

# **Constitution of Tabernacle Baptist Church**

## **Preamble**

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

## **Article I**

### **Name, Affiliations and Purpose**

Section 1. The name of this body shall be “Tabernacle Baptist Church of Raleigh.”

Section 2. This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Raleigh Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Section 3. The purpose of this organization shall be to worship God according to the teaching of the Old and New Testaments, to sustain the ordinances, doctrines and ethics as set forth in the New Testament for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to preach and to propagate among all people the Gospel of the Revelation of God through Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

## **Article II**

### **Membership**

Section 1. Constituency. Membership in the church shall be granted only to persons who give satisfactory evidence of their repentance toward God, of their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Savior, and of having been or, if not physically or mentally impaired, willing to be immersed in water in accord with scriptural example.

Section 2. Admission of Members. Those applying for membership shall be received by vote of the congregation at the regular services. In the admission of members, it is desirable that the vote shall be unanimous, and if in any instance, objection is made the case shall be referred without discussion to the pastor and deacons for investigation and report. Methods of admission shall be as follows:

(A) Baptism. Upon satisfactory evidence of repentance toward God and a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, an applicant may be received as a candidate for baptism, after the administration of which the applicant shall automatically enjoy the full fellowship of the church; provided that a person with a physical or mental impairment which precludes baptism may be received into the full fellowship of the church upon profession of faith and the recommendation of the pastor that baptism be waived due to the impairment.

(B) Letter. A member of another church of like faith and order may be received by letter of transfer from such church. When a member is received upon promise of a letter and such letter cannot be secured within ninety days, the clerk shall automatically record such member as "received on Statement of Experience."

(C) Statement of Experience. A person may be received upon statement of his or her Christian experience and baptism by immersion.

(D) Restoration. Any former member whose membership has been terminated on account of some offense, upon satisfactory evidence of his or her repentance and reformation, may be restored to full fellowship by vote of the church. Any person who has been placed on the inactive membership roll, by a vote of the church, because of continued absence or lack of proper address or unknown location may, upon satisfactory explanation, be restored to full fellowship by a vote of the church.

Section 3. Duties of Members. The duties of the members of this church shall be such as are expressed in the church covenant, attached as part of this constitution. In addition, persons whose status is changed by marriage, by military service or by change of address shall be under obligation to notify the church office in writing of the previous and the new status.

Section 4. Termination of Membership.

(A) Letter. If a member desires to unite with another Baptist Church, the member shall ask for his or her letter or shall present himself or herself to that church; and upon receipt of the request of the clerk of that church a letter of transfer and recommendation shall be granted and sent to the church with which the member desires to unite.

(B) Removal from Rolls. When a member unites with some other church, the church, upon request of the member or upon receipt of properly authenticated information thereabout, shall terminate his or her membership, authorize the clerk to remove the name of the member from the roll and notify the member of such action. The name of a member may also be removed from the roll by vote of the

church due to inactivity, lack of proper address or unknown location of the member; provided a record is maintained of their membership.

Section 5. Discipline of Members. All matters of discipline shall be referred to the deacon body for investigation and recommendation, and no disciplinary action shall be taken until referred to and reported on by the deacons. In dealing with all such cases, the deacons and the church shall be guided by New Testament principles directed toward correction and restoration to fellowship. If all efforts to effect correction have failed, the membership of the offending person may be terminated upon recommendation of the deacon body and vote of the church.

Section 6. Watchcare. A member of another church who is residing in the area temporarily and who desires to participate in the life of this church while retaining original church membership may request affiliation with this church under watchcare. Admission to watchcare status shall be affirmed by vote of the congregation. A person received under watchcare is encouraged to participate in the full life and fellowship of the church, including attendance and participation in church conference, but is not eligible to vote or hold any position requiring church membership. Watchcare may be terminated by a written request from the person received under watchcare, or upon notification of that person's removal from this area.

### **Article III**

#### **Church Meetings**

Section 1. Worship Services. The church shall meet regularly for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. These meetings shall be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor. Under unusual circumstances a service may be canceled by the pastor and chairperson of the deacon body.

Section 2. Special Services. Revival services and any other church meetings which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be placed on the church calendar.

Section 3. Business Meetings.

(A) Regular Meetings.

(1) Regular meetings for the transaction of business shall be held following the last morning service on the fourth Sunday of the month.

2) The church in conference will decide the business meeting schedule, based on the recommendation of the Church Council, with a minimum of six regular business meetings per year.

(3) The pastor and chairperson of the deacon body may change or cancel such meeting by giving notice on the preceding Sunday.

(B) Fiscal Year. The fiscal year shall close on December 31st of each year, and at the first business meeting in January, an annual report shall be tendered by the Budget and Finance Committee covering the preceding year. Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year a budget shall be presented to the church for adoption as prescribed in the Committee Guidebook.

(C) Special Meeting. When necessary, special business meetings may be called by the pastor, moderator or chairperson of the deacon body. In addition, a special meeting shall be called by the pastor, moderator or chairperson of the deacon body when requested to do so in writing signed by twelve adult members. Notice of a special meeting shall be given during all services on the Sunday preceding such special meeting. The notice shall include the subject, date, time and place of the meeting.

(D) Presiding Officer. A moderator elected annually by the church shall preside over all business meetings. In the absence of the elected moderator the chairperson of the deacon body shall preside. Should neither the moderator nor the chairperson of the deacon body be present, the members present for the business meeting may elect a moderator to serve for that meeting only.

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

(F) Parliamentary Procedure. In business meetings, the rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the church in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and any special rules of order the church may adopt.

## **Article IV**

### **Officers**

Section 1. Names of Officers. For its scriptural officers, the church shall have a pastor and deacon body. In addition to these, it shall have at least three trustees, a moderator, a clerk and a treasurer. It may have such staff ministers as may please the church at a given time.

Section 2. Qualifications. All officers shall be members of the church. It shall be the responsibility of the church to elect qualified people for specific duties through the democratic process.

Section 3. Pastor.

(A) Qualifications. The pastor shall be an ordained Baptist minister with an earned college and seminary or divinity school degree and shall have Christian character consistent with the qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7.

(B) Duties. To give himself to the ministry of the Word and spiritual leadership of the church. Detailed responsibilities shall be set out in “Personnel Practices and Responsibilities.”

(C) Election. The pastor shall be called only upon the recommendation of a Pastor Search Committee which has been appointed by the deacon body from names of church members submitted to them after confirming the nominee's willingness to serve. This committee shall consist of seven members, at least three of whom shall be members of the deacon body and at least three of whom shall be women. The deacon body shall appoint the chairperson of the committee. When this committee has made its choice, the time of the church business meeting at which a call will be considered shall be announced in all services on the two Sundays and published in the two issues of the Tabernacle Record preceding such business meeting. Only one nominee shall be considered at a time, and no nominations shall be made from the floor. To be called as pastor, the person nominated by the committee must receive at least 90 percent of the votes cast, and it is to be desired that the vote be unanimous. The election shall be by secret ballot if called for by any one member present. Should the committee's report fail to receive the necessary 90 percent vote, the moderator shall declare the nominee not elected, and shall refer the matter back to the committee for further choice, without debate.

(D) Termination of Pastorate. The pastor shall be called for an indefinite term. Should the pastor or the church desire to terminate the pastoral relationship, the party desiring such shall give the other written notice of at least thirty days.

(E) Church Council. The church council shall be composed of the Pastor as Chairperson and, at least, the following leaders: the ministerial staff, Moderator, Chairperson of the deacon body, Sunday School Director, Discipleship Training Director, Baptist Men’s Director, WMU Director, and Chairperson of the Media Committee. The Council shall program and coordinate the activities of the various organizations of the church so as to effect the most appropriate use of available time and space and to avoid conflicts in the scheduling of activities. The Council shall make assignment of equipment and building space for normal use, and shall process requests for special use of building facilities. The Council shall submit annually a schedule of its meetings for approval by the church in conference, with a minimum of nine meetings per year. The Council may change or cancel any of its meetings by announcement in the church service no later than the Sunday on which the meeting is scheduled.

Section 4. Staff Ministers. Additional staff ministers as desired by the church may be added. The ministerial staff shall be elected by the church in conference at a regular or properly called special business meeting of the church upon joint recommendation of the pastor, personnel committee and the deacon body, provided that the time of the church business meeting at which a call will be considered shall be announced in all services on the two Sundays and published in the two issues of the Tabernacle Record preceding such business meeting. To be called as a staff minister, the person nominated must receive at least 75 percent of the votes cast. Only one nominee for each position shall be considered at a time, and no nominations shall be made from the floor. Should either party desire to terminate this relationship, the party desiring such change shall give the other written notice of at least 30 days. The duties and responsibilities of each individual position will be governed by the "Personnel Practices and Responsibilities." At any time the church is without a Pastor or a Pastor in the interim the Associate Pastor shall preside over the Church Council and exercise the supervisory duties of the Pastor. Should there be no Associate Pastor the member of the ministerial staff who is senior in years of service on the ministerial staff of the church shall preside over the Church Council and exercise the supervisory duties of the Pastor.

Section 5. Deacons. The church may have the number of active deacons necessary to adequately serve the membership. The scriptural qualifications for deacons as outlined in Acts 6 and I Timothy 3 shall be used by the church as a guide in selecting deacons. The deacons shall be elected by the church by secret ballot and ordained unless they have been previously ordained by a church of like faith and order. The deacons shall have regular meetings for planning and reviewing matters that relate to the spiritual welfare of the church. The rotation system of deacons shall be adopted by this body and after serving a term of three years, no deacons shall be eligible for reelection until the lapse of at least one year.

Section 6. Deacons Emeritus. The church may grant deacon emeritus status to any deacon who has become sixty-five (65) years of age, or who has suffered infirmities.

Section 7. Trustees. The church shall have at least three trustees. The trustees shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected at the specified time to serve in a three year rotation, with one-third of them rotating off each year. The duties shall be those as provided by law and the action of the church.

Section 8. Other Officers. Names of all other officers shall be submitted by the Nominating Committee, after each proposed officer has been contacted and committed, at the time designated in the Committee Guidebook. Only members of the church will be eligible to hold office.

## **Article V. Program Organizations**

Section 1. General. All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being members of the church, elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

Section 2. Sunday School. There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director for the study of God's Word. The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the biblical revelation; to reach persons for Christ and church membership; to perform the functions of the church within its constituency; to provide and to interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 3. Discipleship Training. There shall be a discipleship training organization conducted under the direction of the Discipleship Training Director. The tasks of Discipleship Training shall be to orient new church members; to train church members to perform the functions of the church; to train church leaders; to teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, and church polity and organization; to provide and to interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 4. Woman's Missionary Union. There shall be a Woman's Missionary Union with such officers and organization as needed. This program shall be directed by the WMU Director. The tasks of the Woman's Missionary Union shall be to teach missions to youth and adults; to engage in mission action; to support world missions through praying and giving; to provide and to interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 5. Baptist Men. There shall be a Baptist Men's organization with such officers and organization as needed. This program shall be directed by the Baptist Men's Director. The purpose of Baptist Men is to involve church members (especially men and boys) in missions; specifically, to enable and equip them to be personally involved in mission activities, to encourage them to identify and develop their personal ministries, to educate them concerning mission opportunities, to teach them the importance of praying for and giving to missions, and to lead them to develop in all areas of their lives in order to become mature, active, and involved Christians.

Section 6. Church Music. There shall be a Church Music program under the direction of the Minister of Music. Such officers and/or organizations shall be included as needed. The music tasks shall be to teach music; to train persons to lead, to sing, and to play music; to provide music in the church and community; to

provide and to interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

## **Article VI**

### **Standing Committees**

Section 1. Number and Size of Committees. The church shall elect such standing committees as may be deemed necessary to carry on the various phases of the program of the church efficiently and effectively. In any event, the church shall at all times have the following standing committees: Nominating Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, Building and Grounds Committee, and Personnel Committee. All standing committees shall be composed of a number divisible by three and shall operate on the rotation system with one-third of the membership of the committee retiring each year, unless a lesser time of rotation is specified for a given committee. Provided, however, that on those committees where persons serve by virtue of positions they hold, such persons shall serve on such committees so long as they hold the specified position. No member of a standing committee shall be eligible for reelection to that committee until one year has elapsed following a full term on such committee. Nevertheless, when a member of a standing committee has served a term and then, by virtue of election to some position in the church whereby he or she automatically becomes a member of that same committee, he or she will continue to serve on that committee.

Section 2. Relation of Church Officers, Program Organizations and Committees to the Deacon Body and Church Conference. The relation which shall apply, normally, among the church officers, program organizations, standing committees, and the deacon body and the church conference shall be as follows: the church officers, program organizations and standing committees shall present their recommendations to the deacon body which after due consideration shall indicate whether or not they endorse the recommendation and return it to the originator. The originator is then free to present the recommendation to the church conference. The endorsement or lack of endorsement by the deacon body shall be reported to the church conference when any recommendation is presented. This procedure permits the deacon body to be informed of matters of business and gives added strength to the recommendations made to the church conference. In an emergency, so judged by the pastor, the chairman of the deacon body and the chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee, recommendations may be made directly to the church conference.

Section 3. Election of Committees. All committee members shall be members of the church. The Nominating Committee shall nominate to the church by the November business meeting persons to serve for the succeeding year on the standing committees, except the Nominating Committee. The church will then elect the personnel of the several committees. The new members for the Nominating



Committee will be nominated by the deacon body at the November business meeting and elected at such meeting. In nominating persons to serve on the standing committees, the Nominating Committee (or the deacon body in connection with the Nominating Committee) shall nominate the chairperson of such committee who will then be elected by the church in the same manner as the committee members.

## **Article VII**

### **General and Miscellaneous Provisions**

Section 1. Church Covenant. The members of the church shall be provided with copies of the Church Covenant.

Section 2. Consideration of New Matters. It shall be the policy of the church to refer New Considerations, as for example, expenditures exceeding limits set under the policies of the Budget and Finance Committee, changes in the adopted modified church budget, changes in the appearance of the church property, changes in the personnel of the church staff, or other like major considerations, to the appropriate standing committee for prayerful and careful study and recommendation. The church will then consider the recommendation of the committee studying the matter before action is taken.

Section 3. Secular Meetings. No meetings of secular nature shall be held in the church buildings, except with approval of the deacon body.

Section 4. System of Finance. The system of finance used by the church shall be known as the “modified budget” system, whereby one weekly offering is received from the people and applied toward the modified budget for the defraying of all expenses and the provision of needs in all departments of the church life and program, local and worldwide, as adopted by the church conference. The Budget and Finance committee shall recommend policies to be adopted by the church governing the expenditure of funds under the modified budget. The offerings may be brought during the Sunday School hour or during worship services, or they may be made by bank draft, mailed or personally delivered to the church office. No Sunday School class or department or any other organization shall withhold any sum whatsoever from the offering thus brought to the Lord and His church through that organization. Any church organization may receive from its members funds on a voluntary over and above budget offering basis for the cost of social functions or for the cost of cards or flowers to sick members of the group or local mission ministry approved by the group, if the current church budget does not make provisions for the defraying of such expenses.

Section 5. Designated Gifts. Designated gifts shall be faithfully forwarded to the agency designated, or placed in the fund specified. Such designations may be changed only upon consent of the donor, or in the case of memorial gifts, the consent of the family survivors.

Section 6. Special Offerings and Campaigns for Funds. The deacon body may under unusual circumstances, authorize a freewill offering for special purposes. No campaign for funds shall be promoted within the church, without authority of the church in conference.

Section 7. Paid Entertainment, Sales, etc. No entertainment for which an admission fee is charged shall be allowed in the church building. Neither the church nor any organization thereof shall conduct any sale, or entertainment for the purpose of raising money without approval of the deacon body and the church in conference.

Section 8. License to Preach. Any member of the church who, in the judgment of the church, gives evidence that he or she is called of God to the work of the ministry may be given license to preach the Gospel, upon recommendation of the pastor and the deacon body, provided three-fourths of the members present at any church business meeting agree thereto.

Section 9. Ministerial Ordination. When the church desires to ordain a member to the full Gospel ministry, the pastor and deacon body shall either call an examining council of ordained Baptist ministers and ordained deacons in accord with accepted Baptist procedure or they shall request the Committee on Ordination of the Raleigh Baptist Association to examine the candidate with respect to his or her Christian experience, his or her call to the ministry, and his or her view of Bible doctrine. When this council or this committee recommends the candidate's ordination, and the church has accepted and approved such recommendation, he or she shall be publicly set apart and ordained with prayer and laying on of hands.

Section 10. Nomination from the floor. Before engaging in any election of deacons, officers or committee members by the church, ample opportunity shall be given any member of the church to make nominations from the floor of candidates to be voted upon in such elections; provided that those making nominations from the floor be required to obtain the consent and commitment of the person to be nominated and to give the same advance notice to the church as is required of the nominating committee.

Section 11. Committee Members by Virtue of Office. In every instance where a person is a member of any committee or body because of the position or office held by such person, or is referred to as an ex-officio member of any committee or body, such person shall have full membership on such committee or body with full rights

and privileges to participate in the discussion and action of such groups , but shall not be eligible to be elected chairperson of the committee. No such person, however, shall serve on the same committee as a result of election to said committee and by virtue of position or office held. If a person is an elected member of a committee and further elected or appointed to a position which thereby entitles him or her to membership on that committee he or she shall at once resign from his or her elected position on the committee and request the nominating committee to recommend a replacement.

#### Section 12. Ownership of Property.

(A) Title to all real and personal property acquired by the church shall be held by the church as a corporation.

(B) Real property shall not be purchased, disposed of or encumbered in any manner unless the recommendation receives at least 75% of the votes cast in a regular or special business meeting of the church. A 75% approval vote is not required for refinancing the balance of existing loans, so long as the refinancing does not increase the amount of the encumbrance on the real property.

### **Article VIII. Adoption and Amendment of this Constitution**

Section 1. This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present at the business meeting at which vote is taken for adoption shall vote in favor of adoption of same. This vote on adoption shall be taken only after these rules have lain on the table for at least thirty days after formal presentation to the church.

Section 2. Any of the rules in this constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed upon receipt of two-thirds of the votes cast at any regular business meeting of the church; provided, however, that notice and proposal of such amendment, alteration or repeal must be given in writing at the preceding regular business meeting of the church, announced in a Sunday morning service and published in the Tabernacle Record at least once prior to such business meeting; and provided further that any article herein may be temporarily suspended to meet an emergency of extreme nature by a unanimous vote of the conference.

Section 3. The adoption of this constitution shall effect a repeal of all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith.

Section 4. A copy of this constitution and all amendments shall be kept by the Clerk among his records. The Clerk shall also be responsible for placing in the church office a copy of this constitution into which all amendments have been integrated which shall be available to church members during all times when the church office is open. The Clerk shall also be responsible for maintaining copies of all policies adopted by the church in the same manner as the church constitution.

Section 5. This constitution adopted on January 27, 1993, and amended November 19, 2003, June 30, 2004, September 22, 2004, November 30, 2005, and September 28, 2014 supersedes and replaces the constitution adopted about 1951 and amended March 1960, October 1977, March 1978, and September 1980. A copy shall be maintained as a permanent part of the historical records of Tabernacle Baptist Church.

## Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and 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 this congregation enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We agree, therefore, with the help of the Holy Spirit:

- to walk together in Christian love;
- to strive for the growth of this church in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ;
- to promote its spiritual well being and health
- to faithfully attend its worship services, participate in its ordinances and maintain its principles;
- to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministries and expenses of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel throughout the world.

We also agree:

- to maintain as far as possible family and personal devotions;
- to bring up our children in the training and instruction of the Lord;
- to seek the salvation of our family and friends;
- to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age;
- to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further agree:

- to watch over one another in Christian love;
- to remember each other in prayer;
- to aid each other in sickness and misfortune;
- to cultivate Christian compassion and courtesy
- to be slow to take offense, always eager to seek the reconciliation Christ commands, and to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

We moreover agree: that when we move from this area, we will join as soon as possible some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.