

Proposed Constitution Changes

Special-Called Business Meeting
Sunday, September 24, 2023

- Summary of Proposed Changes
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Summary of Proposed Changes

All of the changes being proposed in both the constitution and bylaws seek to align the church's programs and ministry objectives to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. They reflect the expressed desires of our membership and align our governing documents with our current operations.

Changes to the constitution:

Section 3 identifies the church's statement of faith as the Baptist Faith and Message 1963. Given the cultural and ethical climate of today, the proposed changes identify the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as the church's statement of faith, and articulates with clarity that it be the guiding force behind how the church interprets Scripture for the purposes of operations, policies, and procedures. The changes add clarity to the church's Scriptural understanding of the sanctity of life, marriage, sexual identity and purity, so that policies that reflect those beliefs can be defended if challenged. Facility usage, hiring practices, and membership guidelines in churches are all under attack by the proponents of the sexual revolution. Updating the language to reflect the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as the church's statement of faith will help.

Section 6 defines the church covenant. The church covenant in principle is good, but it uses some language that should be updated. It seems to have come from the standard Broadman Church Covenant that is overly behavior specific and dates back to the time immediately following prohibition. The church covenant should reflect language of discernment, discretion, and restraint with regard to an overall understanding that the believer is to live carefully in this world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts accordingly. The proposed language provides the church with the ability to be consistent in the enforcement of church discipline across a broader area of behaviors. It removes language specific to the use of alcohol because while there are many dangers associated with the use of alcohol, it should not be considered a sinful violation of Scripture that warrants church discipline.

Section 7 defines the way the constitution can be amended. The church exists in an age where information can be made available without having to mail that information to last known addresses. Besides, if someone isn't actively engaged in the church enough to know that changes are being made to its governing documents, then they probably shouldn't have a voice in those changes.

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III. Statement of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message {ADD} 2000 and will conduct its services and create ministry policies that align with its stated religious convictions especially with regard to a biblical understanding of the sanctity of life, marriage, and sexual identity and purity.

(Add a line space here to separate these two paragraphs.)

This church does not subscribe to the doctrine and practices of the various cults and sects which are contrary to the teachings of the inspired Word of God, and does not endorse, encourage or practice the Charismatic or Pentecostal beliefs of speaking and/or praying in tongues. Anyone who holds these beliefs, or who practices speaking in tongues or praying in tongues, shall not hold any elected office in this church.

~~A copy of the Baptist Faith and Message is attached to the back of this constitution. Added copies may be obtained from the church office or from the Tract Editor, Baptist Sunday School Board, 127 Ninth Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.~~

{ADD} Copies of the Baptist Faith and Message may be obtained from the church office and will be distributed in new member classes. The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 is also available online at <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/>.

VI. Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God {ADD} *by Divine Grace, to repent and* receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

~~We engage will, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; not forsake the assembling of ourselves together or neglect praying for ourselves and for one another.~~

{ADD} *We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical and outwardly-focused ministry in this church as we sustain its worship, ordinances, disciplines, and doctrines.* {ADD} *We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.*

We ~~also engage~~ {ADD} *will seek* to maintain family and ~~secret~~ devotions; to ~~religiously educate~~ {ADD} *disciple* our children; to ~~seek~~ {ADD} *pray for and pursue through persuasion* the salvation of our ~~kindred and acquaintances~~ {ADD} *family and friends*; ~~to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of, intoxicating drinks as a beverage;~~ to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

{ADD} *We will seek in the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised to walk in a new life in Christ, so there is a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.*

We ~~further engage to~~ {ADD} *will watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always* {ADD} *be ready for reconciliation and mindful of* ~~the rules of our Savior~~ *biblical processes to secure it without delay.*

We moreover ~~engage~~ {ADD} *promise* that when we remove from this place we will, 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.

{ADD} *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.*

VII. Amendments

Changes in this constitution may only be made at a special called business meeting of the church ~~such business meeting~~ {ADD} *and shall be held during a Sunday morning worship service, provided such amendments shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting* at least ninety (90) days prior to the vote on the change, and provided that ~~copies of the proposed amendment(s) shall have likewise been furnished by mail to each member, at last known corrected address, at least ninety (90) days prior to the vote on the amendments~~ {ADD} *the church has made every reasonable effort to inform its members of the proposed changes.* All proposed amendments to this constitution must be presented as a recommendation to the church by, and upon approval of, the Guidelines of Faith & Practice Committee. Amendments shall be by approval of three-fourths (3/4) of all members of the church voting.

A written addendum including any amendments or changes to this constitution shall be ~~provided~~ {ADD} *made available* to all church members. The church secretary shall maintain a current, up-dated copy of this constitution, including any addenda, in the church office.