

# **CONSTITUTION, First Baptist Church, Delaware, Ohio (Revised 04/30/2008)**

## **Article I NAME**

This religious fellowship will be known as the First Baptist Church of Delaware, Ohio.

## **Article II PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church is the study and practice of the Way of Jesus Christ. It seeks to follow the doctrines and teachings of the Master as they are set forth in the New Testament. This is a pathway of freedom that binds no person to a creed but sets each one free to follow the light of Christ within him or her. It seeks to be a spiritual prism that radiates the light of Christ's love to all.

## **Article III AFFILIATION**

This church is an autonomous fellowship, democratically organized. In order to minister beyond its own parish, it will cooperate with other churches in the community, nation and world. The church will be affiliated with the Marion Association, the American Baptist Churches of Ohio and American Baptist Churches USA.

## **Article IV MEMBERSHIP**

Through its organization this church strives to be a living body. All persons who accept its statement of purpose and who desire to participate regularly in the worship, educational and fellowship services offered will be received into membership upon their request.

Letters of membership transfer from other churches will be honored.

At their option, new members may be recognized and received into fellowship at any appropriate worship service.

Members who become unable to participate regularly due to educational, employment, illness or other reasons beyond their control, will maintain member status so long as it is their intention to participate whenever possible.

New members may participate in a course of instruction led by the pastor relative to the life of the church and Baptist heritage.

Although New Testament baptism is not a membership requisite, persons who have not taken this public step of commitment are urged to consider doing so. Preparation for baptism through a course of instruction or counseling by the pastor will be offered.

Persons who terminate their membership may receive a letter of transfer at their request.

## **Article V** **PASTOR**

The Pastor will be elected by the congregation upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Search Committee. This committee will be composed of one representative from each of the following boards and organizations: Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Board of Christian Education, American Baptist Women (ABW), American Baptist Men (ABM) and the American Baptist Youth (ABY). Each board or organization will choose its own representative. The Pastoral Search Committee will be convened by the representative of the Board of Deacons. It will consult with the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Ohio in its search for a suitable candidate.

Election of a Pastor may take place at any regular or called business meeting provided two weeks notice in writing has been given to all persons meeting the requirements of **Article IV**. A two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be required for election.

The Pastor must be prepared by training, knowledge and experience to serve as a spiritual guide to the congregation. It is expected that he or she will be familiar with the great spiritual disciplines of mankind and in harmony with the purpose of this church. The Pastor will serve as a resource person on all boards and committees. It is anticipated that the Pastor will work actively in the community for the advancement of the ideals of Jesus Christ.

The Pastoral relationship may be dissolved by either party provided 90 days notice is given. This period may be adjusted with the consent of both parties.

The removal of a Pastor must take place at a business meeting called for this purpose by the Board of Deacons or the Parish Council. Two weeks notice in writing must be given to each person meeting the requirements of **Article IV**. A two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be required for dismissal.

## **Article VI** **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS**

All officers will serve for terms of two years. The actions of all boards and organizations will be subject to review by the church..

1. The Board of Deacons will be composed of six people. They will meet regularly in order to advise and assist the Pastor in caring for the spiritual needs of the church, including visitation. They will assist in the preparation and distribution of Holy Communion and they will have full responsibility for the use of the Benevolence Fund.
2. The Board of Trustees will be composed of five people. The trustees will meet regularly and will hold in trust all property belonging to the church and will take all necessary measures for its protection, management and upkeep.

3. The Board of Christian Education will be composed of four people. This Board will be responsible planning and administering the total church program of Christian Education. Each member will be elected for a specific area of responsibility. These will be Coordinator of the Sunday School: Coordinator of Adult, Youth and Children's Work: Coordinator of Leadership Development: and Coordinator of Mission Education. The chair of the Board and the secretary for the Board will be selected from these four members on a yearly basis.
4. The Nominating Committee will consist of six people: The Moderator, representatives from the Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Board of Christian Education and two at large positions who will be appointed by the Moderator in consultation with the Parish Council. The appointments will be announced at the April business meeting of the year in which they serve. It will be the duty of the committee to provide a slate of officers for the October business meeting and to present nominations for any offices becoming vacant in the course of the year.
5. The Finance Committee Chair, subject to the approval of the Parish Council will appoint a finance committee which will be responsible for preparing the annual church budget and implementing a program for seeking financial support.
6. The Financial Secretary will receive all money contributed to the church, maintain records of all contributions and the contributors, transmit all funds to the Treasurer except those otherwise designated by the church and submit quarterly reports to the congregation.
7. The Assistant Financial Secretary will assist the Financial Secretary with his/her duties including serving as the Secretary in his/her absence or incapacity.
8. The Treasurer will receive from the Financial Secretary and expend all money belonging to the church except that otherwise designated. Quarterly reports will be submitted to the congregation.
9. The Assistant Treasurer will serve in the absence or incapacity of the treasurer.
10. The Church Clerk will maintain a permanent record of all church business meetings and a membership roll.

The clerk will initiate an annual review of the membership roll by the Board of Deacons for the purpose of maintaining an accurate membership record.

The clerk will maintain a church journal in which will be recorded the following vital statistics:

1. All marriages performed in the church.
2. Births, baptisms, marriages and deaths within members families.
3. Membership beginning or termination dates.

The clerk will provide the congregation with a report of the business meeting proceedings.

The clerk will arrange for the permanent safe storage of church records.

11. The Sunday School Clerk will keep all records of the school, order necessary supplies and make regular reports to the Board of Christian Education.

12. The Moderator will preside at all business meetings, Parish Council and serve as chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

13. The Assistant Moderator will serve in the absence or incapacity of the Moderator.

14. The Parish Council will be composed of the Pastor, Moderator, Church Clerk, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, chairs of the Board of Deacons, Trustees, Christian Education and the Finance Committee and a representative from each of the following: American Baptist Women (ABW), American Baptist Men (ABM) and the American Baptist Youth (ABY). Parish Council meetings are open to the fellowship. The Parish Council will meet regularly to study the needs of the church and community, plan and effect the carrying out of the church program, integrate the work of the various boards, committees and subsidiary organizations. The Council will annually appoint all committees not provided for in the constitution. It will also appoint trustees and division representatives to the association of which it is a member. When an office becomes vacant the Council will appoint an interim officer to serve until the next meeting.

## **Article VII**

### **BUSINESS MEETING**

The congregational business meetings will be held in January, April, July and October. The October business meeting will include the presentation of the annual financial budget and the election of officers who will begin their terms effective January 1<sup>st</sup> of the new year. The annual business meeting will be conducted and reports received in writing from all boards and committees during the Annual Business Meeting in January. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor, Moderator, or the Parish Council provided two weeks notice in writing is given to each person meeting the requirement of **Article IV**. Twelve members present will constitute a quorum.



