



Constitution and By-Laws

South Baptist Church

Laconia, New Hampshire

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for the
Constitution and By-Laws of
South Baptist Church**

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Explanation of the Documents

The term Constitution is defined as the document in which the fundamental principles of this organization are written down. In our case, the general term "Constitution" refers to both the Constitution and the By-Laws as written on the following pages.

1. The Constitution is the set of governing principles upon which the church is organized. The Preamble and Articles of the Constitution contain those items that are basic to our church's existence and its relationships external to the church. These fundamental principles are not subject to frequent revision.
2. The By-Laws are secondary principles that govern those areas that are subject to change more often than the basic Articles of the Constitution. They contain the necessary requirements for the smooth functioning of the church. They explain how the church carries out the basic Articles of the Constitution and address the relationships internal to the church.
3. The Revision History will track all changes to these documents so that succeeding members will know what changes were made and why.

The Biblical principle that is used in having these two [2] documents is the Mosaic Law. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments [the Constitution]. Then God gave Moses chapter after chapter of how these Ten Commandments are to be carried out in the lives of the people [the By-Laws.]

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

In order to affirm and preserve the principles of our faith, to guarantee that this body may be governed in an orderly and efficient manner, consistent with the Scriptures, and for the purpose of preserving the unity of this church, the liberties inherent in each individual member and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this Constitution.

ARTICLE I - NAME, ORGANIZATION AND INCORPORATION

Section 1 Name

This organization shall be known as South Baptist Church of Laconia, New Hampshire.

Section 2 Organization

This church is a union [March 21, 1918] of the First Free Baptist Church, organized March 17, 1838, and the First Baptist Church organized May 30, 1888.

Section 3 Incorporation

South Baptist Church was incorporated September 6, 1919.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

Jesus. . .to know Him, praise Him, and make Him known!

To know Him by:

- Growing in Christ
- Following His teaching
- Obeying the Holy Spirit

To praise Him by:

- Worshiping in spirit and in truth
- Honoring and glorifying His name
- Living the full Word of God

To make Him known by:

- Proclaiming the Gospel
- Pursuing personal evangelism
- Supporting local and world mission.

ARTICLE III-DECLARATION OF FAITH

Section 1 The Holy Scripture

We believe the Holy Bible to be the only verbally inspired Word of God, authoritative, and without error in the original manuscripts. We further believe that the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament are designed for our practical instruction in faith and conduct [2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:21].

Section 2 The Godhead

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three Persons equally: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that these Three are One God [Deut 6:4; Gen 1:26; Matt 28:19].

Section 3 God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of man, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ [John 2:24; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 2:4-8].

Section 4 The Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, came into the world, that He might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy, and become the Redeemer of the lost world. To this end, He was born of the virgin Mary, received a human body and a sinless human nature without ceasing to be God. Therefore Jesus Christ is wholly man and wholly God. We believe that in infinite love for the lost, He voluntarily accepted His Father's will and became the divinely provided sacrificial Lamb and took away the sin of the world. We believe that He arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died, and that his resurrection body is the pattern of that body which ultimately will be given to all believers. We believe, that, on departing from the earth, He was accepted of his Father and that His acceptance is a final assurance to us that his redeeming work was perfectly accomplished. We believe that He became Head over all things to the church which is His body, and in this ministry, He does not cease to intercede and to be an advocate for the saved [Luke 1:35; John 1:1; 14:18, 29; 1 Cor 15:1-3; Eph 1:23; Phil 2:6-8; 1 Tim 2:5; 1 John 2:1-2].

Section 5 The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, dwells in every believer. And, God provides, through the Holy Spirit, power to live the Christian life. The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts of sin, righteousness, judgment, and who guides, illumines, comforts and seals the believer. We believe that every believer receives grace from God, in the form of a spiritual ability which enables him to function as a member of the Body of Christ [Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4:7]. We believe that at the moment of conversion, the individual is baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit [Eph 1:13-14; Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 12:13], and receives one or more spiritual gifts.

Section 6 The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan, fallen and cast down from heaven [Isaiah 14:12], is the prince of demons, the declared adversary of God and man. When the Lord Jesus Christ died on the Cross, He crushed the head of Satan, assuring his destruction in the Lake of Fire [Eph 2:2; 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 20:10].

Section 7 The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state [Gen 1:31; 3:1-6], and that all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but by choice [Gen 3:5; Psa 14:1-3; Rom 1:18-21; 3:10-19; John 8:44], and therefore under just condemnation [Rom 3:9, 19; 2 Cor 5:14] and without defense or excuse [Rom 1:20-21].

Section 8 Salvation

We believe we enter the kingdom of God only by receiving Jesus as Savior and turning from our sin. We believe that our redemption has been accomplished by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this redemption is by the grace of God, an unmerited gift, given in love by God and not the result of any human works. We believe that upon receiving the Lord Jesus Christ by faith the believer is born again and passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life, and into fellowship with God. We also believe that once this salvation is accomplished, we and all true believers everywhere shall be kept saved forever [Rom 10:9-10; John 3:5; 10:28-29; Acts 2:38; Rom 3:24; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-9, 2:5].

Section 9 The Church

We believe that all who are united to the risen and ascended Son of God are members of the church which is the Body of Christ. We believe that the explicit message of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whom He has saved is to make Christ known to the whole world and that this is the purpose of the church as individuals. We believe that the local church gathers together for practical instruction in the Scriptures, fellowship with God and with other believers, and for corporate witness to the unsaved. Our common spiritual goal is to grow toward Christ's likeness [Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:41; Eph 2:11-18; 4:13-16].

Section 10 The Second Coming of Christ

We believe that a future period of great tribulation on the earth will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth. He will return to set up His kingdom with power and great glory [1 Thess 4:13-17; Zech 14:4-11; Rev 3:10].

Section 11 Eternal State

We believe that at death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, pass immediately into His presence and there remain until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for His own, whereupon soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory [2 Cor 5:8; Rev 20:10-15]. Those who have not trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation shall be resurrected to stand before the Great White Throne and upon being judged, cast in to the Lake of Fire to be tormented day and night forever and ever [Rev 20:11-15].

Section 12 The Responsibility of Believers

We believe that all believers should offer their bodies as living sacrifices, being transformed by the renewing of their minds, seeking to walk by the Spirit, separating themselves from worldly practices; and witnessing by life and by word to truths of Holy Scripture [Rom 12:1-2; Gal 5:16, 25; 2 Cor 5:17].

Section 13 Church Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the ordinances of Believers Baptism and the Lord's Supper to be observed by all believers until His return. We believe that the ordinance of Baptism is immersion of the believer in water as it sets forth the essential facts in redemption: the death and resurrection of Christ; and the essential facts in the experience of the believer - death to sin and resurrection to newness of life [Rom 6:4; Acts 8:26-39].

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a privilege accorded to all believers, in commemoration of our Lord's death until He comes [1 Cor 11:23-28].

Section 14 Religious Liberty

We believe that every human being has a direct relationship with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is autonomous and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other [John 14:6; 1 Tim 2:5; Luke 20:25; Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:17; 2 Cor 5:10].

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH MEMBERS STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND DESIRE

Having been led by the Spirit of God, I have received Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord [John 1:12]. I have been born again through the Holy Spirit [John 3:6-7; 1:13] and have publicly confessed my faith by word [Rom 10:8-10]. I subscribe to the Articles of Faith of South Baptist Church and do now, with other members of the church as one body in Christ, state my purpose and desire to enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ:

- To walk lovingly [John 13:34-35] and humbly with my brethren [1 Pet 5:6; Rom 12:3], to pray for them [James 1:15], to separate myself from worldly and unchristian practices [Titus 2:12], and to prayerfully study God's Word [2 Tim 2:15] and to follow His Word as my rule of faith and practice [2 Tim 3:16-17].
- To pray for the advancement of my church in knowledge, spiritual growth and fruitfulness [John 15:8, 16]; to uphold it through faithful attendance at worship, training and teaching; to observe its ordinances [Matt 29:19-20; 1 Cor 11:24-27; Heb 10:25] and affirm its teaching [1Pet 3:15; Jude 3].
- To give regularly and cheerfully to my church as God prospers for the support of the evangelistic, teaching and training ministry among us [2 Cor 9:6-7; 1 Cor 16:2]. For the relief of the needy [Prov 19:17], and for the spreading of the Gospel both here in the Lakes Region and all over the earth [Matt 28:19-20].
- To serve faithfully in some activity in the church body according to God's leading and according to my spiritual gifts and abilities [Rom 12:4-8; James 1:22-24; 2:18]; taking care to assume only such duties as can be effectively performed [1 Cor 4:2].
- To encourage family worship, training and discipline in my home. To encourage daily prayer, Bible study and spiritual growth for any under my care [Eph 6:1-4; Prov 22:6].
- To endeavor by my example [Matt 5:16], witness [1 Pet 3:15], and effort, to point people to Christ, and to do my part in building them up in the faith [Matt 28:19-20; Eph 4:11-16; Col 1:28].
- To endeavor to understand and appreciate my fellow members in the church, especially those who may have personalities, ministries, and backgrounds quite different from mine [Rom 14:1-7; 1 Cor 12:4-7, 18-28; Gal 3:26-28].
- To endeavor to apply the Scriptures as they relate to the whole Body of Christ [Rom 12:6-16; 1 Cor 12:11-27; Eph 4:11-16].

ARTICLE V - FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The government of this church is vested in its members and it is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

The Scriptural officers of this church are Pastor(s) [also referred to as Elders, Bishops, Presbyters, and Overseers in Scripture] and Deacons/Deaconesses. The By-Laws shall determine their election, term and succession. The church shall elect and appoint to the various forms of service indicated by their titles and as defined in the By-Laws, such other officers as deemed advisable. All scriptural officers must exhibit lives lived in accordance with the Scriptures.

ARTICLE VII - MEMBERSHIP

Any person who receives Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord, shows evidence of the new life in Christ; has expressed suitable agreement with the Declaration of Faith [Article III] and the church Members Statement of Purpose and Desire [Article IV] and accepts the Constitution and the By-Laws of this church is eligible for membership.

ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS

The meetings for worship, prayer, praise, fellowship, business and special purposes shall be set forth in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE IX - AFFILIATION

South Baptist Church is a totally autonomous and self-governing church, free from any legal authority by any denomination or other entity. However, recognizing the biblical pattern of interdependence and the need for fellowship, we are free to fellowship with churches of like-mindedness.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended by an annual or special meeting provided that a quorum of 25% [twenty-five per cent] of the active membership is present, and the general meaning of the amendment appeared in the notice of the meeting. The notice for the proposed amendment shall be given on four [4] consecutive Sundays preceding the annual meeting or the special meeting. The amended Constitution goes into effect when adopted by the Church. To amend the Constitution, a 75% [seventy-five percent] majority of those present and voting is required.

By-Laws

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Qualifications

To be received into and remain in this Church as a member, any person must have:

1. Confessed Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior and followed the command to be baptized by immersion.
2. Expressed agreement with the Articles of Faith, the Constitution, the By-Laws, and the Member's Statement of Purpose and Desire of South Baptist Church.

Applicants for membership of the church shall be recommended to the church by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons after having given satisfactory testimony as to conversion and views of Christian faith and practice. Upon recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons, they shall be received by a majority of those church members present in one of the following ways:

1. By profession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; or
2. By letter of transfer from other churches or groups holding the same faith and practice; or
3. By reaffirmation of faith when the prospective member cannot obtain a letter of transfer from his respective church or group.
4. By restoration, if having been disfellowshipped from membership of this church, and upon giving satisfactory evidence for restoration or explanation of lapse of membership.

Section 2 Recognition

Members shall extend to all new members the Right Hand of Fellowship in recognition of their admission to all rights and privileges of this church.

Section 3 Duties

1. The duties of members to themselves are, the acquisition of scriptural knowledge; progress in spirituality; consistency of conduct; and the control and eradication of everything unholy.
2. It is the duty of members to honor, esteem and love their Pastor; and to pray for him fervently. They are to follow him in the Scriptural exercise of his official capacity, to offer their service in his ministry; to show a tender regard for his reputation; and to contribute toward his support as possible [1 Thess 5:12-13; 1 Tim 5:17-19; Heb 13:17].

Section 4 Dismissal

1. The following dismissals shall be made upon the recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons and will not require a vote by the church membership:
 1. Any member in good and regular standing, who so desires, may obtain a letter of transfer to a church of like faith.
 2. Any member in good and regular standing, who so desires, may obtain a letter of fact for transfer to other than a Baptist Church.
 3. Any member who shall unite with any other church without such letter of transfer shall be dropped automatically from the church roll.
 4. Any member who moves outside a reasonable distance for continuing church membership will be encouraged to seek fellowship in a local church in their new home area. After one year, they will be taken off the church roll.
 5. Any member who becomes deceased.
2. The following dismissals shall be made upon the recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons and voted on accordingly by the church membership.
 1. A member may be subject to dismissal by church discipline [see Article II].
 2. Since it is the desire and purpose of the Church to maintain an active membership, the Pastor, the Church Clerk, the Board of Deacons, and the Board of Deaconesses shall constitute a committee for revising the roll. This committee shall meet before the Annual Meeting and take

into full consideration the members' compliance with the requirements of the Constitution, Article IV-Church Members Statement of Purpose and Desire, page 6. The committee shall recommend as the first order of business at the Annual Meeting, the removal from the roll the names of existing members not in compliance.

3. Exceptions to 2.2 above may be placed on an inactive membership list by the committee revising the roll for the following reasons:
 1. Shut-in and disabled.
 2. Those at college or in the military.
 3. Those in Christian service outside the community, who choose to keep their membership at South Baptist Church [missionaries, chaplains, etc.]

ARTICLE II - DISCIPLINE

The following Scripture references have been used in formulating this Article:

- MATTHEW 18:15-17
- TITUS 3:10
- 2 PETER 2:1
- EPHESIANS 5:11
- 1 TIMOTHY 5:19-21
- 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13
- ROMANS 16:17

Section 1 Definitions

1. Discipline: The term discipline as used in this Article and throughout these By-Laws, refers to the method of correction for problems in the church body. It is a procedure including Christian teaching, training, admonition and/or rebuke [both public and private], with a view to helping the individual Christian to grow spiritually in the faith and to throw off unchristian attitudes and practices.
2. Sin: Sin is disobedience to God [Gen 3; 4; 11]. Sin is not limited to, although it includes, the breaking of the literal Ten Commandments. Any act that is in disobedience to the will of God as declared in His Word, or which is detrimental to the honor and glory of God because of disobedience, is sin.
3. Attitude for Discipline: An attitude of prayer, love, patience, calmness, and understanding shall be the undergirding factors in all matters of church discipline, regardless of the nature of the difficulty or violation.

Section 2 Matters Requiring Discipline

A member of this church shall be subject to church discipline for:

1. Differences between individuals. The order given in Matthew 18:16 shall be followed to resolve disharmony between members.
2. Heresy. Members who hold and/or persistently propagate false doctrine shall be subject to church discipline.
3. Public sin. Members found walking disorderly in a manner unbecoming to disciples of Christ shall be subject to disciplinary action after careful consideration by the Deacon Board.
4. Attitude toward the Local Church. For treating the acts and decisions of the church contemptuously or pursuing such a course which produces division.

Section 3 Procedure for Discipline

The Pastor and Deacons are responsible to see that discipline is administered in true love, patience and understanding with a calm spirit. The principles and steps laid down in Matthew 18:15-17 will be followed as a guide in all matters requiring church discipline.

Disciplinary Actions:

1. A member under discipline may not:
 1. Hold office in the church
 2. Vote in church meeting
 3. Otherwise hold positions of leadership or teaching within the church's activities or ministries.
 4. Other disciplinary measures may be taken at the discretion of the Board of Deacons according to the Scriptures.
2. **Disfellowship**
If a member in question neglects to hear the church [Matt 18:17] and refuses to repent [turn from their sin] and a proper solution in line with the Scriptures and the church's faith and practice still cannot be worked out, the member who is found guilty of the violation will be dismissed after a two thirds majority vote.

3. Restoration
Disfellowshipped members may be restored to membership upon recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons, if there is satisfactory evidence of a genuine repentance.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1 Introduction

All duly elected officers of South Baptist Church must be members of the church. They are to remain within the boundaries of authority placed upon them by the Holy Scriptures, this Constitution and By-Laws, and the church body. Each officer and board shall submit a report to be available at each regularly scheduled business meeting.

Section 2 Pastors

1. Qualifications
The qualifications of the Pastor[s] are those given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. He must be spiritually and educationally qualified to lead the church as an under shepherd of God, to teach, train and to provide leadership to carry out the spirit and letter of the Holy Scriptures, and be in agreement with this Constitution and By-Laws. Upon his call to this Pastorate, he [and his wife] shall receive the Right Hand of Fellowship and shall become members of this church.
2. Duties
 1. To earnestly carry on a preaching, teaching, training, counseling and equipping ministry with the aim of bringing each member to a place of spiritual maturity and fruitfulness, and to a place of spiritual harmony with the rest of the church body [Col 1:28-29; 2 Tim 2:2]
 2. To oversee the teaching, visitation and training ministries of the church, to tenderly watch over the church's members and spiritual interests, and oversee and seek to develop its strength for the best possible service.
 3. To set an example in Christian living and dedication [1 Tim 4:12; 1 Pet 5:1-3]
 4. To oversee the administering of the ordinances.
 5. The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all boards and committees. However, such privilege shall not require his attendance at all meetings.

3. **Respect for his office**
The Pastor shall be held in esteem and respect as an under shepherd of God [1 Thess 5:12-13; 1 Tim 5:17-19; Heb 13:17]. To aid the Pastor in carrying out his ministry, the church body shall not burden him with tasks unrelated to those duties listed above [see Sec. 2B].
4. **Call and Termination**
The Pastor shall be called upon recommendation of the Pulpit Committee and by 3/4 [three fourths] vote of members present and voting at a legally called meeting, and shall be engaged for an indefinite period of time. Said relationship shall be dissolved either by a 2/3 [two thirds] vote of the church giving three months notice to the Pastor, or a three months notice by the Pastor to the church or by mutual consent for a shorter period.
5. **Compensation**
A compensation plan will be presented to the Pastor at his call.

Section 3 Deacons

1. **Qualifications**
Deacons shall be men in full communion with the church, of mature judgment, unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ, striving to fulfill the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:2-13 and Acts 6:1-7.
2. **Election**
There shall not be more than seven nor fewer than two Deacons while the number of voting members of the church is less than 50. Thereafter, the church may elect as many more qualified Deacons at it deems necessary based on the recommendation of the Board of Deacons. The Deacons shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Church for a three-year term, so arranged that as nearly as possible, a third of the number shall be chosen each year
3. **Duties**
The Deacons are to serve in council and conference with the Pastor and in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare and work of the church. The Deacons are responsible for the oversight of the duties mentioned below. Oversight does not necessarily mean that the Deacons themselves carry out all the details of each duty. With Board approval, each Deacon is authorized to select helpers from the church body to assist in carrying out the many details of his particular responsibilities.

Specific duties of the Deacons are:

1. Electing a chairman and a secretary at the first meeting following the Annual Business Meeting of the Church.
2. Meeting regularly [at least once a month] for prayer in seeking God's will for plans, and for making decisions concerning the business of the Board and the church. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum. If it sees fit, the Board may delegate in advance, a lesser number to hold a specific meeting confined to a particular topic.
3. The Board of Deacons is responsible for oversight for all other boards and committees of the church to maintain a steady, biblical approach to the Mission Statement [see Constitution, Article II] of the church. In this context, the Board of Deacons has authority and overall responsibility for the functioning of the church.
4. Aiding the Pastor in visitation.
5. Aiding the Pastor in counseling and training of new converts.
6. Possessing a willingness to be trained to fulfill areas of need and oversight in both spiritual and material matters.
7. Providing for pulpit supply and conducting prayer meetings in the Pastor's absence.
8. The Deacons with the Pastor have oversight of the church worship.
9. Overseeing the preparation and distribution of the elements of Communion Services and overseeing the preparations and functioning of the Baptismal services.
10. Counseling with the Pastor in matters of church discipline [see Article II] and exercising said discipline when it is deemed necessary by the Board.
11. Examining, with the Pastor, all applicants for membership as set forth in Article I, Section 1.
12. The Deacons shall maintain and keep order in all public meetings of the church.
13. The Deacons, along with the Deaconesses, will be responsible for the Diaconate Fund. The Boards shall choose annually a liaison to the

Church Treasurer. This fund shall be used primarily for the relief of the needy in the church family. The fund shall also be utilized for special projects as determined by the Diaconate.

14. Assisting the Pastor in other areas that need attention.
15. They are responsible for maintaining a job description and performance evaluation methodology for the Pastor.
16. The Deacons are responsible for annually reviewing the Pastor's compensation and making the necessary recommendations to the Budget Committee.
17. The Board of Deacons, along with the Pastor and Church Clerk, will review the church roll before each annual business meeting for the purpose of maintaining a healthy, active church membership.

Section 4 Deaconesses

1. **Qualification**
Deaconesses will be spiritually mature women in full communion with the church, of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Lord Jesus, and holding the highest degree of scriptural admonition to women [1 Tim 3:11; Eph 5:22-23; Titus 2:3-5].
2. **Election**
There shall not be more than seven nor fewer than two Deaconesses while the number of voting members of the church is less than 50. Thereafter, the church may elect as many more qualified Deaconesses as it deems necessary based on the recommendation of the Board of Deaconesses. The Deaconesses shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church for a three-year term so arranged that as nearly as possible, a third of the number shall be chosen each year.
3. **Duties**
This Board shall choose annually, a chairwoman and a secretary. The Deaconesses, along with the Deacons, will be responsible for the Diaconate Fund. This fund shall be used primarily for the relief of the needy in the church family. The fund shall also be utilized for special projects as determined by the Diaconate. The Deaconesses shall assist in the administration of Baptism, visit the women of the church, and with the Pastor and the Deacons, determine spiritual and physical needs of the congregation. They shall meet at least six [6] times a year for prayer and to report their visits, and for such business as would be related to their work. The Pastor's wife is an ex officio member of the Board. They shall also oversee the

Greeters.

Section 5 Moderator and Vice-Moderator

The Moderator and the Vice-Moderator shall be elected annually. In the Moderator's absence the Vice-Moderator shall preside; or in the absence of both, the chairman of the Board of Deacons shall preside or the Clerk shall call the body to order and a Moderator Pro-Tem shall be elected [from the Board of Deacons if possible]. It is the Moderator's responsibility to call for prayer if unity is not evident in a meeting. It is also the Moderator's duty to see that the meeting be opened in prayer. He should be familiar with Robert's Rules of Order. The Moderator shall be the President of the Corporation.

Section 6 Clerk and Assistant Clerk

The Clerk, elected at the annual meeting of the church, to serve one [1] year, shall keep a suitable record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The Clerk shall keep a register of the names of members with dates of admission, dismissal or death, together with a record of baptisms. He or she shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as indicated by these By-Laws. He or she, along with the Pastor and the Board of Deacons, shall review the church roll annually before the annual church business meeting. He or she shall notify all officers, members of committees, and delegates of their election or appointment. The Clerk shall consider that a part of his or her responsibility is to promote loyalty and efficiency in church life. In the absence of the Clerk, an Assistant Clerk, appointed by the Nominating Committee, shall fulfill these duties.

Section 7 Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

The Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer shall be elected at the annual business meeting. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to pay all orders drawn by order of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall keep a true and fair book of accounts, and at the said meeting for business in January, shall report to the church a statement of the monies so received and accounts paid. Auditors shall examine the records with the necessary vouchers prior to said meeting. A financial statement shall be presented by the Treasurer to the Board of Trustees monthly. He or she shall deliver immediately to his or her successor all books and records pertaining to the office. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer shall fulfill these duties.

Section 8 Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary shall be elected annually at the annual business meeting. The Financial Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all church offerings and credit each contribution to each giver by name. He or she shall render annual statements to each giver. He or she shall not disclose the giving record of any member or attendee. He or she shall deliver immediately to his or her successor all books and records in his or her possession. In the absence of the Financial Secretary, the Assistant Financial Secretary shall fulfill his or her duties.

Section 9 Board of Trustees

The Board shall not consist of fewer than six members. The Trustees shall be elected at the annual business meeting for a three-year term of office, so arranged that as nearly as possible, a third of the number shall be chosen each year. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary will have the privilege of attending Board meetings. The Board of Trustees shall hold in trust all properties belonging to the church, and shall take all necessary measures for its protection, management, and upkeep. It will have no power to buy, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without specific vote of the church. The Board of Trustees shall have the authority to appoint a Finance Committee for the purpose of determining ways and means of raising funds for specific church projects and/or general stewardship, and putting these ways and means in place. Any unbudgeted expenditure greater than 1% of the annual church budget shall require prior church approval except in the case of an emergency. The Board of Trustees is empowered to exchange budgeted funds between categories not greater than 5% of the annual church budget per occurrence. Notification will be provided to the congregation for significant changes.

It shall designate the bank where the funds of the church shall be deposited.

All bills authorized by the church budget shall be paid by the Treasurer with Board oversight. It shall, when so instructed by the church, secure secretarial and custodial services, and an organist at such salary as is authorized by the church, and secure from them acceptable service. It shall perform other duties as are imposed upon it by the church and the local/state/federal governments.

Meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held regularly. The Board shall elect its own chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary at the first Board meeting following the Annual Meeting of the church.

A majority shall constitute a quorum. The church shall receive a progress report monthly on any project authorized by the church. The Board shall annually appoint auditors of accounts. It shall be the duty of the auditors to examine carefully the accounts and records of the church at the close of the church year prior to the annual meeting, and they shall certify the same.

Section 10 Board of Christian Education

The Board shall consist of not fewer than six members, one third of whom, as nearly as possible, shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of three years. The Board will have the privilege of inviting others such as the Director of Vacation Bible School, Children's Worship Coordinator, Youth Leaders, and Sunday School Teachers to assist the Board for a time determined by the Board. Any professional level person (e.g. the Youth Pastor) whom the church has called and is primarily engaged in a teaching and shepherding ministry will be an ex officio member of the Christian Education Board. This Board shall exercise supervisory and administrative responsibility for the entire education program of the church, including Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Bible Studies and training programs in cooperation with the Pastor and the Board of Deacons. This board shall elect its own chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and liaison to the Church Treasurer at the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Church.

Duties:

1. The Board shall meet each month.
2. The Board shall oversee the Sunday School, including recruitment of teachers from the church membership, and the selection of curriculum with input from the teachers.
3. The Board will oversee the nursery scheduling and the disbursement of funds for necessities in the nursery.
4. The Board will select a Children's Worship Coordinator and recruit the organization of teams of Children's Worship volunteers.
5. The Board will select a Vacation Bible School Director and authorize payment for VBS materials.
6. The Board will appoint the leaders for youth groups and undertake the financial assistance of programs as necessary. The Board will maintain steady contact with all youth leaders.
7. The Board will be responsible for the allocation of scholarship funds.
8. The Board will be responsible for preparation of the Christian Education budget.
9. A majority shall constitute a quorum.

Section 11 Board of Missions

There shall be a Board of Missions of no fewer than three members elected at the Annual Meeting for the church for a term of office of three years. As near as possible one third of the Board shall be elected each year. The Board will conduct meetings at least once per quarter.

A member of the Board of Missions will be elected by this Board annually to serve as a liaison to the Church Treasurer.

The Board of Missions shall have oversight of all missionary interests and shall coordinate all missionary activities of the church and its organizations. The Board shall submit its recommendations for missionary commitments and disbursements to the church for action. It shall be their goal to encourage commitment to the fulfillment of the Great Commission [Matt 29:19-20] and the last words of our Lord on earth [Acts 1:7-8], that the total ministry of the church might be fulfilled.

ARTICLE IV - COMMITTEES

Section 1 Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven [7] members elected for a one [1] year term at the annual business meeting. This committee shall serve throughout the ensuing calendar year. Vacancies on the committee are permitted.

It is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to prayerfully select nominees of qualified character and according to their particular spiritual gifts and abilities. The committee shall prepare ballots for consideration at the Annual Meeting so as to show names of suitable active members of the church nominated for each vacancy and for each place on the church boards and standing committees. The ballot shall be presented to the Church Clerk on or before January 1. The chairperson for each board or committee shall be elected or appointed according to these By-Laws and not by the Nominating Committee. For all vacancies that require filling at times other than at the Annual Meeting [through death, resignation, disciplinary removal, etc.], the Nominating Committee shall, with the approval of the Pastor, appoint replacements until such times as an election can be held to fill the vacancy.

Section 2 Church Budget Committee

The Church Budget Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, chairperson of the Board of Trustees, chairman of the Board of Deacons, chairperson of the Board of Christian Education, chairperson of the Board of Missions and two [2] members elected at large annually from the congregation. The Church Treasurer shall serve as chairperson. This committee shall meet in November as called by the chairperson for the purpose of preparing the budget.

Section 3 Pulpit Committee

Upon vacancy of the Pastorate, the congregation shall hold a special meeting and form a Pulpit Committee. The Pulpit Committee shall consist of [9] members: three [3] Deacons elected by the Board of Deacons, one of whom shall serve as chairman; the Church Clerk; chairperson of the Board of Christian Education, and four members elected at large by the congregation. This committee shall remain in force until a new Pastor is called.

If it is felt necessary by the Pulpit Committee, a secretary may be appointed from outside the Pulpit Committee to assist in correspondence and paper work. Said secretary shall have no vote in the committee or enter into the deliberations of the Committee. The Pulpit Committee shall bring to the church for consideration only one candidate at a time. This candidate should be the man the Pulpit Committee feels led of God to recommend as Pastor of the church. The church body shall vote upon the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee as soon as possible after the candidate speaks at the church. Notice of said meeting in accordance with these By-Laws may be given before the candidate comes to speak so that there will be no undue delay.

Section 4 Social Committee

A Social Committee of at least five [5] individuals elected at the annual business meeting for a term of one year, shall coordinate the Harvest Supper and other such occasions in cooperation with the other boards and members of the church.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

Section 1 Worship

1. Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day.
2. Mid-week services shall be held for the purpose of prayer, praise and Bible Study.
3. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at regular intervals as the Board of Deacons may designate.

4. Due to special circumstances the Pastor and the Board of Deacons may alter temporarily any of the above meetings.

Section 2 Business Meetings

1. The church fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31; the annual budget will run from January 1 through December 31. All committees and officers shall remain in office until their successors are duly elected. The church shall continue to operate on the previous year's budget until the annual meeting.
2. The Annual meeting of this church shall be held on the last Thursday in January. At this meeting, annual reports shall be received, annual budgets voted, the officers of the church shall be elected and other business transactions as may be specified in the notice or authorized in the By-Laws may be conducted.
3. Special Meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Board of Deacons, or by written request of ten [10] members of eighteen years of age or over, and of good standing. Only such business as is specified in the notice can be transacted during that Special Meeting.
4. Notice of meetings: All regular and special meetings shall be announced publicly from the pulpit by any officer of the church at two [2] consecutive Lord's Day services preceding the meeting and must state the purpose of the meeting. The notice shall also be posted in a conspicuous place on church property at least fourteen [14] days prior.
5. Quorum. Twenty-five percent of the active membership of the church shall constitute a quorum.
6. All elections and decisions shall be determined by simple majority vote unless otherwise specified.
7. Qualifications for voting: all active members of the church, in good and regular standing, eighteen years of age and over, shall be eligible to vote at all regular business meetings. Absentee ballots will be permitted when authorized by the Church Board of Deacons.

8. Suggested Order of Business:
 1. Call of the Meeting
 2. Prayer
 3. Establishment of the Roll
 4. Reading of previous minutes
 5. Old Business
 6. New Business
 7. Reports
 8. Communication
 9. Prayer
 10. Adjournment

ARTICLE VI - FINANCES

Section 1 Policy

The Scriptures are the sole authority of the financial policy of this church. Only Scriptural methods of raising monies are allowed. Inasmuch as tithes and offerings are commanded of every believer, all members are encouraged to bring them into this church, God's storehouse [Mal 3:10; 1 Cor 16:1-3; 2 Cor 8, 9; Acts 4:34-35].

Section 2 System

The church may provide and encourage the use of faith pledges and offering envelopes.

ARTICLE VII - GENERAL

Section 1 Organizations

This church shall have such organizations as are needed to minister to the different age groups and varied interests of its members. All organizations shall be formed with the approval of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Christian Education. All officers, By-Laws, and practices of such organizations shall be consistent with this Constitution and subject to the oversight of the Board of Deacons.

Section 2 Pastor's Salary, Benefits and Vacation Policies

1. It shall be the duty of the Board of Deacons to review the financial needs of the Pastor and to make appropriate recommendations to the Budget Committee.
2. Adequate health insurance shall be provided for the Pastor and his family.

3. A pension plan shall be provided for the Pastor.
4. The Pastor shall be given an annual paid vacation of four [4] weeks. The scheduling will be subject to consultation with the Board of Deacons.
5. The church shall provide adequate housing for the Pastor.

Section 3 Will of the Church

In order to maintain biblical unity, when the church by a vote has expressed itself and is not in conflict with the Bible, this Constitution and By-Laws, nor with the Religious Corporation Laws of the State of New Hampshire, the will of the church shall be carried out in full by all officers, committees, organizations and members.

Section 4 Licensing and Ordaining

1. The church may grant a license to preach to any male member who gives evidence of his ability and spiritual preparedness, provided he is recommended by the Board of Deacons and the Pastor. The licensee must have preached within hearing of the church before any church vote is taken.
2. The church may ordain any male member who gives evidence of having been called of God. The procedure shall be as follows:
 1. The Board of Deacons shall examine the candidate to determine their agreement concerning his call from God.
 2. The Board of Deacons shall present his name to the church for action, only if they are satisfied with his testimony and qualifications.
 3. Upon church approval, the Clerk shall call a council of messengers consisting of one pastor and one layperson from area churches of like faith, to further examine the candidate. Ordination shall proceed upon satisfactory recommendation of the Ordination Council.

Section 5 Amendments

The By-Laws may be amended by any annual or special meeting provided that the general meaning of the amendment appeared in the notice of the meeting. The notice for the proposed amendment shall be given on four consecutive Sundays preceding the annual meeting or the special meeting. A simple majority of those active, voting members is required to amend the By-Laws. The amended By-Laws go into effect when adopted by the Church.

Section 6 Upon Dissolution of the Corporation

The assets will be distributed only to other charitable and religious corporations which enjoy an exempt status for tax purposes under the then current provision of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States and state as their belief the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

CERTIFICATION

This Constitution and By-laws supersedes any prior constitution and by-laws of South Baptist Church – Laconia, NH and any church action heretofore conducted.

Amended by vote of the church on, January 3, 2010 A.D.

Anne-Marie Dion
Church Clerk (Corporate Secretary)