

**CONSTITUTION
of
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF REDLANDS
REDLANDS, CALIFORNIA**

As revised by the congregation on July 16, 2006

Article I - Name and Object

Sec. 1. The name of the corporation is The First Baptist Church of Redlands, California, a non- profit religious organization whose object is the worship of Almighty God as understood through Jesus Christ; the development of mutual understanding, aid, and education; the attempt to act as Christ's servants and agents on earth; and cooperation with other churches in these endeavors.

Sec. 2. The First Baptist Church of Redlands shall be affiliated with the American Baptist Churches, USA, and the Local, National, and World Councils of Churches.

Article II - Membership

Sec. 1. **Membership**: The membership of the church shall consist of persons who believe in God and in Jesus Christ, his Son, have accepted him as Lord and Savior and the New Testament as their standard of faith and practice, and pledge their commitment to the ministry of The First Baptist Church of Redlands. All members of the Church are members of the corporation and have the rights and responsibilities of full membership. Termination of membership in the church terminates membership in the corporation.

Sec. 2. **Reception of Members**: All members are received by vote of the Commission of the Diaconate or by vote of the church. Membership may be extended to those who experience faith in Christ and are baptized into the fellowship of this church or who can offer a letter of recommendation from another Christian church. Former members may be reinstated after lapse of membership. Persons whose record of membership in another Christian church is not obtainable may be received as members after a satisfactory statement of their Christian experience to the Commission of the Diaconate.

Sec. 3. **Membership Procedure**: Persons seeking membership shall present themselves before the congregation at a scheduled service and/or one of the ministers. The ministers shall guide all applicants in meeting qualifications for church membership. When an applicant appears to be qualified for membership, the minister shall present verification of qualification and the application to the chairperson of the Commission of the Diaconate for action by that commission.

Sec. 4. **Transfer of Membership**: Letters of transfer may be granted to any member upon written request, by vote of the Commission of the Diaconate or by vote of the church.

Sec. 5. **Inactive List**: Members who do not maintain an active relationship, indicated either in attendance or financial contribution, with the church for a period of two years may be placed on the inactive list by vote of the Commission of the Diaconate at any regular meeting.

Sec. 6. **Protection in Case of Dismissal of Members**: Members may be dismissed upon recommendation of the Diaconate only after a hearing and upon two-thirds vote of those present at a qualified meeting of the church. Notice of the meeting shall have been given to the membership two weeks prior to the date thereof.

**Article III -
Executive Council**

Sec. 1. **Duties:**

- a. Except where otherwise provided in this Constitution, the affairs of this corporation shall be administered by an official body to be known as the Executive Council, sometimes hereinafter referred to as the Council.
- b. It shall be the duty of the Council, in consultation with the Senior Minister, and subject to the provisions of this constitution and directives from official meetings of the church membership, to initiate and establish policies and procedures for the church, based on recommendations from the various commissions and ministers of the church where appropriate; to refer matters to the various Commissions for action; to appoint such temporary committees as may from time to time be needed; to provide general supervision of the work of Commissions, committees, and officers; and to coordinate and promote the entire program of the church.
- c. The Council shall require and review reports submitted by the respective Commissions and committees, taking such action as in its judgment may be warranted, subject only to the final authority of the church membership. It shall submit a proposed budget to the January business meeting of the church, after receiving recommendations from the Commission of Finance and Property.
- d. Subject to restrictions of the State Law, the Charter, and this Constitution, the Executive Council shall exercise all the corporate powers of this church. It shall have power and authority to purchase or otherwise acquire or dispose of any property for and in behalf of the church, to make and issue notes and other negotiable or transferable instruments, pledges, mortgages, deeds of trust, and trust agreements and do everything necessary to effect same. No transaction in excess of \$10,000 shall be entered upon without prior approval of the church. On such matters it will ordinarily seek recommendations from the Commission on Finance and Property. It shall appoint a church treasurer on recommendation of the Commission on Finance and Property. The Council shall have authority to control the number of special offerings to be taken for causes within or without the church budget. It shall have power to approve use of church facilities.
- e. The Council shall appoint and maintain a Nominating Committee.
- f. The Council shall make temporary appointments to fill Commission vacancies as provided under Article V, Sec. 4, a.

Sec. 2. **Membership:** The Executive Council shall be composed of the following officers and members of the church:

- a. Chairperson and one member elected from each of the following Commissions: Finance and Property, The Diaconate, Christian Education, Local Outreach, National and World Missions, Worship, and Pastoral Relations and Personnel.
- b. President of the local American Baptist Women's Ministries.
- c. One senior high and one college age church member may be selected by those respective groups.
- d. Moderator
- e. Vice-Moderator.
- f. Clerk.
- g. The Ministerial Staff shall be ex-officio members of the council without vote.
- h. Immediate-Past Moderator: The Immediate-Past Moderator shall act in an advisory capacity to the executive council.

Sec. 3. **Chairperson:** The Moderator shall be chairperson of the council and the Vice-Moderator shall serve in his or her absence.

Sec. 4. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Sec. 5. Corporate officers shall be the Moderator, Vice Moderator, and Clerk in their respective capacities. They shall be responsible for executing all legal documents on behalf of the corporation.

Article IV - Officers and their Duties

Sec. 1. **Officers** of the church shall consist of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and the full-time Ministerial Staff. The Ministerial Staff shall be members ex-officio, without vote, on Commissions in their areas of responsibility.

- a. **The Senior Minister**: The primary responsibility for the leadership in the spiritual ministry and program of the church shall be vested in the Senior Minister. He/she shall have duties common to the office under Baptist usage. He/she shall consult regularly with the Executive Council regarding matters of policy and procedure and shall be ex-officio member without vote of all Commissions and committees of the church. The Senior Minister shall report in writing to the church at the Annual Meeting.
- b. **Other Ministers**: Additional ministerial staff may be employed upon recommendation of the Senior Minister and approval of the Search Committee, Council, and Church, to work with the Senior Minister and in harmony with such commissions as are related to their special ministries.
- c. **Moderator**: It shall be the duty of the Moderator to preside at the business meetings of the church, to serve as chairperson of the Executive Council and to take active interest in helping the Senior Minister supervise the work of the church. He/she shall be an ex-officio (non-voting) member of all Commissions and committees, except the Nominating and Auditing Committees.
- d. **Vice-Moderator**: The Vice-Moderator shall aid the Moderator in performance of his/her duties, and exercise all the powers of the Moderator when serving in his/her absence and shall serve as a voting member of the Commission on Pastoral Relations and Personnel.
- e. **Clerk**: The Clerk shall be a member of the Executive Council and a corporate officer of the church; shall keep a complete record of the proceedings of the church; have charge of the records and keep a register of members, the dates of their admission, transfer, and death; and submit a statistical report at the Annual Meeting.
- f. **Treasurer**: The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Executive Council on recommendation of the Commission on Finance and Property. It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to (a) arrange for the timely production of a monthly financial statement of the Church, (b) review these monthly reports for accuracy and investigate any apparent anomalies or discrepancies in the report, and (c) report on this review at the monthly meeting of the Finance and Property Commission. In addition, the treasurer shall report on the year-end financial statement to the church at its January business meeting. The treasurer shall also be responsible for overseeing staff and/or consultant accounting and bookkeeping practices sufficiently to ensure that adequate systems and procedures are in place to facilitate normal and periodic audits as required by the Executive Council.
- g. **Immediate-Past Moderator**: The Immediate-Past Moderator shall act in an advisory capacity to the executive council.

Article V - Commissions and Other Elected Personnel

Sec. 1. Commissions:

- a. The following Commissions shall be elected by the church: Commission on Finance and Property; Commission of the Diaconate; Commission on Christian Education; Commission on Local Outreach; Commission on National and World Missions; Commission on Worship; and Commission on Pastoral Relations and Personnel. Each Commission shall be comprised of at least seven members with the exception of the Commission on Pastoral Relations and Personnel that shall be comprised of at least five members. Each commission is encouraged to have at least one youth member (junior high through college age).
- b. No person shall serve on more than one Commission at the same time.
- c. All Commissions are responsible to the Executive Council and subject to the ultimate authority of the church membership.
- d. Commissions shall have authority to appoint from the congregation at-large such committees as may be necessary to assist in carrying out the functions of that Commission. The chairperson of that appointed committee, if not already a member of the parent Commission, shall become an ex-officio member (without vote) of the Commission and shall report periodically to the Commission on the activities of the committee.

Sec. 2. Duties: (general)

- a. It shall be the duty of each Commission at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the church to organize by electing a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary, all of whom shall be members of the respective Commissions. It shall be the duty of the chairperson of each Commission to fulfill the normal duties of a presiding officer and to read, at its first meeting each year, the provisions of the constitution pertaining to the duties of that Commission. The Commissions shall meet regularly, hold such special meetings as may be called by the chair or on request of four members of the Commission. A majority of each Commission shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.
- b. The proceedings and recommendations of each Commission shall be reported monthly to the Executive Council and quarterly to the Church for approval and action.

Sec. 3. Duties and responsibilities of Commissions:

a. Commission of Finance and Property

- (1) The Commission shall have charge of the financial administration of the church, seeking to secure the needed funds for all general and special programs of the church. The Commission shall continually review the status of giving and of expenditures and shall carry on a year-round program of promotion, keeping the congregation informed on all financial matters. As part of this promotion program it shall be responsible for an annual endeavor to secure pledges or assurances of definite amounts to be paid on a regular basis.
- (2) The Commission shall confer with all departments of the church work as to their needs for the next year and shall prepare a budget for recommendation to the Executive Council and through it to the church membership.
- (3) The Commission shall have the authority to set up such separate funds as may be deemed necessary, with the approval of the Executive Council, and to create and maintain reasonable reserves to guarantee the proper promotion of the church's program.
- (4) The Commission shall be responsible for the orderly deposit of church receipts and the disposition of such appropriate bank accounts and investments as needed. The Commission shall be responsible for the recommendation of major purchases, acquisition or disposal of property, or for the making or issuing of notes and other negotiable or transferable instruments, pledges, mortgages, deeds of trust, and trust agreements.

- (5) The Commission shall protect and care for the property of the church, keep it adequately insured and provide for all necessary repairs and alterations to the premises. It shall employ the services and provide the necessities incidental thereto, including the fixing of salaries and bonding of persons handling money.
- (6) The Commission shall prepare and submit to the church at the January business meeting a report of its business and finances for the year.
- (7) The Commission shall annually recommend a church treasurer, to be appointed by the Executive Council, who shall be an ex-officio member (without vote) of the Commission.

b. Commission of the Diaconate

- (1) The Commission shall have a special concern for the spiritual and pastoral care of the members of the church. It shall have the duty of keeping in contact with all members, resident and non-resident, for rendering such assistance as may be necessary to the sick and shut-ins and for providing greeters for the main worship services.
- (2) The Commission shall act as the membership committee for the church, being empowered to receive members and grant letters of transfer in accord with the provisions of this Constitution and to seek to integrate new members into the full life of the church.
- (3) The Commission shall have supervision of the Fellowship Offerings in giving aid to those who are in need, with special emphasis on the parish and community.
- (4) The Commission shall be responsible for the administration of the church ordinances as arranged by the Senior Minister and the Worship Commission.
- (5) Other duties of the Commission shall include the investigation of the fitness of any member who desires a license to preach or ordination and the making of proper recommendations to the church concerning the same.

c. Commission on Christian Education

- (1) The objective of the church's educational ministry is to make available a vital and creative learning and growing experience for all persons as individuals and for each family, which will help them to grow in their trust in God and to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, thus enabling them to live abundant and faithful Christian lives, personally and as empowering agents of strength within the church and community.
- (2) The Commission shall have the responsibility for determining the church's educational policy, standards and program, for supervising and administering educational work, and for coordinating and unifying educational programs.
- (3) The Commission shall approve educational curricula, appoint capable and dedicated leadership and work with all educational groups in the selection, training, and supervision of teachers and workers. All teachers, substitutes, and persons serving in supportive administrative positions within the Sunday School shall be approved by the Commission, and be made known to the membership.
- (4) The commission shall approve sponsors, counselors, and committees as needed for youth activities and be responsible for scholarship funds designated for youth events.
- (5) The Commission shall submit a recommended budget to the Commission on Finance and Property covering projected expenses of its Christian Education program.
- (6) The Commission shall be responsible for the development and maintenance of programs that meet the needs of the congregation.
- (7) The commission shall, as far as possible, have two members whose special interest is primary education, two members whose special concern is youth and college ages and two members with special concern for adult education.

d. Commission on National and World Missions

- (1) It shall be the duty of the Commission to provide opportunities for study of worldwide mission work and to supervise all service activities of the church relating to world and national missions.
- (2) It shall lead the church in programs of study and participation in applying the gospel of Christ to specific social situations and problems in the world and national communities.
- (3) It shall prepare a budget request annually for national and world missions in conjunction with the annual budget submission to the church.

e. Commission on Local Outreach

- (1) It shall be the duty of this Commission to lead the church in programs of study and participation in applying the gospel of Christ to specific social situations and problems in the local community.
- (2) Through study programs and special emphasis, the Commission shall challenge the congregation to be more intentional and effective in evangelistic outreach.
- (3) It shall recommend for appointment, by the Executive Council, the representatives to appropriate local ecumenical organizations and shall report to the church at such times as may be deemed appropriate.
- (4) It shall prepare a budget request annually for local outreach programs in conjunction with the annual budget submission to the church.
- (5) Recognizing the long-standing and important ties between The First Baptist Church of Redlands and The University of Redlands, the Commission shall seek to work in close cooperation with the University Chaplain, other campus ministries, and with faculty and staff who are related to The First Baptist Church of Redlands. A similar relationship should be encouraged with other institutions of higher learning in the area.

f. Commission on Worship

- (1) It shall be the duty of this Commission to explore all meaningful modes of worship and to be on the lookout for especially significant and unusual forms, to analyze their effectiveness and to incorporate the best into the church's own worship program, subject to the approval of the Senior Minister and the Executive Council.
- (2) The Commission shall be responsible for arrangements for all elements in the Worship services. It shall appoint: a flower committee, a head usher and a corps of ushers.
- (3) The Commission shall act as the music committee and shall propose a budget for the ministry of music and recommend employment of appropriate personnel.

g. Commission on Pastoral Relations and Personnel

- (1) It shall be the responsibility of this Commission to:
 - a) encourage a high-level of task competence and strive to maintain harmonious relations among the professional and lay staff. In this regard, the commission will consult with the professional and lay staff concerning continuing education. The chairperson shall meet at least four (4) times a year with the Senior Minister to discuss the effectiveness of the professional and lay staff in meeting their respective responsibilities;
 - b) ensure the maintenance of a complete and up-to-date job description for every staff position, receiving input from the Senior Minister and appropriate commissions. The Executive Council will decide whether a position is deemed "lay" or "professional";
 - c) supervise the evaluation of each staff member's performance, six months after date of employment and, thereafter, once annually. The specific process for the evaluation of each staff member shall be included in his/her respective job description;

- d) organize and maintain a Personnel Manual describing all personnel policies of the church, approved by the Executive Council, and including but not limited to working hours, holidays, sick leave, pay periods, vacations, and benefits;
 - e) approve the process for the recruitment and hiring of lay staff, delegating responsibility for final decisions to the Senior Minister after his/her consultation with the Personnel Commission;
 - f) review circumstances relating to the request by appropriate Commissions or the Senior Minister for the resignation or termination of staff, and bring their recommendation to the Executive Council for final action;
 - g) supervise the handling of grievances on the part of all staff members. Such grievances shall be presented by the commission to the Senior Minister. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached by the Senior Minister and the staff member, the staff member or the Senior Minister may bring an appeal to the Personnel Commission, which will in turn either: (a) adjudicate the matter directly with the affected staff, giving a decision binding upon the parties, or (b) bring a recommendation to the Executive Council for final action. All matters involving either discipline or termination shall be referred to the Executive Council for final action.
- (2) Decisions of the Commission shall be by unanimous consent or by a majority vote by secret ballot.
 - (3) The pastor and other professional staff members shall be ex-officio (non-voting) members of the Commission. On occasion the Commission may declare an executive session from which the staff is excused.
 - (4) The scope and sensitive nature of this responsibility make it understandable that the membership of the Commission must be carefully chosen and that the Commission's decisions must be confidential.

Sec. 4. **Other Officers and Committees:**

a. Nominating Committee: Immediately after the annual meeting, the Moderator shall appoint, subject to the Executive Council ratification, a Nominating Committee of at least three members, which shall meet promptly to elect a chairperson and a secretary. Throughout the year, the Nominating Committee shall be encouraged to continuously study the use of the church membership on Commissions and committees and shall maintain a register of the interests and special abilities of members. As vacancies occur in Commissions or other offices, the Committee shall nominate individuals from the church membership to fill those vacancies. Based on the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the Executive Council may make temporary appointments to fill these vacancies and these will become permanent upon ratification by the church at the next quarterly meeting. The Committee shall prepare a list of nominees for the various positions to be elected at the Annual Meeting. Nominations shall be prepared with the consent of those nominated and the complete proposal shall be presented to the church in written form on the Sunday prior to the annual meeting.

b. Senior Minister Search Committee:

- (1) When it becomes necessary to call a Senior Minister, a Search Committee shall be formed of the following: Moderator, Vice-Moderator, one person elected by and from the membership of each of the following commissions: Diaconate, Worship, Christian Education, Finance and Property, Local Outreach, National and World Missions, and Personnel Commission, and a member from the local American Baptist Women's Ministries and five members elected at large at an open meeting of the congregation after report of the Nominating Committee (including at least two high school or college-age members).

- (2) The Moderator shall convene the first meeting, at which time the committee shall elect a presiding officer and secretary, who will keep minutes and records of the committee.
- (3) The presiding officer shall report to the Executive Council at each meeting, shall seek direction from that group, shall work with the American Baptist Churches, USA in reviewing recommended candidates, and in general shall seek recommendations for candidates from a wide range of sources.
- (4) Only candidates who are fully committed to the mission of the American Baptist Churches USA shall be considered by the Search Committee.
- (5) The Search Committee shall present its recommended candidate to the Executive Council. The Council shall call a meeting of the church expressly for the purpose of considering the candidate. Notice of such meetings shall be given at least two weeks in advance. No call shall be extended unless approved by a 2/3 vote.
- (6) The Search Committee, once formed, shall remain so constituted until its task is completed, unless dissolved by a vote of the church membership.

c. Other Search Committees:

- (1) When the congregation desires to create or fill professional staff positions other than the Senior Minister, the Executive Council shall elect a search committee comprised of representatives from those constituencies being served by the appointment and at least two other members at large.
- (2) Candidates shall be presented to the Commission on Pastoral Relations and Personnel for a background check and approval.
- (3) No candidate shall be presented to the Executive Council who is unacceptable to the Senior Minister.
- (4) The Executive Council approves the proposed appointment.

d. Historian/Archivist: The church at the annual meeting may elect one or two persons whose duties will be to keep a record of the principal events of the program of the church and to catalog and preserve historical material of the church.

e. Librarian: A librarian may be elected by the church at the annual meeting. It shall be the duty of the librarian to supervise the church library, the purchasing of books, and the fostering of reading among all groups in the church. The librarian shall present an annual report to the church and quarterly reports to the Executive Council.

f. Endowment Fund Committee:

- (1) Six persons shall be elected by the congregation to serve on the Endowment Fund Committee. The qualifications and term of office shall conform to Article VI, Sec. 4. Annually, the committee shall elect a chairperson and a secretary.
- (2) The committee shall be responsible to the Executive Council and report semi-annually or as often as is deemed necessary.
- (3) The Purpose and Responsibilities shall be as stated in the Endowment Fund Guidelines as adopted by the congregation.
- (4) The church treasurer, serving as ex-officio member with voting privilege, shall serve as treasurer of the committee.

Article VI - Elections and Terms of Office

Sec. 1. **The Senior Minister and Other Members of the Professional Staff:** Members of the Ministerial staff shall serve as long as it is mutually satisfactory to the staff members and the church. Normal requirements for notice of termination of service shall be (a) by the professional staff--two months (b) by the church--six months.

Sec. 2. **Lay Staff**: Unless otherwise provided for in the Constitution, appointments to the church lay staff shall be made by the Senior Minister in consultation with the Personnel Commission and other appropriate Commissions, with the consent of the Executive Council. Normal requirements for notice of termination by the church or lay staff shall be one month.

Sec. 3. **Moderator, Vice-Moderator, and Clerk**:

- a. The Moderator, Vice-Moderator, and Clerk shall be elected for terms of one year.
- b. The Moderator, at the conclusion of his/her term, shall serve one additional year as the Immediate-Past Moderator and as a member of the Executive Council.

Sec. 4. **Commissions and Committees**: No person shall serve as an officer of the church nor on any Commission of the church who is not a member of the church. The terms of office for the members of the various Commissions and committees shall be three years unless otherwise specified. No member who has served two full terms consecutively shall be eligible for re-election until one year has elapsed. Normally one-third of a Commission's members will be elected each year. Any member missing three consecutive meetings without prior notification shall be asked by the chairperson whether he desires to relinquish membership on the Commission or committee.

Article VII - Meetings

Sec. 1. The fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

Sec. 2. The annual meeting shall be held the third or fourth week of January. Quarterly business meetings shall be held the third week in April, July, and October unless a two-week notice of change is given by the Executive Council.

Sec. 3. Special business meetings may be called by the Senior Minister, Moderator, by vote of the Executive Council or upon written request of twenty-five members with two weeks notice (except in emergency situations).

Sec. 4. Sixty members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business except to vote upon the call or dismissal of a Senior Minister, in which case, at least one third of the members on the active roll of the church will be required for a quorum and must be approved by a 2/3 vote.

Article VIII - Amendments

Sec. 1. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of active members present at a business meeting of the church, provided that an announcement of such a meeting shall have been given at two previous church services, and provided that a copy of the proposed amendments shall be available to all members, through the church paper or other means, not later than ten days before the time of the meeting.

Sec. 2. Any portions of the Constitution previously adopted by the church and not included herein are hereby repealed.

Revised on July 16, 2006