

CONSTITUTION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHAWMUT
VALLEY, ALABAMA

(September 26, 2017)

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 consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist denomination, 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.

I. NAME

This organization shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Shawmut, Valley, Alabama.

II. OBJECT

This church, believing in the Bible as the inspired Word of God and as the authority for faith and practice, and acknowledging its adherence to the teachings of Jesus Christ, declares its purpose:

- (1) To proclaim earnestly the Gospel message and urge its personal acceptance.
- (2) To co-operate heartily by prayer, gift, and service, in the effort to establish the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world.
- (3) To maintain regular services for worship and fellowship.
- (4) To promote systematic Bible study and training for Christian service.
- (5) To urge our members and others to live daily according to the principles that are set forth in the Scriptures.

III. DOCTRINAL STATEMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT

SECTION I - DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

First Baptist Church of Shawmut is the sole interpreter of Holy Scripture

A. The Scripture.

We believe that all Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is verbally inspired by God, and inerrant in the original writings; and that it is of supreme and final authority in faith and life (II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:21). The Scripture is given to man that he might know God, and that he might know God's will for man.

B. The Godhead.

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three Persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--and these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of the same confidence and obedience (Matthew 28:18,19; II Corinthians 13:14).

C. The Christ.

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (John 3:16). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:30-35). He lived a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15). He died on the cross as the substitute for man for the sin penalty (Romans 5:8). He arose from the dead (John 20:20). He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9). He is presently ministering for the believer as intercessor (Hebrews 7:25). He will return personally and visibly, first to receive the believer to Himself (I Thessalonians 4:16,17), and then to establish His kingdom on earth (Matthew 25:31,32).

D. Man Created and Fallen.

We believe that man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). Man fell because of sin, and as a consequence, lost his spiritual life (Genesis 3). Man, therefore, in his natural state, is condemned to an eternal death (Romans 6:23).

E. Salvation.

We believe that man may have salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin through personal trust in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for man's sin (I Peter 2:24). Through faith in Jesus Christ, man is born again (John 3:3), possesses a new nature (II Corinthians 5:17) and has the promise of eternal life (Romans 6:23). Salvation cannot come through works but only through the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8,9).

F. The Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity (Matthew 28:19). He is active in the regeneration of the believer (Titus 3:5). He indwells every believer (Romans 8:9). He is the source of power whereby the believer may live a Godly life (Galatians 5:16). His present ministry is, in part, to convince the world of the reality of sin, of righteousness through Christ, and of the judgment to come (John 16:7-11).

G. Eternal Security and Assurance of the Believer.

We believe that those who have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation have the promise of eternal life as a present possession (John 5:24), and therefore, they are guaranteed eternal life (Ephesians 4:30). It is the privilege of the believer to have a present and continuing assurance that he possesses salvation (I John 5:13).

H. Satan and Sin.

We believe that Satan is a created being of God, and that he fell because of sin to his present state (Isaiah 14:12-17). He is the author of sin (Genesis 3:1-19). He has been judged through the death of Christ on the cross (John 12:31). He will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). Sin is unrighteousness in the sight of God (I John 5:17).

I. The Church.

We believe that all who are born again through faith in Christ are members of the Church, which is the body and bride of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-27). The Church has been given the commission to reach the world for Christ (Matthew 28:19,20). The local church is an organized body of believers in one locality (Revelation 2). The ordinances of the Church are water baptism (Matthew 28:19), and the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19,20; I Corinthians 11).

J. The Blessed Hope and the Second Coming of Christ.

We believe that Christ has gone to prepare a place for the believers, and that He will come again to receive them (John 14:2,3). The Blessed Hope of the believer is the rapture, when Christ returns to call from the grave and from this life those who have put their faith in Him (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). The rapture will be followed by the tribulation years (Matthew 24:21-27; Revelation 6:1-19:21). At the close of the tribulation period, Christ will return to this earth in His physical body (Acts 1:11; Revelation 19). He shall judge the nations (Matthew 25:31-42). He shall reign upon the earth for one thousand years (Revelation 20:4). He shall finally judge all those who have rejected God's salvation through faith (Revelation 20:11-15).

K. The Eternal Estate.

We believe that at death the souls of those who have trusted in Christ for salvation pass immediately into the presence of Christ (Philippians 1:23). Those who have died will rise again from the graves, and those who are living at the time of the rapture will with them be translated into an immortal state (I Corinthians 15:51-53), and they shall be forever with Christ (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Eternal life in heaven awaits all believers (Revelation 21,22). Eternal punishment in the lake of fire is for all who have rejected Christ (Revelation 20:14,15).

L. The Christian Walk.

We believe that the Christian is challenged in the Word of God to live a life separated from the sin of the world (Romans 6:1,2; I Corinthians 6:18,19; II Corinthians 6:17,18), which can only be accomplished by his living in dependence upon the Holy Spirit so as to reveal the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-23). The life of the believer should be fruitful in spiritual service and lived for the glory of God (John 15:1-8).

M. Marriage and Sexuality.

We believe that God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man and a woman, and therefore First Baptist Church of Shawmut will only recognize marriage as that which is between one biological man and one biological woman. (Genesis 2: 21-23; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19: 4-6)

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, 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, angels, 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 its 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, 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 kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; and 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 each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and 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 place, 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.

IV. CHARACTER

Section 1---Policy

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it, and is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and co-operation which are common among churches of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Section 2---Doctrine

This Church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention as indicated in the Doctrinal Statement herewith.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall be composed of individuals who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Personal Savior and have followed Him into baptism. Members may be received into our church in the following ways:

- (1) Admission by immersion, as a profession of faith.
- (2) By letter from other Baptist Churches.
- (3) By statement.

Section 1 - Duties

Members are expected first of all, to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life; and also to attend habitually the services of this church, to give regularly for its support and its causes and to share in its organized work.

Section 2 - Voting on Members

All action regarding the receiving and dismissing of members shall be voted on by the church.

Section 3 - Dismissal of Members

A member will be granted a letter of dismissal to unite with another Baptist Church of like faith and order upon request by the church. The clerk shall not be authorized to grant letters unless the request comes from the church where the member or members are applying for membership. In the event any member shall join a church of another faith and order, their name shall be removed from our roll.

Section 4 - Termination of Membership and Discipline of Members will be outlined in the Church Operations Manual.

ARTICLE II - ORGANIZATION

Section 1 - Church Council

The Church Council shall consist of: All Ministerial Staff, other vocational staff members as needed, Chairman of Deacons, Clerk, Treasurer, Trustees, Sunday School Director, Discipleship Director, W.M U. Director, Baptist Men's Director, the Director of the Department of Youth, and as many other workers as our church deems necessary.

Section 2 - Pastor

A 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 at least one week's public notice shall be given. A pulpit committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendation will constitute a nomination, though any member has the privilege of making other nominations. The committee will consist of five (5) members, with two additional members as alternates. No two members shall be from the same family.* The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, an affirmative vote of two thirds of those present being necessary to a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated. A thirty (30) day notice shall be given unless a shorter notice is acceptable to both the church and pastor.

The pastor shall have in charge the spiritual welfare and oversight of the church. He shall be non-voting member of all committees and boards. His salary and privileges shall be fixed by the church and shall be changed as often as the church deems necessary. The pastor shall serve as moderator of the church. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of the deacons, or the vice-chairman, shall preside or designate someone to preside. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of deacons and the vice-chairman, the church clerk shall call the church to order and a moderator pro-tem shall be elected.

Section 3 - Deacons

The deacons shall be a minimum of 9 in number. They shall be elected to serve a term of three years, with terms ending on different years, so that one-third of the number will be rotated off each year. The number of deacons may be increased or decreased by vote of the church at any time deemed necessary. In the case of death, or removal, resignation or inability to serve, the church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term.

The deacons shall arrange for regular meetings and such committees as are necessary to the discharge of their duties. They shall elect annually their own officers. The pastor, or the chairman of the deacons, may call the deacons into special session whenever need for such arises.

Men who have never before served as a Deacon of First Baptist Church of Shawmut shall be elected to serve in their first year as a Deacon Intern. At the end of one year of service, their call and suitability for continuing service as a Deacon will be prayerfully considered in a mutual, open discussion between the Intern and his fellow Deacons.

If both the Intern and Deacon are mutually agreed that the ministry of Deacon matches the heart and calling of the Intern and if the Intern wishes to continue in lifetime service as a Deacon of First Baptist Church of Shawmut, then the Internship will be complete.

If the Intern and Deacons cannot reach a mutual agreed upon decision regarding the candidates suitability in lifetime service as a Deacon, the matter will be referred to the church for guidance.

The first year of service of a Deacon Intern is calculated in their three year term of service.

Section 4 - Clerk

The clerk shall keep an accurate record of all church business which takes place at regular or called business meetings. Also, he or she shall keep an up-to-date record of the church membership, with date and manner of member's admission and/or dismissal. In church business meetings the clerk shall make a report of all business that has been transacted since the last business meeting. The clerk shall be presented by the nominating committee, and elected by the vote of the church annually.

*Immediate Family (this would prevent husband and wife serving together on this committee).

Section 5 - Treasurer

The Church Treasurer will be a volunteer member of the church who is trained in all financial processes of the church and is a competent substitute/assistant to the church Financial Secretary in matters regarding church finances (executes post-Sunday morning offering procedures, the making of bank deposits, recording of gifts, preparing regular financial reports, paying bills, payroll, use of Powerchurch Plus, etc.). The Treasurer shall be presented by the Nominating

Committee to the church for approval and may serve a term of five years. The Church Treasurer may be reelected for subsequent terms.

The church, at its discretion, shall appoint as many committees as it sees fit and may invest in them the authority to spend whatever amount of money they may deem wise. In such cases the Church Financial Secretary and/or Church Treasurer would be justified in paying whatever bills they make, as long as they were within the limits as set forth by the church.

Section 6 - Trustees

There shall be three trustees, one-third of whom shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for three years, and until their successors shall be elected by the church, will hold in trust the property of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific majority vote of the church authorizing such action.

Section 7 - Other Church Officers

The other officers of the church, such as the Sunday School Director, Discipleship Training Director, W.M.U. Director, Baptist Men's Director and the Director of the Department of Youth, shall be guided in what their duties are by the suggested methods as found in the different manuals that are published by our Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. These officers and all others deemed necessary shall be presented by the nominating committee and elected by a majority vote of the church. All officers and teachers shall be members of this church.

Section 8 – Minister of Music and Education

The music ministry is under the leadership and supervision of the Minister of Music and Education. He will work in close co-operation with the pastor. He shall be called by the church upon recommendation from the Personnel Committee and shall serve until the relationship is terminated. In the event of termination of the agreement between the church and the Minister of Music and Education, a thirty day notice shall be given unless a shorter notice is acceptable to both the church and the Minister of Music and Education. He will enlist, with the help of the nominating committee, the directors and accompanists of the various choirs, and they shall be elected by the church.

The Minister of Music and Education shall have the responsibility for the development of a comprehensive church music education program and shall by virtue of his position serve as a member of the Church Council.

(Note: A full listing of the Minister of Music and Education's duties are listed in the Church Operational Manual.)

Section 9 - Constitutional Committees

Constitutional Committees are Committees whose statement of purpose and membership will be included in the Church Constitution and will include policies for term limits of its members and Chair. The Nominating Committee will ensure that term limits are enforced by Constitutional Committees. The committee will report to the Nominating Committee annually the makeup and leadership of its committee. When need arises, the Deacons with 2/3rd congregational approval, will be responsible for the creation and dissolution of Constitutional Committees.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

This committee shall be composed of three members appointed annually by the moderator. Also, serving on the committee will be the current Sunday School Director, Discipleship Training Director, Women's Missionary Union Director, Baptist Men's Director and the Director of the Department of Youth.

The committee has the responsibility of recommending to the church the coming year's Sunday School Director, Discipleship Training Director, Women's Missionary Union Director, and Baptist Men's Director. Following their election, these individuals will also serve on the Nominating Committee.

The committee will also be responsible for nominating the Children's Director, Church Clerk, Treasurer and Outreach Director. The committee will also nominate the entire educational organizations of the church.

The Nominating Committee will also have the responsibility of nominating to the church all committees.

The committee shall have the responsibility through the year for nominating to the church, persons to serve in the various capacities and positions of the church and its organizations and on standing committees, vacated from time to time.

The reports of the Nominating Committee shall be suggestive only, and any member of the church will have the privilege of nominating from the floor.

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

This committee shall consist of four members nominated by the Nominating Committee, plus the Church Treasurer, Chairman of Deacons and Chair of the Personnel Committee. The church Financial Secretary, upon request, may be called upon to assist this Committee. No member of the Budget and Finance Committee shall serve more than three consecutive terms.

A chair, other than the Treasurer, Chair of the Deacons and Chair of Personnel, shall be elected annually by all seven members of the Committee.

This committee shall . . .

- 1) Prepare annually a proposed budget including local expenses, education, missions, and benevolences, and shall submit the same to the church at least one month before the beginning of the new fiscal year. The committee shall consult with the head of each department for their needs in the coming year in preparing a proposed budget.
- 2) Upon the adoption of the budget by the church, the Budget and Finance Committee shall lead the church in a program to secure the commitment of its members to the budget, providing envelopes and other necessary literature and materials.
- 3) Approve the Financial Report of the church and sponsor the report in the church business meetings.
- 4) Prepare for congregational approval comprehensive financial policies and guidelines for the church. The Budget and Finance Committee shall also then update those financial policies as needed and present them for congregational approval

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

This committee shall consist of six members elected by the church. They shall have the responsibilities of recruiting, interviewing, and recommending to the church the personnel for all employees' positions of the church other than pastor. This would include Minister of Music and Education, Minister of Youth, church secretary, janitor, organist, and pianist. As the church authorizes additional salaried personnel, this committee shall have the responsibility of recommending the personnel to fill these authorized positions. The committee shall be familiar with the function and work of each of these personnel. It shall also study such items as hospitalization insurance, retirement pension plans, vacations, and holidays for employed personnel.

Section 10 - Operational Committees

Operational Committees are Committees whose statement of purpose and membership will be included in the Church's Operations Manual. Operational Committee will have a congregationally approved statement of purpose and will meet regularly to fulfill its mission. Every Operational Committee will have a chair, chosen annually by a majority vote of its members. The committee will report to the Nominating Committee annually the makeup and leadership of its committee. When need arises, the Deacons, with congregational approval of a simple majority, will be responsible for the creation and dissolution of Operational Committees.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Special committees are elected by the church when a need occurs and serve until that need is met.

ARTICLE III. - MEETINGS

Section 1 - The Lord's Day

This church shall have Sunday School, Discipleship Training, and at least two worship services each Lord's Day, unless specified otherwise by the church.

Section 2 - Prayer Meeting

This church shall have prayer service each Wednesday, unless changed by the church.

Section 3 – Quarterly Business Meeting

This church shall have a quarterly business meeting.

Note: Temporary changes to the church's meeting schedule can be made by the Church Council for programming purposes, and by the pastor and/or the chairman of the deacons due to weather, utility, or other unforeseen situations.

Section 4 - The Lord's Supper

This church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least once each quarter.

Section 5 - Baptism

This church shall observe baptism as often as it is necessary.

ARTICLE IV. - GENERAL

Section 1 - Quorums

In all business meetings, the members present shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2 - The Will of the Church

The will of the church on any given matter fully expressed by its vote shall be carried out by all committees, officers, and organizations of the church.

Section 3 - Church Affiliation with Associations and Conventions

The First Baptist Church of Shawmut is a member of the East Liberty Baptist Association, Alabama Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. We further pledge to support our local church program and co-operate with the above named organizations through our local church program and by gifts to world missions through the Cooperative Program.

Section 4 - Licensing and Ordaining

Any member who in the judgment of the church gives evidence of his piety, zeal, and aptness to teach and that he is called of God to the work of the ministry may be licensed and/or ordained to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

At the request of another Southern Baptist Church of like faith and order who desires the individual to serve in a capacity needing ordination, the church may ordain one of its members, providing that the church has called a Council and that this body has examined the candidate as to fitness, and has recommended to the church that he be ordained.

When a non-ordained Deacon Intern has completed one year of service, has affirmed his calling and has formally gained affirmation by their fellow Deacons, a Council composed of Southern Baptist ordained deacons and ministers shall be called together to examine the candidate and recommend to the church that he be ordained in a service set aside for this purpose.

Section 5 - Auditing Books

Our church books shall be audited by the Trustees, or Auditing Committee that shall have the sanction of the church. This work will be done every three years.

Section 6 - Fund Raising

No organization or member of the First Baptist Church of Shawmut will engage in any fund raising activities using the name of, or referring to, the First Baptist Church of Shawmut for the purposes of supporting the church budget. Organizations desiring to raise money need to make a written request of the fund raising committee. This committee will include the chairman of deacons, W.M.U. director, Baptist Men's director, and all ministerial staff. This committee may give organizations and/or members recurring permission for certain activities provided that the activity has not changed and/or is still valid.

Section 7 - Church Operations Manual

An Organizational Guide shall be prepared which will depict lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. This guide will have a comprehensive list of the duties and work assignments of all staff personnel and shall include responsibilities of church officers and all committees.

Church policies and procedures shall be described in the Church Operations Manual. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available to any member of the church. The manual shall be maintained by the church secretary. Changes in policies and procedures may be initiated by any church member or organization. Additions, revisions, or deletions of church policies require: (1) the recommendation of the church officer or organization (including committees) to whose areas of assignment the policy relates. (2) discussion by the church council, and (3) approval by the church. Procedures may be added, revised, or deleted by: (1)

recommendation of the appropriate officer or group, (2) approval by the church council, and (3) approval of the church if deemed necessary by the church council.

Section 8 – Position on Marriage and Sexuality

First Baptist Church of Shawmut reserves the right and has the authority to restrict the use and rental of Church facilities and properties. Property and facility use will not be permitted to any persons, members or non-members, or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with First Baptist Church of Shawmut's Doctrinal Statement in the Church's Constitution and By-Law's. This position establishes that any other view, idea, statement, or doctrine of marriage will not be recognized within the Church's life and programs. It prohibits how staff may teach and preach about marriage. It further prohibits staff from performing marriage ceremonies or participating in other marriage related activities which are contrary to the Church's Doctrinal Statement.

ARTICLE V. - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any business meeting of the church provided that the proposed amendment shall be presented in writing to the church resident membership one month prior to consideration of the proposed amendment. No change shall be made in the "Doctrinal Statement" and "Covenant" except by a two-thirds vote of all members of the church present and entitled to vote, with said proposed change having been laid before the church in writing at a business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action and read from the pulpit on the Lord's Day preceding such proposal.