

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH *of*
CRESTWOOD

Constitution
And
By-Laws

(Revised – June, 2005)

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First Baptist Church of Crestwood

Constitution and By-Laws

Articles of Incorporation

The word “Church” as used in this document refers to the First Baptist Church of Crestwood, located at 9916 East Watson Road, Crestwood, Missouri, 63126. This church is incorporated under the laws of the state of Missouri as a non-profit organization. *Official “Articles of Incorporation” are located in a separate file that is on state record and in our library.*

Statement of Faith

We believe that God is the only true living God. He is the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the universe. God exists as a Trinity—three manifestations of one God: God the Father, God the Son: Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit. God, as an expression of His love and grace for us, sent His one and only son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save us from the penalty of sin. In spite of humanity’s continued rejection of God’s plan, Jesus Christ chose to die for all of man’s sins so that we may be saved through faith to enter an eternal relationship with God. We believe that the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and serves as the basis for our beliefs. As a church body, we accept the “Baptist Faith and Message,” 1963 affirmation of basic Christian beliefs adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. *(A copy of this document is available in the church library or may be accessed at <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfmcomparison.asp>)*

Mission Statement

Through Jesus Christ we worship, teach, and lead others to know Him by serving the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of all people.

Purpose/Beliefs

The purpose of the Church is to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. (Matthew 22:36-40; 28:18-20) NIV

First Baptist Church of Crestwood is organized around five core biblical principles:

Worship – “To praise and celebrate God’s glory as a body of believers by public worship and personal devotion.” (Psalm 99:9; Matthew 4:10; Deuteronomy 6:13) NIV

Fellowship – “To pray, support, and share our lives together as a family of God.” (Philippians 2:1-2; 1 John 1; Matthew 22:36-40) NIV

Discipleship – “To educate and inspire believers toward Christian maturity. To promote personal and spiritual growth through scripture reading and prayer.” “Our goal is to produce fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.” (Exodus 18:20; Isaiah 28:26; Romans 15:4; Colossians 3:16) NIV

Ministry – “To serve our community and the world through meeting spiritual, physical and emotional needs.” (Galatians 6:9-10; Matthew 20:20-27; 25:35-40) NIV

Evangelism – “To preach, teach and live the Gospel, so that all may hear the Good News that Jesus Christ died and was resurrected to provide the way to a personal relationship with God.” (Matthew 28:18-20; John 3:16-17; Acts 1:8) NIV

Church Leadership

- **Professional Staff: Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors, Additional Staff**
- **Deacon Body**
- **Support Teams: Ministry, Leadership, Business**

General:

The leadership structure is designed to effectively handle the affairs and manage the resources of the church. Leadership candidates are voted on by the church body in accordance with these by-laws. All leadership team positions are held for one year unless otherwise noted. Those who accept an elected position are to serve in their appointed tasks' to the best of their abilities in accordance with God's Word (Col. 3:23) NIV. ¹Team leaders are responsible for selecting their team. All leaders must be members of the FBCC church body. The following describe the function and duties of our church leadership.

For additional information about hiring/firing/resignation and/or additional policies please refer to our operations and procedure appendix.

¹The nominating team is selected as described on page 3.

Professional Staff

Senior Pastor:

The Senior Pastor is the shepherd of this body of believers. Through a passion and knowledge of God's Word, the Senior Pastor is responsible for teaching the Message of Jesus Christ. This pastor/teacher will demonstrate the Message by example, by stimulating spiritual growth and by providing counsel and care for both believers and non-believers. The Senior Pastor will guide and aid the Professional Staff in performing their duties to support this purpose driven body of believers. *For additional information about hiring/firing/resignation and/or additional policies please refer to our operations and procedure appendix.*

Associate Pastors:

Associate Pastors will carry out the ministries of music, youth, senior adults, etc. at the discretion of the Senior Pastor. They will assist the Senior Pastor and perform their duties to the best of their abilities to support this purpose driven body of believers. *For additional information about hiring/firing/resignation and/or additional policies please refer to our operations and procedure appendix.*

Additional Staff:

Additional Support Staff will be added by the Senior Pastor in cooperation with the Personnel Team to carry out the daily business/maintenance of the church. *For additional information about hiring/firing/resignation and/or additional policies please refer to our operations and procedure appendix.*

Deacons

Deacons are to assist the Senior Pastor in meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the church body. Deacons are to support the church body's vision and various ministries offered by the church. *For additional information about hiring/firing/resignation and/or additional policies please refer to our operations and procedure appendix.*

Support Teams

Ministry Team:

The Ministry Team, led by the Senior Pastor, is composed of all ¹Pastoral Staff and current ministry leaders. Its purpose is to meet, at least quarterly, to propose ideas, strategize and implement events and campaigns for the church body. The Ministry Team will fulfill its task by pursuing a purpose-driven model of service.

¹Pastoral Staff represents the Senior Pastor and all Associate Pastors.

Leadership Teams:

Personnel Team:

The Personnel Team is responsible for maintaining and evaluating all Professional Staff and other salaried personnel in accordance with these by-laws. *For additional information about hiring/firing/resignation and/or additional policies please refer to our operations and procedure appendix.*

Nominating Team:

The Nominating Team is responsible for reviewing and recommending qualified candidates as volunteer leaders for the following: Personnel, Finance, Trustees, Building and Grounds, Church Clerk, By-laws, Discipleship Teams and Ministry Teams. This team, consisting of 5-7 members, is selected by the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors, and the Chairman of Deacons and approved by church vote. Leadership recommendations from the Nominating Team will be addressed as needed during business meetings and agreed upon by church vote.

Discipleship Team:

The Discipleship Team is responsible for reviewing and suggesting material for ongoing bible studies, Vacation Bible School (VBS), AWANA, small groups and children's ministries. The Discipleship Team leader is responsible for maintaining and evaluating current discipleship leaders. All discipleship leaders must be members of this church body. Leadership recommendations from the Discipleship Team will be addressed as needed during business meetings and agreed upon by church vote.

Business Teams:

Finance Team:

The Finance Team is responsible for all financial aspects of this church. *For additional information about hiring/firing/resignation and/or additional policies please refer to our operations and procedure appendix.*

Trustees Team:

Trustees, consisting of three members, are to serve as the legal custodians of this church's property. They are to take all necessary measures for its protection and management. Trustees have the duty to recommend to the church the purchase and sale of property and the creation of debt and obligations binding to the church. They are responsible for the annual inspection of all real, fixed and installed church-owned property. Trustees are responsible to annually review the property/liability insurance maintained by the church. They are also responsible for selecting a certified public accountant and securing the audit report for the fiscal year. Trustees will serve as the Board of Directors for this Corporation.

Building/Grounds Team:

The Building and Grounds Team provides for the normal care and maintenance of both the exterior and interior of this church property. Periodic inspection, preventive and corrective maintenance, and repair of church property will be performed by this team. Inspection and work requiring skilled professionals will be presented to the church body for approval on contracts exceeding \$5,000. All such contracts shall fall within the Building/Grounds approved church budget or will be submitted to the church body for formal approval.

Church Clerk:

The Church Clerk serves as the custodian of church records. These include, but are not limited to, current membership, baptisms, and deaths within the church family. Additional duties include recording all church business meetings, reports from leaders and teams, and conducting church correspondence. The Church Clerk will serve as the Secretary of the Corporation and the Registered Agent for the Corporation.

By-Laws Team:

This team, consisting of 5 members, is responsible for maintaining and recommending amendments to the constitution and bylaws of this church. *For additional information about hiring/firing/resignation and/or additional policies please refer to our operations and procedure appendix.*

Church Membership

General:

As a purpose driven body of believers we reserve the right to determine qualifications and conditions of membership. Prior to joining the church we encourage that all persons seeking membership complete CLASS 101. This class provides an overview of our basic beliefs and outlines expectations for church membership. All individuals completing CLASS 101 will be encouraged to sign a covenant of commitment to this local body of believers. Final acceptance into membership will occur after a simple majority vote of this church body at the conclusion of a worship service or a business meeting.

Class 101 will be led by a member of the pastoral staff or qualified church leader.

How to join our church:

1. By making a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and believers' baptism.
If you have recently confessed your faith in Jesus Christ we require that you follow his example of being baptized by immersion—"dipping under" the water. This is an act of Christian obedience and serves as a public witness of your new life in Christ.
2. By transferring your membership from another Baptist church.
If you are presently a member of another Baptist church you can simply transfer your membership to this church. This is sometimes referred to as "moving your church letter." Our church clerk will assist you in this matter.
3. By statement of faith.
If you are coming from another denomination and have already participated in believers' baptism you may join our church by "a statement of your faith" in Jesus Christ. You will not be asked to be re-baptized.
4. By baptism, when coming from a church of another denomination.
If you are a member of a church of another denomination and have confessed your faith in Jesus Christ but have never been baptized by immersion you may join our church by statement of your faith and believers' baptism. Many adults choose to join our church in this way.

Explanation of believers' baptism:

We believe that the Bible teaches that baptism should 1) occur after we have expressed faith in Jesus Christ; 2) be by immersion—the only way it is pictured in the New Testament; 3) be a conscious and willing choice.

We do not practice infant baptism or confirmation. We do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Membership Duties:

It is the duty of each member to actively support the leadership, organization, and mission of the church in carrying out Christ's "Great Commission" (Matthew 28:19-20) by serving the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of all people.

Membership Termination:

Termination of church membership will be approved by a majority vote at any business meeting for part a, b, and d. Part c requires a ballot vote as described under church meetings/voting.

- a) A letter of recommendation for any member in good standing will be issued upon the request of any church of like faith and order.
- b) As a matter of church policy, any member who joins a church of unlike faith and order will be removed from the church roll by approval of this church.
- c) Should a member become an offense to the church by reason of consistent immoral or unchristian conduct or prolonged inactivity the church may terminate membership. This will only occur after all efforts at reconciliation and due notice have been given following the biblical principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1.
- d) Death will automatically terminate membership.

Redemption, rather than punishment, will be the criteria by which every member and membership issue is evaluated.

Operation and procedures Appendix

Senior Pastor

- a) The Senior Pastor will serve as President of this Corporation.
- b) The Senior Pastor must meet the requirements from Hebrews 5:1-4 and I Timothy 3:1-7 as interpreted by this church body.
- c) The Senior Pastor will ¹vote for Nominating Team candidates and serve as a non-voting member of all other teams and auxiliary organizations of the church.
- d) The Senior Pastor has the ability to form ministries necessary to carry out tasks voted on by the Ministry Team without need for a church vote.
- e) The Senior Pastor is responsible for administering the Lord's Supper and Baptism.
- f) The Senior Pastor will be chosen in the following manner whenever a vacancy occurs. The Personnel Team will interview qualified male candidates and bring one nominee at a time for consideration by the church body. The election will be by secret ballot with at least one week's public notice of that election date. An affirmative three-fourths vote of those present on the election date is necessary to hire the nominee.
- g) In the event of resignation, written notice should be given to the Personnel Team thirty days prior to the effective date of resignation.
- h) The Senior Pastor will be released in the following manner. The Personnel Team may make a recommendation to the church body to call a meeting for dismissal based on annual reviews and/or signed petition representing 20 separate member families. This action requires two weeks prior written public notice and announcement at a regular service. The Chairman of Deacons will mediate the meeting and allow all sides to defend their actions. Voting will be by written ballot. If three-fourths of the membership present votes to remove the senior pastor, his service will be terminated immediately. All subsequent compensation is at the discretion of the Personnel Team in cooperation with the Finance Team under signed agreement.
- i) In the event of the resignation, absence, death, or other inability of the Senior Pastor to fulfill his duties, the Personnel Team in cooperation with associate pastors and the chairman of deacons will take appropriate action necessary to carry on the work of the church.

¹ Voting will be done in reference to the Nominating Team section on p3

Associate Pastors/Support Staff

- a) The Personnel Team will interview qualified candidates in conjunction with the senior pastor for hiring additional Associate Pastors/Support Staff necessary to carry out the mission and conduct the business of the church.
- b) Associate Pastors must meet the requirements from Hebrews 5:1-4 and I Timothy 3:1-7 as interpreted by this church body.
- c) Associate Pastors will ¹vote for Nominating Team candidates and serve as non-voting members of all other teams and auxiliary organizations of the church.
- d) The hiring, firing, and resignation of Associate Pastors and or Support Staff will be handled in the same manner as the Senior Pastor.

¹ Voting will be done in reference to the Nominating Team section on p3

Deacons

- a) The Deacon Chairman will serve as Vice-President of this Corporation.
- b) In addition to serving their church families, they will assist the Senior Pastor in administering the Lord's Supper and Baptism.
- c) A candidate for the Deacon Body must be a member of this church, age 25 and older, and meet the requirements from Acts 6:1-6 and I Timothy 3:8-12 as interpreted by this church body.
- d) A list of all eligible male candidates will be provided to the church body annually during the month of April and voted in May.
- e) Deacons are asked to serve based on the total number of votes given to eligible candidates.
- f) The total number of candidates asked to serve will be determined by the number required to complete the active Deacon Body.
- g) The Deacon Body will consist of one deacon for a maximum of twenty-five resident church families as determined by the church membership as of **April** 1 of each year.
- h) Deacons will serve up to a 3 year term on the active deacon body. A rotation schedule for expiring terms will be arranged so that no more than one-third of the active Deacon Body will be replaced in any given year. An active Deacon whose term expires will not be eligible for re-election for one year.
- i) Ordination for a Deacon candidate will be considered by the Deacon body after one year of service. Upon qualification and support of the Deacon Body the candidate must decide whether or not to become ordained. In the event that the church or an apprentice Deacon chooses not to pursue ordination the Deacon candidate will no longer serve on the Deacon Body.

Personnel Team

- a) The Personnel Team, consisting of 5-7 members, is responsible for recruiting and releasing all professional staff.
- b) In the event of recruiting any Professional Staff, the Personnel Team and 2 additional at-large ²members selected and approved by the church will present all new staff recommendations to be voted on by the church body.
- c) In the event of releasing any Professional Staff, the Personnel Team will bring a recommendation to the church body for a vote.
- d) They are to provide the job descriptions and personnel policies not covered in this document for all Professional Staff.
- e) The Personnel Team will conduct annual reviews of work performance and moral character for all Professional Staff unless additional reviews are deemed necessary.
- f) This team will work in cooperation with the Finance Team on all issues related to Professional Staff compensation.

²Additional members will be nominated and voted on during a called business meeting prior to initiating the recruitment of any professional staff.

Finance Team

- a) The Treasurer will serve as the Chief Financial Officer of this corporation and the custodian of church funds and be bonded to the church and bank.
- b) This team will consist of 3-5 church members including the treasurer.
- c) The Treasurer will disburse church funds in accordance with the latest approved budget. All disbursements over \$2,500 require the signature of the Treasurer and one of the Trustees.
- d) This team will establish and supervise all church financial records and books of account.
- e) The Finance Team will submit account records for the fiscal year to be audited annually by an external public accountant.
- f) They will provide annual comprehensive statements for each church member showing regular and special contributions given by January 31 of the new calendar year.
- g) The Finance Team will also prepare and submit a proposed budget at a designated business meeting for the church body to approve.
- h) The Treasurer may call for a special business meeting to recommend budget revisions requiring a church vote by giving at least 1 week advanced notice of the meeting.
- i) No member of this church body has the power to create debt or other obligation for this church unless given permission by the treasurer in accordance with the current approved church budget. Any unbudgeted expenditures exceeding \$250 must have prior approval by the Finance Team.

Church Meetings

General:

This church will meet regularly every Sunday morning to worship the one true God and proclaim the Good News of Salvation through His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Additional worship services will be planned according to the spiritual needs of this body. Regular business meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of every other month. The annual budget meeting is held in January. Business/ministry meetings may be called at other times as deemed necessary. Notice of all meetings will be given by both verbal/written announcement or in Sunday worship services immediately prior to the meeting, unless the leadership of the church agrees that extreme urgency renders such notice impractical.

Rules of Order:

Business meetings of this church will be governed by Robert's Rules of Order. The By-Laws Team leader will serve as moderator. The Chairman of Deacons will serve as moderator in the absence of the By-Laws Team Leader.

Voting:

Every member in attendance at any regular or special business meeting is eligible to one vote on any motion brought before the church at such meeting. Membership includes the right to vote on: 1) hiring/firing of all professional staff 2) active deacons 3) elected church leaders 4) church budget 5) property issues 6) amending by-laws 7)¹ membership acceptance/termination. At least thirty members, a quorum, must be present in business meetings for which a church body vote is needed. Team/group (non-business) meetings must have fifty percent of authorized membership. A simple majority of votes cast will determine if a motion passes or fails, unless otherwise noted. In the case of a tie vote, the motion is lost. The moderator does not cast the tie-breaking vote. A vote may not be cast in absentia unless said member is physically incapacitated. A written ballot will be used on the following matters: hiring/firing of professional staff, ² termination of church membership, amending the by-laws and any time a ballot vote is deemed necessary. Ballot votes need a three-fourths majority to pass. ³ Deacon voting will be performed as previously described.

¹ Refers to membership termination part A, B, & D from page 5

² Refers to membership termination part C from page 5

³ Refers to Deacon operation and procedure appendix part C-F from page 6

Lord's Supper and Baptism

The Lord's Supper will be observed monthly. Baptism will be by immersion, as modeled by Jesus and practiced by the New Testament Church, symbolizing Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. This will be done as often as necessary.

Licensing and Ordaining

General:

Our mission is to provide training and equip men and women who identify a specific call to vocational Christian ministry. (Preaching, Music, Education, Missions, etc.) Licensing and ordination are the formal means by which our church body affirms God's call in the lives of those who wish to be "set apart" for ministry.

Licensing:

Any individual seeking to be licensed to ministry must be a member of this church body. This person should exhibit a clear call to ministry, Christ-like character and a commitment to the local church. A candidate for licensing will be recommended to the church by the Pastoral Team and/or Deacon Body and must be affirmed by a three-fourths vote of the church body.

Ordination:

Candidates for Ordination will be recommended to the church by the Pastoral Team and/or Deacon body. The Ordination of an individual to the gospel ministry or vocational Christian ministry will be affirmed by a three-fourths vote of the church body.

The Ordination of Deacons who serve our fellowship will follow one year of faithful Deacon Ministry and be affirmed by a three-fourths vote of the church body. An ordination service will be planned and conducted by the current deacon body in cooperation with the Pastoral Team for all candidates that accept.

Amendments

Any proposed changes to the current by-laws will be announced by written/verbal communication and copies distributed in a Sunday morning worship service 1 month prior to the stated meeting. Amendments must pass by a three-fourths majority written vote of members present at stated meeting.

Affiliations

First Baptist Church of Crestwood is an autonomous local body of believers recognized as a participating member of the St. Louis Metro Baptist Association, the Missouri Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.