

FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

I. CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We do declare and establish this constitution: For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Denomination and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member and for the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith.

Name

This body shall be known as the **FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH of FAIRFIELD, PA** and shall be located at 110 Mt. Hope Road, Fairfield, Pennsylvania.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to be a Christ-centered, God-honoring, Bible-teaching body of believers led by the Holy Spirit to worship and witness in spirit and in truth.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to equip the Church to use their spiritual gifts for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Value Statements

As a church we value:

1. The Bible as God's inspired Word and accept its authority

We value the Word of God and accept it as the complete authority in the Church and our personal lives. The Bible is inerrant and relevant to all issues. It should be the center of church teaching, training, and counseling. Hebrews 4:12 (NIV), 2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)

2. Christ centered homes

We value the home as the center of our family lives where Christ is demonstrated in Biblical marriages as well as purity in singleness. It is where the mother and father are honored, the children are loved and encouraged to grow in the strength and stature of the Lord, and each person seeks to serve the Lord. The home is where everyone learns about walking daily with Christ, and the church is responsible for equipping and supporting parents, young adults, and children under the authority and protection of the church family through Christ. Deuteronomy 11:19 (NIV), Joshua 24:15 (NIV), Ephesians 5:33-6:4 (NIV)

3. Evangelism as an act of love and obedience to Jesus Christ

We value sharing the good news of what God had done for us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Sharing the truth of salvation and our personal testimonies to others, both saved and lost, is one of the greatest ways to love and obey our Lord. Establishing new believers in the word is part of the sharing process. Evangelism is the overflowing of our abundant life with Christ onto others. It is done in love by the power of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV), Acts 1:8 (NIV), 2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV)

4. Authentic and loving relationships that encourage one another

We value relationships within the church and in the community which serve as the primary means to love and encourage each other. Relationships are the glue which bonds our hearts in love and can build a bridge of sharing and openness to others. Strong relationships breed a spirit of accountability and discipleship among individuals and groups. Christ was the ultimate example of using relationships for demonstrating truth, love, and encouragement. John 13:34-35 (NIV), Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)

5. Prayer as vital to growth and connection to God

We value the power of prayer as the means to connect to God in the act of praise, confession, thanksgiving, and specific requests. Praying as a family and a congregation builds unity in the body and helps us see what God is doing in our midst. Individual prayer enables us to come before the Father of the universe, honor His name, and be still in His presence in order to discern His will and direction in our lives. Praying for the ministry, outreach, and the leadership of the church should take place on a continual basis. Matthew 6:9 (NIV), Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV), Matthew 21:22 (NIV)

6. God given gifts/talents/skills and their use in building the kingdom

We value people and their individual gifts. The gifts given to us by the Father are all used within the church body for the building of the kingdom here on earth. These gifts are developed through the work of the church ministries and the encouragement and fostering of fellow believers. The different gifts provide diversity of talents and skills, but are given by the same Spirit to work in harmony. We should know each other by our God-given gifts, talents, and skills. 1 Corinthians 12 (NIV), 1 Corinthians 14:12 (NIV)

7. Stewardship as our testimony that all belongs to God

We value giving. We cannot out-give God. Giving, or stewardship, is taking care of what God has given us and using it to advance His kingdom. Honoring the Lord with our wealth means giving back the first of all our fruits for meeting the needs of ministries, benevolence, and missions. Stewardship is not just about money. It is the wise use of our God-given time, talents, and treasures both individually and corporately. Psalm 24:1 (NIV), Luke 16:10 (NIV), Acts 17:24-25 (NIV), 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

Affiliation

Said church shall be affiliated with the Keystone Baptist Association in Pennsylvania; and the State Convention of Baptists of Pennsylvania/South Jersey, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Articles of Faith

The “Articles of Faith” shall be those currently adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention and printed in the tract, “THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE”. **This Church receives the Holy Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice.**

Amendments

The By-Laws, Name, Statements, and Affiliation of this church may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting at a regular business meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing to the congregation at a regular service at least two weeks prior to a regular business meeting.

Church Covenant

As we believe, having been led by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; **We do now, in the presence of God and joyfully enter into covenant with one another and UNITE AS ONE BODY IN CHRIST.**

1. Ministry Promise

- A. Protect the unity of the fellowship. Philippians 2:1-4
- B. Share the responsibility of the financial needs of the Church. Acts 4:32-35
- C. Serve in ministry according to your spiritual gifts. Ephesians 4:11-13

2. Maturity Promise

- A. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:1-3
- B. Develop the holy habits of prayer and personal Bible study. Acts 2:42
- C. Participate in a small group Bible study. Acts 2:46
- D. Attend a worship service provided by the Church. Hebrews 10:25

3. Missions Promise

- A. Support mission causes with prayer and giving. Acts 11:27
- B. Learn how to effectively share the gospel. 1 Peter 3:15
- C. Become personally involved in evangelism and missions. Acts 1:8

II. BY-LAWS

Article 1 – Membership

1. Reception of new members

New members are received as follows:

- A. By profession of faith in Christ and being baptized or immersed in water.
- B. By letter from a church of like faith and order.
- C. By public statement, provided his or her church is now non-existent, or records lost, or when other satisfactory explanation is given for not being able to furnish a letter.
- D. By restoration. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church, upon evidence of his repentance and reformation.

2. Rights of membership

Such members as are in full and regular standing and have reached the age of thirteen (13) may act and vote in all business transactions of the church; except items dealing in matters of the law whereby the member must be of legal voting age. Full and regular standing shall be defined as those members who have attended at least two (2) services per month within the preceding quarter with the following exceptions;

- A. Those unable to attend because of illness
- B. Those resident members who have been out of the community for more than a month.
- C. Those who have been members for less than one year provided they have attended at least two (2) services per month during the time they have been members.
- D. The Elders shall make recommendations to the church concerning special voting privileges.

3. Termination of membership

Membership may cease as follows:

- A. By letter of dismissal to a church of like faith and order. The letters of dismissal shall not be granted directly to the individual, except in extreme cases where such is deemed wise.
- B. By dropping from the roll, when persons join orders of another faith.
- C. By exclusion. Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral, or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his or her covenant vows, the church may terminate membership, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance an amendment.

NOTE: All requests for termination of membership by exclusion or action looking thereto shall first be considered by the Pastor and the Elders, or by a duly elected membership committee, who shall make recommendations to the church.

Article 2 – Church Ministers

1. Senior Pastor-Elder

A. Ministry Description

The Pastor is responsible to the Church for proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for the discipleship of the people, for the engaging in pastoral care, for the equipping of the people for works of service, and for the providing motivational leadership in all areas of the Church ministry. The annual salary and 'Benefits Package' of the pastor are determined jointly by the Personnel and Finance Committee each fiscal year. He will act as an equal member of the church leadership consisting of the Eldership and Deacons.

B. Selection Process

In the absence of a pastor, a Pastor Search Committee shall be formed by the nominating committee. This committee will bring to the consideration of the Church only one man at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present being necessary to affirm the choice. The Pastor thus elected shall serve until the relationship is terminated.

C. Term of Office

The pastor may relinquish the office as pastor by giving at least two (2) weeks notice to the Church at the time of resignation. The church may also declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a business meeting specifically called for that purpose and that it has been announced at least one week in advance. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the elders and deacons. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and shall be someone other than the pastor. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor; the church will compensate the pastor with an agreed upon severance package. The termination shall be immediate.

2. Eldership

A. Ministry Description

An Elder is a man called by the Lord to serve as the overseer and who direct the overall affairs of the church. Elders will oversee all matters pertaining to the ministry of the Church along with the senior and all assistant pastors.

B. Selection Process

The initial Elders will be nominated by the Pastor (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5) and following such selection the nominating committee, along with any existing Elders, will determine the men who are qualified according to the standards found in the Bible (1 Timothy 3:1-7) and approach candidates as to their willingness to serve. An elder will meet the same biblical qualifications as required for the Pastor. (Titus 1:6-9) All Elder candidates are to be trained and tested before ordination. At a business meeting the new candidates will be voted on by the Church with a two-thirds majority of those members present.

Following this meeting, an ordination service can be conducted for recognition of God's call on their life

C. Term of Office

An elder will serve for an indefinite period of time until the Lord leads him to resign, become inactive (usually for at least a one year period) or he is asked to resign by the Deacons and Elders. An elder becoming active following an inactive period, must be coordinated with the senior pastor and with the current board of elders.

D. The duties of the Eldership will be as follows:

1. To oversee all matters pertaining to the spiritual ministry of the Church (1 Peter 5.2)
2. To oversee the "Outreach," "Worship," and "Discipleship" ministries" of the church (Article 3).
3. Together with the Pastor(s) and Deacons, serve as the overall church leadership.
4. The Elders will select from among themselves who will serve as the corporate officers and represent the Church in all legal matters.

3. Deacon Ministry

A. The Deacons will be selected according to the same procedure as the Elders with the exception that the congregation may submit the names of candidates to the nominating committee for their consideration.(Acts 6:3). Nominations will only be accepted once a year and voted on during the October business meeting

B. A Deacon will meet the qualifications as listed in the Holy Bible. (1 Timothy 3:8-12)

C. The term of office will not be established, but a Deacon will serve for an indefinite period of time by a mutual agreement. A deacon may become inactive as the Lord leads or by being asked to resign by the Board of Elders. A deacon becoming active following an inactive period, must be coordinated with the senior pastor and with the current board of elders.

D. The duties of the Board of Deacons will be as follows:

1. Together with the Pastor(s) and Elders, serve as the church leadership
2. To oversee the "Administrative" and "Servant" ministries of the church (Article 3).
3. Direct the Church's ministry to the poor through the use of benevolent funds. (Acts 6:1-6)
4. Oversee all Church property so that it is properly insured, repaired, and maintained in cooperation with the Building and Grounds Committee.
5. Other duties as prescribed by the Elders. (Acts 6:3)

Article 2 – Church Officers

1. Moderator

The Moderator shall be appointed by the nominating committee. In the absence of the moderator, one of the Elders shall preside.

2. Clerk

The Clerk of the Church shall keep a record of all the actions of the Church, except as otherwise herein provided. He/she shall keep a register of the names of members, with date of admission, dismissal or death, together with a record of baptisms. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church, and preserve on file all communications and written official reports.

3. Treasurer

The Church shall elect annually a church Treasurer, who shall become an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to pay out all money, receive and preserve all things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Payment of bills for local work and expenses shall be made promptly by check, and all funds received for denominational or other causes shall be remitted at least monthly by check. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church an itemized report of receipts and disbursements at least two weeks after the preceding month ends. Within thirty (30) days after the end of each year, an annual financial report shall be prepared by the Treasurer, and presented to the church for approval. The financial records kept by the Treasurer shall be considered the property of the church and shall be open to inspection at all times by any member of the church at a business meeting with prior notice.

4. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall maintain a record of all gifts to the church and supply each member with a duplicate annually and quarterly of his/her total contributions. The financial secretary shall also enter all financial transactions of the church and any ministry under the church into the automated financial system or designated system to keep an accurate account of the finances.

5. Tenure and Resignation

The Leaders in Article 2 shall be elected annually, and assume responsibility October 1, except when otherwise provided. All Officers serving the Church shall notify the Church thirty (30) days in advance when desiring to offer their resignation.

Article 3 – Church Ministries

1. Administrative Ministry

A. Building and Grounds Committee

This committee will maintain the building and grounds of the Church. And it shall recommend adaptation and remodeling as the needs arise. Also it will seek to fulfill the physical needs of the Church's ministries that are required for effective ministry.

B. Finance Committee

1. The Finance Committee is a group of members in good standing. This committee, in consultation with the leaders of each ministry within the church, shall prepare and submit to the church membership for approval an inclusive budget for the fiscal year (October through September). The budget shall indicate by items and amount needed and sought for all local expenses and purpose, as well as for all denominational or other approved non-local causes.
2. If the Church should approve a special fund for building purposes, those funds shall be handled by the regular Treasurer and deposited in a separate account at the bank. It should be understood that the gifts given for building purposes cannot be used for any other causes no matter how worthy.
3. The expenses of all organizations shall be paid from the local expense fund as heretofore provided. It shall be understood that no member may pledge the credit of the church without the approval of the Treasurer .

4. Any special gift to the church regarding building repairs or furnishings shall first be discussed with the Financial Committee prior to the committing of the funds to the designated item. The placing of donors' names on any item received shall be discouraged.
5. Special offerings may be sought by the Church or by any of its organizations only by approval of the church membership after recommendation of the Finance Committee. This does not preclude individuals making special offerings at any time the Spirit of God may move them.
6. The Finance Committee shall also be responsible for stewardship education. It will teach people that following the Lord in faithfulness involves giving financially to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts.
7. A monthly report of income and expenses must be provided to the church leadership and be available to anyone in the congregation. An audit of the financial records shall be made annually with a report provided to the congregation.

C. Nominating Committee

The nominating committee is a group of members in good standing nominated by the church leadership and voted on by a two-thirds majority during a regular business meeting. The committee works to staff both paid and volunteer positions in the church. It will serve as the personnel committee for matters of employment and termination of employees. Any offer or termination must be coordinated and approved by the church leadership. Committee members serve no more than a three year term with some members coming on in a three, two, or one year term to preserve continuity of the committee. Committee members coming off a term shall be inactive for at least one year before re-nomination.

D. Pastor Search Committee

A suitable number of members in good standing shall be chosen by the nominating committee to carry out the duties and responsibilities of securing a pastor of our like faith and practice when a vacancy exists. The final candidate must be unanimously approved by all members of the committee and the active elders. This committee will be disbanded after the six month follow-up of the new pastor is completed.

E. Ministry Council

This council is composed of a representative from every ministry and committee of the Church. Its purpose is to coordinate the activities of the Church and to plan the monthly events on the master calendar. Ministry leaders must be members of the church.

2. Outreach Ministry

A. Missions Ministry

This ministry will promote offerings and mission education for local, home, and overseas mission agencies of the Cooperative program or other mission organizations approved by the Church. It will oversee any new Church plant sponsored by this Church.

B. Evangelism Ministry

This ministry will conduct the evangelistic outreach of the church.

3. Worship Ministry

A. Worship Team

This ministry will lead the praise and worship of the Church

B. Drama Ministry

This ministry will plan and conduct drama for the Church.

C. Concert Ministry

This ministry will plan and promote concerts for the church.

4. Discipleship Ministry

A. Children's Ministry

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate, and conduct the discipleship of the children.

B. Youth Ministry

This ministry will conduct the outreach and discipleship program to the youth.

C. Women's Ministry

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate, and conduct the discipleship of the women.

D. Men's Ministry

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate and conduct the discipleship of the men.

E. Young Adult Ministry

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate, and conduct the discipleship of the young adults.

F. Small Group Ministry

This ministry will plan, promote, and evaluate the activities of the small group Bible studies.

G. Senior's Ministry

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate, and conduct the discipleship of the senior adults.

H. Counseling Ministry

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate, and conduct the counseling program.

I. Sunday School

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate, and conduct the Bible teaching program of the Church.

J. Discipleship Ministry Coordinator

A Discipleship Ministry coordinator will work with the ministry leaders and Sunday School teachers to coordinate Bible studies and small group studies. The coordinator will work with the Elders to ensure all content of the studies are consistent with the mission, vision, and values of the church.

5. Servant Ministry**A. Usher/Greeters**

This ministry is responsible for the bulletin distribution, sanctuary comfort, seating arrangements, and order in all worship services. It shall also prepare and distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper

B. Member Care

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate and conduct the activities that meet the needs of people both inside and outside of the Church.

C. Benevolence

This ministry will evaluate and distribute the Church's funds to those requesting financial help from the church.

D. Hospitality Ministry

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate, and conduct the fellowship meals of the Church. It shall also oversee the cleaning and maintenance of the church.

E. Prayer Ministry

This ministry will plan, promote, evaluate, and conduct the prayer activities of the Church.

Article 4 – Meetings**1. Regular Services**

The Church shall maintain full time services, to include but not be limited to Sunday Mornings.

2. Business Meetings

Regular business meetings should be held on the second Sunday of the even months to present the state of the church ministries and overall financial state. A meeting of the Church shall be held prior to the beginning of the fiscal year with the primary purpose of adopting the new church budget. "The Roberts Rules of Order" shall be followed for all church business meetings. The church may be called into a special meeting at any time, provided public announcement has been made one week in advance at a regular worship service of the Church. Any functioning ministry or committee may bring a report to each business meeting. A Quorum shall be those members present and voting with a simple majority of vote shall have rule unless otherwise noted.

Article 5 – Affiliation

It is understood that the Nominating Committee shall designate annually the number of messengers and alternates to attend any and all meetings through the affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article 6 – Church Operations Manual

A special committee of the church shall develop a "Church Operations Manual" to include church policies and procedures depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use there by any member of the church. The Church secretary shall maintain the manual. The Church council or a special committee shall review the manual at least annually with authority to recommend changes for the church members to consider. Any church member or church ministry may initiate suggested changes in the manual. Addition, revision, or deletion of any church policies requires:

1. The recommendation of the church officer or ministry in whose area or responsibility the policy relates.
2. Review and approval by the Elders
3. Approval by the Church membership

Procedures may be added, revised, or deleted by:

1. Recommendation of the Church officer or ministry in whose area of responsibility the procedure relates,
2. Review and approval by the Elders
3. Approval by the Church membership.

Article 7- Federal Legal Declarations

1. Said organization is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purpose, including, for such purpose, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

2. No part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this document, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

3. Upon the dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purpose or to such organization or organizations, as said shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.