



**FAIRVIEW**  
**BAPTIST TABERNACLE**

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

Voted on 08/27/2023

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

## Fairview Baptist Tabernacle Church

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## **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 help preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

### **Name:**

The body shall be known as the “Fairview Baptist Tabernacle Church, Inc.” of the Sweetwater Baptist Association located at Sweetwater, Tennessee.

### **Mission Statement:**

We are a family of believers led by God to worship, grow, and build relationships as we reach out to serve and proclaim the Truth of the Gospel to our community and world.

*The Bible:* We believe that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, complete Word of God and is the standard by which all the programs and activities of this body will be evaluated.

*Prayer:* We believe that the discipline of personal and corporate prayer is an essential ingredient of a growing relationship with God and the foundation of a healthy vibrant church body.

*Worship:* We believe that God alone should be exalted, adored, and praised, both individually in private devotion and collectively in public worship.

*Discipleship:* We believe in encouraging and assisting one another to discover spiritual gifts and to develop more Christ-like character.

*Ministry:* We believe that all members are called to love and minister to one another in obedience to our Lord’s command through willing service, faithful attendance, and financial support.

*Evangelism:* We believe we are bound by the command of our Lord to share the gospel intentionally with our community and world.

*Fellowship:* We believe the fellowship of the body is to be developed and maintained by cultivating relationships in Christ-like love through submission and accountability to one another.

### **Statement of Faith:**

The Holy Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of “The Baptist Faith and Message” as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000.

## **Relationships:**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers (members) who compose it. This Church shall be, and is always to be, a sovereign, autonomous Baptist church, self-governing on all matters by a majority of the body of members who compose it. The church recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist Churches. In no way is this to be understood that such cooperation or affiliation shall ever become one of the doctrines and/or tenets of this Church.

## **Church Covenant:**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote it's prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world, to guard our bodies and minds against influences and addictions that might harm our Christian witness. We also engage to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our behavior; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this fellowship we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

## **Ordinances**

### **1. Baptism**

Baptism is the public profession of faith of one who has received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Baptism shall be:

1. By immersion in water.

2. Administered by the pastor or whomever the pastoral staff shall authorize.
3. Administered as an act of worship during any worship service.

## **2. The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby baptized believers, partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly.

## **BYLAWS**

### **Article I. Membership**

#### **Section 1. General**

This is an autonomous and democratic Southern 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 this Church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Christian Code of Conduct - Persons applying for membership, volunteering for service, or seeking employment by the church must adhere to the Scriptural teaching of marriage being the union of a man and a woman as found in Genesis 2:24. They must also abstain from conduct unbecoming a Christian as found in I Corinthians 6: 9-10.

#### **Section 2. Candidacy**

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be received for membership, upon affirmative vote of the church, in any of the following ways:

1. By baptism signifying a confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church of like faith and order.
3. By statement of faith of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion in a church of like faith. (Baptism being defined as an outward act of obedience to previous inward change by conversion.)

#### **Section 3. Voting Rights of Members**

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business meetings, provided the member is present.

#### **Section 4. Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death, (2) dismissal to another church, and (3) exclusion by action of this church.

#### **Section 5. Discipline**

1. It shall be the basic intent of the Fairview Baptist Tabernacle Church to take every reasonable measure to assist any wayward member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Reconciliation shall be the ultimate goal of any church discipline.

2. Should some serious condition exist that would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare and testimony of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastoral staff and deacons to resolve the problem with a spirit of Christian love based upon these Bible verses (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1-2; II Thessalonians 3:6) . Furthermore, finding that the welfare and testimony of the church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may act by a three-fourths vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose. The church will then declare the individual's membership to be terminated.
3. Anyone whose membership has been terminated by the church may, upon request, be restored to membership by a vote of the church upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

## **Article II. Church Organization**

### **Section 1. Senior Pastor**

1. The Senior Pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament Church. The Senior Pastor shall lead the congregation in worship, evangelism, discipleship, pastoral care, missions, and the discernment of God's will for the congregation. Refer to Senior Pastor job description.
2. A Senior Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which a one week's public notice has been given.
3. A pastor search committee shall be recommended by the deacons and approved by majority vote of the church: The committee's recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church one name at a time. Election shall require a three-fourths affirmative vote of members present at a business meeting called for that purpose.

### **Section 2. Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees shall be deemed to be the Board of Directors (as required by law for non-profit corporations). The Board of Trustees shall consist of three persons elected by the church for three-year rotating terms; the Senior Pastor shall be a non-voting member. Beginning with the 2023-24 church year, three Trustees shall be elected by the church: one for a three-year term, one for a two-year term, one for a one-year term. The Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff shall make recommendations for a new member of the Board of Trustees as the term expires.

The Board of Trustees must select a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary from among its members annually. In the event of a vacancy on the Board due to death, resignation, ineligibility, or removal of a Trustee, the church shall elect a replacement to serve the remainder of that individual's term.



The responsibilities of the Board shall be as follows:

1. The Board shall only oversee the secular affairs of the Church and shall not oversee nor supervise the Senior Pastor or staff.
2. The Board shall have supervision over and maintain any deeds, bonds, insurance policies, and important papers of the Church with any two Trustees signatures that should be required to complete the above listed transactions. The Board, upon recommendation from the staff and the finance committee, shall have authority to enter into agreements for real property contingent on full church approval prior to closing. Otherwise, the Board shall have no authority or privileges to mortgage, lease, etc. any property of the Church, or borrow money, also without prior approval of the Members during a properly defined business meeting.
3. The Board is further authorized to receive and disburse monies in accordance with terms of wills, bequests, and special instruments wherein the Church is named beneficiary.
4. The Board shall see to the filing of annual reports to the Secretary of State and other filings and reports which may be required of the corporation. The Board of Trustees shall monitor compliance with the Charter, Constitution, Bylaws, and laws affecting the Church, and make recommendations to the Members as needed concerning such matters.
5. Any Trustee with a real or potential conflict of interest (being a party to, having knowledge of, and/or a material financial interest in a transaction) has the duty to disclose that conflict to the Board.

### **Section 3. Deacons**

1. In accordance with the teaching and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to support and serve with the Senior Pastor and assist Pastoral Staff in performing pastoral ministries: worship, evangelism, discipleship, pastoral care, missions, and the discernment of God's will for the congregation.
2. The deacon body will elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary annually.
3. The Deacon Candidate Selection Committee, composed of its Deacon Officers and Senior Pastor, will receive recommendations from deacons and church members. They will interview potential candidates who have expressed a willingness to serve, demonstrated biblical qualifications for deaconship, and have been a member of Fairview Baptist Tabernacle Church for at least one year. (I Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-7)

4. The recommended candidate(s) will be presented to the church for secret ballot and must receive three-fourths of all votes cast in the affirmative to be set apart as a deacon.
  - a. The church will vote during a special called business meeting on a Sunday morning.
  - b. The Deacon Candidate Selection Committee chairman shall appoint (including at least one lay person) a tally committee to tally the votes.
  - c. The Senior Pastor or interim shall possess the sole right to convene an Ordination Council to examine the qualifications of a candidate and advise the Church as to the propriety of ordination. The final action to ordain a man to the deacon ministry shall rest with the Church upon recommendation of the Ordination Council.

#### **Section 4. Moderator**

1. The Moderator at the Church business meeting shall be the Senior Pastor or his designee. The moderator shall use “Robert’s Rules of Order” for the purpose of conducting the meeting. In the absence of the Senior Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons or his designee shall act as the moderator. The Moderator shall bring matters before the business meeting as he determines at his discretion to be appropriate. i.e.
  - a. A slate of proposed members of the Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Mission Committee, and for any standing Committee as may be necessary.
  - b. An annual church budget or any proposed change to the Church’s current budget.
  - c. Any proposed change to the Church Charter, Constitution, and Bylaws.
  - d. Any proposed action regarding the calling of a Senior Pastor, or any other Church Pastoral Staff member.
  - e. Presiding at the annual Business Meeting for the new fiscal year, which is September 1 through August 31.
  - f. Membership admissions and terminations.
  - g. Election of messengers to denominational conventions appointed by the Senior Pastor.
  - h. The purchase, sale, or lease of any real property.

## **Section 5. Clerk**

1. The church shall elect annually a clerk who is responsible for recording minutes of all church business meetings and keeping records of all church business with the help of the Office Assistant to the Senior Pastor.
  - a. Records of memberships (dates of admission, dismissal, or death).
  - b. Record of Baptisms.
  - c. Issuing letters of dismissal voted by church.
  - d. Give notice of Special called business meetings.
  - e. Filing all records in the church office.

## **Section 6. Treasurer**

1. The church shall elect annually a church treasurer who has the responsibility of managing the finances of the church in conjunction with the staff member designated for financial matters. The Treasurer shall not be a paid staff member.
  - a. The duty of the staff member is to receive, preserve, and pay out upon receipts of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the church.
  - b. It is the duty of the staff member to keep an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements with two signatures being required.
  - c. It is the duty of the staff member to give a financial report to the church at the end of each month.
  - d. It is the duty of the Treasurer to give an annual account (August 31) to the church for approval. The records are given to the Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records.
  - e. The Treasurer is to oversee that a complete external review of all finances of the church be completed on an annual basis.

## **Section 7. Committees**

### **1. Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, who will serve as Chairman, and four other members to be appointed by the Pastoral Staff. One member will be appointed annually to serve a four-year term. The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval a yearly budget, indicating by items the amounts needed for church

ministries and mission endeavors. The Personnel Committee shall submit a budget to the Finance Committee for benefit and pay packages for approval. This committee shall have oversight of handling of funds of the church and make recommendations to the treasurer and administrative assistant concerning bill payments. This committee shall be responsible to ensure the integrity of all financial processes. The Pastoral Staff will make recommendations for any new committee members, who will then be elected by the church.

## **2. Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee shall consist of five (5) members. Members of this committee shall serve a five-year rotating term, and a chairman of the committee shall be elected at the beginning of the new church year. The Pastoral Staff will make recommendations for new committee members, who will then be voted by the church. The duties of this committee are as follows:

- a. The committee shall assist the Senior Pastor and/or his designee in determining the needs of additional staffing.
- b. The committee shall assist the Senior Pastor with benefit and compensation levels of paid personnel, based on job performance evaluations performed by supervisory staff.
- c. The committee shall assist the Senior Pastor with recruiting, interviews, and any recommendations for prospective church staff employees. The pastoral staff may hire support staff with assistance and approval of the personnel committee. All prospective pastoral staff shall be voted on and approved by the church at least a three-fourths vote at a meeting called for that purpose with one week's notice given.
- d. The committee shall assist the Senior Pastor with job descriptions.
- e. The committee is responsible for the annual job performance evaluation of the Senior Pastor.

## **3. Mission Committee**

The Mission Committee shall coordinate the mission projects, budgets, fundraising, and offering of both local and global missions alongside the Pastoral Staff. This committee of no fewer than six members shall be nominated by the Pastoral Staff and elected by the church. The committee shall serve on a three-year rotating term, and a chairman of the committee will be elected at the beginning of the new church year. The duties of this committee are as follows:

- a. Coordinate the mission efforts of the church including communication, promotion, and recruitment of volunteers for specific projects.
- b. Suggest budgets, campaigns, donations, and offering goals to the church concerning missions.

- c. Evaluate requests and make recommendations to the church for approval concerning members, outside ministries, and mission organizations who want to partner with or receive support.
- d. Suggest to the church both local and global areas of need, as well as opportunities for growth and development in missions.

#### **4. Other Committees**

All current active committees shall remain as needed, and other committees may be appointed by the Senior Pastor or, in his absence, the Pastoral Staff.

### **Article III. Church Meetings**

#### **Section 1. Worship Services**

The church shall regularly meet each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening unless services are cancelled at the discretion of pastoral staff. These services are to be for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. The meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church, and for all people, and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor and elected staff.

#### **Section 2. Special Services**

Revival services and other church meetings which will be essential in the promotion of church objectives shall be placed on the church calendar.

#### **Section 3. Annual Business Meetings**

An annual business meeting will be held during the month of August to present the nomination for committees and approval of the budget for the new church year. At the beginning of each month, a budget statement and report of committee activity will be produced and provided to all members who desire one. Members are asked to contact committee members or church staff with any questions or concerns.

#### **Section 4. Special Business Meetings**

A special called business meeting may be held to consider matters of significant nature. A one-week notice (announced three times) of the subject, date, time, and location must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such a notice impractical.

#### **Section 5. Quorum**

Those eligible church members who attend the business meeting shall constitute a quorum, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

## **Article IV. Church Finances**

### **Section 1. Tithes and Offerings**

The Church receives its financial support from regular, proportionate gifts (tithes and offerings) of the membership.

All funds for any and all purposes shall be properly recorded. A system of accounting that meets the requirements of the IRS and will adequately and securely provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

### **Section 2. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church shall run concurrently with the church year which begins September 1 and ends on August 31.

## **Article V. Amendments**

The Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at any church business meeting by three-fourths vote of those members present after giving a one-week notice announced three times. The notice shall state that the purpose, or one of the purposes, of the meeting is to consider the proposed amendment and shall contain or be accompanied by a copy or summary of the amendments.

A copy of the Constitution and Bylaws shall, at all times, be kept by the Church administrative offices along with amendments to or revisions thereof. Up-to-date copies shall also be maintained in the Church offices and made available to any church member upon request.