

The Constitution and Bylaws

Forest Hills Baptist Church

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I **Name**

The name by which said corporation is legally identified:

FOREST HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH

ARTICLE II **Purpose**

Forest Hills Baptist Church exists to glorify God by contending for His truth, multiplying servants of Jesus Christ and caring for one another.

ARTICLE III **Membership**

Section 1: Requirements for membership

All members must:

- a. Be interviewed in person by a membership committee representative of elders.
- b. Give satisfactory evidence of having been born again by the Spirit of God and of being willing followers of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- c. Be baptized following regeneration.
- d. Agree with and support the Doctrinal Statement of Forest Hills Baptist Church.
- e. Agree to walk in harmony with the Membership Covenant, indicated by signature.
- f. Agree to walk in harmony with the Constitution of Forest Hills Baptist Church.
- g. Not be members of secret or cultic organizations.

Section 2: Reception of Members

- a. Those who have met the requirements of membership in Section 1, upon recommendation of the elders, may be recommended for membership to the church following the procedure listed below:
 1. Upon receiving a majority vote of those members present, the candidate then becomes a member of the Forest Hills Baptist Church.
 2. New members will be given the right hand of fellowship following the vote or at an upcoming service.
- b. Watchcare Status: We will assume a watchcare relationship to such persons who are of like precious faith, but do not wish to either move their membership from their home church, or are carrying on the

work of the Lord at another location. As a church, we would seek to minister to them in the same personal way we would to all members in matters of counseling, visitation, care by pastoral calling when sick and with similar matters. Members with watchcare status will not be allowed to vote in the affairs of the church.

Section 3: Dismissal of Members

- a. By Recommendation: A member in good standing may, upon application and approval of the church, receive a letter of commendation and transfer from this church to unite with another Bible believing church of like faith.
- b. By Exclusion: The name of any member who shall be absent from the services of the church for a period of approximately six months, as determined by the elders and deacons, without giving satisfactory reason for such absence, may be excluded from membership.

Section 4: Biblical Discipline

In all cases of disorderly conduct or heretical doctrine, so opposed to the church's life as to destroy the possibility of fellowship, procedure shall be in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18.

- a. Initial, private communication initiated by the member raising the complaint.
- b. Secondary, private communication continued by that member with witnesses.
- c. After determination by the elders, a final, public communication of the complaint before the congregation.
- d. If necessary, removal of membership of the sinning member. First Corinthians 5 and 2 Thessalonians 3 provide further guidance as to the relationship remaining members should have with those who have been removed for discipline.

Restoration: Any member who has undergone discipline by the local congregation, resulting in removal of membership, who wishes to rejoin the membership of the local church, must satisfactorily be interviewed by the elders as to their current relationship with the Lord, and upon approval by those leaders, come before the congregation at a public service and upon the hearing of a confession of sin, membership may be reinstated.

Section 5: Ordinances

As the Scriptures exemplify, believer's baptism should be experienced as close to the point of salvation as possible. As it is the duty of members of this church to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrine, and discipline, we believe willful absence from the Lord's Table is disobedience to the Scriptures and our covenant relationship.

- a. Baptismal services will be held as needs of the congregation arise, and at the discretion and timing of the elders. All baptisms will be by public immersion, with exceptions being made only in cases of illness, when recommended by the elders. Those being baptized will verbally testify of what God has done in their lives, and be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- b. The communion service is a central and regular facet of the church's worship and is to be observed at least once a month. 1 Corinthians 11:2; 1 Peter 2:13-17; 1 John 2:3-6; 3:14; 4:20-21

ARTICLE IV **Officers**

Section 1: Guidelines

- a. General Qualifications: The officers of this church shall consist of elders, deacons, treasurer and clerk, who have been active members not less than one year. No officer of the church shall be less than 21 years of age and shall not hold more than one office at a time.

- b. Nominations: Nominations, which should be made with prayerful consideration to the talents, gifts and abilities of the individuals, may be received at any time of the fiscal year. Those members desiring to serve as officers are encouraged to submit their names to the elders. A public comment period of three Sundays (two weeks) on all nominations will precede the appointment of any officer(s). The final appointment list will be supplied by the elders at the annual meeting.
- c. Terms: Elders will serve a three year term and deacons, treasurer and clerk for two year terms. Officers may serve consecutive terms if they are nominated and reappointed. The term of elected office will be from January 1st to December 31st.
- d. Cooperation and accountability between offices: Elders and deacons will cooperate in the directing of church affairs, with each elder being assigned several deacons and their families to whom spiritual oversight and care shall be given. Deacons in turn will provide care to a number of families within the congregation. The elders and deacons shall determine their number in order to adequately do the work of the ministry.

Section 2: Elders

The plurality of elders is clearly taught throughout the New Testament. Scripture repeatedly speaks of the elders (plural) of a local church (singular) (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14). Acts 20:17-35 addresses the same group of men as elders (v. 17) and overseers (v. 28), and as carrying out the ministry of shepherds (or pastors)(v. 28). These titles are used in the same manner in I Peter 5:1-4. While every pastor is an elder, not every elder carries out the task of a pastor-teacher (Eph. 4:11). The clearest distinction between the pastor and elder is made in I Timothy 5:17. Some elders are involved in spiritual oversight and others are also given to the pastoral tasks of preaching and teaching. For the purposes of this document, “pastor(s)” will refer to vocational elders who are involved in preaching and teaching.

- a. Pastor(s) shall be chosen by a 3/4 majority of all votes cast by members present. Their tenure of office may be terminated upon thirty days notice by either the pastor or the church. These terms may be waived by mutual agreement.
- b. A 3/4 majority of votes cast by members present shall be required to dismiss a pastor.
- c. Elder Duties:
 1. To give attention primarily to prayer and the ministry of the Word of God.
 2. To equip the members of the church for effective ministry.
 3. To provide oversight for the various ministries of the church.
 4. To protect the church from false and destructive teaching.
 5. To administer the duties of baptism, communion, weddings, funerals, dedications, etc.
 6. To moderate all church meetings, except in matters concerning themselves.
 7. To serve as ex-officio members of all committees of the church.
 8. To constitute a pulpit supply and committee in the absence of a teaching pastor, and to take the necessary steps to secure a candidate.
 9. To oversee the establishment of the church budget and the disbursement of all church funds. In this regard they shall keep good communications with the church and shall ask for congregational approval for any expenditure over ten (10) thousand dollars. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay elders.

d. Selection of Elders

1. The elders of the church shall be male members of the church, and shall be chosen on the basis of Scriptural qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
2. Elders of the church shall not have been divorced.
3. All elders at the first meeting following the annual meeting shall be required to subscribe in writing to the Doctrinal Statement of Forest Hills Baptist Church.

Section 3: Deacons

- a. Deacons shall meet within thirty days after each annual meeting, and at regularly scheduled monthly meetings, and at special meetings as seems necessary by any deacon, who must notify each deacon of such a meeting.

b. Deacon Duties

1. To provide care for the temporal needs of the church family.
2. To appoint three of their number to act as trustees for the Forest Hills Baptist Church in all legal matters.
3. To dispense the benevolent fund, according to the written guidelines established by the deacons.
4. To count and deposit all offerings into the church bank account, and provide the treasurer with a statement of purpose.
5. To audit the treasurer's books no less than annually.
6. To oversee the maintenance and care of all church property, including oversight of the janitorial service.
7. To coordinate with the elders concerning the use of the church building for other than regularly scheduled activities, including groups from outside the congregation.
8. To elect from their number a chairman and secretary each year following the annual meeting.
9. To organize themselves or appoint committees as they feel necessary in carrying out their responsibilities.

c. Selection of Deacons

1. The deacons of the church shall be male members of the church, and shall be chosen on the basis of Scriptural qualifications in 1 Timothy 3.
2. Deacons of the church shall not have been divorced.
3. All deacons at the first meeting following the annual meeting shall be required to subscribe in writing to the Doctrinal Statement of Forest Hills Baptist Church.

Section 4: Treasurer

- a. The treasurer shall not disburse any funds except on order of the deacons or elders.
- b. The treasurer shall make records available to the deacons or elders for an audit upon demand.

- c. The treasurer shall submit a written financial report to the deacons monthly.

Section 5: Clerk

- a. The clerk shall record all congregational business.
- b. The clerk shall present minutes of prior meetings at subsequent meetings
- c. The clerk shall make records available to the deacons or elders for an audit upon demand.
- d. The clerk shall have custody of all church records except those of the treasurer.

Section 6: Removal of Officers and Vacancies

The failure of any officer of this church to fulfill the responsibilities of his or her office for a period of one month for any reason other than employment, illness, or valid absence from the city, may be considered sufficient occasion for the church to declare the office vacant and appoint a successor according to the normal appointment procedures outlined above. Removal of officers requires a 3/4 majority vote of the congregation. Officers may also be removed for spiritual failures. Confrontations with and discipline of officers shall be conducted in the spirit of 1 Timothy 5:19-20. Officers of the church who are undergoing official and public church discipline shall be removed from their office immediately upon commencement of the public discipline. In the event of a vacancy, a replacement will be appointed according to the normal appointment procedures outlined above.

ARTICLE V
Missions

It is the policy of this church to support missions engaged principally in evangelization and establishment of Bible-believing churches. They shall be in hearty agreement with our Doctrinal Statement, both in doctrine and practice. Christian schools and social agencies, such as homes for the aged, children's homes, etc., shall be considered an appropriate part of the missionary program.

ARTICLE VI
General

Dissolution of Church Corporation

In the event of dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members, or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated by corporate vote, prior to dissolution, to such other non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Doctrinal Statement adopted by this church, and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service, Code of 1954 (Section 501.c.3).

BY-LAWS

Section 1: Business Meetings

- a. The church shall hold regular meetings in the months of April and November. These meetings will be known at least one month in advance. The November meeting will be the annual meeting of the church, with attention given to the announcement of officer appointments and annual budget approval. All officers shall submit annual reports. A monthly financial report will be made available to the congregation after the deacons have approved the report in their monthly meeting, or as soon as is practical.

- b. Special meetings may be called for the transaction of business by the elders, a majority of the deacons, or by a quorum of members of the church. Notice of such meeting shall be given on three consecutive Sundays. Discussion at special meetings shall be limited to the announced subjects. Limited business meetings for the sole purpose of voting new members into the congregation may be convened during any regular church service without prior notification whenever a quorum is present.
- c. The congregation will participate in voting on these issues: the calling of pastors; making changes to the covenant, doctrinal statement, constitution and bylaws; the buying, selling or leasing of real estate; approving of the annual budget; and the taking on of debt.

Section 2: Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall be from January 1st to December 31st.

Section 3: Raising Funds

All funds of the church shall be raised on a voluntary basis. No promotional means of fund raising will be permitted without permission of the deacons.

Section 4: Change of Constitution

The church may make any necessary change in the Constitution or Bylaws but such changes shall be made available to the members at least three Sundays previous to the regular or special business meeting and a 3/4 majority of all votes cast shall be required for adoption.

Section 5: Control By Other Corporations

This corporation shall not be controlled by any other corporation, although we may seek counsel in an advisory manner.

Section 6: Rules of Order

All business of the church shall be conducted in accordance with *Roberts Rules Of Order* except when in conflict with the Constitution.

Section 7: Right to Vote

The right to vote upon church affairs is limited to members of the church in good standing, eighteen years of age and over. However, this right may be denied to those who have for approximately six months prior failed or neglected to communicate or participate in its activities, as determined by the elders and deacons.

Section 8: Petitions

No one shall circulate a petition in the church without having submitted it to the elders and received their permission.

Section 9: Quorum

No official church business may be conducted in a business meeting that does not have a quorum, and the number necessary to constitute a quorum shall be 25% of the eligible voting members of the church.

Section 10: Methods of Voting

All congregational votes concerning the calling of pastors will be by ballot. The method of voting, whether by ballot, hand, or voice, in other voting instances, is up to the discretion of the officer moderating the meeting. Applications for absentee ballots may be received from the Clerk. Absence from the city or extreme illness are considered the only viable reasons for approval of said application.

Membership Covenant

Forest Hills Baptist Church

I have received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and have been baptized by immersion in obedience to Him. I am in agreement with the mission, vision, strategy, structure, values and doctrine of Forest Hills Baptist Church. I have decided to unite with the FHBC family by placing membership, and in so doing, I commit myself to Jesus Christ and to the other FHBC family members. With the Lord's help, we will endeavor to do the following:

1. Protect the unity of our local church
 - ...by acting in love toward other members
 - ...by resolving conflicts according to Matthew 18:15-17\
 - ...by submitting myself to private and public discipline of sin
 - ...by following the spiritual leaders

2. Support the testimony of our local church
 - ...by attending faithfully
 - ...by giving regularly, cheerfully and in proportion to God's blessing
 - ...by living a godly life in public and in private

3. Serve the ministry of our local church
 - ...by discovering my spiritual gifts and talents
 - ...by being equipped to serve
 - ...by developing a servant's heart

4. Share the responsibility of our local church
 - ...by praying for its growth
 - ...by sharing my faith with those around me
 - ...by embracing my responsibility to make disciples
 - ...by inviting the unchurched to attend
 - ...by warmly welcoming those who visit

Print Member's Name

Member's Signature

Signature of Pastor

Signature of Elder

Date