



northside
BAPTIST CHURCH
All are welcome | Clinton, Mississippi

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CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We declare and establish this Constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith and so that this body may be governed in an orderly manner. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this Church and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches of the same faith.

Article I - Name

The name of this Church shall be Northside Baptist Church of Clinton, Mississippi. This Church operates as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Mississippi.

Article II - Mission

The mission of this Church is to celebrate God's grace and follow the movement of the Holy Spirit, allowing any person, without exception, who professes Jesus as Lord to participate in any capacity with this fellowship.

We **proclaim** through worship and missions the good news that God is loving and forgiving.

We **care** through a fellowship of loving, mutually supportive believers who will strengthen each other and will help each other achieve Christian maturity.

We **share** our faith and resources through the witness to others by example and deed.

We **grow** through our worship, Christian education, and witness by encouraging others to participate in a spirit of openness, allowing people to raise their awareness of human needs through a greater understanding of the grace and love of God.

Article III - Statement of Faith

The standard of faith shall be that as set forth in the Old and New Testaments. The 1963 Baptist Faith and Message may serve as a guide to the faith.

Article IV - Church Covenant

The members of this Church covenant together with the Lord and with each other to:

- (1) love and obey Christ;
- (2) love and serve those in this community of faith and the larger community;
- (3) meet faithfully for worship, fellowship, and Christian education; and,
- (4) give of our financial resources to this fellowship to further the Kingdom of God.

Article V - Polity

This Church shall be governed by and with the consent of its members, each of whom shall have equal right as to voice and vote, without preference one over another.

Article VI - Denominational Relationships

The government of this Church is vested in the members who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. To that end, the Church may choose to relate to Baptist groups as the congregation deems appropriate.

Article VII - Baptism and the Lord's Supper

This Church practices believer's baptism by immersion and regularly celebrates communion which is open to all believers who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Article VIII - Amendments

The congregation may amend these articles by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at a regular business or at a special meeting called for the purpose. Notice giving the wording of such proposed amendments will be given at least thirty (30) days previous thereto by at least two of the following methods:

- (1) giving notice from the pulpit at a regular worship service;
- (2) publishing the notice in the church newsletter; and/or,
- (3) mailing and/or emailing the notice to each household of the Church based on the household's communication preference.

Amendments to this Constitution become effective at the close of the business session at which they are adopted.

BYLAWS

Article I - Membership

Section I - Full Membership

Any person may, upon request at a worship service, or by an interview with a member of the ministerial staff, become a member of this Church:

- (1) by profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, to be followed by baptism,
- (2) by transfer of letter from another Baptist church,
- (3) by statement of former membership in a Baptist church, or
- (4) by statement of membership in a Christian church of another denomination and baptismal experience according to the practices of that church.

Section II - Associate Membership

Any person may, upon request at a worship service, or by an interview with a member of the ministerial staff, become an associate member of this Church. This category of membership exists for a person who wishes to maintain ties or affiliation with another Christian congregation but wishes to serve with the members of this Church. An associate member is entitled to the same privileges as a full member except they may not serve as a deacon.

Section III - New Member Orientation

The Church encourages new members to participate in membership orientation under the direction of the deacons and/or the ministerial staff.

Section IV - Termination of Membership

The Church may terminate a member's membership:

- (a) at the member's death;
- (b) upon a written request by or on behalf of the member whose membership is to be terminated; and/or,
- (c) with the votes of three-fourths of members present at a regular business meeting.

Article II - Church Meetings

Section I - Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday for worship and at other times as the Church shall decide. The worship services are open to all people.

Section II - Business Meetings

Subsection I - Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held quarterly on the second Sunday in February, the third Sunday in May, the second Sunday in August and the second Sunday in November. A proposed agenda will be provided prior to the business meeting. A report on membership changes will be included on the agenda.

Subsection II - Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings may be called by the chairperson of the diaconate or the pastor after advance notice in at least one regular business meeting or worship service of the Church. No business shall be transacted at a special meeting other than that stated in the announcement.

Subsection III - Quorum

The members of the Church in attendance at any business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Subsection IV - Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order (Modern Edition) is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church when not otherwise outlined in these bylaws.

Subsection V - Exigent Circumstances

If exigent circumstances render in-person business meetings impracticable, a business meeting may be held virtually.

Article III - Corporate Structure

Section I - Organization

The membership of Northside Baptist Church constitutes a duly organized non-profit corporation pursuant to the laws of the state of Mississippi.

Section II - Corporate Meetings

Regular business meetings held pursuant to Article II, Section II, Subsection I also constitute corporate business meetings.

Section III - Budgetary Process

A proposed budget shall be announced along with the agenda for the February business meeting. Options for methods by which to vote on the proposed budget will be announced along with the agenda for the February business meeting. Options for voting methods may include in-person voting, online voting, and/or phone voting. Prior to the vote on the proposed budget, a forum shall be held to discuss the proposed budget. The vote on the proposed budget will be conducted without discussion. All votes must be cast prior to or during the business meeting.

Section IV - Officers

Subsection I - President

The chairperson of the deacons shall be the president of the Corporation.

Subsection II - Secretary

The church clerk shall be the secretary of the Corporation.

Subsection III - Treasurer

The church treasurer shall be the treasurer of the Corporation.

Section V - Trustees

The Nominating Committee shall nominate and the Church shall elect three trustees who will hold in trust the property of the Church. One of these trustees shall be elected each year to serve a three-year term. The trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the Church authorizing each such action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, or purchase or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required.

Article IV - Church Leaders

Section I - Ministerial Staff

Subsection I - Definition

The ministerial staff shall be composed of ministers as established by the Church.

Subsection II - Ministerial Search Committee

The Committee on Committees shall recommend a search committee with a temporary chair to fill vacancies in the ministerial staff. The Ministerial Search Committee shall consist of seven members and shall be elected by the Church in business session. The temporary chairperson will convene the initial meeting at which time the search committee will elect its own officers.

Subsection III - Employment of Ministers

The call of a minister shall take place at a business meeting called for that purpose, with at least one week's notice given in a mailed and/or emailed communication to all the membership and by announcement at the preceding Sunday morning worship service. The Ministerial Search Committee shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one person at a time. Conditions of employment shall be recommended in consultation with the Finance Committee and the Personnel Committee and shall be a part of the recommendation presented to the church. Election shall be by ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present being necessary for a choice.

Subsection IV - Termination of Ministerial Staff

A minister, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the minister's request or upon the Church's request through the diaconate. Absent emergency circumstances, a minister shall give at least two weeks' notice at the time of resignation before terminating their ministerial responsibilities.

In the event of a motion to terminate the minister, such motion shall be referred to the Personnel Committee for consultation and review for a period of thirty days. During this time the Personnel Committee shall use the services of an outside mediator in an attempt at reconciliation. After thirty days, the motion shall return to the agenda of the Church at a special business meeting pursuant to Article II, Section II, Subsection II. Should the Church vote to terminate a minister, the termination is effective immediately upon the votes of all members present. Upon termination, a minister shall be entitled to severance pay equal to one-sixth annual compensation.

In instances of egregious malfeasance or felonious charges, the diaconate may modify the ordinary termination process. The Church's Personnel Manual contains detailed procedures for termination in such instances. In such instances, a minister shall not be entitled to severance pay.

Subsection V - Personnel Manual

Though not legally binding, the Personnel Manual serves as a guide for staff members.

Section II - Non-Ministerial Staff

Subsection I - Definition

Non-ministerial staff shall be composed of positions approved by the Church in a business session.

Subsection II - Employment of Non-Ministerial Staff

The Personnel Committee shall oversee the process of hiring non-ministerial staff when a vacancy occurs. The ministerial staff, church leadership, and/or committees that oversee the vacant position will recommend qualified applicants to the Personnel Committee.

If an increase in the current budget should be required, such an increase must be approved by the Church prior to any recommendation to fill the vacancy.

The Personnel Committee will have responsibility for evaluating the need to change or abolish staff positions at the recommendation of the Church leadership and/or committees. Such a recommendation must be approved by the Church.

Subsection III - Termination of Non-Ministerial Staff

An employee shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the employee's request or upon action of the Personnel Committee. An employee shall give at least two weeks' notice at the time of resignation before terminating their responsibilities as an employee.

Section III - Diaconate

Subsection I - Duties

In accordance with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the Church. The duties of a deacon are to:

- (a) undergird the ministerial staff in providing care for church members and other persons in the community;
- (b) attend diaconate meetings and retreats and participate in the established ministry of the diaconate;
- (c) lead the Church in worship, witness, education, and ministry;
- (d) promote and encourage stewardship in the Church;
- (e) oversee the ministerial staff, including conducting an annual review;
- (f) participate in the integration of new church members;
- (g) perform such other tasks as the membership may delegate.

Subsection II - Qualifications

To serve as a deacon, a person must be at least twenty-one years of age and have been a full member of the Church for at least one year. The person is expected to be an active participant in the programs of the Church and a regular contributor. The person must not have been an active deacon in this Church for a period of at least one year.

Subsection III - Number

The church membership shall elect no fewer than one deacon for approximately every twenty persons of the Church.

Subsection IV - Term of Service

Each deacon elected shall serve as an active deacon for a period of three years and until their successor shall have been elected. Each year the term of service of approximately one-third of the number of deacons shall expire, and an election shall be held to fill these vacancies. A deacon shall be ineligible to serve as an active deacon for one year immediately following the expiration of such deacon's term except when a person is serving an unexpired term of one year or less. Active deacons shall serve on a calendar-year basis.

Subsection V - Election

Deacons will be elected in November from a slate consisting of no more than double the number of vacancies in the diaconate. The number of candidates on the slate will be determined by the Deacon Election Committee. The candidates will be chosen in the following manner:

- (a) A number of nominees equivalent to the number of vacancies will be chosen from a Church-wide vote concluding on the third Sunday in October during the worship service. Each church member will have had the opportunity to nominate a number of nominees equal to the number of vacancies in the diaconate. A list of eligible church members who have indicated they are open to serving will be circulated two weeks prior to the nomination process by the first Sunday in October. The Deacon Election Committee will maintain confidentiality as they met in person or virtually to assure that the half of the nominees receiving the highest number of nominations will be listed on the final ballot if they agree to serve.
- (b) After the Church-wide nomination process, the Deacon Election Committee will maintain confidentiality as they meet in person or virtually to nominate no more than the same number of members as decided by the church. The final list of nominees will not be publicized for at least 24 hours. These nominees will be listed on the final ballot if they agree to serve.
- (c) The slate of candidates will be publicized by the first Sunday in November. The Church will then vote on this slate of candidates. Tie votes will be resolved by the Deacon Election Committee. Voting methods may include in-person voting, virtual voting, and/or phone voting. Final tabulation of the votes will be conducted by the Deacon Election Committee and announced at the soonest opportunity.

Subsection VI - Deacon Election Committee

The Deacon Election Committee shall be comprised of those deacons whose terms expire at the end of the calendar year. The committee's responsibilities shall include:

- (a) publicizing the election process;
- (b) polling the nominees to discuss duties of deacons and to ascertain their willingness to serve; and,
- (c) counting votes and notifying elected deacons and the Church of the results. Nominees will not be informed as to whether the congregation or the committee placed their names on the ballot.

Subsection VII - Filling Unexpired Terms

In case of a deacon's death, resignation, incapacity, or unwillingness to serve, the Church may elect to fill that deacon's unexpired term upon the recommendation from the diaconate. The election process may follow a procedure similar to the one prescribed in Article IV, Section IV, Subsection VI but may be modified by the diaconate depending on the onset and length of the unexpired term.

Subsection VIII - Meetings

The diaconate shall have regular monthly meetings. The January monthly meeting shall be an organizational meeting. A copy of the Deacon Handbook will be provided for in-coming deacons at this meeting. In addition to its regular monthly meetings, special meetings of the diaconate may be called by the chairperson, the pastor, or any three members of the diaconate.

Subsection IX - Quorum

A majority of the diaconate shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business at any meeting of the diaconate. If less than a majority of deacons is present, the majority of the deacons present may adjourn the meeting to another time. The action of a majority of those deacons present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be an act of the diaconate.

Subsection X - Election of Deacon Officers

Newly elected deacons will join current deacons for the final diaconate meeting of the calendar year. The purpose of this meeting will be to elect a chairperson, a chair-elect, and a secretary. These officers shall be nominated by the Deacon Election Committee and elected by a majority vote of those deacons serving during the coming calendar year.

Subsection XI - Duties of Deacon Officers

The chairperson of the diaconate shall preside at all monthly diaconate meetings and shall serve as church moderator as well as president of the Corporation. The chair-elect of the diaconate shall preside at monthly meetings in the absence of the chairperson and shall serve as church moderator in the absence of the chairperson. The secretary of the diaconate shall record minutes of each meeting and report them to the diaconate at each monthly meeting.

Section IV - Church Moderator

The chairperson of the diaconate shall serve as the church moderator. The moderator shall preside at all business meetings. In the absence of the moderator, the chair-elect of the diaconate shall preside. In the absence of both the chairperson and the chair-elect, the church clerk shall call the Church to order and preside over the election of an acting moderator.

Section V - Church Clerk

The Nominating Committee shall nominate, and the Church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer. The church clerk shall keep a record of all actions of the church. The church clerk shall also serve as secretary of the Corporation pursuant to Article III, Section III, Subsection II. In the absence of the church clerk, the moderator will appoint an acting clerk.

Section VI - Church Treasurer

The Nominating Committee shall nominate, and the Church shall elect annually a treasurer as its financial officer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to oversee the receipt and disbursement of all money given to the Church. It shall also be the duty of the church treasurer to provide at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding time period. The church accounts and finances may be reviewed annually by a certified public accountant selected by the Finance Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee to determine annually the scope of any review. It shall be the responsibility of the church treasurer to receive any review report and present it to the Church at the February business meeting. Routine acts of the church treasurer may be delegated pursuant to the financial procedures and policies adopted by the Church. The church treasurer shall also serve as the treasurer of the Corporation pursuant to Article III, Section III, Subsection III.

Article V – Church Committees

Section I - Structure

Committees shall assist the ministerial staff in planning and directing the programs and activities of the church. No policy or program changes or the expenditure of non-budgeted funds will be initiated without the approval of the church.

Section II - Election

Members of the standing committees shall be nominated by the appropriate committee, as specified in Article V, Section 3, and elected annually by the church. Members of standing committees shall serve rotating terms of three years.

Section III - Committees

Subsection I - Committee on Committees

The Committee on Committees annually will nominate persons to fill vacancies and will recommend to the church the need for, size of, and purpose of committees. The Committee on Committees will publish a handbook detailing the responsibilities of each of the standing committees. The Committee on Committees will be nominated by the Nominating Committee and will consist of six members, who will serve a one year term. One member will be the immediate past chair of the deacons. The committee will be elected at the August business meeting.

Subsection II - Nominating Committee

The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to lead the church in the staffing of all church-elected leadership positions filled by volunteers, including clerk, treasurer, and trustees and excluding committee members except the Committee on Committees. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of six members, two to be elected each year. The Nominating Committee should present a complete slate of officers and leaders in the August business meeting.

Subsection III - Other Committees

A list of other standing committees will be maintained by the Committee on Committees. Responsibilities of each committee are listed in the Committee Handbook published by the Committee on Committees.

Article VI - Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a vote taken at any regular business meeting or special called business meeting of the Church. The proposed amendment(s) and date of the presentation for a vote shall be included in a mailed and/or emailed church communication to all members at least two weeks in advance of the vote. Adoption of proposed amendments shall be by majority vote of church members present and voting. Amendments to the bylaws become effective at the close of the business meeting at which they were adopted. The Church shall review these bylaws every five years.