transfer stock, bank notes, and mortgages upon authorization of the church.
- g. Trustees shall strive to maintain and improve the church property.
- h. Trustees shall be persons of high moral character and Christian devotion.
- i. They shall be honest and possess the qualities of practicality, thriftiness, financial ability, and good judgment.
- j. Trustees shall learn as much about law as possible and be persons in good standing with the church.
- k. The trustees, with the treasurer, shall count and record the offering.
- l. The trustees shall be able to give accurate account of all church finances at any stated church meeting or whenever the church business so requires.
- m. They shall perform all other duties pertaining to the office of trustees as designated by the pastor, deacons and congregation.

4. Treasurer

- a. The treasurer shall have the responsibility of receiving and depositing the

church's liquid assets (cash, checks, money orders, etc.) In the church's bank account(s).

- b. The treasurer shall sign all checks for the payments of all bills and obligations.
- c. The treasurer shall make sure that all monies coming from the treasury are in keeping with the church budget.
- d. The treasurer shall know, at all times, where the church stands financially.
- e. He/she shall report to the church regarding its liquid assets periodically as the church may require.
- f. The treasurer shall present a detailed financial report at regular scheduled conferences. This report will be completed and submitted on a quarterly basis, or as required by the church, at each regularly scheduled church conference.
- g. The treasurer shall prepare an annual contribution summary for members who made a request for tax purposes during the month of January (for the previous year).
- h. The treasurer will pay no bill, without seeing proof (i.e. Itemized receipts, invoices, billing statements) that the bills are owed.
- i. The treasurer will not write blank checks under any circumstances.
- j. Checks will be written for specific amounts based on requests, receipts or prior approvals.
- k. He/she shall automatically be a member of the budget committee.
- l. He/she shall perform all other duties pertaining to the office of treasurer.
- m. The treasurer, upon recommendation of the Executive Board and the congregation, shall require that the person holding the position of treasurer shall be bonded to serve in this position. This process shall be done based upon established guidelines for bonding a financial officer of this type organization. This requirement shall remain in force during the tenure of the person in this position

5. Clerk/Secretary

- a. The clerk shall keep a record of the church membership and statistics.
- b. The clerk must be present or have a representative present for all regular

and special meetings of the church for the purpose of recording the minutes with accuracy and legibility.

- c. The minutes shall be kept in a permanent record book and duplicated for the church file. The clerk shall keep duplicate copies of all church-related documents, minutes, policies and procedures. Although these documents can be stored on computer, there should also be a paper copy stored where members of the church are able to access them.
- d. The minutes shall be kept in a manner that later generations could review the transactions of the church.
- e. The clerk shall write the official letters for the church and file copies of the same.
- f. The clerk shall read at each church meeting the minutes of the previous meeting, unless deferred by the body.
- g. He/she shall keep records of members' addresses, baptism dates, death dates, date of exclusion from the church, etc.
- h. He/she shall perform all other duties pertaining to the office of clerk.

6. Auxiliary Heads, Presidents, Superintendents, and/or Directors

- a. The heads of auxiliaries shall lead and direct each auxiliary's ministry and service to the church and the world..
- b. They shall preside over the meetings of the auxiliaries and organize their work.
- c. They shall oversee the work in a manner that will enhance the life of the congregation and support the vision of the church.
- d. The auxiliary head shall represent the auxiliary (or send a representative) at meetings of the local association, state or other levels with consent of the church body.
- e. Auxiliary heads shall serve for a term of 1 (one) year.
- f. Auxiliary heads shall hold at least a quarterly meeting of their respective group.
- g. He/she shall perform all other duties pertaining to the office of auxiliary head.

7. Committee Chairperson

- a. The chairpersons of committees shall convene and preside over committees.
- b. The chairperson of each committee shall make sure that his/her committee performs the tasks assigned to it by the pastor and/or church
- c. The chairperson is responsible for presenting the committee report at the annual church conference or when requested.
- d. He/she shall perform all other duties pertaining to the position of committee chairperson.

8. 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 council shall be to recommend to the church suggestive objectives and goals to review and coordinate program plans recommended by the officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the church the use of potential leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate achievements in terms of church objectives and goals.

The membership of the church council shall consist of the pastor, The Deacon Board, other chairs of boards and auxiliaries.

All matters agreed upon by the council which call for action, not already approved, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

ARTICLE II.

When the Pulpit is Vacant

Section 1

The chairman of the Deacon Board shall preside at all official meetings while the pulpit is vacant.

Section 2.

The Board of Deacons, as a body, shall oversee the spiritual needs of the church, as well as insure the proper functioning of the church during the period that the pulpit is vacant.

Section 3.

The Board of Deacons, as a body, may constitute the Pulpit Search Committee or they may add two additional members, preferably a young adult and a female member of the church.

Section 4.

The Search Committee shall be responsible for:

- a. Making a public announcement that the pulpit is vacant.
- b. Receiving and reviewing information on potential candidates.
- c. Interviewing potential candidates and scheduling a preaching date.
- d. Screening candidates for recommendation to the church for vote.
- e. Recommending an interim or acting pastor, if in the judgment of the Pulpit Search Committee, an interim or acting pastor is necessary.

ARTICLE III.

Calling a Pastor

Section 1.

As a general practice, the church will hear several ministers before a decision is made to call a pastor.

Section 2.

Usually, after several ministers are heard, the Pulpit Search Committee will rate the candidates, usually as choices #1 and #2. The number 1 choice will be presented to the church for vote.

Section 3.

If the church rejects the number one choice, the Pulpit Search Committee may start the process over again or they may present the number two choice. Generally, the church elects to start the process again. However, should a 2/3 majority of the congregation be in agreement, the search may be suspended and the candidate called as Pastor when agreement is reached.

Section 4.

The Pulpit Search Committee should present the following at the time the candidate is presented to the church for a vote:

1. Background information on the candidate to include any criminal activity, prior pastoral/ministerial position, leadership experience, and educational preparation/training.
2. Their reason for recommending the candidate.
3. The financial package they propose to offer the candidate.

Section 5.

An Interim or Acting Pastor

1. When/If an Interim or Acting Pastor is appointed, the church should treat this appointment in the same manner as a Pastor and expect this person to perform the duties of a Pastor.
2. The financial package for an Interim or Acting Pastor should be based on qualifications and service expectations, just as in the case of calling a Pastor.

Section 6.

Qualification(s) of the Pastor

The Pastor shall:

1. Be mature.
2. Be trained
3. Preferably have prior pastoral experience, but not absolutely necessary.
4. Be able to work with and inspire others.
5. Exhibit true Christian character, commitment and be God-fearing.
6. Understand the Bible, Baptist Doctrine and polity.
7. Possess business and administrative skills.
8. Those qualifications not specifically outlined in this section, but included elsewhere in this document, shall be enforced.

ARTICLE IV

Section 1. Regular Scheduled Conferences

1. This congregation shall have four (4) scheduled conferences.
2. The months shall be March, June, September and December, unless otherwise approved. The conferences will usually be held on the 4th (fourth) Saturday evening of these months.

Section 2. Called Conferences

1. The Pastor may call a special conference for a specific purpose whenever necessary, and only that specific business shall be transacted.
2. He should ask the advice of the Deacons as to the date and time. There should be sufficient time to schedule an advanced meeting.
3. Proper notice must be given to the congregation. Meetings should be announced during Sunday worship service. Members should take responsibility for informing each other as well.
4. No conference may be called without the Pastor's knowledge and concurrence.
5. However, in the absence of a Pastor (when the church does not have a Pastor), the Deacons should call the church together and ask the church to decide matters of importance to the church. In the absence of a Pastor, the chairman of the Deacons will assume leadership of the called conference and conduct the designated business of that session. He will ensure the orderly flow of business during this session.

Section 3. Conference by Order of the Deacon and Trustee Boards

1. Members can request that the Pastor call a conference to deal with important business matters. One such example may be recalling the services of the Pastor. In such cases, the Deacons and Trustees may call the church together if the Pastor refuses to call the conference. This shall only be done after serious prayer, and two-thirds (2/3) of the Deacons and Trustees must agree to call the conference.

ARTICLE V

Parliamentary Procedures

We shall use **Robert's Rules of Order** as the parliamentary guide for the transaction of business. Of course, in all situations, we shall continually strive to keep our affairs "decent and in order" in keeping with our Christian beliefs.

Policies and Guidelines

These policies are designed to facilitate the orderly day-to-day operations of the church. The list includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. No meeting or activity shall take place without prior knowledge and approval of

the church, the Pastor, or the Board of Deacons.

2. No auxiliary shall be organized without prior knowledge and approval of the church.
3. All members shall have the right of input or feed-back in all facets of church operations.
4. All delegated representatives of the church shall adhere to church guidelines which shall include voting the will of the church in business sessions, and making reports to the church in written or oral form.
5. All finances of the church shall be channeled through the unified treasury from all auxiliaries, boards, or programs.
6. **All purchases or expenditures made in the name of the church shall be by purchase order or prior approval of the Board of Trustees.**
7. All salaried personnel shall be governed by their contractual agreements.

AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present in a regular business meeting with these restrictions.

1. The amendment must be presented in writing in a previous business session with copies for each member present to review and to respond to in writing.
2. The vote must be by secret ballot.
3. No voting may be done by proxy.