



CONSTITUTION



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF JUNIATA COUNTY
MIFFLINTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA**

THE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this church shall be: “First Baptist Church of Juniata County.”

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

Its purpose shall be to share the gospel with the lost for the purpose of life change, exhort and equip the believers in their spiritual lives, and provide fellowship in the Lord (Matthew 28:19-20, Eph. 4:11-16).

ARTICLE III

APPLICATION

This church is an independent church not in subjection to any denomination or organization. However, this church shall affiliate with the Venture Church Network, formerly Conservative Baptist Association of America and its regional chapter, Mission Mid-Atlantic.

ARTICLE IV

COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive

for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 16:2; Acts 11:29; 2 Corinthians 9:7-12; Acts 1:8).

We also commit to maintain family and personal devotions, to educate our children, to seek the salvation of our community and all nations, to walk wisely and peacefully in the world, to be just in our dealings with others, faithful in our responsibilities, be a godly model in our behavior, and to be zealous and dedicated in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ and fulfill the Great Commission (Psalm 1:1-2; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Corinthians 9:22-23; Ephesians 5:15; Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 4:29-32; Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; Ephesians 5:18; Acts 19:8; 28:23).

We further commit to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready to seek reconciliation, to think the best of each other and put one's needs above our own, and to be diligent to follow the commands of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We further commit that, when we leave this local body of believers, we will as soon as possible join with a local church where we can carry out the Great Commission and the principles and commands of God's Word (John 13:34-35; Galatians 6:2; James 5:13-14; Colossians 4:6; James 1:19-20; Matthew 18:15-17).

ARTICLE V

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Section 1

We believe the Bible to be God's inerrant, sufficient and perspicuous Word; written by men who were definitely and uniquely inspired, and that it is our supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice. We affirm our belief in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in their original autographs (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

Section 2

We believe in God the Father, perfect in Holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. We believe that God created the physical universe and all forms of life with reproductive capacity in six literal days. We rejoice that He

concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all that come to Him through Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 20:2-3,11; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 3:16; Matthew 7:7; Hebrews 7:25; Acts 4:12).

Section 3

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, born of a virgin, sinless in His life, who atoned for the sins of the world by His death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension into Heaven, his High Priestly intercession for His people, and His personal, visible, pre-millennial return to the world according to His promise (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 2:17; Acts 1:11).

Section 4

We believe in the Holy Spirit who comes forth from God to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, comfort, and seal forever those who believe in Jesus Christ (John 14:16-17; John 16; Romans 8:14,16,26-27; Ephesians 1:13-14).

Section 5

We believe God originally created Adam and Eve in His image and free from sin. We further believe that all people are created as either male or female in His image, but are sinners by nature and choice and are spiritually dead. We also believe that those who repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:27-31; 2:18-25; Psalm 51:5; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 1:10; 3:23; 5:12; 8:11; 10:13; Ephesians 2:1-2; John 3:16—"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."). We believe God established marriage to be a lifelong covenant relationship between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman. Marriage so defined is the only permissible context for intimate sexual expression and is the foundation for the human family. We believe that human life is sacred and precious and should be protected from conception until death. We further believe that every human being is directly responsible to God in matters of faith and life, and that each should be free to worship God according to the dictates of conscience bound by the Word of God (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25; 5:1-2; Matthew 19:1-6; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Hebrews 13:4; Psalm 119:128; 139:13-17).

Section 6

We believe that the local church is composed of regenerated, immersed believers, voluntarily united together for the purpose of worship of God, the fellowship of believers and the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world. We affirm that

each believer is equipped by a gifting from God to serve one another, but that the supernatural “sign” gifts were uniquely granted to the first-century church during the ministry of the apostles (Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 1:12; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4).

Section 7

We believe in the competency of the individual soul to have direct approach to God; the priesthood of all believers; a regenerated church membership; the symbolic ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; that each church is independent and autonomous and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; the solemn obligation to majority rule within the church, with equal right to all and special privilege to none; the absolute separation of church and state; and a worldwide program of missionary endeavor in obedience to the final command of our Lord (1 Peter 2:5,9; Acts 8:26-39; 1 Corinthians 11:24-30; Acts 4:19-20; Matthew 22:21; Matthew 28:18-20).

ARTICLE VI

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1

Reception of Members:

1. Members (Regular and Associate) of this church shall consist of such believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as have been baptized by immersion, who take the Holy Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, and who agree to be governed by this Constitution. Regular and Associate Members may be received by:

a. Baptism (Immersion);

b. Letter from a Church of like faith and practice; or,

c. Christian experience, if the candidate has been baptized by immersion and gives satisfactory evidence of Christian faith and character.

2. All requests for membership or change in membership status shall be referred to the Board of Deacons for recommendation to the congregation for the appropriate action.

3. Associate membership. A two-thirds vote of the members present in a regular or special business meeting of the church can grant this status. Such membership

would pertain to former or retired pastors, full-time Christian workers, students, senior citizens, active-duty military personnel, or special requests. Each associate member would be considered a non-voting member of the church.

Any associate member can become an active voting member by meeting with the Board of Deacons and a simple majority vote of the congregation.

Section 2

Duty of Members:

1. The duty of members shall be, by Divine help, to faithfully to endeavor to meet the obligations set forth in the church covenant.
2. All active members eighteen years of age and older shall have the privilege and duty of voting at all business meetings of the church.

Section 3

Separation of Members:

1. Members may be dismissed from this church by:
 - a. Letter to unite with some other church of faith and practice;
 - b. Exclusion: Charges of conduct unbecoming a Christian having been made and duly proved. Prolonged absence, as detailed in point c below, from the services of the church will be considered conduct unbecoming a Christian; or,
 - c. Inactivity: If any resident member has been unfaithful for the period of six months, willfully neglecting the privileges and duties of membership, and disregarding his covenant obligations, the individual shall be placed on the church's Inactive Roll. Those names that appear on this roll shall have no vote or voice in the regular or special business meetings of the church. This action shall in no way affect any member who, on account of ill health or conflicting duties, is unable to attend the services regularly.

The Church Clerk, by order of the congregation, shall send a letter to all those whose names are dropped from the Active Roll. This letter shall inform the member that the individual has been placed on the Inactive Roll, thereby losing his or her voice and vote in any business meeting of the church.

An inactive member can be reinstated to full membership. For reinstatement, the individual should contact a pastor or a deacon and sincerely and conscientiously

fulfill the individual's covenant obligations for a period of three months. After the three-month period, the congregation, by majority vote, can reinstate the individual to regular membership.

If, at the end of six months from date of the letter, an inactive member shows no inclination to reinstate his-or herself, he or she shall automatically be removed from the Church Membership Roll by recommendation of the Board of Deacons, then by a majority vote of the congregation.

2. All requests for separation shall be referred to the Board of Deacons for recommendation to the congregation for the appropriate action.

ARTICLE VII

OFFICERS

Section 1

The elected officers of this church shall be the Pastors (Senior and Assistant), Elders, a Board of Deacons, a Treasurer, a Financial Secretary, a Clerk, a Sunday School Superintendent, a Historian, a Head Usher, a Children's Sunday School Superintendent, and a Sunday School Secretary.

Section 2

Length of service for officers - The pastors shall serve an indefinite term. After the initial terms identified in the job description, the elder(s) shall serve for five (5) years. The deacons shall serve for three (3) years. First-time deacons may serve a one (1)-year trial term if desired. After two successive terms, deacons shall take a minimum of one year off before serving another term. The number of deacons to be elected will be determined by the number of those terms, which have expired. All other officers shall serve for one (1) year. There are no limits to the number of terms that can be served in any office.

Section 3

Vacancy - Should a vacancy occur in any office, the same may be filled for the unexpired term at any regular or special business meeting, by ballot, providing notice has been given from the pulpit on the two Sundays preceding the proposed election.

Section 4

Election procedures - The several officers of the church shall be members of the church and shall be chosen by ballot. A majority vote of the members present and

voting shall be requisite to their election in all cases except in the choice of a pastor or elder, who shall be elected by a seventy-five percent vote of the members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose, of which meeting notice shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays preceding the proposed meeting.

Section 5

Election and resignation of the pastor - Upon the death or removal of the pastor, the church shall, without delay, elect to its pastorate a minister of Baptist faith, of good report, and in keeping with the biblical qualifications for pastors (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). It shall be the duty of the pastor to preach regularly to the church, to administer the ordinances of the gospel, and perform the various duties incumbent in this office. The pastors and elders shall be members *ex-officio* of the Board of Deacons and all committees of the church.

A pastor's relationship with the church may be dissolved by his resignation or by a majority vote of the congregation at any regular or special meeting provided announcement of the purposes of the meeting has been made from the pulpit on the two (2) successive Sundays preceding the meeting. In either case, the church or pastor shall give three (3) months notice. This time may be shortened by mutual consent.

Section 6

Sunday School teachers - The Sunday School teachers shall be members of the church appointed by the Sunday School Superintendent and the Senior Pastor and approved by the Board of Deacons.

Section 7

Duties of Deacons - It shall be the duty of the Deacons to hold slated meetings, prepare and distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper; use the Fellowship Fund of the church for the relief of poor and needy, and exercise general supervision over both physical and spiritual interests of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without the specific authorization of the congregation. They shall additionally advise and cooperate with the pastors in the performance of their duties, secure pulpit supplies in the temporary absence of the Senior Pastor or when the church is without a pastor. When the church is seeking a pastor, they shall serve as the pulpit committee. Finally, they shall consider all applications for membership and requests for dismissal and report, with recommendation thereon, to the church, elect their own officers, serve the needs of the congregation through the deacon care list, and fulfill and maintain the biblical qualifications of deacon (1 Tim. 1:8-13).

Section 8

Duty of the Treasurer - It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive and disburse all funds of the church and to keep strict confidence regarding personal giving. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be responsible for counting the weekly and special offerings excluding the Fellowship Fund. The Treasurer shall arrange for deposit of the same as soon as possible in the church's designated accounts. The Treasurer shall make a report to the church in writing of the condition of its finances at the regular business meetings and at the annual business meeting. The offering envelopes will be given to the Financial Secretary for accurate recording.

Section 9

Duty of the Financial Secretary - The Financial Secretary, who will be able to retain strict confidence, shall keep a record of all contributions received through the envelope system and through online contributions. The Financial Secretary shall prepare a statement for each envelope number/donor at the end of the fiscal year.

Section 10

Duty of Church Clerk - The Church Clerk shall keep a record of all proceedings of the church at the various business meetings; keep a registry of members; sign all letters of dismissal; supervise the keeping of the Sunday School records; conduct such correspondence as the business of the church may require and perform such other duties as may be referred to him or her.

Section 11

Duty of Church Moderator - The Church Moderator shall be the Chairman of the Board of Deacons. The Moderator shall be the presiding officer at all church business meetings. When unable to preside, the alternate will be the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE VIII

MINISTRY TEAMS

Section 1

Nominating Team - A Nominating Team of three (3) members shall be elected; two (2) by the Deacons from their Board and one (1) by the teachers and officers of the Sunday School from the Sunday School teachers. They shall nominate a slate of officers for all offices to be filled at each annual business meeting and post

their list at least one (1) week before the meeting. Opportunity shall be given for additional nominations from the floor.

Section 2

Other Teams - As the need arises other teams may be appointed by the Board of Deacons or elected by the congregation.

ARTICLE IX

MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1

Slated Meetings:

- a. Public worship each Sunday;
- b. Observance of the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month; and,
- c. Two semi-annual business meetings, with special business meetings called as needed.

No meetings, practices, or team meetings may be conducted during regularly scheduled Sunday services of the church without previous approval by the Board of Deacons.

Section 2

Special Business Meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor, the Church Moderator, or by the Church Clerk on a written request specifying the purpose and signed by not less than five (5) Members. Public notice of such meeting shall be given from the pulpit on the Sunday preceding the proposed meeting, except as provided for under Article VII - Officers.

Section 3

Fiscal Year - The fiscal year shall begin January 1 and end December 31 of each year.

ARTICLE X

FELLOWSHIP FUND

First Baptist Church of Juniata County has a ministry to needy individuals, and the church has established a Benevolence Fund known as "The Fellowship Fund"

through which funds for the support of needy individuals may be administered:

This fund is established to help individuals and/or organizations in financial need as determined by the Deacon Board.

FBC will accept only contributions to the Fellowship Fund that are to or for the use of the church and their use must be subject to the control and discretion of the church Deacon Board. Donors may make suggestions but not designations or restrictions concerning the identity of the needy individuals; and,

FBC will provide a charitable contribution receipt for gifts that meet the criteria outlined in this constitution. FBC reserves the right to return any gifts that do not meet the criteria.

Offerings shall be received for the Fellowship Fund as directed by the Deacon Board and these offerings shall be used for the established purpose of the Fellowship Fund. The Deacon Board shall annually report the amount received and the amount spent but shall not be required to report the beneficiaries of the fund.

ARTICLE XI

AMENDMENTS

This Constitution, after due notice, may be amended at any bi-annual, or special business meeting of the church by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, provided the purposed change has been presented in writing to the Church at least four (4) weeks previous.

If any matter is not covered in this Constitution they will be referred to Robert's Rules of Order. This present Constitution supersedes all previous Constitutions of First Baptist Church of Juniata County and was approved on 11/21/2021.