

The CONSTITUTION of JEFFERSON PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

Adopted September 26, 2012  Charlottesville, VA

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WE ARE A BODY OF BELIEVERS WHO HAVE BEEN LED BY THE SPIR-
it of the One God Almighty to receive His Son Jesus as our
personal Savior and Lord and have been baptized in the name of the
Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, to secure
and preserve the principles of our faith the liberties of each individual
church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to
other churches, and to conduct ourselves in an orderly manner con-
sistent with God's will, we solemnly and joyfully unite in Christ our
Head as Jefferson Park Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia, in
accordance with the following articles.

I. Statement of Faith

Foremost, we accept the canonized sixty-six books of the Holy Bible
as authoritative, inerrant, and sufficient in matters of faith, word, and
practice.

We are orthodox. We affirm the Nicene Creed.

We are Protestant. We affirm the five solas of the Reformation: Scrip-
ture alone, faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, glory to God alone.

We are Baptist. We affirm the Baptist Faith and Message (2000).

II. Purpose

The chief purpose of Jefferson Park Baptist Church is to glorify God
and enjoy Him forever. To this end, we will faithfully proclaim the
gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ both locally and beyond, making and
living as His disciples through the power of the Holy Spirit.

III. Covenant

AS BAPTIZED BELIEVERS IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WE GLADLY enter into this covenant as members of Jefferson Park Baptist Church. By God's grace, we therefore dedicate ourselves to live together as His disciples. (*Galatians 3:26-28; 1 Peter 2:4-5; James 5:12*)

- » We will regularly join in public worship, Bible study, and prayer as a church family. We will also observe baptism and the Lord's Supper, the ordinances of Christ. (*Ephesians 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 26:26-29; 28:19; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29*)
- » We will maintain private and family worship, Bible study, and prayer. We will uphold godly homes and marriages where Christ is honored. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; Genesis 2; Deuteronomy 6; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 5:22-6:4*)
- » We will be good stewards of our time and resources. We will fulfill our call to serve the body with our gifts. We will also be good stewards of our bodies, not abusing ourselves through addiction or excess. (*Matthew 25:19-23; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 5:18*)
- » We will watch over each other in brotherly love. We will pray for each other. We will participate in each other's joys, and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows. (*John 13:34-35; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:1-3*)
- » We will humbly warn a brother who is in danger of falling into disobedience or error. We will speak the truth in love, be slow to take offense, and be eager to seek swift and lasting reconciliation. (*Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:15*)
- » We will pray for our leaders and submit to them as they lead us to Christ through Scripture, teaching and correcting with gentleness. (*Ephesians 4:11-16; 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3*)
- » We will faithfully proclaim the gospel and evangelize the lost. We will cooperate with other believers to advance the cause of Christ in whatever ways God leads us. (*Matthew 28:18-20*)
- » If we leave this church, we will, in a timely manner, seek to join with another church of like purpose and doctrine, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant. (*Hebrews 10:25*)

IV. Membership

Section 1. Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration; who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration; and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible (*Acts 2:38-41*). Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and strive to keep the commitments expressed in the Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership.

Section 2. Admission of Members

To be admitted into membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3. Discipline

Formative discipline is the objective of much of the church's activity. Indeed, we are charged by our Lord to "make disciples." However, because of the presence of sin in our lives, occasions do arise where it is necessary for the church corporately to call upon individuals or groups to repent of certain actions. The purpose of such corrective discipline is for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined; for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them; for the purity of the church as a whole; for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians; and supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties expressed in the Covenant or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church. The elders shall follow the biblical guidelines for corrective church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 12:18; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-7; Galatians 6:1; and 1 Timothy 5:19-20.

Corrective church discipline should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Anyone with a charge against a fellow member shall attempt to address the concern in accordance with Jesus' instructions in Matthew 18. Should one's brother or sister in Christ refuse to listen, the concern shall be taken to the elders. The elders shall be entrusted with the responsibility of pursuing both formative and corrective discipline, including admonition; suspension

from the Lord's Table; removal from ministry, service, and teaching responsibilities; and, if necessary, recommendation of removal from membership. A two-thirds vote at any members' meeting with two weeks' notice is required for dismissal.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death. A person's membership may also be terminated by a two-thirds vote at any members' meeting following a voluntary resignation or joining with another church, or as an act of church discipline. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other reason the church deems necessary or prudent.

Any member having moved out of the local area who has not already transferred membership to another church shall be removed from membership in this church after six months, unless the elders recommend continued membership due to particular circumstances.

V. Government

First and foremost, this church and its members are under the Lordship and headship of Jesus Christ, as he is revealed in Scripture (*Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18*). The biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons (*1 Timothy 3:1-13; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5-9*), but final earthly authority is vested in the assembled congregation (*Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:5; 11:29; 15:4, 12, 22-23; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 12:27; 2 Corinthians 2:6; 1 Peter 2:5, 9-10*).

Section 1. Members

It is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote. Members shall be responsible for:

- Recommendation and approval of elders and deacons
- Approval of membership and discipline matters
- Approval of the Statement of Faith and Covenant
- Approval of the Constitution and any amendments
- Approval of the annual budget and other significant financial decisions
- Approval of mission partnerships
- Approval of such other matters as may be submitted to a vote

Only members shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Section 2. Elders

Qualifications

The church shall elect a body of elders according to the biblical qualifications and practice outlined in Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:14; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4. In accordance with 1 Timothy 2:12 and 3:2, women shall not serve as elders.

Number

The elder body shall be comprised of not fewer than three men. The total number shall be determined by the elders based on the needs of the church and the available qualified candidates.

Roles and responsibilities

The elders shall:

- Care for the body
- Shepherd the body through edification, discipleship, and equipping members for service, as well as by admonition and correction
- Be examples to the body, which they love as under-shepherds of Christ
- Lead in prayer and the ministry of the word
- Oversee public worship services and the ordinances
- Oversee teaching, appoint teachers, and protect doctrine
- Oversee the deacons and their ministries
- Evaluate and nominate elder and deacon candidates
- Appoint and oversee any committees, coordinators, and agents as needed
- Lead the church through the membership and discipline processes
- Lead the church in evangelism, outreach, missions, and mission partnerships
- Pray over and anoint the sick, when called upon
- Exercise primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff
- Approve any outside speakers or other uses of the facilities

All elders are equal in authority. All elders are uniquely gifted and should complement each other. Staff elders are called out for specific purposes as gifted.

Election

As needed the elders shall evaluate and nominate candidates for the congregation's approval. Notice of the nomination of someone to be elected and called as an elder must be given at least one month prior to the vote at a members' meeting. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for the office should ordinarily express such concern first to that candidate. If the reconciliation and understanding of both parties cannot be met, then that member should address the issue(s) to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate must express their objection to the elders at least one week before the relevant members' meeting. Each member shall cast a vote of "yes" or "no" by secret ballot for each candidate. Each candidate receiving at least a three-fourths majority of "yes" votes shall be deemed called and shall be set apart as an elder. At least annually, the congregation shall recommend potential elders.

Term

Non-staff elders are elected to a three-year term and must be elected by the process described above before beginning any new term. Having served two consecutive three-year terms, they may only be elected to the office of elder after at least a one-year sabbatical. Staff elders shall serve as continuous members of the elder body.

Preaching Elder: Qualifications and Responsibilities

The preaching elder shall be an elder. He shall have the same qualifications and perform the same duties of an elder described above, and he shall also be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and Lord's Supper, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in this Constitution. He shall not be subject to any term limit. In the absence or incapacity of the preaching elder, the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated.

Staff Elders: Hiring

The elders shall act as the search committee for a staff elder as needed. At their discretion the elders may choose to add other members to the committee. To assist the committee, the congregation shall recommend potential staff elders. The elders shall then nominate a candidate for the congregation's approval. Notice of the nomination of someone to be elected and called as a staff elder (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and, if he is married, his wife) must be given at least one month prior to the vote at a members' meeting. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for the office should ordinarily express such concern

first to that candidate. If the reconciliation and understanding of both parties cannot be met, then that member should address the issue(s) to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate must express their objection to the elders at least one week before the relevant members' meeting. Each member shall cast a vote of "yes" or "no" by secret ballot for the candidate. A candidate receiving at least a three-fourths majority of "yes" votes shall be deemed called and shall be set apart as an elder.

Termination

An elder's tenure may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and then, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Timothy 5:17–21. Any elder may be dismissed by a majority vote of the members at any members' meeting with two weeks' notice.

Organization

At least annually, the elders shall elect a non-staff elder as chairman, and any other positions as needed. The elders shall meet regularly at a time and place of their own choosing, and at other times and places as deemed necessary by the chairman. A majority of the number of active elders shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. Deacons

Qualifications

The church shall elect men as deacons according to the biblical qualifications and practice outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Philippians 1:1. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, deacons shall not exercise a ministry of spiritual authority but shall support and facilitate the elders' ministry of the word.

Number

The total number of deacons shall be determined by the elders based on the needs of the church as well as the available qualified candidates.

Roles and Responsibilities

In order to give these officers freedom, biblical guidance, and protection, the overall role and scope of the deacons, both individually and collectively, shall be determined by the elders. Deacons shall work under the authority, vision, and leadership of the elders, in accordance with Scripture, to maintain unity within the body and care for the practical needs of the church, with their primary responsibilities including (but not limited to):

- Caring for the physical needs of the church's members

- Promoting, receiving, holding, and disbursing a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.
- Maintaining and promoting the physical upkeep of properties and facilities
- Preparing and managing the church's budget under the elders' guidance
- Supervising the collection and counting of the offering
- Maintaining and promoting church and member hospitality
- Preparing and organizing for public ministry and worship, including (but not limited to): assisting with the Lord's Supper and baptism; greeting worship attenders before worship and fellowshiping with worship attenders after worship; and setting up, maintaining, and taking down equipment for church functions.

The deacons, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities to the church.

Election

As needed the elders shall evaluate and nominate candidates for the congregation's approval. Notice of the nomination of someone to be elected and called as a deacon must be given at least one month prior to the vote at a members' meeting. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for the office should ordinarily express such concern first to that candidate. If the reconciliation and understanding of both parties cannot be met, then that member should address the issue(s) to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate must express their objection to the elders at least one week before the relevant members' meeting. Each member shall cast a vote of "yes" or "no" by secret ballot for each candidate. Each candidate receiving at least a three-fourths majority of "yes" votes shall be deemed called and shall be set apart as a deacon. At least annually, the congregation shall recommend potential deacons.

Term

Deacons are elected to a three-year term and must be elected by the process described above before beginning any new term. Having served two consecutive three-year terms, they may only be elected to the office of deacon after at least a one-year sabbatical.

Termination

A deacon's tenure may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that a deacon should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and then, if need

be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any deacon may be dismissed by a majority vote of the members at any members' meeting with at least two week's notice.

Organization

At least annually, the deacons shall elect a chairman, and any other positions as needed. The deacons shall meet regularly at a time and place of their own choosing, and at other times and places as deemed necessary by the chairman. A majority of the number of active deacons shall constitute a quorum. There shall be regular communication and consultation between the elders and deacons, including reports, minutes, and attendance at each other's meetings, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 4. Administrative Positions

We recognize the practical necessity of certain administrative positions.

Moderator

The elders shall designate a moderator to preside at the members' meetings.

Trustees

Trustees shall hold in trust the title to all church properties and act as legal officers for the church. According to written instructions adopted by vote at a members' meeting and in conformance with applicable law, the trustees shall have power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any part or all of such properties and sign any legal or notarized documents pertaining to church business. There shall be three trustees, who shall be nominated annually by the elders and approved by vote at a members' meeting to serve a renewable one-year term. A trustee may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent approval by vote at a members' meeting. Should one of the trustees be unable to perform the duties of office, the remaining two may act on behalf of the church.

Clerk

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all members' meetings of the church; to preserve an accurate roll of the membership; to render reports as requested by the elders, the deacons, or the church; and to attest to official correspondence with other churches and organizations. The clerk shall be nominated annually by the deacons and approved by vote at a members' meeting to serve a renewable one-year term. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the deacons shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the clerk. The clerk may be removed from office by a decision of the deacons, or by vote at a members' meeting.

Treasurer

The treasurer shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall pay all accounts and debts promptly in compliance with the church's budget, or as duly directed, and sign all checks. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each regular members' meeting. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

The treasurer shall be nominated annually by the deacons and approved by vote at a members' meeting to serve a renewable one-year term. No active elder, deacon or paid staff member of the church shall be eligible for the office of treasurer. The treasurer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the deacons and the subsequent approval by vote at a members' meeting.

The assistant treasurer shall assist the treasurer as needed and shall be empowered to sign checks during the temporary absence of the treasurer, reporting any such activity promptly upon the treasurer's return. The assistant treasurer shall meet the same eligibility requirements and be nominated, elected, and removed in the same manner as the treasurer.

VI. Operations

Section 1. Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be a regular members' meeting at least quarterly, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership. Additional members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or by the church in a members' meeting. The date, time, and purpose of any meeting shall be announced at least two weeks before the meeting. As necessary, the elders may postpone any meeting for one week when unusual circumstances may prevent a sufficient number of members from attending.

A moderator designated by the elders shall preside at all members' meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, the members present shall constitute a quorum. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present; in addition, any member serving under the commission of this church on the mission field shall also be eligible to vote remotely.

At any members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Section 2. Budget and Finances

Each year the deacons, after consulting with the elders and receiving the input of the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. A budget shall be presented at two consecutive members' meetings prior to the start of each fiscal year. A draft budget shall be discussed at the first meeting; a budget shall be approved at the second meeting. The deacons may recommend necessary adjustments to the budget during the fiscal year.

Those who have been allocated funds in the budget may spend such allocations according to established procedure without further approval of the church as long as the treasurer who releases such funds concurs that the expenditure is within the budgeted allotment and verifies that the church has the money to cover the expenditure.

Those bringing a motion before a members' meeting to spend church funds that are not budgeted or that are in excess of a budgeted item must first confer with the deacons regarding the proposed expenditure.

The deacons may authorize individual non-budgeted expenditures of up to \$2000.00 without consulting the church in a members' meeting. Any such expenditure shall be reported at the next members' meeting.

No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

Section 3. Employees

The elders shall represent the church as an employer and shall hire, oversee, evaluate, and dismiss church staff as needed, except as elsewhere limited in this Constitution. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to the deacons or another staff member. The elders may also bring recommendations to any members' meeting for funding new staff positions.

VII. Amendments

The Statement of Faith or Covenant may be amended upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent approval by a two-thirds vote at a members' meeting with two weeks' notice, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting.

Any other article of this Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote at a members' meeting with two weeks' notice, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting.

Appendix: Confessions of Faith

Material in this Appendix is provided for reference only, and may be updated as needed.

Section 1. The Nicene Creed

- » I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
- » And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.
- » Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.
- » And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.
- » And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Source: <<http://www.reformed.org/documents/nicene.html>>. As of this writing, the original Greek and Latin texts and additional English translations are available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed>.

Section 2. The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)

Copies of the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) are available in the church office. As of this writing, it is also available online at <<http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>>.