

# **West Blocton First Baptist Church Constitution and Bylaws**

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# **West Blocton First Baptist Church Constitution**

## **Preamble**

That everything may be done “decently and in order” (I Corinthians 14:40), that the mission and message of the church may be protected and preserved, that the responsibilities, rights and privileges of each member shall be made clear, that the autonomy of this church may be plainly declared, we establish this constitution and by-laws.

## **Article I – Name**

This body shall be known as the West Blocton First Baptist Church of West Blocton, Alabama, located at 1249 Main Street. Est. October 21, 1888.

## **Article II – Confession of Faith**

### **1. THE WORD OF GOD**

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31-32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32)

### **2. THE TRINITY**

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. (Genesis 1:1,26; John 1:1,3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:5-6)

### **3. GOD THE FATHER**

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Luke 10:21-22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1-2; 2:5-6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6)

### **4. GOD THE SON -JESUS CHRIST**

We believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke

1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30-31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9-10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16)

#### 5. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide. (John 14:16-17,26; 15:26-27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26)

#### 6. REGENERATION

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual, and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. (Genesis 1:26; 5:2; 3; 2:17; 3:19; Ecclesiastes 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24-30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; II Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 19:3,20; 20:10,14-15; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; I John 19; John 3:16; John 1:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1)

#### 7. THE CHURCH

We believe in the universal church; a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head, and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, service and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. (Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25)

#### 8. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full measure of maturing in Christ, throughout life and unto death. (I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15, 23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:9-10)

## 9. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

We believe that marriage is ordained by God as the sacred union of one man and one woman. All sexual relations must therefore be reserved for that union. Christian marriage is a representation of Christ's relationship to His Church. We also believe that children are a blessing from the Lord. Thus all human life is sacred and worthy of protection from the moment of conception. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:24; Psalms 127, 128; 139:13-16; Matthew 19:1-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:22-23; Hebrews 13:4)

## 10. THE ORDINANCES

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God as a symbol of our union with Christ and His death, burial and resurrection. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death and the anticipation of His second coming. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered in obedience to Scripture until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26)

## 11. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

We believe that West Blocton First Baptist Church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore the Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other. (I Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9, 12)

## 12. THE LAST THINGS

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked. (Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15)

### **Article III- Church Covenant**

Having, as we trust, been brought, by Divine Grace, to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (John 13:34-35)

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church; exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish in meekness and encourage one another, as occasion may require. (I Peter 1:22; Philippians 2:4; Hebrews 10:24)

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others. (Hebrews 10:25)

We will strive to raise those under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends. (II Timothy 3:15; Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Ephesians 6:1-4; Acts 1:8; Matthew 4:19; Psalms 126:5-6; Proverbs 11:30)

We will rejoice at each other's happiness, and endeavor, with tenderness and sympathy, to bear each other's burdens and sorrows. (Romans 12:15; James 4:16; Galatians 6:2; James 2:14-17; I Peter 3:8-11)

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to live a new and holy life. (Ephesians 5:15-21; II Peter 3:11; Romans 12:17; Romans 13:8; Revelation 2:10; Romans 14:13; I John 2:10; Ephesians 5:18; I Thessalonians 5:22)

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church as we sustain its worship, ordinances, disciplines, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church and the spread of the Gospel through all nations. We will humbly and earnestly seek to live to the glory of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. (II Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 1:27; II Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 11:23-26; Jude 3; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 8:6-7; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

We will, when we move from this place, 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. (I Corinthians 4:2)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen. (II Corinthians 13:14)

#### **Article IV – Government**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers (members) who comprise it. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

#### **Article V - Membership**

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership. Procedures for admission, dismissal, and transfer shall be provided by Article I of the Bylaws of the church.

#### **VI- Affiliation**

This is an autonomous and democratic southern Baptist church operating under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the importance of mutual counsel and cooperation which is the common practice of Southern Baptist churches. Insofar as it is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Bibb Baptist Association, the Alabama State Board of Missions and the Southern Baptist Convention.

#### **VII – Amendment Procedure**

Changes to this Constitution may be proposed by any church member. The procedure for any proposed amendment is as follows:

1. All proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing, with background and supporting documentation to the deacons as specified by the church by laws for review. The deacons will present all proposals at the next scheduled business meeting in writing with a recommendation from the deacons that the church approve or oppose the proposed change.
2. Amendments to the Constitution must receive three-fourths (3/4) vote of members present and voting at an additional business meeting to take place no sooner than 10 days from the meeting in which the deacons presented their proposal.

## **West Blocton First Baptist Church Bylaws**

### **Article I – Membership**

#### **Section A – General**

As a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the leadership 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 shall consist of those persons who have professed faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, who have experienced the ordinance of believer's baptism, and who have given satisfactory proof of their commitment to follow the teachings of the Bible as their model and standard of living.

#### **Section B – Request for Membership**

Any person may offer his/herself as a candidate for membership of this church in any of the following ways:

1. Those who make an initial profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and express their desire to identify with Christ and His Church through the act of believer's baptism.
2. Those who transfer their letter of membership from another Southern Baptist Church.
3. Those Christian believers who have been baptized by immersion and who come by statement of their salvation experience.
4. Those Christians from another denomination who come for baptism by immersion as a witness to their understanding of and adherence to Baptist beliefs and doctrines; and
5. Those who make a profession of faith but for whom baptism might prove physically harmful.

#### **Section C- Process for Membership**

Before being accepted as members, all candidates for membership shall:

1. Present themselves to the church as a candidate of church membership.
2. Be voted on by present members of the church.
3. Attend a membership class.

4. Affirm their support and submission to the Church Covenant, the Church's Confession of Faith, and the Church Constitution and Bylaws.
5. When these steps are completed the candidate will officially become a member of the church.

#### **Section D- Privileges of Members**

1. Protection – The church member finds greater protection from theological error and sin through discipleship, through church discipline, and by coming under the leadership of the church and its pastors.
2. Commitment – The mutual commitment between the church member and the church body provides a deeper level of community and a greater opportunity for spiritual growth.
3. Mission – The church member will find greater effectiveness in advancing the Kingdom of Christ as a part of a church body than he or she will individually.
4. Service – The church member is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for elected positions of service.
5. Voting – The church member that is present during church business meetings is entitled to vote on matters that require a decision of the church body. Members must be over 18 years of age to vote on church matters.
6. Ordinances – The church member may participate in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as administered by the church.

#### **Section E- Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated by a vote of the church for any of the following:

1. Death of the member.
2. Transfer of membership to another Baptist church or other like-minded church.
3. Upon request and proof of membership or activity in another church.
4. Removal by discipline of the church for unrepentant sin. (Article I, Section H hereof)
5. Inactivity with the church for more than one year.

## **Section F – Discipline**

1. Reconciliation - It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1-2).
  
1. Removal - Should some serious conditions exist which would cause the member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the church will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to remove a member, a majority vote of the members present and voting is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. A spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance shall pervade all proceedings.
  
2. Restoration - The church may restore membership to any person previously removed, upon request of the removed person, and upon evidence of the removed person's repentance and completion of the membership process. Such restoration shall be by a majority vote of the members present and voting.

## **Article II – Officers**

### **Section A – Trustees**

The church shall elect and maintain three trustees from the membership of the church to serve as legal officers for the church. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any church property. When signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents related to church approved matters. The authority and methods of conducting business for the church will be in accord with the provisions of the statutes of the State of Alabama. In no case will the trustees be authorized to make expenditure or create indebtedness without the authorization of the church in a business meeting.

**Section B – Moderator**

The Pastor or his designee shall serve as Moderator of all business meeting. The Moderator is responsible for conducting all business meetings of the church. If the pastor is not present a deacon shall serve as moderator for that meeting.

The Moderator shall be responsible for the orderly and proper execution of church business meetings by utilizing common church business meeting procedures and following the spirit of Colossians 3:12-15.

**Section C – Church Treasurer**

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to provide oversight of the receipt and disbursements (upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel), all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all the receipts and disbursements. It will be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding months. Church records shall be audited as needed.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of the fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church. The church may delegate some or all of the Treasurer’s responsibilities to an appropriate member of the church staff.

**Section E – Officers Beliefs**

All church staff, leaders, and officers must be voted on members of the church and follow the Southern Baptist belief system and follow West Blocton First Baptist Church’s bylaws and constitution.

**Article III – Deacons**

**Section A – General**

The church guided by I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3-8, shall elect Deacons from its membership who are at least 21 years of age and have been a member of the church for no less than one year.

**Section B – Responsibilities**

A Deacon is to be a servant of the church. As such, he is to join with the pastors in the following ways:

- 1. To be faithful in working toward and praying for the unity and ministry of the church.

2. To be faithful in worship attendance, small group Bible study and active in the overall life of the church.
3. To be faithful in attendance and actively participate in deacon's meetings and retreats.
4. To be faithful to support the church with tithes and offerings.
5. To be faithful to care for the widows and widowers of the church.
6. To be faithful in fulfilling other duties as assigned and determined by the deacon leadership.

### **Section C – Deacon Officers**

The Deacons will elect from among themselves a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary in October of each year.

### **Section D- Termination of Deacon Status**

Upon sufficient grounds, the call for a Deacon's resignation shall be resolved by the active deacons.

### **Section E – Nomination and Election Procedures**

Nominations for deacons will be made by the current deacons or to the deacons. A vote of  $\frac{2}{3}$  will be required by the current deacons to present the candidate for a church for vote. A majority vote will be required by the church after the candidate completes a 6 month watch care of the deacons. Deacons must be members of the church for more than 1 year, be over 21 years of age, and observe and follow the Southern Baptist beliefs.

### **Section F – Ordination**

Deacon ordination is a tradition in our church based upon Acts 6 where a man entering the deacon ministry is consecrated or set apart for that ministry after examination by the laying on of hands of other ordained men during a time of prayer.

As soon as it is practical, newly elected Deacons who have not been ordained shall be ordained. The Pastor and Deacon Chairman shall make arrangements for the ordination service.

## **Article IV - Pastors**

### **Section A - General**

Three terms describe the New Testament pastor. The first, “pastor” signifies a shepherd, and illustrates his role as one who leads, feeds and guides the flock under his care. The term “overseer” indicates his administrative role. “Elder” describes the respect he should merit. These synonymous terms and the biblical qualifications of a pastor are found in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, I Peter 5:1-3 and Acts 20:17-32.

While fully recognizing and believing that Jesus Christ is the head and authority above all, the pastors of the church are responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church.

### **Section B – Call of The Senior Pastor**

The Senior Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. When a vacancy occurs, the following actions will take place in the order listed.

1. The deacon body will be responsible for securing preachers to preach during church services. They will be responsible for this task until an interim pastor is selected or a pastor has been selected.
2. The deacon body will accept nominations for a Pastor Search committee. The nominees will be reviewed by the deacon body. The nominees must be members for at least one year and deemed to be qualified based on their faithfulness in worship, Sunday school, and giving. The deacons will form a Pastor Search Committee based on nominees and present this committee to the church to be voted on.
3. The deacon body will present a pastor search committee to serve to the church body at least one week prior to the election of the pastor search committee. A vote will be taken to vote on the Pastor Search Committee, majority vote (50% +) is required.
4. If an Interim Pastor is selected before the hiring of the Pastor, a vote of  $\frac{3}{4}$  present members is required.
5. The Pastor Search Committee will begin meeting after the team is formed and voted on. They will begin to seek out Pastor candidates immediately. Names for nominations may be secured from the Baptist Association, the Alabama State

Board of Missions, and from church members. These nominations will not be used for pulpit supply.

6. The Pastor Search Committee will give the church at least one week's notice that a Pastor candidate will be preaching, the candidates will preach 2 trial sermons on Sunday services and participate in a Wednesday night question and answer.
7. Election shall be by secret ballot of church members. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (counted by the deacons) of those present and voting will be required for a call.
8. The Senior Pastor must become a member of West Blocton First Baptist within 30 days after his first sermon as Senior Pastor.

### **Section C- Termination of The Senior Pastor**

1. The Pastor shall serve until his ministry is terminated by his request. The Pastor may relinquish the office of Pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church at the time of resignation.
2. If removal of the Pastor is needed, the deacon body will vote on the removal of the Pastor. A vote of 2/3 majority of the deacon body will be necessary to bring a recommendation to the church for action.
3. Upon decision to bring a recommendation to the church to terminate the Pastor, the Pastor will be immediately informed and placed on paid leave until the vote of the church body on the recommendation.
4. A congregational vote to terminate the Pastor shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one weeks' notice has been given to the membership.
5. The moderator for this meeting shall be the chairman of the deacons, if the chairman is not available the vice chairman of the deacons or deacon secretary will fill this role.
6. The vote to declare the office of Pastor vacant shall be by secret ballot. A vote of majority (50% +) of the members present and voting will be necessary to declare the office of Pastor vacant. The ballots will be counted by the deacons immediately following the vote. The termination will be immediately.
7. The church may provide up to one-fourth of the Pastor's total annual compensation as severance pay in three equal installments. The first installment shall be rendered in not more than thirty days, the second in not more than sixty days and the third in

not more than ninety days. Any severance compensation shall be determined by the church's deacons after the vote has taken place.

### **Section D – Responsibilities of the Pastor**

The Senior Pastor is expected to devote himself to “prayer and the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:3-4). He is, first and foremost, a preacher and teacher of the Word of God (I Timothy 4:1-4). He is also to lead the church in evangelism (I Timothy 4:5). He is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12). He is to seek God's direction for the church and to communicate it to the church (Hebrews 13:7,17).

The Pastor shall conduct worship services and oversee the two ordinances of the church. He shall preside at meetings of the church and may serve as moderator in business meetings in keeping with these by-laws. He is the leader and supervisor of the church staff and is the first among equals in relationship to the church staff.

### **Section E- Qualifications of Pastor**

1. **Biblical Qualifications:** The Pastor shall meet the biblical qualifications as outlined in the Holy Scriptures, specifically in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. These qualifications include, but are not limited to:
2. **Blamelessness:** The Pastor must be above reproach in his conduct and reputation, living a life of integrity and moral uprightness.
3. **Husband of One Wife:** The Pastor must be faithful to his wife and exhibit a commitment to biblical marriage.
4. **Sober-minded and Self-controlled:** The Pastor must exhibit a clear, disciplined mind, and control over his actions and emotions.
5. **Respectable and Hospitable:** The Pastor must demonstrate an approachable, welcoming nature and a willingness to extend hospitality.
6. **Able to Teach:** The Pastor must be able to effectively communicate and teach the Word of God, guiding the congregation in spiritual growth.
7. **Not Given to Drunkenness:** The Pastor must refrain from excessive drinking or any substance that impairs judgment and conduct.

8. Not Violent but Gentle: The Pastor must have a gentle spirit, not given to physical or verbal violence, but demonstrating a peaceful demeanor.
9. Not Quarrelsome: The Pastor must avoid contentiousness, striving for peace and unity within the church body.
10. Not a Lover of Money: The Pastor must not be motivated by financial gain but should serve the church with a heart of humility and generosity.
11. Manage his Household Well: The Pastor must demonstrate good leadership in his own family, providing spiritual guidance and discipline for his children.
12. Above Reproach in Character and Doctrine: The Pastor must be a model of Christian character and sound doctrine, ensuring his life and teaching reflect the teachings of the Bible.
13. Spiritual Calling and Maturity: The Pastor must be called by God to the ministry and exhibit a strong sense of personal spiritual calling. He should demonstrate a mature, growing relationship with the Lord through prayer, Bible study, and service to others.
14. Educational Qualifications: While formal theological education is preferred, it is not required if the individual demonstrates clear biblical knowledge, a sound understanding of doctrine, and the ability to rightly divide the Word of Truth. A degree from an accredited seminary or Bible college may be considered an asset.
15. Experience and Ministry Background: The Pastor should have prior experience in ministry, demonstrating competence and fruitfulness in leadership, teaching, and shepherding. This experience may include serving as a pastor, associate pastor, or in other leadership roles within a church or Christian ministry.
16. Doctrinal Agreement: The Pastor must agree with and adhere to the church's Statement of Faith and the doctrinal positions of the Southern Baptist Convention and be ordained.
17. The Pastor must be ordained. If not, the Pastor must be ordained within 90 days of accepting the position.

#### **Section F- Associate Pastors**

Associate Pastors shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for an associate pastor is

determined. The deacons, in counsel with the current ordained pastor will recommend a prospective Associate Pastor to the church for church action.

### **Section G – Termination of Associate Pastors**

An Associate Pastor will give at least two weeks' notice to the church of his resignation.

The church may vote to vacate an Associate Pastor's position upon the recommendation of the deacons. Termination process of the Association Pastor shall follow the same guidelines as stated above for the Pastor. Termination by church vote will be immediate and the compensation conditions will be the same as that of Pastor, except the amount shall relate to the specific individual's compensation.

### **Article V – Support Staff**

#### **Section A – Employment of Support Staff**

Support Staff or non-pastoral staff shall be employed as the deacons determine the need for their services. They must follow West Blocton First Baptist Church's doctrine and the Southern Baptist Message.

#### **Section B – Termination of Support Staff**

At the time of resignation at least two weeks' notice should be given to the church.

Support Staff/positions may be terminated by recommendation of the pastor and/or deacons, termination being immediate and compensation being according to the deacons. The deacons reserve the right to waive the requirements of said two weeks' notice and said waiver will be in writing.

### **Article VI – Ministry Teams**

The church shall maintain ministries and shall have teams of church members to provide leadership for those ministries. These may include but are not limited to: Senior Adult Ministry, Hospitality Ministry, Worship Ministry, Student Ministry, Children's Ministry, Pre-school Ministry, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry etc... The deacons provide direction and oversight to the ministry teams.

## **Section A – The Ministry Council**

The Ministry Council shall be composed of the pastor, deacons and all ministry team leaders. The Ministry Council will meet as often as needed so that all of the ministries of the church can be shared, reviewed and overseen by the ministry team leaders, the Pastor, and the Deacons. The purpose of this is to ensure that all the ministry components of the church are communicating with each other so that optimal unity and effectiveness might be obtained.

## **Article VII – Church Meetings**

### **Section A – Parliamentary Rules**

If church voting shall occur at any business meeting, at such time the deacons shall determine the appropriate method of voting, including voice, standing, show of hands, or written votes. Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution and Bylaws, all matters of business shall be carried by a majority vote of the members present and voting.

## **Article VIII – Church Ordinances**

### **Section A – Baptism**

The church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. Individuals seeking baptism shall be counseled by a pastor prior to baptism.
3. The Pastor, or whomever he shall authorize, shall administer baptism.
4. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and the observance of baptism.
5. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during a worship service or may be recorded and witnessed by the church at a later date.

## **Section B – The Lord’s Supper**

The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience. By partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, members of the church commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

The church shall observe the Lord’s Supper a minimum of 2 times per year. The pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord’s Supper, the deacons being responsible for physical preparations. Any follower of Christ may participate in the Lord’s Supper.

## **Article IX – Finances**

### **Section A – Budget**

The Treasurer, in consultation with the deacons, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval a conclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other ministries and church expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for member use. It is understood that membership in the church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular and joyful giving.

### **Section B – Accounting Procedures**

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the counting team and be properly recorded in the books of the church. The deacons will supervise the audit of all church financial records. Individual records will be kept for each person who gives a monetary gift to the church.

### **Section C – Fiscal Year**

The church fiscal year shall begin on October 1 and end on September 30.

## **Article X – Other Guiding Documents**

### **Section A – Child Protection Policy**

The church shall maintain a Child Protection Policy Manual because the church is committed to a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in church programs. The Child Protection Policy shall provide guidance toward our goal of the protection of our children from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

## **Article XI – Wedding, Funerals, and Special Functions**

### **Section A — Eligibility for Marriage**

1. **Membership:** Church members are not subject to wedding or funeral service fees required by the church, but donations are accepted. Fees required by the officiating minister are subject to the minister providing services.
2. **Faith and Beliefs:** Both individuals in a wedding service must affirm their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and agree to honor Biblical principles regarding marriage.
3. **Definition of Marriage:** West Blocton First Baptist affirms that marriage is a covenant designed by God to be between one born man and one born woman. This belief is based on the teachings of Scripture and West Blocton First Baptist Church follows these teachings in the acceptance of marriage ceremonies conducted within our facilities.

### **Section B — Scheduling and Facilities Use**

1. **Approval:** All wedding/funeral dates and times must be approved by the pastor and/or the deacons to ensure availability.
2. **Facility Use Agreement:** The requesting party must sign a Facility Use Agreement outlining expectations for use of the church building, decorations, music, and other arrangements.
3. **Rehearsals:** Rehearsals must be scheduled in advance and are subject to the availability of church facilities and staff.

### **Section C — Ceremony Guidelines**

1. **Officiating Minister:** The officiating minister must be approved by the pastor and/or deacons.

### **Section D — Exceptions and Appeals**

1. **Pastoral and/or Deacon Discretion:** The pastor and/or deacons retain the right to deny a wedding, funeral or other uses of facilities request if it conflicts with the church's beliefs or schedule.
2. **Appeals Process:** In cases of disagreement, the requesting party may submit a written appeal to the church's deacons for review and final decision.

## **Section E — Cost**

1. Any wedding service for non members has a required fee of \$250.00 to be paid to the church prior to the ceremony to cover utilities, cleaning, and staffing.
2. Any funeral service for non members has a required fee of \$100.00 to use the church's sanctuary or \$250.00 if the fellowship hall is to be used as well. This fee is due prior to use. This is to cover utilities, cleaning, and staffing.
3. Any other use of the church's fellowship hall or sanctuary for non members will pay a required fee of \$100.00. If both the sanctuary and fellowship hall are needed a fee of \$250.00 is required. This fee is required prior to use. This is to cover utilities and cleaning. The use of the fellowship hall for events must be approved through the church's calendar and is subject to denial of use by the deacons.
4. If anyone needs church staff present to operate the media center for an event, they will also pay a fee of \$25 an hour to the staff present with a 2 hour minimum charge.
5. Anyone borrowing any items from the church must have the approval of the deacons. Items borrowed must be returned in a timely manner agreed upon.

## **Article XII – Amendment Procedure**

Changes to these Bylaws may be proposed by any church member. The procedure for any proposed amendment is as follows:

1. All proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing, with background and supporting documentation to the deacons for review. The deacons will present all proposals at the next scheduled business meeting in writing with a recommendation from the deacons that the church approve or oppose the proposed change. If the deacons deem it necessary, they may call the church into a special called business meeting to address the proposed amendment. In that case, a notice of no less than ten days shall be given to the church about the meeting and the proposed amendment will be published along with the notification.
2. Amendments to the Bylaws must receive a three-fourths (3/4) vote of members present and voting.

Any complete review and/or revision of the Bylaws shall be done by the deacons, or the deacons may recommend for church approval a special committee to that task.

A copy of this Constitution and Bylaws shall, at all times be kept at the church and at an offsite location along with amendments to and revisions thereof. Up to date copies shall also be maintained in the church offices and made available to any church member upon request.



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Brent White (Chairman of Deacons)

March 12, 2025

Date