

**Constitution
For The
First Baptist Church
Centerville, Iowa**

Article I (April, 2004)

Name

This organization shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Centerville, Iowa as defined by the Articles of Reincorporation filed March 6, 2000.

Article II (April, 2004)

Purpose

The purpose of First Baptist Church is to be a united Christ-like family of believers who praise and worship God, thus allowing the Holy Spirit to birth believers as we teach and obey the Bible, fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), and minister in love to the needs of the Body of Christ and the community.

Article III (September, 2006)

Church Affiliation

This Church is independent in its regulation of its affairs. Any Association or Denomination affiliation shall be determined by the congregation of the church at a duly called regular or special congregation business meeting.

Article IV -POWERS

This church shall have the powers granted under the provisions of Chapter 504.A, Code of Iowa (1981). This church shall have the power to set apart and ordain to the Christian ministry any qualified man. In addition, this church shall have the power to do other things necessary or convenient for carrying out the purposes for which it is created or powers incidental thereto.

This church shall hold property in its corporate name. Legal instruments shall be executed by the chairman or vice-chairman of the Board of Elders and the elder designated as board secretary. Property to be sold which is valued at \$5,000 or more, must be brought to the congregation for approval.

The private property of those on the Board of Elders and those on the voting roster of this church shall be exempt from corporate debts.

Article V- MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications:

All persons who profess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for eternal salvation; desire to live under His lordship; are willing to join in the regular fellowship of this church and submit to its leadership; are in general agreement with its Statement of Faith and agree to sign the Unity Covenant, will be eligible for inclusion as a member of First Baptist Church.

Section 2 Procedure:

Request to be included in the membership should be made to one of the Elders. Letters from other churches will be considered only as recommendations. The Elders, following an informal interview, will make their recommendation to the congregation. Upon their recommendation, any legitimate reason for not including a person on the voting roster should be made known privately to one of the Elders. All persons included shall be urged to obey the Lord in baptism at the earliest convenience if they were not baptized following their salvation (Matthew 28:19). Persons included on the voting roster must be at least eighteen years of age.

Section 3. Removal from The Voting Roster/ Membership:

Those on the voting roster may be removed and will be notified in writing:

- a. By request. The individual who desires to be removed shall make the request to the Board of Elders.
- b. By absence. If a person voluntarily absents himself from the congregational service and regular meetings for a period of three months, that person will be removed from the roster. An individual may ask to be placed on “inactive” status if they are going to be absent for an extended period of time (winter address, mission trip, etc.), but intend to return. Upon their return they will be automatically reinstated to the active voting roster.
- c. By discipline. It is right and harmony with Scripture to exclude from this fellowship any person who holds false and heretical doctrine, who lives inconsistently with their Christian profession, or who disturbs the unity and peace of the church (I Cor. 5:11-13; Gal. 1:8-9,11; Thess. 3:6). The Board of Elders shall determine these matters.
- d. If the person leaves the church for another church.
- e. The Elders shall review the voting roster no less than two (2) [more frequently if circumstances dictate] time per year to maintain accuracy.

Section 4- EXPECTATIONS:

Members of this church are expected to be faithful in the services of First Baptist Church, actively supporting its spiritual family in prayer, the exercise of spiritual gifts as the Holy Spirit enables, and with material resources.

Further, members are to seek to exemplify a united testimony for the gospel in this community and beyond. Active members, listed on the voting roster, may vote, if qualified, to teach and hold office.

Article VI- BOARD OF ELDERS

Section 1. General Powers:

The management and government of the church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, shall be vested in the Board of Elders, whose authority is derived from the qualifications established in Scripture (Titus 1:5-9; Acts 14:23; 20:28; I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17).

The Elders shall oversee the congregation without compulsion, but with loving willingness, as examples to the church. Care must be exercised not to use unscripturally the authority vested in them. As a shepherd cares for the sheep, the elders are to care for the church (I Peter 5:1-4).

The congregation is to be submissive to the leadership of the elders as unto the Lord. This will produce unity in practice and doctrine (Hebrews 13:7,17; I Thess. 5:12-13; Romans 16:17; I Cor. 1:10; I Timothy 5:17).

It shall be the duty of the Elders to care for the church in its spiritual condition, to guard the purity of doctrine and life of the church, to discipline the church in accordance with the Word of God, to administer the ordinances, to equip believers to do the work of ministry, to counsel the erring and needy and to supply the pulpit as needed. They severally shall be ex-officio members of all committees. They shall inform the congregation of all major decisions made in their meetings. Any action taken by the Board of Elders may be changed by a three-fourths majority of the qualified voters who are present and voting at a properly called congregational meeting.

Section 2. SPECIFIC POWERS:

In no manner limiting the authority of the Board of Elders, but solely for the purpose of enumerating some of its powers, it shall have the power to:

- a. Call congregational meetings, provided notice of each meeting shall be given as provided in the Articles of Incorporation.
- b. Delegate to individuals or committees the right to transact any of its business or exercise any of its powers. In each such instance, the Board of Elders shall retain the right to supervise and control the acts of each individual or committee in such delegated authority.

- c. Receive, consider and respectfully, make disposition of any written comments, suggestions, or recommendations by any individual, committee or organization of the church.
- d. Adopt or amend procedures to govern the conducting of its business.
- e. The Elders shall designate the bank where the funds shall be deposited.
- f. The Elders shall not sell or encumber the real estate or other property of the Church unless authorized to do so by three-fourths (3/4) majority voting roster present at a meeting of the Church called for the purpose of considering such a transaction. Such a meeting of the Church must be called in accordance with the provisions of the laws of the State of Iowa which governs the selling or encumbering of Church property.
- g. The Church congregation has the right to accept or not accept a donation of real estate or other property depending on the future expenses of said real estate and other property. The Elders shall be responsible for designated monies being administered as specified.
- h. Any expenditure over \$2000, not budgeted, shall be approved by the Church. Expenditures less than \$2000, not budgeted will be administered by the Elder Board from "Budgeted Miscellaneous" funds.
- i. In case the Church falls behind, the Elders shall take appropriate action to eliminate this indebtedness. The Elders may borrow necessary funds with the approval of three-fourths (3/4) majority voting roster members present.
- j. The Elders shall be responsible for an annual audit of the books by an independent auditor.
- k. Exercise all other powers and duties which properly belong to the sole governing body of an independent church.

Section 3. LIMITATION OF POWER:

The Elders shall not:

- a. Encumber with loan, or transfer, or sell, or purchase any real estate for the Church except with approval of three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present at a properly called congregational meeting.
- b. Incur or authorize any individual, committee or organization spend over \$2500.00 on one project except with approval of a three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting at a properly called congregational meeting and except to protect church property in the event of any emergency. This does not apply to previously approved budgetary expenditures.

Section 4. NUMBER AND TERM OF OFFICE:

The number of Elders shall be according to the number who have been appointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). If at any time the number should fall below three, the normal authority of the Board of Elders will revert to the congregation. Elders shall be reconfirmed every four (4) years (with no term limits) as long as they are able and meet the qualifications.

Section 5. QUALIFICATIONS:

Men nominated for the position of Elder shall be at least twenty-five years of age and shall have been currently on the voting roster for a period of not less than one year. They shall be living an exemplary, dedicated and consistent Christian life. Titus 1:5-9 and I Timothy 3:1-7 shall serve in making this determination.

Section 6. SELECTION:

The selection of additional Elders shall be initiated by the Board of Elders. Whenever it discerns that the Holy Spirit of God has raised up a man to serve as an elder, it shall make recommendation to the congregation at the regular morning services on two successive Sundays immediately prior to the October business meeting. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting shall be necessary to confirm appointment. If dismissal should become necessary, the Board of Elders shall make recommendation to the congregation in the same manner. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting shall be necessary to dismiss him.

Section 7. MEETINGS:

The regular meetings of the Board of Elders shall be held at such time and place as the board may determine. Special meetings may be called at the request of the chairman, the vice-chairman, or a majority of the Elders. Notice shall be given at least one day prior to the meeting, or it may be waived by unanimous consent of the Elders.

Section 8. QUORUM:

A majority of the Elders shall constitute a quorum for an Elder meeting.

Section 9. LEADERSHIP:

By means of majority vote the Board of Elders shall select a chairman and vice-chairman and secretary at their first session following the annual meeting.

Article VII-PASTORAL STAFF

Section 1. Duties:

The Pastor shall be a believer in, and a preacher of, the Gospel, and the basic doctrines of faith along with the Elders. He shall administer the ordinances, watch over the membership, promote the spiritual interests of the Church, organize and develop its spiritual strengths. The Pastor shall be a member of the Elder Board. The Pastor and Elders shall be an ex-officio member of all ministries and committees of the Church and its auxiliary organizations.

Section 2. NUMBER:

The size of the pastoral staff will vary according to congregational need.

Section 3. SELECTION:

The selection of the pastoral staff will be initiated by the Board of Elders. It will invite qualified men to candidate. It shall recommend only one person at a time. No other person shall be considered until a decision is made by the congregation regarding that one. The Board of Elders shall make a recommendation to the congregation at the regular morning services on two successive Sundays immediately prior to a properly called congregational meeting.

A three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting shall be necessary to confirm appointment. Upon acceptance of his call, the new Senior Pastor shall automatically be added to the Board of Elders, though he may not be appointed chairman or vice-chairman. If dismissal should become necessary, the Board of Elders shall make recommendations to the congregation in the same manner. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting shall be necessary to dismiss him. He and any other pastoral staff, along with their respective wives, shall also be automatically added to the church voting roster.

Section 4. SALARY:

Salaries shall be presented by the Elders and approved by the congregation, at the annual meeting.

Article VIII
DEACON AND DEACONESS

Section 1. DUTIES:

In keeping with Biblical evidence, it shall be the duty of the Deacons and Deaconesses to assist the Elders in the administration of the various ministries of the church (Acts 6:1-7). Where needed, they will be assisted by committees approved by the Elders. These shall include, but not be limited to, the areas of: Worship, Missions & Evangelism, Christian Education, Family Ministries, Discipleship & Fellowship, and Trustees. They will serve as chair of any respective committee and will keep the Board of Elders informed as to plans and progress in his respective area of ministry. The Diaconate does not function as an autonomous board, but at the will of the Elders.

Section 2. NUMBER:

The number of persons appointed to that office will be set by the Elders according to the need as they determine it.

Section 3. QUALIFICATIONS

Those nominated for positions in the Deacon and Deaconess shall be at least twenty-one years of age, included on the voting roster, and be living an exemplary, dedicated and consistent Christian life (I Timothy 3:8-16). Deacon and Deaconess shall be reconfirmed every two (2) years (with no term limits) as long as they are able and meet the qualifications.

Section 4. SELECTION:

At least three months prior to the annual meeting, the Board of Elders shall function as a nominating committee. They shall seek out and select willing and qualified members to serve the Diaconate. Following approval by the Board of Elders, these names will be posted for at least two successive Sundays and then presented to the congregation at the October business meeting for approval. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting shall be necessary for approval. If dismissal becomes necessary, the Board of Elders shall make a recommendation to the congregation in the same manner. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting shall be necessary to dismiss that person.

ARTICLE IX
SERVICE POSITIONS FOR FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Section 1. Clerk:

The Clerk shall keep accurate Minutes of the business proceedings and membership of the church.

- a) The Clerk shall keep a complete roll of the members of the church and their addresses.
- b) The Clerk shall issue letters of transfer/dismissal as authorized by the Elder Board
- c) The Clerk shall conduct all official correspondence and preserve and properly file all letters, reports and other documents pertaining to the office.
- d) The Clerk shall deliver immediately to his or her successor all books, files, records and other documents in his or her possession.
- e) The term for this office shall be one year. The person in this office may serve consecutive terms.

Section 2. Financial Secretary:

The Financial Secretary shall keep an account for each member/family showing contributions received for each fund.

- a) The Financial Secretary shall provide each member/family with offering envelopes and render annual statements to each.
- b) The Financial Secretary shall provide a monthly financial report to the Elder Board.
- c) The Financial Secretary shall deliver immediately to his or her successor all books and records in his or her possession.
- d) The term for this office shall be one year. The person in this office may serve consecutive terms.

Section 3. Treasurer:

The Treasurer shall be the custodian of all monies contributed for the general expenses of the Church.

- a) All budgeted disbursements shall be authorized by the appropriate Ministry Chairperson and payment shall be by check.
- b) The Treasurer shall present to the Church at its quarterly and annual business meetings, or more often if so requested, an itemized report of receipts and disbursements showing the actual financial condition of the Church.

- c) The Treasurer shall present the books to be audited at the close of the fiscal year, or more often if so requested by the Elder Board.
- d) The Treasurer shall deliver immediately to his or her successor all books and records pertaining to this office.
- e) The term for this office shall be one year. The person in this office may serve consecutive terms.

Section 4. Trustee Ministry:

The Trustee Ministry shall hold in trust all property belonging to the Church and the corporation and shall take all necessary measures for its protection, management and upkeep.

ARTICLE X
Nominating Committee

The Elder Board shall serve as Nominating Committee or may empower up to five (5) active members. They shall serve a term of twelve months, commencing July 1 and ending June 30.

- a) Nominations must be submitted by September 1st.
- b) This committee shall interview each nominee proposed and ascertain his or her willingness to serve in case of election.
- c) The committee shall have prepared ballots for use at the annual election.
- d) The Nominating Committee will cooperate with and be responsible to the Elder Board.

ARTICLE XI
Elections

Section 1. Time:

The annual election of officers shall be held on the third Sunday of the month of October.

Section 2. Procedure:

The Nominating Committee shall present to the Elder Board at its September meeting the names of one (1) or more persons for each office to be filled. The Elder Board will in turn make a list of the nominees available to the congregation at least one (1) week before the election.

Prior to voting, it shall be the privilege of any person on the voting roster present to place in nomination the name of any eligible person who has agreed to serve.

All elections shall be by printed ballot. A majority of the ballots cast shall be necessary for the election of any officer unless otherwise stated in the Constitution. Voting by proxy shall not be allowed.

Section 3. Vacancies:

Vacancies occurring during the church year will be filled for the unexpired term by the Elder Board, with ratification by A three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting.

ARTICLE XII
Qualifications for Voting

Section 1. Quorum:

Twenty (20) voting roster members shall constitute a quorum. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting, shall be sufficient to decide any question presented unless otherwise stated herein. All members voting shall be 18 years old.

ARTICLE XIII
Standing Committees

The Elder Board may establish and direct Standing Committees as deemed necessary. The following Standing Committees have been named: Nominating, Music, Memorial, Counting, Lord's Cupboard.

The duties and responsibilities of these Standing Committees are set forth in the Administrative Handbook.

ARTICLE XIV
Ad Hoc Committees

Section 1. Ad Hoc Committees:

Ad Hoc Committees may be established by the Elder Board when deemed necessary. Each committee shall function as charged and when the assigned task has been completed, it shall be dissolved with a vote of appreciation.

Section 2. Pastoral Search Committee:

In forming a Pastoral Search Committee, the Elder Board will serve on the search committee. Elder Board will appoint two (2) active members to serve on the search committee.

ARTICLE XV

Meetings

Section 1. Devotional Meetings:

The Church shall meet regularly each Lord's Day for worship and the preaching of the gospel.

The Church normally shall meet for the observance of the Lord's Supper upon the first Lord's Day of each month and/or as deemed necessary by the Worship Ministry.

The Church shall meet each Lord's Day for Christian instruction (the study and teaching of the Bible) and at such other times as the Church may decide.

Section 2. Business Meetings:

The Annual Business Meeting shall be held on the third Sunday of January for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of the Pastors, of individual Officers, Committees of the Church and its Auxiliary Organizations and the transaction of such other business as is proper to come before the meeting.

The Quarterly Business Meeting shall be held on the third Sunday of each new quarter. In October officers for the coming year will be elected and the budget for the next year will be adopted.

Special Business Meetings may be called at any time by the Elder Board. Notice of such meeting and the object for which it is called shall be given from the pulpit at least two (2) weeks in advance of the date of the meeting and by written notice to all the membership.

ARTICLE XVI

Auxiliary Organizations

Section 1. Definition:

The Church regards as integral parts of its body all organizations and small groups formed for the purpose of carrying out the mission and the ministry of the Church and which use the facilities and/or draw support from the Church, such as, children's after-school activities, youth group, vocal choir, bell choir, Condolence Committee.

Section 2. Ministries' Responsibilities:

The Elder Board shall oversee and guide these organizations to support the ministry of First Baptist Church. A report of the activities of these organizations shall be included in the annual reports to the congregation.

Section 3. Auxiliary Organization's/Small Group's Responsibilities:

The purpose of an auxiliary organization and small group must not be in conflict with the Church's purpose as defined in Article II.

Meetings of Auxiliary organizations should be held at such times as will not conflict with the meetings of the Church.

ARTICLE XVII

Church Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on the first day of January and close on the last day of December.

ARTICLE XVIII

Amendments

This Constitution may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the Church by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of voting roster members present and voting.

Each amendment is to be recommended individually to the Church by the Elder Board.

Notice of such amendment, stating the proposed change, must be given from the pulpit on two (2) successive Sundays and by written notice to the entire active membership.

ARTICLE XIX

Rules of Order

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the business proceedings of this Church in all cases where they are consistent with the Constitution. The Church shall have copies of the Constitution and the Administrative Handbook available to all. Church leaders shall make themselves acquainted with these documents.