

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION

## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF POWELL, TENNESSEE

### ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this incorporated organization shall be “First Baptist Church of Powell, Tennessee”.

### ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The First Baptist Church of Powell exists to see the unchurched and half-hearted church members around the world be turned into wholly surrendered disciples who allow Christ to live through them.

### ARTICLE III: DOCTRINE

The First Baptist Church of Powell subscribes to the doctrines found in the most recent edition of *The Baptist Faith and Message* adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention.

### ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

The receiving and dismissal of members will be in accordance with the church’s membership policies. The membership policies may be changed at any regular or special called business meeting by a majority of those voting. The motion to change the membership policies will come from the Elders.

### ARTICLE V: CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Church Incorporation. The church shall maintain active status as a Tennessee “not-for-profit” religious organization, registered as a 501(c)(3) entity with the IRS.

- **The President** of the corporation shall be the Senior Pastor or another ordained pastoral staff member designated by the Personnel Committee.
- **The Vice President** of the corporation shall be designated by the Personnel Committee.
- **The Treasurer** of the corporation shall be the Elder responsible for financial oversight of the church’s business. The Treasurer has the duty of receiving and disbursing by check, upon proper authority, all money that is given to the church in accordance with instructions from the church. He shall keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements, rendering an account to the Finance Committee monthly and to the church quarterly. The Treasurer’s books shall be audited annually, and the result of the audit will be given to the Finance Committee. All books and records kept by the Treasurer shall be the property of the church. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Finance Committee.
- **The Secretary** of the corporation shall be selected by the Personnel Committee from among the full-time church administrative staff. The Secretary will fulfill the function of Church Clerk. The Secretary will issue letters of transfer of membership as authorized by the church and keep an accurate record of all church business transactions. The Secretary may designate another member to serve as “recorder” in church business meetings.
- The corporate officers shall execute all contracts, deeds, mortgages, or other instruments when authorized to do so by the church in accordance with this constitution. All documents requiring signatures must be signed by any two of the corporate officers.

#### Section 2. Church Elders

First Baptist Church of Powell is Elder-led with accountability to, and input from, the congregation. Elders include both ordained paid staff and non-paid staff members. The Elders will work with various church leadership teams for counsel. The Elders are accountable to the church membership through the Finance Committee in areas of finances and through the Personnel Committee in areas covered by the Personnel Policies.

The Elders are selected from the adult male membership of the church as led by the Holy Spirit and affirmed by the church membership. An Elder must have given evidence of spiritual maturity and service for an extended period of time. Prospective Elders will be examined according to the qualifications given in 2 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

A man will be nominated to the office of elder by the Deacons, and/or the current Elders, and/or an adult Life Group leader, and/or the church membership. Elder candidates must be approved by a vote of no less than two-thirds of the current Elders and by a separate vote of no less than two-thirds of the current Deacons. Upon such approval, the nominees will be presented to the church for election at any regular or called business meeting. A 75% vote of approval will affirm the Elder's call to office.

An Elder shall serve without a term limit. An Elder is removed from the office by resignation, or 75% affirmative vote for removal by all active FBC Elders, or by 75% vote of affirmation to remove by the church (vote taken in a regular quarterly business meeting, and notice of motion to dismiss given in writing to the church no less than two Sunday's before the business meeting).

Section 3. The congregation will vote on the following:

- The annual budget
- Changes to the adopted budget that involve an increase in the budget total
- Approval of the Quarterly Financial Report
- Property purchases not in the budget (with the exception noted in Article X, Section 2)
- Building projects not in the budget
- The calling of Elders
- The installation of Deacons
- Messengers to conventions and annual meetings
- Candidates for Christian Schools, seminaries, and Christian organizations that require church approval
- Licensing and ordaining men to the ministry
- Items that the Elders, Personnel Committee, or Finance Committee determine need to be voted on by the church
- Granting church letters to other churches

#### **ARTICLE VI: CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Section 1. Regular business meetings will be held quarterly at a time announced in the church newsletter one week prior to the meeting.

Section 2. Special business meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor or the Chairman of the Deacons with a one-week notice. The notice of a special business meeting and the purpose of that meeting may be printed in the church newsletter or announced from the pulpit. Only the announced issues may be discussed at the special called business meeting. When emergencies occur and the one-week notice is not practical, business may be transacted after the Sunday morning or the Sunday evening service.

Section 3. Messengers to a convention, annual meeting, and church affirmation of members to a Christian school, seminary, or Christian organization may be voted on after any regularly scheduled service without prior notice.

Section 4. The Moderator of all business meetings will be the Senior Pastor. In the absence of the Senior Pastor or in the event that the Senior Pastor needs to speak to a motion, the Executive Pastor will moderate the business meeting. If the Executive Pastor cannot moderate, an Elder designated by the Personnel Committee will moderate.

Section 5. Only members 18 years of age and older will be allowed to vote in any business meeting.

Section 6. A minimum of ten percent (10%) of the previous Sunday's adult Sunday school attendance must be present in order for business to be conducted.

#### **ARTICLE VII: AFFILIATION**

Section 1. The First Baptist Church of Powell, Tennessee shall be affiliated with the Knox County Association of Baptists, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention as set forth in the constitutions of these autonomous bodies. FBC, through fully elected messengers, will participate in their deliberative assemblies.

Section 2. The calling of a church business meeting for the purpose of voting on withdrawal from the Knox County Association of Baptists, and /or discontinuance of cooperation with the Tennessee Baptist Convention,

and /or the Southern Baptist Convention will require that written notice be sent to each resident member thirty days prior to such action. That letter will state the purpose and time of said business meeting. Action to withdraw must be carried by a vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the members present and voting.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH STAFF**

All hiring, dismissal, and governing of church staff will be in accordance with the Personnel Policies. The Personnel Policies are established by and are subject to change only by the Personnel Committee.

#### **ARTICLE IX: DEACONS**

The number of deacons needed shall be determined by the current deacon body. The deacons will be elected from among the members who meet the scriptural qualifications of a deacon listed in 1Timothy 3:8-13. Sunday school teachers, elders, and current deacons will nominate new deacons. The Senior Pastor will prioritize the nominees and send them a packet containing the qualifications and responsibilities of a deacon. A current deacon will be assigned to contact each nominee to answer any questions he may have and to find out his decision about serving as a deacon. All nominees who are qualified will then be presented to the church for a vote. If more deacons are presented to the church than needed, the deacon nominees with the most votes will be considered elected. If the number nominated is the number needed, then each nominee who receives a minimum of seventy five percent (75%) "Yes" votes will be considered elected. The term of office is five years with the option to continue on a year-by-year basis after the five years are completed.

#### **ARTICLE X: CHURCH COMMITTEES**

The elders may appoint a non-standing committee, task force, leadership team, or advisory council as needed. There are two standing committees in the church: the Finance Committee and the Personnel Committee. Both of these committees will be staffed by ordained deacons (not necessarily a currently active deacon) with the exception of the Treasurer who is a member of the Finance Committee. Both committees will have six members serving a three-year term each with two members rotating off each year. A member may succeed himself. In the event of a resignation, someone will be elected to fill the unexpired term. The Personnel and Finance Committees will be nominated by the elders and elected by the church.

Section 1. The Personnel Committee - The Personnel Committee is charged with the responsibility of establishing, revising, and ensuring that the Personnel Policies are followed. In consultation with the elders, they will determine the application of any "exceptions" to the policies. The Personnel Committee also recommends salaries for church personnel to the Finance Committee each year for the annual budget. The Finance Committee cannot change any individual salaries but may send the total salary section back to the Personnel Committee for adjustment.

Section 2. Finance Committee - The Finance Committee is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the financial integrity of the church. The specific responsibilities of the Finance Committee are as follows:

- Working with the elders, the Finance Committee will present to the church for approval an annual budget that will govern the spending of the church over the next year.
- The Finance Committee will examine the monthly financial report from the Treasurer to ensure that the budget is being followed.
- The Finance Committee is authorized to make offers on property on behalf of the church (without a congregational vote) when timing and confidentiality dictate such an action.
- The Finance Committee is authorized to make changes throughout the year within the budget without further church approval as long as the changes do not increase the budget total.
- The Finance Committee will work with the Treasurer in securing an annual audit. They are charged with the responsibility of reviewing the audit results and ensuring that needed changes are made.

#### **ARTICLE XI: MINISTERIAL LICENSE AND ORDINATION**

Section 1. When a member makes known his call to vocational ministry, the elders will examine his qualifications. If the Elders determine that the call seems genuine, they will recommend to the church in a regular or special called business meeting that he be licensed to the ministry. The licensing will occur after a majority vote of the congregation. The licensing will serve as an acknowledgement of his call and an

encouragement to make further preparation for ministry. The Church Clerk may furnish the member with a certificate of license. It is understood that state law shall govern the performance of civil duties by the member.

Section 2. In the event that the church is requested to ordain a member or former member who has been called as a pastor to a church of like faith to the First Baptist Church of Powell, or that member or former member is entering a field that requires ordination (such as a chaplain), the following procedure will be followed. An ordination council made up of deacons and elders shall examine the candidate's qualifications for ordination. If the council so chooses, it shall recommend to the church in a regular or special called business meeting that the member or former member be ordained to the ministry. The ordination must be approved by a seventy-five percent (75%) majority of the members who are present and voting. If the congregation approves the ordination, an ordination service will be scheduled. After the ordination service the Corporate Secretary will provide the member or former member with a certificate of ordination.

#### **ARTICLE XII: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. When seventy-five percent (75%) of members voting at a regular business approve this constitution, it shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect. This vote shall be taken at the next regular business meeting after formal presentation of the constitution to the church at a regular Business Meeting.

Section 2. This constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed by a seventy-five percent (75%) vote of the members present at any regular business meeting of the church provided that notice of such amendment, alteration, or repeal was given in writing at the preceding regular business meeting of the church.

Section 3. The adoption of this constitution shall effect a repeal of all previously adopted constitutions, by-laws, rules, regulations, or procedures that may be found in conflict.

Section 4. Copies of this constitution shall be kept by the Corporate Secretary among his/her records and in the church office at all times. All amendments to or revisions thereof shall, after passage by the church, be inserted in copies of the constitution and held in the Secretary's records. Copies shall be made available to any member upon request.

#### **ARTICLE XIII: RULES OF ORDER**

In matters of parliamentary procedure not specifically provided in this constitution, *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* shall be followed.

*Approved by FBC at business meeting August 1, 2004*

*Amended by FBC at business meeting August 14, 2011 (re: Article 5, Section 2: Church Elders)*