

Constitution and By-Laws

Date of Adoption: February 25, 2007

PREAMBLE

Believing the local church to be an institution established by the Lord, and believing that it is His will that “all things be done decently and in order,” we the members of Blythefield Hills Baptist Church (referred to herein as the “church”), do solemnly and sincerely set forth this Constitution (which serves as the bylaws) by which we willingly and cheerfully agree to be governed.

Article I

NAME - The name of this church is Blythefield Hills Baptist Church.

Article II

PURPOSE - The purpose of the church is to promote the true worship of God by means of teaching and preaching the Bible, God’s Word, seeking to win the lost to faith in Christ, building up believers, observing the ordinances, and promoting Christian community. The church shall maintain a local ministry and seek to extend a like ministry throughout the world.

Article III

DOCTRINE - The Articles of Faith accepted by the church are the Confession of Faith of the Grand Rapids Association of Regular Baptist Churches as revised September 1, 1952.

Article IV

MEMBERSHIP - As used in this Constitution, the “church” shall refer to the membership. Action by the church shall be action by its members, except as authority for action is granted to the church board.

A. Basis of Membership

1. Personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Evidence of regeneration.
3. Personal assurance of salvation.
4. Baptism by immersion after salvation.
5. Acceptance of the doctrines and practices of this church.
6. The desire to live a consistent Christian life.

B. Reception of Members - Those desiring to become members must:

1. Be examined by members of the church board.
2. Be recommended by the board to the church for membership.
3. Give testimony of their faith in Christ in a meeting of the church, or by a written statement published to the congregation.
4. Be received for membership by unanimous vote of the members present and voting in a meeting of the church. If any negative votes are cast, the church board will receive or reject the validity of the reason for the negative vote and make the final decision.

C. Classification of Members

1. **Active Members** - Active members are all of the regular members who have not been removed to the inactive roll.
2. **Inactive Members** - Determination of active or inactive status is the responsibility of the board. If a member does not attend or show interest in the work of the church, an effort shall be made to see such member’s interest restored. If the member does not show interest for nine months, his or her name may be placed on the inactive roll and the member shall be notified in writing to his or her last submitted address. Inactive members shall not have voting privileges or the privilege of holding office. Exceptions shall be available for students away in school, missionaries, those in military service, and other like situations.

3. Associate membership shall be available to persons in special circumstances determined by the board, such as students attending school in the area while retaining membership in the home church. All normal membership requirements and privileges apply except that no congregational vote is necessary and associate members have no voting rights.
4. The membership roll shall be available to active members at the church office during normal business hours for matters of church business.

D. *Discipline of Members* - Matters of discipline are ultimately the responsibility of the church board. Matters that may result in discipline include: heretical doctrine, immoral lifestyle, and sowing discord among the membership.

E. *Confirmation and Termination of Membership*

1. The board may periodically require any member to confirm his or her membership. Any member who fails to confirm his or her membership may be removed from membership by the board.
2. Inactive members who fail to attend or show interest for another six months, may be removed from membership by the board which shall attempt to notify them of this action. The dismissed member may appeal this action to the board or to the congregation.
3. The board, as a final disciplinary measure, may dismiss a member. If the church has not heard the case, the member who is subject to dismissal shall have the right of appeal to the church. A dismissed member shall be removed from the rolls and may be restored only by the procedure outlined in Section B, above.
4. Membership may be terminated voluntarily at any time by the member requesting same in writing to the church or by failing to confirm his or her membership.

F. *Letters of Standing and Christian Character*

1. For those being received - the church may inquire of previous churches concerning the standing and Christian character of those applying for membership in this church.
2. The church may respond to inquiries from other churches concerning the circumstances of membership and Christian character of anyone who has been a member of this church.

Article V

MEETINGS

A. *Congregational Services*

1. The church will meet regularly for worship on the Lord's Day.
2. The church will regularly provide Christian education programming.
3. The Lord's Supper will be observed at regular intervals as determined by the board.

B. *Regular Business Meetings*

1. The church fiscal year is June 1 to May 31.
2. The church board is responsible to arrange all business meetings.
3. The annual business meeting of the church shall be held each May, with notice of the time of the meeting given at least two preceding, consecutive Sundays. The proposed budget will be presented to the members for discussion and approval, and deacons will be elected.
4. A financial report will be made available to church members upon request.

C. *Special Business Meetings*

1. Special business meetings will be called and arranged by the board.
2. Notice of special meetings and their purpose shall be given at least two preceding, consecutive Sundays.
3. Except for minor matters of business and admission of members, only the business matters for which the meeting was called shall be conducted.

D. *Voting Procedure*

1. Active members who have reached the age of 18 years shall be eligible to vote.
2. All elections shall be by secret ballot. All other matters may be by voice or visible vote unless a secret ballot is requested.
3. Absentee ballots will be permitted for elections and for all specially announced business matters for those unable to be present. Requests for all ballots must be made to the church office, and the ballot must be in the hands of a designated church staff member prior to the meeting.

4. Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, all business matters require a majority vote to pass. Exceptions include:
 - a. A three-fourths majority is required to call a pastor.
 - b. A unanimous vote is required to accept a new member.
 - c. A two-thirds majority is required to incur indebtedness.
 - d. A two-thirds majority is required to amend this Constitution.
5. All votes shall be of those present and voting in person at the meeting or by ballot.

E. *Miscellaneous*

1. A quorum is 20% of the active membership of voting age.
2. Minor matters of business, such as calls for ordination councils, election of members, church recognition councils, choosing of representatives or messengers, etc., may be cared for at any meeting of the church.

Article VI

THE CHURCH BOARD

- A. *Members* - The board is composed of the pastors and deacons of the church. By action of the church board certain pastors may be designated as ex-officio or advisory members so they might be free from attending all meetings of the church board. Advisory members have no vote. Ex-officio and advisory members will not be counted in determining a quorum of the board.
- B. *Qualifications of Deacons* - Qualifications for deacons are those given in I Timothy 3:8-13.
- C. *Nominations for Deacons, Term of Office, and Number*
1. Nominations shall follow this procedure:
 - a. Each member qualified to vote shall be given an opportunity to recommend persons for nomination to the church board. The church board will consider these recommendations for nominations and present one nominee for each vacancy.
 - b. All those on the ballot shall have given their consent to serve if elected.
 - c. No nominations shall be made from the floor.
 - d. The election of new board members shall take place in May at the annual business meeting.
 2. Deacons shall be elected for terms of three years. Terms shall expire in such a manner that, so far as possible, one third of their number shall be chosen annually. Deacons may be elected to three year terms of office successively.
 3. The deacons shall be at least seven in number. Additional deacons may be added as determined necessary by the board and approved by the membership.
 4. Mid-year vacancies on the board shall be filled by board appointment until the next annual meeting.
- D. *Responsibilities of the Board* - The board is responsible:
1. For the general spiritual oversight of the church and all church-related organizations.
 2. For written policies that address general spiritual oversight, governance, organizational decisions and process.
 3. To administer the finances according to the desires of the membership. The board may authorize up to five percent of the total annual budget for any item not budgeted, and may expend additional amounts without approval of the membership when necessary to protect church property.
 4. To establish any official church-related organizations.
 5. To approve the leadership of all official church-related organizations.
 6. In the absence of any pastor, to care for pulpit supply, and to care for the presentation of pastoral candidates, following the procedure outlined under "Call" in the article on "Pastors" (Article VIII).
 7. To select one to serve as the clerk of the board and the church, who is responsible for records of church action by the board or the membership.
 8. To select one to serve as treasurer of the church, who is responsible for the financial records of the church. The board is responsible to provide the treasurer with the necessary help in keeping financial records.
 9. To interview and recommend candidates for membership.
 10. To appoint committees or task forces as are provided for under Article VII.
 11. For carrying out the provisions for the discipline of members, as provided for in Article IV, Section E.
 12. To serve as directors (trustees) of the church as required by law.
 13. To appoint such other officers as they deem necessary to carry out the purpose of the church.

E. The Meetings of the Board

1. The church board shall establish regular meeting times for the fulfilling of its responsibilities.
2. A quorum to transact business is a majority of the board members.
3. Special meetings of the board may be called by the senior pastor, the board chairman or by 50 percent of the board members.
4. Neither the business to be transacted, nor the purpose of any regular or special board meeting need be specified in the notice of such meeting.
5. If all board members shall consent in writing or by email to action to be taken, such action shall be as valid an action as though it had been authorized at a meeting.
6. The board may transact business by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment, by a means in which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation in such a conference shall constitute presence in person at such meeting.
7. Regular meetings may be held without notice. Notice of special meetings shall be given personally, from the pulpit, by mail, email, by telephone, or by publication in the church bulletin, at least three days prior to the meeting.
8. Attendance of a board member at a meeting constitutes a waiver of notice of the meetings, except where a member attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transacting of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Notice of any meeting need not be given to any person who waives such notice in writing, either before or after the meeting.

F. Board Organization

A board chairman, vice-chairman, clerk and treasurer shall be chosen from among the board annually at the first meeting of the new board. The board chairman shall serve as moderator of the board.

Article VII

TASK FORCES/COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS

- A. The church board may appoint individuals, task forces, or committees with specified duties and term of service. The church board may also dismiss individuals appointed to accomplish specified duties and disband task forces or committees at any time.
- B. The church board may establish policies and procedures for the appointment of teachers and persons serving in other positions.

Article VIII

PASTORS

A. Qualifications

1. The senior pastor shall be an ordained Baptist minister, or it shall be his intention to become ordained within the first year of his pastoral ministry here.
2. A pastor shall meet the spiritual, personal, and family qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
3. A pastor shall be a believer in and a teacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
4. A pastor shall adhere to the doctrine and policies of the church.

B. Call

1. A candidate shall be recommended by the board to the church, and a ballot shall be taken on each candidate before another is recommended to the church.
2. A candidate may be recommended to and voted on by the church only after the following is done:
 - a. The candidate has read this Constitution and the Articles of Faith and has declared himself in agreement to them, or submitted in writing to the board those specific areas of disagreement. If the board recommends the candidate despite such disagreement, the disagreement shall be disclosed to the church.
 - b. The candidate has been favorably interviewed by the church board as to his conversion, call, training, doctrine, and suitability to a pastorate in this church.
 - c. The candidate has declared his willingness to the board to be so recommended.
 - d. The church has had opportunity to observe his preaching and/or teaching on two separate congregational meeting days (if he is a candidate for the position of senior pastor).
3. A three-fourths majority vote is necessary to extend a call.

C. Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of the pastors, in cooperation with the deacons to:
 - a. Preach and teach at the regular stated services of the church or provide for such.
 - b. Oversee the spiritual welfare and the administration of the church.
 - c. Administer the ordinances.
2. In order to carry out their responsibilities, pastors shall:
 - a. Be ex-officio members of all task forces or committees, and church related organizations.
 - b. Moderate at all services and meetings of the church, if they desire, unless the business matter concerns themselves.
3. The pastors of this church shall divide their responsibilities among themselves, according to their gifts, training, and interests.

D. *Number* - Recognizing the correctness (though not the necessity) of a plurality of pastors in a local congregation, the church may provide for as many pastors as the Lord directs. A pastoral candidate may be recommended to the board by the senior pastor.

E. *Remuneration* - Recognizing its obligation to provide a living for its pastors, the church shall supply suitable compensation and benefits, and may provide for reimbursement for certain expenses as approved by the board.

F. Termination

1. *By resignation* - If a pastor wishes to terminate his ministry with the church, he shall, if possible, give the church at least 30 days prior notice.
2. *By dismissal* - If the church wishes to terminate the ministry of any of its pastors with the church, it may do so at any special business meeting called for that purpose. A majority vote shall be necessary for dismissal. The pastor's salary shall be continued for 30 days following the dismissal date.

Article IX

POLICIES

A. *Mission Policy* - In accord with Christ's command to take the gospel to "all" the world, the church shall engage in an active mission program. As such it may promote mission's experiences among the congregation and support any missionary, mission board, or mission agency in substantial agreement with our Articles of Faith. Support is to be underwritten through the general budget. It may receive designated gifts for approved missionaries or agencies.

B. *Auxiliary Organizations* - The church may establish church-related or auxiliary organizations in the fulfillment of its ministry. Such organizations are subject to the authority of the church board.

C. *Ecclesiastical Association* - The church may officially support or organizationally associate with those churches, organizations, or movements with whose general doctrinal policy stance it can substantially agree.

D. *Financial Policy* - The financial needs of the church and its various organizations shall be met principally by voluntary gifts of tithes and offerings. All financial matters not specifically reserved by the membership or the board shall be subject to the administration of the pastors. A two-thirds majority of members present at a duly called business meeting shall be required to incur indebtedness.

E. *Association Policy* - The church, by majority vote of its members, may declare itself in fellowship or association with sister churches on a local, state, national or international level, so long as withdrawal by the same process does not endanger the church's property rights in any way.

Article X

AMENDMENTS – This Constitution may be amended at any business meeting of the church by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. Proposed amendments must be approved by the church board and shall be published and announced at least two Sundays prior to the business meeting.

Article XI

DISSOLUTION – Upon dissolution of the corporation, the board shall assign all assets, both real and personal, to one or more Bible-believing organizations such as churches, schools or associations, which are qualified under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code or the corresponding provision of a future U.S. Internal Revenue law.

Article XII

ADOPTION - Upon adoption of this Constitution and Bylaws, the provisions herein shall supersede any prior policies and procedures as to the matters addressed. The date of adoption shall be indicated in the published Constitution, and implementation essential to the provisions herein shall be as recommended by the church board and approved by the church. All officers serving at the time of adoption shall continue in office for their terms until officers are elected under the provisions of this Constitution.

Article XIII

PROCEDURE - The moderator shall have authority over matters of procedure and may adopt a form of procedure suited to the business being conducted. If the procedure chosen by the moderator is challenged, *Robert's Rules of Order* shall become the rule of parliamentary procedure.