

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA
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 Church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other Churches.

**ARTICLE I
THE NAME**

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina, located at 61 Church Street.

**ARTICLE II
OBJECTIVES**

To be a dynamic, spiritual body 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 worshipping 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 Christian in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

**ARTICLE III
THE CHURCH COVENANT**

Of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina
We do solemnly covenant and agree:

That we will take the ONLY LIVING and TRUE God: One God in THREE PERSONS: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be our God.

That we will unreservedly and solemnly give up ourselves, both souls and body, and all we possess, to Almighty God; to be ordered, directed and disposed of by Him, according to the counsel of His holy will. This we do, in a humble dependence on the grace of the Holy Spirit to aid and support us in these sacred engagements: and hope for acceptance and salvation, through the merit and mediation of our lord, Jesus Christ.

We take the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be our rule of faith and practice in the great concerns of religion, the general affairs of life, and transacting the business of the Church.

We promise to maintain communion and fellowship with each other, in the public worship of God, according to the various ordinances of the Gospel; not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but embracing all regular convenient seasons for this purpose, as the providence of God shall permit. We will exercise Christian forbearance and love, one towards another, pray for and sympathize with each other in the various circumstances of life, and use every laudable endeavor to provoke to love and good works.

We promise to contribute in a reasonable manner, according to our ability, for the support of public worship and the relief of the poor in the Church, and to use our influence, to forward and to promote the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom in the world. We will be careful to conduct ourselves with uprightness and integrity, and in a peaceful and friendly manner, toward mankind in general, and toward Christians of all descriptions, in particular. We will also pay a conscientious regard to civil government, and give it our support as an ordinance of God.

This covenant we make, that we shall therein be accepted of God, unto Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and majesty, power and dominion, everlasting. Amen.

Originally adopted by the Church, August 21, 1791.

Revised by the Church, May 12, 1851.

Revised by the Church, March 31, 1992.

Revised by the Church, May 29, 1996.

Revised by the Church, February 19, 2006

ARTICLE IV 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.

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, this Church will cooperate with and support the Charleston Baptist Association, the state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

BYLAWS (Approved changes current as of 02/01/09)

ARTICLE 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 the 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 themselves 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 request for baptism according to the bylaws of the Church.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church.
3. By a statement of prior conversion experience and believer's baptism when no letter is obtainable.
4. By request of a Christian for baptism by immersion.
5. By spiritual watchcare, for persons who are temporary residents in the city or who are members of a church of another denomination or have justifiable reasons. Such persons may come under the spiritual watchcare of our Church by presenting themselves for membership. These persons shall have rights and privileges ordinarily afforded full members of the Church, such as benefits of the clergy and Pastoral care, participation in the observance of the Lord's Supper, etc. However, they shall not hold office in the Church or vote in Church business conference.

The names of candidates for Church membership shall be presented to the Church at the next regular Church conference. A majority vote of those Church members present and voting shall be required to elect candidates to membership. Full membership shall be effective after baptism, upon receipt of transfer of letter or receipt of statement of prior experience and baptism by immersion.

Section 3. Duties of Members

New members of the Church are urged to participate in the Church's new member orientation.

Members of this Church shall be expected to:

1. be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life.
2. attend faithfully the services of this Church.
3. give regularly for its support and its causes.
4. share in its organization.

Section 4. Rights of Members

1. Each 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.
2. Unless otherwise herein provided, each member of the Church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the Church.
3. Each member of the Church may participate in the ordinances of the Church as administered by the Church.¹

Section 5. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated by:

1. death of the member.
2. dismissal to another Baptist Church.
3. exclusion by action of this Church.
4. request of the person in writing.
5. membership in a Church of another denomination (erasure).

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.

Should some serious condition exist with a member which adversely affects the general welfare of the Church, the Pastor and the Deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Mathew 18. If it becomes necessary for the Church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present is required; and the Church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the Church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The Church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by a majority vote of the Church.

ARTICLE II CHURCH OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

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

Section 1. Church Officers

- 1) Pastor – The 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 Pastor is leader of Pastoral ministries in the Church. As such, he works with the Deacons and Church staff to:
 - lead the Church in the achievement of its missions.
 - proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
 - care for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

The organization of a Pastor Search Committee shall be called for by the Chairperson of the Deacons upon the resignation or termination of the Pastor. There will be 11 voting members and one alternate on this committee. Two weeks advance notice of the nomination of the committee members shall be required.

¹ For an exposition of the privileges and responsibilities of the membership, please see the "Resolution Adopted by the Deacons of First Baptist Church, Charleston, March 11, 1996.

In a Church conference immediately following a Sunday morning worship service, the Church shall nominate the committee members by secret ballot. Any Church member 18 years of age or older is eligible for nomination. Voting tally shall be made by the Deacons.

The 22 receiving the highest number of votes and who are willing to serve will be placed on the final ballot to be presented on the following Sunday to the Church in conference. The 11 receiving the highest number from the second ballot shall be the members of the committee; the person with the next highest number of votes shall serve as the alternate. The committee shall elect its own chairperson.

The committee shall bring to the Church the name of only one prospective Pastor at a time. Election to call the Pastor shall occur at least two weeks after written presentation of the name to the membership. The election shall occur at a Church conference immediately following the Sunday morning worship service during which the prospective Pastor has preached. Selection of the Pastor shall be conducted by secret ballot and shall constitute at least seventy-five percent of the votes cast. The Pastor may resign the office of Pastor by giving at least two weeks written notice to the Church at the time of resignation.

The Church may declare the office of Pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given in the Church newsletter. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the Deacons, or by a majority of Church members at a regular business conference. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by a majority vote, and shall be someone other than the Pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of a simple majority of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the Pastor so excluded from office, the Church will compensate the Pastor with not less than one-twelfth of the total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

When the office of Pastor becomes vacant, an Interim Pastor shall be chosen by the methodology described in Article II, Section 1, number (2) "Staff" and Section 2, number (17). The Interim Pastor shall serve until the office of Pastor is filled, until dismissed by the Church in a regular Church business meeting, or in accordance with the employment agreement entered into with the Church. The position of Interim Pastor will not include responsibilities involving finance or personnel during the interim period of service.

- 2) Staff – The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the Church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Those prospective staff members of whom the Church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be reviewed by the Personnel Committee and recommended to the Deacons who shall present them to the Church for a vote. Seventy-five percent of the votes cast shall be required to extend a call to a staff member.

A staff member may resign by giving at least two weeks written notice to the Church.

The Church may vote to vacate ministerial staff positions upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee, the Deacons or the Pastor. Such termination shall be immediate and the compensation conditions shall be the same as for the Pastor, except the amount shall relate to the individual's compensation.

Non-ministerial staff members (including hourly wage earners) 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 of services shall be in consultation with the Pastor, the supervising staff member, and as appropriate, with related committees of the Church.

- 3) Deacons – The Church shall elect deacons by ballot in the following manner: An announcement will be published in the communication instruments of the church, currently *The Builder, Newsbreak, and Senior Scoop* during the first week of April of each year. This announcement will request anyone who does not wish to serve as a deacon for that year have his or her name removed from the published list of church members eligible to serve. Removal of one's name from the list of eligible church members will be made by signing a

published form and returning it to the church office by the date specified in the announcement. The signed form will be used as verification for removal of said name from the published list. The names of all church members who are eligible to serve will be on the published list unless the signed form is received by the church office. It will be assumed that everyone on the published list is willing to serve if elected as a deacon in First Baptist Church of Charleston

On the first Sunday morning in May of each year, each Church member in attendance will be afforded an opportunity to nominate six individuals to serve as deacons. Eligibility is defined as First Baptist Church members who are 18 years of age or older, regular participants in the life of the Church, observant of the Biblical responsibilities for regular financial support, servant leaders by lifestyle and personal commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and not paid members of the ministerial staff. The twelve persons receiving the highest number of nominations will be contacted concerning their willingness to serve and their understanding of the ministry of deacons. Should any of those nominated not wish to serve; the person with the next highest number of votes will be asked to serve. The twelve persons receiving the highest number of votes will be placed on the second ballot. The six receiving the highest number of votes on the second ballot will then serve as deacons with terms to begin June 1.

Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year, the assigned term of office of one-third of the number of Deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill those vacancies. In case of a vacancy other than the completion of a three-year term, the next alternate from the last Deacon election shall fill the remainder of the unexpired term. After serving a term of three years, a Deacon shall be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of at least one year. If an alternate filling an unexpired term serves less than one year, he/she is eligible to be nominated without a lapse in service. A member who was a Deacon at another Church does not automatically have active Deacon status in this Church. If elected by this Church, his previous ordination by another Church of like faith and order, as determined by the Pastor, shall suffice. In accordance with the meaning of the word 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 ministries of (1) leading the Church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) caring for the Church's members and other persons in the community.²

- 4) Church Clerk – The Church Clerk is elected and serves as a corporate officer as delineated in (7) below. The Clerk, assisted by the Pastor and staff, shall be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all official actions of the Church, except as noted elsewhere in these bylaws. The Church Clerk shall also assist in enrolling new Church members as they unite with the Church. All Church records under the care of the Clerk and Church staff are Church property and shall be kept in the Church office.
- (5) Treasurer – The Church shall elect annually a Church Treasurer as its financial officer and one of the corporate officers. The term of office is for one year with no individual serving more than three consecutive one-year terms. The Treasurer's term of office will follow the fiscal year (June 1 – May 31). However, in the event of an emergency, the term of office will continue until a successor is elected. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by 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 of the preceding month. The Treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by an auditing committee of public accountants. The Treasurer shall be bonded, the Church paying for the bonding.
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 a part of the permanent records of the Church.

The Church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to the bookkeeper who will assist the elected treasurer.

² For an exposition of the role, principles, and responsibilities of this body, please see the document entitled, "Deacons, First Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina.

- (6) Moderator – The Church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer. In the absence of the moderator, the Chairperson of the Deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the Vice-Chairperson of the Deacons will act as moderator.
- (7) Corporate Officers – The Church shall elect annually a President, a Vice-President, and a Church Clerk to serve with the Treasurer as corporate officers for the Church. They shall hold in trust the Church property. Upon a specific vote of the Church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any Church property. When the signatures of officers 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 and such other powers as might be granted by the statutes of the state to the Church under its charter of incorporation of 1778. The terms of office are for one year with no individual serving more than three consecutive one-year terms.
- (8) Associational Executive Committee members – The Church shall elect annually one individual to serve with the Pastor as the Church’s Associational executive committee members. The term of office is for one year with no individual serving more than three consecutive one-year terms.

Section 2. Church Committees

The Committees of this Church shall be:

Finance Committee
Long-Range Planning Committee
Nominating Committee
Personnel Committee

Procedure for standing or ad hoc committee action is as follows: Any action of a committee that requires a vote of the Church must first be brought before the Diaconate. The committee’s recommendation may then go forward to the Church along with the recorded action of the Deacons, recognizing that the Church is the final authority.

Additional regular committees may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these bylaws. Except in situations concerning the hiring or dismissal of Church employees in which a need for confidentiality exists, the meetings of the Deacons and all Church committees are open to the membership. All members of regular Church committees and boards of institutions (see Article IX) shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church unless otherwise specified within the bylaws. However, ad hoc committees may be appointed as the need arises by the Nominating Committee. It is recommended that at least seven days’ notice be given prior to a committee meeting. Each committee will meet the first week in the fiscal year to elect a chairperson, if a chairperson has not previously been elected. Any member who does not attend his/her committee meetings for a year will have vacated the office and the vacancy shall be filled. Ex-officio members are non-voting members of committees, except where stated otherwise. When a member has completed his prescribed term on a standing committee, he shall be eligible to serve on that committee after the lapse of one year. If an alternate filling an unexpired term serves less than one year, he/she is eligible to be nominated without a lapse in service. Members who are full-time employees of the Church may vote on matters before the congregation, but do not vote within committees. This does not apply to the employees of the school.

Finance Committee

Membership – The committee shall be composed of nine members, six of whom will be elected for three-year terms with two of these will rotating off each year. The Church Treasurer for that year will be a voting member while the Pastor and Chairperson of the Deacons will be non-voting ex-officio members. Both the committee and the Church Treasurer will follow the Church fiscal year.

Responsibilities:

1. To consult the church committees about their anticipated financial needs for the next year.
2. To prepare the budget for presentation to the Deacons for approval and/or amendment and to the church for its approval or amendment. At each stage (in committee, in the Diaconate, and before the Church), the proposed budget shall have the approval of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

3. To promote stewardship emphasis during the year.
4. To offer monthly supervision of expenditures and receipts.
5. To give periodic reports to the Deacons (available to Church members upon request):
Monthly: an analysis of revenues and expenses;
Quarterly: balances of designated or restricted funds and records of “pass-through” funds (e.g. Lottie Moon Christmas Offering).
6. To develop a system of accounting.
7. To arrange for a yearly audit.

Long Range Planning Committee

Membership – The committee shall be composed of nine members, six of whom will be elected for three-year terms with two of these rotating off each year. The Pastor, the Chairperson of the Deacons, the Chairperson of the School Board, will be non-voting ex-officio members. Whenever necessary, the Church Nominating Committee may designate additional members with appropriate professional skills.

Responsibilities:

1. To discover and analyze long range Church needs, specifically those of the physical plant.
2. To recommend long-range goals and strategies to the Deacons and to the congregation, including the utilization of existing facilities or development of new facilities.
3. To evaluate the long range effectiveness of Church plans.
4. To interpret long range goals and strategies to appropriate groups.
5. To work in cooperation with the Pastor and other staff ministers.

Nominating Committee

Membership – The committee shall be composed of nine members, six of whom will be elected for three-year terms with two of these rotating off each year. The Pastor, Minister of Education and the Chairperson of the Deacons will serve as non-voting ex-officio members. The nominations for the Boards of the Institutions (see Article IX), Church Committees and Church officers must be presented to and approved by the Church prior to June 1, the beginning of the fiscal year. Every effort should be made to ensure that no individual is nominated to serve on more than one committee.

Responsibilities:

1. To give committee representation to a broad spectrum of the Church body. Adequate representation by the Diaconate will be considered in nominations.
2. To select, interview and enlist Church organization leaders, committee chairpersons, committee members, board members of institutions, Church corporate officers and general Church officers.
3. To work in conjunction with the Minister of Education to enlist all Sunday School teachers and workers.
4. To agree on volunteer workers before inviting them to serve in Church-elected leadership programs.
5. To assist Church leaders in discovering and enlisting qualified persons to fill Church-elected positions of leadership in their respective organizations.
6. To present volunteer workers to the Church for election.
7. To nominate special committees as assigned by the Church.
8. To present to the Church its list of nominees to all elected positions at least one week in advance of the business meeting scheduled for the election of such positions.
9. To receive additional nominations from the membership from the floor of the business meeting, provided the individual being nominated has given consent.
10. To fill vacancies as may occur on any committee or board.

Personnel Committee

Membership – This committee shall be composed of eight members, six of whom will be elected for three-year terms with two of these rotating off each year. The Pastor and the Chairperson of the Deacons shall serve as non-voting ex-officio members.

Responsibilities:

1. To work in coordination with the Pastor and Deacons in determining the need for new staff positions.
2. Once a determination is made for the need to fill a vacant position or create a new position, it is the

responsibility of the Personnel Committee to fill that position using the following procedures: Paid ministerial staff positions (other than the Pastor): The Committee will immediately begin to use all resources available to determine the person best suited for the position, and recommend the individual to the Deacons and to the Church. The Committee should coordinate their efforts with the Pastor. Other staff positions: To employ other staff members on recommendation of, or after consultation with, the Pastor, excluding hourly wage earners (See Article II, Sec. 1, Para. 2).

3. To conduct staff evaluations on an annual basis (or more frequently if the situation dictates) to determine the effectiveness of each staff member and make recommendations for changes as needed.
4. To review staff compensations and to make recommendations to the Finance Committee.
5. To review and update job descriptions on existing staff positions and create job descriptions for new positions.
6. To act on behalf of the Church in matters related to paid Church staff members.
7. If necessary, to recommend to the Deacons, and to the Church, a person who will serve as interim Pastor. Included with the recommendation will be a written proposed description of duties and compensation.

Section 3. Ministry Teams

In addition to the elected committees of the Church, ministry teams shall be established for the various ministries of the Church. All church members shall be requested and encouraged to be involved in at least one ministry team based on his or her gift(s) and passion for ministry. The establishment of the ministry teams, team organization and selection, and such other information as is necessary for the effective operation of the ministry teams shall be contained in a Ministry Team Manual. The number and priorities of the ministry teams may change from year to year. The Ministry Team Manual shall be initially approved by the Church, and shall be reviewed and approved annually thereafter, prior to the beginning of each fiscal year. The approval of the Ministry Team Manual shall be made at a regularly called business meeting.

ARTICLE III CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The Church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching; Church member training, Church leader training, new member orientation; mission education, action and support; and music education, training and performance. All organizations related to the Church programs shall be under Church control. All officers will be elected by the Church. The Church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

- (1) The Sunday School shall be basic organization for the Bible teaching program. Its responsibilities shall be to teach the Biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and Church membership, to minister to Sunday School members and prospects and to lead members to worship.

The Sunday School Council is responsible for leading the Sunday School in planning and implementing the overall work of the Sunday School. The Council is made up of the Pastor, Minister of Education, Sunday School Director, Director of Preschool Department, Director of Children's Department, Director of Youth Department, Director of Adult Departments, Minister to Students, and Director of Outreach. The Sunday School shall be organized by divisions, departments, and classes, as appropriate for all ages. The Minister of Education and Sunday School Director shall work together to manage all facets of Sunday School operations.

- (2) Homebound Ministry shall give special attention to those who are unable to attend Church services and other activities of the Church. This program is under the direction of the Minister of Education.
- (3) Women's Missionary Union shall be a mission education, mission action and support organization of the Church for women, young women, girls and preschool children. Its task shall be to teach missions; engage in mission action; support world missions through praying and giving; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination. Women's Missionary Union shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires. The term of office for the WMU leadership is for one year with no individual serving more than three consecutive terms.

- (4) The Church Music Program, under the direction of the Minister of Music, shall be the music education, training and performance organization of the Church. Its tasks shall be to teach music; train persons to lead, sing and play music; provide music in the Church and community; lead the Church in worship through music and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination. The Church Music Program shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.
- (5) The Women's Enrichment Ministry shall be an organization with the purpose of enriching women through discipleship activities. Its task will be to develop ministries including mentoring, prayer, Bible studies, and retreats. Women's Enrichment Ministries shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires to fulfill its stated purpose within the overall ministry of First Baptist Church. (Paragraph (5) added as amendment by church vote on 9/26/01)
- (6) The Men's Ministry shall be an organization with the purpose of enriching men through discipleship activities such as Bible Studies, retreats, prayer groups, service projects, and special events. The Men's Ministry will have such officers and organizations as the program requires to fulfill its stated purpose within the overall ministry of First Baptist Church. (Paragraph (6) added as amendment by church vote on 9/26/01)

ARTICLE IV CHURCH PROGRAM SERVICES

The Church shall maintain media center services for the purpose of enriching and extending the ministries and programs of the Church. The media center will be the resource center for the Church. Its personnel will seek to provide and promote the use of printed and audio-visual resources. They also will provide consultation to Church leaders and members in the use of printed and audio-visual resources.

ARTICLE V CHURCH ORDINANCES

Section 1. Baptism

The Church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any 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 Pastor or the Church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The Deacons shall assist the Ordinance Ministry Team in the preparation for and the observance of baptism. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.
- (3) A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Pastor and/or Deacons.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least once a quarter. The Pastor, or his designate, and Deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE VI CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and Wednesday evening for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction and evangelism shall be among the elements of these services. The Pastor shall direct the services for all the Church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Under unusual circumstances or to meet special needs, the Pastor may temporarily change the time and/or date of scheduled services. If special conditions persist, the Deacons will be consulted to determine a course of action. Any

consideration of the discontinuance of a regularly scheduled Church worship service must be brought before the Church for majority approval of members present.

Section 2. Special Services

Revival services and any other Church meetings essential to the advancement of the Church's objectives shall be placed on the Church calendar by the ministerial staff.

Section 3. Regular Business Meetings

The Regular Church Business Meetings will be held on Sunday afternoon of each quarter beginning with the church year. Dates for each meeting will be announced two weeks in advance of the meeting.

Section 4. Called Business Meeting

The Church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. The Pastor or the Chairperson of Deacons, will make a determination of which items of business are of special nature and significance requiring a called business meeting.

A one-week notice must be given for the called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, time and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have the opportunity to know of the meeting. Any action taken must pertain to the subject for which the meeting was called. Generally, items of special concern will be presented to the membership on Sunday afternoons for discussion and amendment/revision and vote. However, a Sunday morning vote will be taken on the proposed annual budget, calling a ministerial staff member, and other matters as determined by a vote of the Deacons. All discussion for Sunday morning business will take place the preceding Sunday afternoon. The procedures will have no effect on other measures provided for elsewhere in these bylaws.

Section 5. Quorum

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

Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

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

Section 7. Church Calendars

The Church year shall be from June 1 through May 31. Church program organizations and committees will operate on the Church year unless otherwise specified. The terms of office for all Church officers except Pastor and ministerial staff will coincide with the Church year unless otherwise specified in this document.

ARTICLE VII CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1.

The Finance Committee, in consultation with Church program directors, committee chairpersons, and staff, shall prepare and submit to the Deacons and the Church for approval an inclusive budget, including by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses.

The proposed budget will be submitted to the Church for discussion, amendment, or change at either a regular or special business meeting. Changes may be made by a majority of those members present and voting. The proposed budget will be mailed to the membership at least one week before the budget is considered at the regular or called business meeting. Any amendments made to the proposed budget at such meeting shall be mailed to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the vote on the budget at a Sunday morning service. To be adopted, the budget requires approval by a minimum of two-thirds of the members present and voting. It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its voted and approved budget with regular, proportionate gifts. Annually there shall be opportunity provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from the Church members. Offering envelopes will be provided.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall be properly recorded on the books of the Church by the Church Treasurer or by the Bookkeeper, both of whom shall be bonded, the Church paying for the bond. (See Article II, Section 1, number (5), regarding the Church Treasurer).

A system of accounting, including regular, independent audits that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds, shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

Section 3. Dedicated and Restricted Giving Beyond Budget

The First Baptist Church of Charleston approves designations to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship up to the percent of the members' donation to the Church which is equal to the percent of the Church budget allocated to Southern Baptist Convention causes. (Approved by the church on 07/26/95).

Other giving in the form of funds to be used by the Church for specific purposes approved by the Church Finance Committee is reserved by the Church for those purposes and held or invested as instructed by the donors and reported by the Church Finance Committee quarterly to the Deacons and the Church membership. Funds donated for purposes outside the Church will also be processed by the Church office as directed by the donors and approved by the Church Finance Committee.

ARTICLE VIII CHURCH OPERATIONS MANUAL

A special committee of the Church shall develop a Church Operations Manual to include policies and procedures and organization charts depicting lines of responsibility for the administration of the Church. The manual shall be kept in the Church office and its upkeep will be under the oversight of the Pastor. The manual shall be written within the constraints of the Church Constitution and By-Laws and additions, deletions and revisions, after initial manual completion, will be the responsibility of the staff person or committee responsible for the policy and procedures. The manual will be available in the Church office for review by any Church member.

Any Church member can initiate a change to the manual by communicating with the appropriate staff member or committee chairperson. In the event such discussions do not resolve the issue, the member should inform the Pastor. If the issue still cannot be resolved, the member has the right to bring it to the Church for resolution.

ARTICLE IX INSTITUTIONS

A. Purposes

The First Baptist Church shall sponsor institutions for the accomplishment of the purposes of the Church and shall appoint (Article II, Section 2) the members of the boards of directors to which the governance of these institutions shall be committed in accordance with their charters.

B. Identification of Sponsored Institutions

The following are the institutions sponsored pursuant to the Church's Bylaws:

- The First Baptist Church Foundation
- The First Baptist School Foundation
- The First Baptist School

C. Changes Regarding Sponsored Institutions

1. A motion made to the Church to dissolve or substantially alter the relationship between the Church and a sponsored institution, or to add a sponsored institution shall be referred to the Deacons for study and a recommendation to a subsequent business meeting. If the motion is in the nature of or contains an amendment to the Church Bylaws, the motion shall be considered in keeping with the amendment provisions of these Bylaws.
2. A request by the board of directors of an institution to dissolve or substantially alter the relationship between the Church and that institution shall be conveyed in writing to the Deacons. The Deacons shall submit that

request to the Church and shall advise the Church of the Deacons' recommendation for a response by the Church to the request.

D. Terms of Directors' Service

1. Directors shall be appointed (See Article II, Section 2, appointees are nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church) to a term of three (3) years, except directors being appointed to complete an unexpired term. One-third (1/3) of the directors shall retire from each board each year. Board members shall not be eligible to succeed themselves or be appointed to any other board until one year has elapsed except in the case of a board member who has first been appointed to fill less than one year of an unexpired term. Terms commence June 1 following appointment by a vote of the Church.
2. No person shall serve on more than one board of directors at the same time. A person who is an employee of an institution may not serve as a member of a board of directors of an institution sponsored by the Church.
3. Any voting director of an institution who becomes a member of another church shall thereby terminate membership on that board.

E. Articles of Incorporation

All proposed Articles of Incorporation, or changes or amendments to Articles of Incorporation of institutions sponsored by the Church under these Bylaws, and of any subsidiary corporation created by a sponsored institution, shall be submitted by the institution to the Church for approval before they become effective.

F. Contents of Articles of Incorporation

The Articles of Incorporation of an institution sponsored by the Church under these Bylaws shall contain the following provisions:

1. The board of directors, consisting of designated persons, a number sanctioned by First Baptist Church, shall be appointed by First Baptist Church.
2. Directors shall be appointed for terms of three (3) years. Directors' terms shall be staggered.
3. First Baptist Church may remove directors prior to the expiration of the term of the directors' appointment upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee and by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members voting in a regular or called business meeting of the Church. Removal may occur only upon the Church's finding that removal of the director is in the best interest of the institution.
4. Vacancies in the board of directors are to be filled by the Church.
5. The directors may adopt bylaws not inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation.
6. Any amendment to the Articles of Incorporation or bylaws of the institutions must be approved by First Baptist Church.
7. Any merger shall require the consent of First Baptist Church.
8. Before the institution may sell, lease, exchange or otherwise dispose of any real property other than in the usual and regular course of its activities, the permission of First Baptist Church must be secured.
9. Dissolution of the institution may occur only with the permission of First Baptist Church, and upon dissolution the assets of the institution shall pass to First Baptist Church if at that time First Baptist Church is a tax exempt corporation within the meaning of 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code. If First Baptist Church is not a tax exempt corporation, then the assets of the institution shall be distributed to one or more tax exempt organizations selected by First Baptist Church. The corporation is (either) a religious nonprofit corporation (or a public benefit nonprofit corporation).
10. The Articles shall contain language appropriate for a corporation exempt from federal taxation under 501 (c)(3) or a successor section of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

Changes in the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the Church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to the membership of the Church. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds of Church members present and voting. Amendments to the bylaws shall have concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting. Amendments shall become effective when approved by the Church.

ADDENDUM

The By-Laws make reference to additional documents which provide policies and information regarding church governance. Those include the Policy Manual, the Ministry Teams Manual, and the two resolutions by the deacons attached below. None of these are a part of the By-Laws, but do represent information useful to the life and work of the Church.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE DEACONS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CHARLESTON March 11, 1996

The First Baptist Church Constitution and By-Laws is a document designed to provide a framework for the efficient operation for the staff, committees, organizations, and congregation of First Baptist Church. In order for the Constitution and By-Laws to be properly implemented, the members of the congregation, committees, organizations, and the staff should fully understand their responsibilities as outlined below:

I. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. Any member of First Baptist Church may bring forth any recommendation or any concern to the appropriate committee or the Deacons at any regularly scheduled meeting. In addition, any member may bring forth any recommendation or concern to the general congregation at any regularly scheduled church business meeting. It is recommended and encouraged that the procedure outline in the "Responsibilities" section below be followed.
- B. Any member of First Baptist Church may attend any committee/Diacons meeting unless the committee is called into "Executive Session." An exception to this would be a Pastor/Staff Search Committee meeting. Common courtesy would dictate that the Chairman of the committee be notified ahead of time if a church members wishes to bring business before a committee.
- C. Committees/Diacons established by the First Baptist Church Constitution and By-Laws may bring recommendations to the Congregation as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws for action on subjects which come before them; however, this does not prevent any member of First Baptist Church from bringing a recommendation on the same subject to the general congregation at a regularly scheduled business meeting. Common courtesy would dictate that the Church Moderator be informed if business is to be brought forth in a Church Business Meeting.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. Each member of First Baptist Church should strive to work within the established framework of the First Baptist Church Constitution and By-Laws for the overall good of the congregation and the stated goals of First Baptist Church.
- B. Committee members/Diacons should fully understand the responsibilities of the position to which they have been elected and should make every effort to fulfill their duties in a fair and ethical manner for the good of the general congregation of First Baptist Church. Committee members should recognize the need for confidentiality as the situation dictates.
- C. Members of the congregation who desire to make recommendation or voice concerns on any subject should observe the following procedure:
 - 1. Members should take their recommendations or concerns to the appropriate committee/Diacons for action. If the member is unsure which committee has responsibility for the particular concern, they should seek the advice of the Pastor, other Ministerial Staff, or the Deacon Chairman. If the concerned

person is a member of any committee/Deacons in which the recommendation or concern is voiced, it is the duty of the member to express his/her thoughts and opinions in the committee setting and strive for resolution among the membership of said committee.

2. If the member does not receive satisfactory response from the appropriate committee/Deacons, this person may request a joint meeting with the Pastor or appropriate Ministerial Staff member and the appropriate committee.
3. If the member still does not receive a satisfactory response, this person may then take their request to the general congregation at a scheduled business meeting.
4. If the individual church member, committee members, Deacons and Ministerial Staff will strive to follow these steps, individual recommendations and concerns can be dealt with in an efficient, orderly and fair manner.

III. CONCLUSION

First Baptist Church, Charleston, is the Mother Church of Southern Baptists. While its Constitution and By-Laws provides a framework for the operation of the Church, it should be clearly understood that, true to its rich Baptist heritage, First Baptist Church retains the freedom and autonomy that gives the Church membership the final authority on all matters.

DEACONS, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

ROLE

Deacons will share, along with the Pastor and ministerial staff, the common tasks of proclaiming the gospel to believers and non-believers, caring for the church's members and other persons in the community, and leading the church in the achievement of its mission.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

A Deacon should strive to be a servant leader in the manner exemplified by Christ, who said "The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve..." (Matthew 20:28).

A Deacon should strive to live a life in which these characteristics are evidenced.

- To be genuinely humble before God, turning to Him for guidance through daily prayer and the study of His Word.
- To show Christian compassion on behalf of those who are needy or hurting.
- To be gentle in speech and conduct, striving to bring all graciousness to all situations.
- To have a yearning for righteousness, seeking both to please God and to take stands against evil and to resist moral compromises.
- To minister to those who have needs, both spiritual and material.
- To be motivated in all things by love for Jesus Christ.
- To be peacemakers. To be internally at ease, not agitated or ill-tempered. To strive to settle quarrels, finding no pleasure in being negative. To build up the fellowship of believers.

DEACON MEETING

The Deacon meeting is usually held the Monday evening after the 4th Sunday in the month at 6:30 pm. This date and time may be changed at the discretion of the Deacon Chairman in consultation with other Deacon officers and the Pastor. Attendance at these meetings is fundamental for effective service. Other church, church school committees, and church related events should not be scheduled on this date unless special needs arise. The expected level of attendance is determined by the Deacon Chairman in coordination with Deacon officers, the Pastor and the active Deacon body when in doubt.

RESPONSIBILITIES

A Deacon is expected to serve the congregation in the following areas:

- Deacons are committed believers to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and are His servants on a daily basis.
- Deacons are spiritual leaders of the Church.
- Deacons are expected to exhibit the character of Christian leaders.
- Deacons are grounded in Scripture and the conviction that its truth is their authority for proclaiming the Gospel.
- Deacons provide a personal ministry with assigned members, serving their needs throughout the year.
- Deacons exert a constructive influence, personally and collectively guiding and guarding the mission of the Church working with the Pastor.

- Deacons are enthusiastic about God's commission and communicate their commitment in service on various administrative committees.
- Deacons lead by personal example in their lives, in regular attendance at church services and by financial support of the Church's mission and reach.
- Deacons are to have compassion for the community at large and seek and act to reach those unsaved.

FAMILY MINISTRY

All active deacons are expected to participate fully in building and maintaining church fellowship by carrying out the following specific functions:

- Initial contact with the church families assigned should be made by the next regularly scheduled deacons meeting after the names are assigned. Personal visits and telephone calls are encouraged. Letters of introduction may be used prior to the personal contacts.
- Crisis Visitation – In the event of a crisis in the home of a deacon-family, the deacon will make *personal* contact with the family as soon as possible. Such crises include death in the immediate family, an illness resulting in hospitalization, or any other personal crisis that results in significant or unusual trauma.
- Observing Rites-Of-Passage – When an immediate member of a deacon-family experiences a significant rite-of-passage, the deacon should make personal contact with that family member through a visit, a telephone call, or by mailing a card. Rites-of-passage include such events as a birth, high school graduation, a marriage, college graduation, retirement, celebration of birthdays, baptisms, baby dedications, etc.
- Shut-In (Homebound) Visitation – Deacons should take special care to visit any homebound members who are assigned to them. Any unmet needs that are noticed should be noted and solutions explored. In addition to personal visits, telephone calls are encouraged, particularly in times of sickness or inclement weather.
- Fellowship Visitation – Many deacon-families are very active in the church, are healthy, and experience little crisis. Nevertheless, it is important for each Deacon to build camaraderie with these families. Methods of communication and visitation can be accomplished through many avenues. The following are some examples: deacon-families drop-ins a picnic, or some seasonal celebration.
- Shut-In (Homebound) Communion – When requested or when an invitation is accepted, a deacon and their spouse or another Deacon (active or inactive) should arrange an appropriate time to share communion with a homebound member of First Baptist Church.

DEACON ELECTION

Deacons will be elected at large from the church membership as provided by the church By-laws. An adequate time (usually two weeks) will be set aside to complete a discussion of the role and responsibilities of deacons with those nominated prior to their expression of willingness to serve if elected. Discussion leaders will include the Pastor, the Deacon Chairman, and deacons selected for this purpose.

ELECTION OF DEACON OFFICERS

The selection of individuals to serve in leadership positions is of crucial importance and must be given prayerful concern and careful attention. In order that a reasoned approach may be afforded to the process of nominating candidates for the deacon positions of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Committee Chairman, a Nominating Committee will be established. The Nominating Committee will consist of the Pastor, the current Chairman, and three deacons (one from each tenure group). These three deacons will be selected by vote of the deacons. The Nominating Committee will present for each officer's position, two or three names of deacons with whom the responsibilities have

been discussed and who have agreed to serve if elected by popular vote of those deacons currently serving. (An opportunity to nominate other deacons for these offices will be provided prior to the votes being taken.)

The Chairman for the following church year, beginning in October, will be elected in the regular May Deacons Meeting. This action will allow the Chairman and Chairman-elect to participate in the Church Council's annual needs identification and goals-setting process. The positions of Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Committee Chairman will be filled by election in the September deacons meeting.

DEACON COMMITTEES

In order to more efficiently and effectively carry out the responsibilities shown above, four deacon committees are established. Each of these committees will have three members who will be nominated by the Deacon Nominating Committee.

- Family Ministries Committee – The principal function of this committee are the assignment of deacon-families and the evaluation of deacon fulfillment of these obligations.
- Ordinances and Greeters Committee – The principal function of this committee will be the coordination and assignment of deacons to collect worship service offerings, administer communion and act as greeters.
- New Deacon Orientation Committee – The principal function of this committee will be the development and completion of a program to inform and foster understanding by newly elected deacons of their role and responsibilities.
- Deacon Fellowship Committee – The principal function of this committee will be identification and fostering of the means by which to encourage and nurture fellowship among currently-serving deacons.

INACTIVE DEACONS

Members of this church who have previously served as ordained deacons in this church are considered as inactive deacons. These men and women may contribute their valuable talents to the enhancement of deacon functions and activities. They may be used as resource persons in the training of active deacons and the orientation of newly-elected deacons. They may assist in targeted visitation efforts and in other aspects of relational Christianity. Specific actions for inactive deacon involvement may be proposed by the Pastor and the Chairman for consideration as needs and opportunities are identified.

A deacon's mandate is to minister. At First Baptist Church that ministry is multifaceted and takes numerous different forms. The extent to which each deacon approaches his or her responsibilities prayerfully and with energetic enthusiasm will determine in large measure the success of the church to achieve its mission and to be an effective witness for the Lord.