

**BY LAWS OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
WEST POINT, VIRGINIA
ARTICLE 1**

Name

The name of this church shall be the First Baptist Church of West Point, Virginia.

**ARTICLE II
Purpose**

As a member, you are part of our spiritual family and have decided that this is your church home. In any family, the home thrives on healthy relationships (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). We are committed to building these relationships. First Baptist Church also wants to provide new members a place where they can use their gifts and talents (1 Peter 4:10). We all need a place to grow and First Baptist Church will provide an atmosphere that promotes growth (Acts 2:42). New members need to know that they belong to something bigger than themselves and that although we exist as individuals we must all work together in support of the church (Romans 12:4-5).

We, the members of the First Baptist Church, West Point, Virginia, a body of believers each of whom has had a personal experience with Jesus Christ which leads to a continuing relationship with Him, do hereby affirm our belief in, and do acknowledge our earnest desire to uphold by consistent Christian living, these principles of biblical doctrines:

1. The preeminence of Christ as our divine Lord and Master,
2. The supreme authority of the Bible as our only rule of faith and practice,
3. The Priesthood of the Believer — the right of private interpretation of the Scripture, and the competency of the individual soul in direct approach to God,
4. The separation of Church and State,
5. The symbolic ordinance of Believer's Baptism in obedience to the command of Christ,
6. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper, open to all Christians and observed monthly,
7. The solemn obligation of majority rule, guaranteeing equal rights to all and special privileges to none,
8. The spiritual unity of all believers, for which the Master so earnestly prayed,
9. A world-wide program of missionary fervor and evangelism in obedience to the final command of Jesus,
10. The complete autonomy of the local church and its interdependence in associated fellowship with other Baptist Churches. First Baptist Church of West Point has voluntarily associated itself with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, and the Dover Baptist Association.

**ARTICLE III
Membership**

**Section I
Reception of Members**

Persons wishing to become members may present themselves for membership in any one of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith and baptism by immersion.
- B. By membership transfer. Immersion will not be required of persons not previously immersed but who were baptized as believers. Immersion will be required for membership by persons who were christened as infants.

- C. A statement of faith may be accepted in lieu of membership certificate if circumstances make it impossible to secure a written record of membership in another church.
- D. Associate membership: An individual requesting associate membership (a) must already be a Christian, and (b) must be a member of another church prior to being considered for associate membership.
(c) An associate member shall have all rights and privileges as a full member.

Section 2
Responsibility to New Church Members

The church shall have responsibility to integrate new members into the church family by:

- 1. Making available written materials concerning church programs, ministries, church by-laws and policies.
- 2. Providing new member classes (1) for members new to the body of Christ and (2) for Christians new to our church.

Section 3
Privileges of Members

Members of all categories are entitled to equal rights and privileges pertaining to the life and work of the church.

Section 4
Standards of Members

The standards for each member of this church are:

- A. To endeavor to find time each day for quiet meditation, prayer and reading of the Bible, in an effort to learn the will of God and to grow spiritually.
- B. To faithfully attend the regular services of the church.
- C. To accept financial responsibility commensurate with God's material blessings.
- D. To accept responsibility for services in the church commensurate with one's talents and time.
- E. To witness to others what Christ means to one's personal life.
- F. To live a life of thought, word, and deed that becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 5
Termination of Membership

Termination of Membership shall be

- A. By member's written request
- B. By confirmation letter from another church
- C. By verbal request documented by a church staff member
- D. By death

ARTICLE IV
Meetings

Section 1

The church shall hold quarterly business meetings on the fourth Wednesday nights of January, April, July and October at 7:00 p.m. The regular meeting in January shall also be known as the annual meeting. Each officer, chairperson of a standing committee, and director of a church program is responsible for submitting a written report highlighting the previous year's activities. It will be the responsibility of the recording clerk to compile the annual reports, in book format, and make these reports available in the church office.

Regular business meetings may be rescheduled (1) when they are in conflict with revival or other religious services that are taking place in the church or (2) when staff and members are participating in a religious

activity outside the church or (3) At the discretion of the senior pastor in conjunction with the deacons.

Business meetings may be called by the senior pastor or by a written petition of at least twelve members of the church at any time, for a specific stated purpose. Notice for any of these changes will be given regarding time and purpose at two consecutive Sunday morning worship services. Church members shall be notified in writing as to time and purpose of the meeting and the moderator and clerk shall be called by the senior pastor.

Section 2 Quorum

Thirty members shall constitute a quorum for all church business meetings.

Section 3 Absentee Voting

There will be no absentee voting recognized for any business meeting.

ARTICLE V Amendments

Section 1

The By-Laws shall be altered or amended by a majority vote taken at any business meeting. Presentation of the proposed change shall be given at the business meeting preceding the business meeting at which the change is to be voted. The proposed change shall also be published in the church newsletter one time prior to the business meeting at which the change is to be voted.

Section 2

Whenever the entire By-Laws are revised, copies will be made available outside the church office at least four weeks prior to voting on the revised By-Laws. The entire By-Laws revision will not be published in the church newsletter.

Section 3

The Officer and Committee Handbook may be altered or amended by a majority vote taken at any business meeting. Presentation of the proposed change shall be given at the business meeting at which the change is to be voted.

A typed copy of the changes to the By-Laws or Officer and Committee Handbook are to be handed out by the recording clerk at the next business meeting. Copies of the changes are to be available in the church office.

SECTION 4

The constitution shall be altered or amended by a two-thirds majority vote taken at any business meeting. Presentation of the proposed change shall be given at the business meeting preceding the business meeting at which the change is to be voted. The proposed change shall also be published in the church newsletter one time prior to the business meeting at which the change is to be voted.

ARTICLE VI Standing Committees

Unless otherwise stated in the Officer and Committee Handbook, committee members shall be elected by a rotation system with one-third of the members being elected annually. No committee member shall serve more than three consecutive years on the same committee except for those committees where succession is stated. When it is deemed to be in the best interest of the church, that body may then vote in business session to waive, for one year the foregoing regulation. The scholarship committee is an exception to the three-year rotation system due to the fact that it functions best on a five-year term basis.

Members, for all standing committees, shall be secured by the Nominating Committee and presented for vote at the October business meeting. any additional changes after the October business meeting will be voted on at the next quarterly business meeting.

The nominating committee shall preside over a joint meeting of all committees (prior to December 31) for the purpose of organization and election of chairmen for each committee.

New committees may be established, as needed, by a majority vote of the church. By church action, the name of, or the function of, a particular committee may be changed, expanded, or deleted.

ARTICLE VII Ministerial Vacancy

Section 1

Ministerial staff shall be defined as Senior Pastor and Associate Pastors. Associate will be further defined by their appropriate area of service, as in Associate Pastor of Youth. A meeting of the personnel committee, search committee (if applicable), budget and finance committee, and treasurer must take place before recommendation is made to the church or to a potential candidate.

Section 2 Senior Pastor

When a vacancy occurs in the senior pastoral leadership, the moderator will call together the chairman of the trustees, chairman of the deacons, and the recording clerk for the purpose of nominating a seven member committee, one of whom may be a youth, to serve as the pastor search committee. An additional member may be nominated to serve as an alternate. This person may attend all meetings and participate in all activities of the committee, but will have no voting authority except when a member is unable to fulfill their work on the committee. This committee shall be elected by the church in business session. It shall be the responsibility of the moderator to call the pastor search committee together at which time a chairman shall be elected.

The pastor search committee shall be responsible for recommending to the church a minister to fill the senior pastoral vacancy. It shall further be the responsibility of this committee to inform the candidate on matters regarding responsibilities and duties to the church, salary and benefits, and any other information pertinent to the position.

Should a vacancy occur in any associate pastoral leadership (i.e. minister of music, minister of youth, etc.), a determination will be made in business session as to whether the position will be filled by ministerial staff or non-ministerial staff. If the decision is made to hire ministerial staff, the same procedure shall be followed as those for the senior pastor.

Section 3 Interim Pastor

When a vacancy occurs in the senior pastoral leadership, the moderator will call together the chairman of the trustees, the chairman of the deacons, and the recording clerk for the purpose of nominating a seven member committee, one of whom may be a youth, to serve as the interim pastor search committee. This committee shall be elected by the church in business session. It shall be the responsibility of the moderator to call the interim pastor search committee together at which time a chairman shall be elected.

The interim pastor search committee shall be responsible for recommending to the church a minister to fill the senior pastoral vacancy. It shall further be the responsibility of this committee to inform the candidate on matters regarding responsibilities and duties to the church, salary and benefits, and any other information pertinent to the position.

Should a vacancy occur in any associate pastoral leadership (i.e. minister of music, minister of youth, etc.) The same procedure for a senior pastoral vacancy shall be followed.

Section 4

No member of the interim pastor search committee shall serve on the pastor search committee or vice versa.

Section 5

The chairman of the personnel committee shall confer with any committee or persons charged with the responsibility for securing a new pastor or other church staff member so that present church personnel policies are communicated and the committee is made aware of all written agreements made with the new staff member.

Section 6

All ministerial staff shall be nominated by the search committee at the Sunday morning worship service one week prior to the Sunday morning on which a vote is to be taken.

Section 7

An affirmative vote of ninety percent (90%) of the church members present and voting shall be required to extend a pastoral call.

ARTICLE VIII Procedure for Addition, Replacement, or Change of Non Ministerial Personnel

Section 1 Addition of Personnel

When there is a need to add personnel, the church member requesting the addition should make the request to the personnel committee and the senior pastor. Along with this request should be a rationale for establishing the position, a job description describing the services to be performed by the additional personnel, and the qualifications required to perform these services. The personnel committee will consult with other committees as necessary to determine needs, salary scale, and other necessary information. The request will then be presented by the personnel committee to the church during a quarterly or called business meeting for a vote. Once the position has been established, a job description for that position will be included in the First Baptist Church Personnel Policy Manual. This person will report to the senior pastor unless otherwise delegated by the senior pastor.

**Section 2
Change of Personnel**

When change necessitates the altering of a present position either by title or job description, the church member requesting the change will present the change and reason to the personnel committee and the senior pastor. The personnel committee will prepare the necessary changes and present them to the church at a quarterly or called business meeting. If the changes are approved, they will be included in the First Baptist Church Personnel Policy Manual. Whenever possible the personnel occupying the former position will be used in the redesigned position, and new services and salary will be discussed and agreed upon at that time.

**Section 3
Replacement of Non-Ministerial Personnel**

- A. When a non-ministerial staff position becomes vacant, or notification has been given to the personnel committee and the senior pastor that the position is going to become vacant, the senior pastor or the pastor's designee¹ shall seek a replacement.
- B. When a vacancy occurs in the non-ministerial staff, the procedure for replacement will follow the guidelines as established in Article VII.
- C. Before replacement of any staff member who is to be employed at a salary above the established salary scale and/or for more or fewer services than those listed in the policy manual, a recommendation by the personnel committee must be made and approved by the church.
- D. A meeting of the personnel committee, search committee (if applicable), budget and finance committee and treasurer must take place before recommendation is made to the church or to a potential candidate.

**Section 4
Resignation of Personnel**

Employees are expected to give two weeks' notice prior to resignation.

**Section 5
Termination of Employment**

(See termination policy in the Personnel Policy Manual)

**ARTICLE IX
General**

Section 1

The church, in business session, reserves the right of final approval of the actions of members, committees, and officers when they represent the church.

Section 2

No member or group of members shall conduct any fundraising event on the behalf of the church without the approval of the church council.

Section 3

Any request for use of the church facilities must have a written application approved by the church council. Those desiring weddings, rehearsals, funerals, receptions, etc. shall reserve the desired facilities by getting the approval of the senior pastor or the pastor's designee¹. All individuals and groups are responsible for leaving the church in proper order according to the guidelines issued by the church office. A copy of the wedding guidelines must be obtained from the church office.

Section 4

All church officers, committee chairmen, and Sunday school staff shall be members of this church. Members of all categories are entitled to equal rights and privileges pertaining to the life and work of the church. In addition, the following must consist of church members:

Audit	Budget & Finance Committee
Trustees	Scholarship Committee
Deacons	Nominating Committee
WMU Officers	Personnel Committee
Tithes & Offerings Committee	Transportation Committee

ARTICLE X

Church Staff

Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall seek to perform the duties of this office with all fidelity; to preach at the scheduled worship service on the Lord's day; to administer the ordinances as commanded in the New Testament; to visit members of the church; and to perform such other duties as listed in the senior pastor's job description in the Personnel Policy Manual. If the senior pastor feels the work of the church has become ineffective, it shall be the senior pastor's duty to confer with the deacons to determine what steps should be taken to improve the situation, having the best interests of the church in mind at all times.

With the exception of the senior pastor search committee and the interim pastor search committee, the senior pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards, departments, committees, and similar bodies of the church and will be entitled to a vote. The senior pastor or the pastor's designee¹ should be notified of all committee meetings, etc., and shall work in close cooperation with these committees at all times to advance the effectiveness of the entire church program.

The senior pastor will have an annual (written) review by the deacon officers based on the covenant that was agreed on by the pastor and the church. Any salary raise or adjustment proposals will be discussed in the review and after being reviewed by the personnel committee shall be submitted to the budget and finance committee for consideration.

The senior pastor shall have administrative responsibility over all staff members of the church unless otherwise delegated by the senior pastor.

Other Ministerial Staff Members

Each staff member shall be under the supervision of the senior pastor and shall aid him in the pastoral and administrative duties. The primary duties of each staff member shall be outlined in a job description prepared by the senior pastor working in conjunction with the personnel committee and any other committee designated by the church. The church in a business meeting shall approve these duties. The job description shall be reviewed and/or revised annually by the personnel committee and the Senior Pastor. The senior pastor shall

have a written annual review of these personnel, and after being reviewed by the personnel committee, shall submit to the budget and finance committee any salary raises or adjustments for consideration.

Non-Ministerial Staff Members

Non-ministerial personnel, (i.e., church secretary, assistant treasurer, treasurer, organist custodian, etc.) shall be determined by the senior pastor, in counsel with the personnel committee and any other committee involved, subject to the provisions or limitations of authorized budget appropriations. These staff members shall be under the supervision of the senior pastor or one of the other ministers of the church as might be stated in their job description. the senior pastor, or the pastor's designee¹, shall have a written annual review of these personnel, and after being reviewed by the personnel committee, shall submit to the budget and finance committee any salary raises or adjustments for consideration.

ARTICLE XI

Parliamentary Procedure

Business Meetings

The Business Meetings of the church shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Roberts Rules of Order.

¹In the absence of a designee by the pastor, a designee shall be appointed by the trustees.