

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WICHITA
WICHITA, KANSAS

As Adopted November 16, 1966, and later revised
January 31, 1968; July 21, 1971; April 12, 1972; October 18, 1972;
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ARTICLE I. NAME AND PLACE

The organization shall be known as "THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF WICHITA," a non-profit, religious corporation affiliated with the American Baptist Churches, in the U.S.A. Its place of business shall be Wichita, Kansas.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The Church shall have as its purpose the advancement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It shall seek to attain this end through the regular public worship of God, the preaching of the gospel, consistent Christian living by its members, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor, Christian education, and a commitment to meet the needs of people.

ARTICLE III. RELATIONSHIPS

The Church shall be autonomous with respect to its internal organization and the regulation of its own affairs; however, recognizing the necessity for united denominational action, and being in general accord with the broad denominational aims, the Church cooperates with the Roger Williams Association, the American Baptist Churches of the Central Region, the American Baptist Churches, in the U.S.A., and the Baptist World Alliance. With an awareness of the benefits evolved from cooperation with other denominations and the effectiveness of a united Christian action, we also share in the concerns of evangelical cooperative Christianity.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications

The membership of the Church shall consist of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord; who have given evidence of a changed/new life; who have been baptized by immersion; and who have affirmed their agreement with and commitment to the faith and practices of the Church which have been approved by the Church and set forth in the Church Covenant and Statement of Core Beliefs.

Section 2. Receiving of Members

Persons presenting themselves for membership will:

- (a) Express their desire to unite with the body of believers at First Baptist; and
- (b) Meet with a representative(s) of the Diaconate or a pastor to share their testimony and also affirm that all membership qualifications have been met.

After the Diaconate, the Diaconate representative(s), or pastor have confirmed membership qualifications, candidates will be presented to the Church for membership at any regular or special business meeting.

Section 3. Removal from Membership Roll

Members may be removed from the membership roll upon the recommendation of the Diaconate and by a majority vote at any regular or special business meeting due to:

- (a) Member request.
- (b) Lack of attendance in worship, church school or other church ministries or programs for an extended period of time and following contact or repeated attempted contact by a member(s) of the congregation or by a pastor.
- (c) Failure to preserve the qualification of membership described in Article IV Section 1 following loving corrective Christian discipline undertaken in a spirit of gentleness or attempts at same as determined by the Diaconate or a pastor.

Members shall be automatically removed from the roll upon death.

Section 4. Inactive Membership

Following careful review and consideration, a member may be declared inactive by the Diaconate for reasons which may lead to membership removal. The inactive membership roll will be regularly reviewed (at minimum on an annual basis), contacts will be made with all inactive members and reports and recommendations will be provided to the Diaconate. No member will be placed on the inactive membership roll for justifiable extended absences including but not limited to absences due to ill health or being out of the Wichita area for a lengthy period(s) of time.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

Section 1. Elective Officers

The Elective Officers of the Church shall be:

- (a) A minimum of 12 and a maximum of 15 Deacons;
- (b) Three (3) Trustees, who may also be elected to the Diaconate;
- (c) One (1) Moderator;
- (d) One (1) Treasurer;
- (e) One (1) Assistant Treasurer;

- (f) One (1) Clerk.

Section 2. Duties and Terms of Elective Officers.

Elective Officers shall be elected to terms and carry out all duties and responsibilities as hereinafter provided, and perform any other duty as appropriate or assigned to carry out the mission, program and activities of the Church.

- (a) Members of the Diaconate: Each member of the Diaconate shall be elected for a three (3) year term. One-third (1/3), approximately, shall be elected each year. Each member may be re-elected to a second three year term. No person having served two consecutive terms on the Diaconate shall be eligible for re-election to the Diaconate until at least one (1) year has elapsed since the expiration of his or her term. Each member shall fulfill the responsibilities of his or her division position.
- (b) Trustees: The Trustees, who shall be of legal age, shall have the responsibility of executing all legal instruments relating to Church business and Church property, as directed by the Church. They may also fulfill division positions within the Diaconate.
- (c) Moderator: The Moderator shall be elected from the membership of the Church, other than the Church Staff, for a term of one (1) year, and shall not be eligible for immediate re-election as Moderator. The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the Church and represent the Church in various denominational and community affairs. The Chair of the Diaconate shall preside at business meetings in the absence of the Moderator.
- (d) Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be elected for one (1) year, shall be a member of the Finance Division and shall be responsible for signing all checks made in payment of duly authorized obligations of the Church. The Chair or Vice Chair of the Finance Division may sign checks upon authorization of the Treasurer.
- (e) Assistant Treasurer: The Assistant Treasurer shall be elected for one (1) year, shall assume the duties of the Treasurer when the Treasurer is not available or upon authorization by the Treasurer, and shall be a member of the Finance Division.
- (f) Clerk: The Clerk shall be elected for one (1) year, and shall keep the minutes of all business meetings of the Church.

ARTICLE VI.

THE DIACONATE

The Diaconate shall be the governing board of the Church and, together with the Pastor, shall be responsible for general oversight of all Church activities, and planning and/or approving and implementing the mission and program of the Church.

Section 1. Composition

The Diaconate shall be comprised of men and women representative of the Church membership who are seeking, by the grace of God, to lead a life as a living testimony to the risen Lord Jesus Christ. It shall annually recommend to the Personnel Committee the number of at large Diaconate members for election to carry out the mission and program of the Church. The Personnel Committee shall recommend a specific number of men and women and identify a specific number of at-large Diaconate members for election.

The composition of the Diaconate shall be: a Chair; the Division chairs; from two to five "at large" members; the Moderator; and the Senior Pastor.

Section 2. Organization

- (a) Diaconate assignments, including Divisional chairs, shall be as established for each year by the congregation at the meeting for the annual election of officers and members of committees. The Diaconate Chair may or may not fulfill a committee responsibility. The Diaconate shall elect from its membership a Vice Chair.
- (b) The Diaconate shall generally meet monthly at such time as it shall select, and shall make rules and regulations as may be required for its government, provided they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and By-Laws. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair. The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of the Diaconate. As the occasion requires, the Diaconate may adjourn into executive session to discuss legal, personnel or disciplinary matters. It may refer matters brought before it to any Division or committee.

Section 3. Duties

- (a) Church Staff: The Diaconate shall hire and, if needed, discharge all support staff. It shall also determine personnel policies, establish salary schedules and discuss and evaluate the performance of all Church staff.
- (b) Use of Property: The Diaconate shall determine and/or approve policies regarding use of Church property and facilities by church members and outside groups and organizations. It may assign to the Property Division the responsibility to authorize use of property within approved policies.

- (c) Personnel Committee: The Diaconate shall nominate the members at large of the Personnel Committee, as required by Article IX, Section 3.

Section 4. Divisions

- (a) The work of the Diaconate shall be accomplished by the various Divisions and their committee(s). Any creation, dissolution or change in purpose of a Division shall be recommended by the Diaconate for approval by the Congregation.
- (b) Each Division Chair shall be responsible for providing a written report for compilation in an Annual Report book of the Church, which shall be presented at the annual meeting.
- (c) The Diaconate shall annually review the various committees within each Division which are necessary and appropriate to carry out the mission, programs and activities of the Church. Any creation, dissolution or change in purpose of a committee shall be approved by the Diaconate and reported to the Personnel Committee by October 1. Committees shall carry out all duties and responsibilities as may be assigned to them by the Diaconate.
- (d) Committee Chairs within the Divisions shall be elected by each committee unless otherwise appointed by the Diaconate or Division Chair. They shall hold office for one (1) year.
- (e) Committee Chairs may enlist Church members at large who can provide specialized assistance to expedite the proper function of the committee.

Section 5. Responsibilities of the Divisions

Divisions of the Diaconate shall function under the continuing authority and direction of the Diaconate in carrying out the mission, programs and activities of the Church. Each Division shall develop for approval a divisional budget, and shall administer the approved budget. The Divisions and committees shall meet as often as necessary to conduct their business.

- (a) Church Property: The Property Division shall be responsible for the general maintenance of all real and personal Church property. The Division may assign responsibility for specific items to other Divisions. The Division shall allocate appropriate space for the ministries of the Church.
- (b) Church Finances: The Finance Division shall be responsible for the finances of the Church and for maintaining efficient records to be reviewed annually by a qualified accountant. It shall be charged with the responsibility of preparing the annual Unified Budget for submission to

the Church for final approval. The Finance Division, in cooperation with the Diaconate, shall organize and supervise the annual stewardship campaign of the Church.

Section 6. Restoration

The Diaconate, or designated members thereof, shall be responsible for loving, Christian discipline in a spirit of gentleness for the well-being of any Church member and the restoration of breached or broken relationships.

Section 7. Deacon Emeritus and Deaconess Emeritus

The honorary titles of Deacon Emeritus and Deaconess Emeritus may be conferred in recognition of long, continued, honorable, and faithful service rendered by a current or past member of the Diaconate. Such title may be conferred on the recommendation of the Diaconate by a majority vote of the members at any regular business meeting of the Church.

Section 8. Business Administrator

The Diaconate may, with the approval of the congregation, employ a Business Administrator who will have administrative duties delegated to him.

ARTICLE VII. THE PASTOR

Section 1. Calling the Pastor

In the event of calling a Pastor, the Pulpit Committee shall recommend candidates for the pastorate. The recommendation of this committee, when approved by a three-fourths majority of the Diaconate, shall then be presented to the Church for final action. A three-fourths vote of those present and voting shall be necessary to call a Pastor.

Section 2. Pastor as Member

The Pastor shall be a voting member of the Diaconate, and shall be a non-voting member of the Divisions and the committees of the Church.

Section 3. Pastor's Tenure of Office

The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time, his tenure of office continuing until he or the Church has given not less than one month's advance notice of the termination of his pastorate.

Section 4. Calling an Interim Pastor

In the event of calling an Interim Pastor, the Interim Pulpit Committee shall recommend Interim Pastors. The recommendation of the Interim Pulpit Committee, when approved by a three-fourths majority of the Diaconate, shall then be presented to the Church for final action; except for Interim Pastors serving two-months or less, in which case final vote will rest with the Diaconate.

ARTICLE VIII. CHURCH STAFF

Section 1. Program Staff

The Program Staff shall consist of the Pastor, who shall be head of the staff, all Associate Pastors, all Ministers, and the Business Administrator. Members of the Program Staff shall be non-voting members of the Divisions and Committees as appropriate for their individual staff responsibilities.

Full-time members of the Program Staff, other than the Pastor, shall be called by the congregation upon the recommendation of the Diaconate. The committee(s) specifically related shall serve with the Diaconate in interviewing candidates. The Diaconate and the committee(s) shall specify the terms of the "call." Part-time members of the Program Staff shall be called by the Diaconate and the committee specifically related to their respective fields of ministry. Members of the Program Staff shall be called for an indefinite period of time, continuing until they or the Church have given not less than one month's advance notice of their termination.

Section 2. Support Staff

All church employees who are not members of the Program staff shall be members of the support staff.

ARTICLE IX. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Section 1. Pulpit Committee

In the event of a vacancy in the Pastorate, a Pulpit Committee, consisting of seven (7) members, shall be elected by the Church. This committee shall consist of persons in the following positions in the year in which the Committee is established: The Chair and three (3) additional members of the Diaconate; and three (3) members from the Church at large; a man, a woman, and a member representing the youth. Nominations for this committee shall be presented to the Church by the Personnel Committee. The Pulpit Committee shall make careful and diligent inquiry and investigation regarding possible candidates for the Pastorate, giving special regard to Article III and to the Code of Ethics of the Ministers' Council of the American Baptist Churches, in the U.S.A, as it applies to churches.

Section 2. Interim Pulpit Committee

In the event of a vacancy in the Pastorate of more than 2 months, an Interim Pulpit Committee, consisting of five (5) members, shall be elected by the Church. The Interim Pulpit Committee shall include at least one member of the Diaconate who is also serving on the Pulpit Committee. Nominations for this committee shall be presented to the Church by the Personnel Committee. The Interim Pulpit Committee shall make careful and diligent inquiry and investigation regarding possible candidates for Interim Pastor(s), giving special regard to Article III and to the Code of Ethics of the Minister's Council of the American Baptist Churches, in the U.S.A.

Section 3. Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall consist of not less than five (5) members but not more than nine (9) members of the Church who serve for three (3) year terms, with at least one (1) member elected each year. The Diaconate shall nominate members to the committee and shall post the names of its nominees for election by the congregation at the regular business meeting before September 1. The members of this committee shall not be eligible for any other Church elected position during their term. No person having served a 3 year term on the Personnel Committee shall be eligible for re-election to the Personnel Committee until at least one (1) year has elapsed since the expiration of that term.

The Personnel Committee shall meet regularly beginning approximately August 1 for the purpose of preparing a list of nominees for Church officers and committee members. This list must be provided to the Clerk in time to meet the posting requirements of Article XI, Section 2(f) prior to the annual meeting. The Personnel Committee shall meet promptly to fill vacancies as they shall occur throughout the year. The election to fill any vacancy shall occur at a business meeting as soon as possible after the posting of the nominees, as provided in Article XI, Section 2 (f).

The Personnel Committee shall be aware of all leadership needs of the Church and become sensitive to the various gifts the Lord has graciously shared with His people. This committee shall then seek out those who are spiritually mature and live exemplary Christian lives and who are gifted to serve as officers of the Church as well as members of committees who are to be chosen at large. They shall seek out those who are best equipped to serve in one of the specific Divisions of the Diaconate and propose those best suited to serve as Chairs of the Divisions. The Personnel Committee shall also seek out those who are to serve in other crucial areas of general Church leadership and those who are to serve on special committees when requested by the Diaconate.

Section 4. Other

The Diaconate may establish any other special committee it considers necessary to carry out specific responsibilities consistent with the mission, program and activities of the Church. The Diaconate may either assign persons to such committees or enlist the

Personnel Committee for this purpose. Such committees will generally be task oriented and short term in duration, and shall report directly to the Diaconate or a Division thereof in executing its responsibilities.

ARTICLE X. ELECTIONS

Section 1. Time and Method

Unless otherwise provided for, all elective officers and committee members of the Church shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year by majority vote; and shall be eligible for re-election.

Section 2. Vacancy

In the event of a vacancy in any elective position, the Personnel Committee shall nominate another member to fill the unexpired term as provided in Article IX, Section 3. Any person unable to perform the duties of his position shall submit a resignation in writing to the Diaconate. The Diaconate may declare any position vacant in which the elected person fails to perform his duties. The Diaconate shall inform the Personnel Committee of any vacancy.

Section 3. Unexpired 3 Year Term

Any member elected to fill 18 months or less of an unexpired 3 year term shall hold the position to which he is elected for the duration of the unexpired term, and following completion of the unexpired term, shall be eligible for immediate re-election to a full term; otherwise, the member is not eligible for immediate re-election to the same position. Diaconate members who have served two consecutive terms shall not be eligible to fill an unexpired term until at least one year has elapsed since the expiration of his or her term.

ARTICLE XI. MEETINGS

Section 1. Public Worship

The Church shall meet regularly for the public worship of God, for Church School, for teaching, fellowship, and such other purposes and at times and other places as deemed proper.

Section 2. Business Meetings

- (a) Regular business meetings of the Church shall be held at a frequency established by the Diaconate and approved by the Church at a regular

business meeting. The posting requirements of Section 2 (f) shall be met to notify the Church of each meeting.

- (b) The meeting for the annual election of officers and members of committees shall be at the annual meeting.
- (c) The Unified Budget shall be presented to the Church for approval prior to the start of the budget year.
- (d) The annual business meeting of the Church shall be held in either December or January. The annual meeting shall also be considered a regular business meeting.
- (e) Special business meetings of the Church may be called by the Pastor, the Chair of the Diaconate, or by a majority of the Diaconate. Notice of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting shall be given according to Section 2(f).
- (f) Whenever notice of a business meeting is required, or when the Church meets in business session for the election of officers; the calling of a Pastor, Interim Pastor serving for a period of more than 2 months, or other full-time member of the Program Staff; or any matter requiring a charter, constitution, or by-law change, notice stating the subject or purpose of the meeting shall be given as follows:
 - (1) By posting a typewritten or printed notice on the bulletin board in the vestibule of each education building for a minimum of seven (7) days preceding the meeting; and
 - (2) By at least one publication in the regular Church paper, mailed directly to the home of each member prior to the meeting.

If the meeting is for the purpose of an election or calling of any member of the Program staff, the name(s) of the nominee(s) or Program staff candidate shall be included in each notice.

Section 3. Quorum and Rules of Order

Fifty (50) members of the Church shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, REVISED, shall govern when not covered by the Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE XII. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business at regular business meetings of the Church shall be as follows:

- a. Call to order.
- b. Review of minutes of previous meeting.

- c. Finance Division report.
- d. Diaconate recommendations, if any.
- e. Unfinished business.
- f. New business.
- g. Adjournment.

ARTICLE XIII. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from the first of January through the thirty-first of December.

ARTICLE XIV. BUDGET YEAR

The budget year may be any twelve (12) consecutive whole months. Approval to revise the budget year shall be by majority vote at a regular business meeting.

ARTICLE XV. NOTICE

Whenever any notice is required to be given for consideration of any motion at a business meeting of the Church, the notice shall include the proposed motion, or a brief statement of the purpose of the meeting.

ARTICLE XVI. AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The Constitution and By-Laws and Charter

The Constitution and By-Laws and Charter may be amended at any regular business meeting of the Church by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, provided a quorum is present, and that notice of the proposed amendments has been given as stated in Article XI, Section 2 (f) and Article XIV.

Section 2. Adoption of Constitution and By-Laws

The Constitution and By-Laws, when adopted, shall supercede the Constitution and By-Laws adopted September 11, 1957, and all revisions, former acts, rules, and regulations for the government of the Church. This includes the Constitutions and By-Laws of all auxiliary organizations insofar as they may be in conflict with this instrument.

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