

Constitution of Ebenezer Baptist Church

EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Constitution and Bylaws of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Beaverdam Virginia

Preamble

This Constitution and Bylaws are created to achieve the following:

1. Preserve and secure the principles of our Christian faith.
2. Preserve and contribute to the liberties and spiritual growth of each individual member of the Church.
3. Ensure freedom of action to participate in the life of the Church.
4. Provide for orderly conduct of internal and external affairs, in dealing with others, organizations, and government.

ARTICLE I – NAME AND LOCATION

The name of this church shall be the Ebenezer Baptist Church. The Church is located at 14476 Scotchtown Road, Beaverdam, Virginia 23015. The Church was founded in 1866.

As an African American congregation, we joyously welcome all God's children while unapologetically celebrating and honoring our heritage and glorifying God who embraced us in the past, meets us in the present and calls us into the future

ARTICLE II – MISSION

The mission of this congregation is to give visible form to the faith and fellowship to which God has called God's people. We acknowledge ourselves to be a local manifestation of the universal church in and through which Jesus Christ still redeems and transforms the world and the Holy Spirit still anoints and empowers. We shall seek to fulfill this calling through corporate worship services and the proclamation of the gospel in word and deed; through a program of Christian Education for the nurture, equipping and building up God's people; through shared fellowship and caring mutual support which affirms life, individuals, and community; and through loving services that ministers to human needs and heals broken people and places.

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ARTICLE III – POLITY

Recognizing Jesus Christ as the only head of the church, this congregation shall seek to ascertain and to obey the will of our Lord in all matters of faith and practice. Authority to reach decisions for governing the spiritual and temporal affairs of this Church being given to us by Christ, we hold that such authority and responsibility is vested in the membership of the congregation.

All decisions made by this Church shall be made in accordance with the witness of Christ, the dictates of Scripture and the unction of the Holy Spirit. The call for faithful decision and action by this Church in accordance with the normative resources is neither nullified nor abridged by this or any other document.

In carrying out the wider ministry for which Christ had made the Church responsible, we shall adhere to and be a member of the Mattaponi Association and the Baptist General State Convention of Virginia. The Church will also be in cooperation with the larger Christian fellowship through other local, national, and international councils, assemblies, and conventions.

ARTICLE IV – CORE COMMITMENTS

This Church accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New testaments as the inspired record of God's revelatory actions in human history, and, when interpreted and applied in the Spirit and in accordance with God's self-disclosive expressions, as the authoritative basis for the doctrine and practice. The Core Commitments listed below are regarded by this Church as expressions of the essential Christian doctrines as set forth by the Word.

1. Embrace the Sovereignty of God, Centrality of Jesus Christ, the Power of the Holy Spirit, and the truth of the Word.
2. Affirm the intrinsic value and dignity of all people and the goodness and care of creation.
3. Witness to the liberating truth that transforms people, places and perspectives.
4. Celebrate our history and heritage while welcoming all God's children and honoring God's presence throughout the world.
5. Invest in growth in Spirit, knowledge, fellowship, and service and a ministry that equips and empowers the people.
6. Relate in love, mutuality and respect and building partnership and authentic relationships.
7. Practice total life stewardship and sharing blessings to be a blessing.

ARTICLE V – CHURCH COVENANT

The Church's Covenant is found in the front of the Church's hymnal.

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ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP

Admission of Members – Persons may be received into membership by any of the following methods, subject in each case to the recommendation of the Diaconate Ministry and the vote of the Church:

- A. **By Baptism** - Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and who is in essential agreement with the doctrine and practice of the congregation following baptism by immersion.
- B. **By Letter** - A person who is in substantial accord with the doctrine and practice of this Church may be received by letter of commendation from any other Baptist church.
- C. **By Experience** - A believer who is in substantial accord with the faith and practice of this Church may be received upon statement of Christian experience.
- D. **By Restoration** - any person who has been out of fellowship for any reason may be restored to membership upon recommendation of the Diaconate Ministry and the vote of the Church.

All persons who are affirmed as members via the above referenced manner and support the church's ministry with their name, attendance, prayers, spiritual gifts and/or contributions shall be afforded all the rights of God's Community herein named Ebenezer Baptist Church.

ARTICLE VII – THE PASTOR AND OFFICERS

All elected and appointed officers should and are expected to be responsible, active members of the Congregation, regular and cheerful financial supporters committed to Christian growth, spiritual maturation, and effective ministry, and full participants in the worship and educational life of the Church.

Section 1. Pastor – The pastor shall be the servant leader of the Church in all its activities and shall preach the gospel, teach, administer the ordinances, have charge of the stated services, public worship, and direct the spiritual welfare and administration of the Church. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all ministries and auxiliary organizations of the Church. The pastor shall be elected by the Church as provided in Article VIII, Section 1 of this document.

Section 2. Moderator – The servant leader of the Advisory Council Ministry, as elected by the Council, shall serve as moderator of the Church, and shall preside at all business meetings of the Church and at all meetings of the Advisory Council Ministry.

Section 3. Clerk/Financial Secretary/Auditor – A clerk/financial secretary/auditor will be approved and confirmed at each annual meeting and be responsible for maintaining

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records of all business transactions, membership, finances, and activity of the Church under the direction of the trustees. The clerk/financial secretary shall maintain the general financial records of the Church, draw checks, and make financial reports at all business meetings and/or when requested.

Section 4. Assistant Financial Secretary – An assistant financial secretary may be appointed each year by the Trustees Ministry and confirmed at the annual meetings. The assistant financial secretary shall assist the financial secretary, receive cancelled checks and maintain an audit of receipts and disbursements.

Section 5. Secretaries/Church Administrator– Secretaries shall be appointed by the pastor endorsed by the Advisory Council Ministry and confirmed by the Church. The secretaries will record the transactions of business meetings, provide bulletins for services, prepare necessary communications, and coordinate and cooperate with the clerk in preparation and maintenance of all records.

Section 6. General Treasurer – The General Treasurer shall be appointed by the Trustees Ministry and confirmed annually by the Church. The general treasurer will receive collected funds, make bank deposits and coordinate with the financial secretary in the maintenance of financial records and the auditing of all financial activities.

Section 7. Building Fund Treasurer – The Building Fund Treasurer may be appointed by the Trustees Ministry and confirmed annually by the Church. The building fund treasurer shall receive and deposit funds collected for building purposes, maintain financial records of building funds and provide reports at business meetings and/or as requested.

Section 8. Assistant Building Fund Treasurer – The assistant building fund treasurer may be appointed by the Trustees Ministry, confirmed annually by the Church and will assist the building fund treasurer in the conduct of their duties.

Section 9. The Trustees Ministry – The trustees shall be elected at each annual meeting. The trustees shall elect a chairperson for an initial three-year term not to exceed more than two successive three-year terms (six years total). The chairperson and other officers shall regularly meet each month. The trustees will have responsibility for all property held by the Church and shall take necessary measures for its protection, management and upkeep. The trustees shall insure that the Church is in compliance with all federal, state, and local requirements, regulations, and tax obligations. The trustees shall insure that the Church has sufficient liability, hazard, fire, and property insurances. The trustees, upon the vote of the Church, have authority to mortgage property, sell property, purchase property and/or incur indebtedness to construct, expand, and or maintain property. The trustees will supervise the use of Church properties, the activities of care takers and property maintenance when deemed appropriate the pastor and trustees may appoint a building ministry to direct building, planning and construction.

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The trustees shall transact all legal matters on behalf of the Church and will supervise the collection, disbursement, ~~and~~ accounting and raising of all Church funds. The trustees serve as the financial committee and as such will direct the development, funding and execution of the Church budget. The trustees, diaconate and pastor will consult in the hiring, background checks, annual evaluations, and/or termination of any Church employee and the execution of contracts for employees.

Section 10. The Diaconate Ministry – The Diaconate Ministry shall be elected and/or confirmed at each annual meeting. The ministry shall annually confirm its servant leader and other officers who shall serve an initial term of three years but not serve more than two successive three-year terms (six years total). The ministry shall regularly meet each month.

The Diaconate Ministry shall in every way assist the pastor in receiving new members, providing a meaningful worship, prayer, and praise life for the congregation, visiting members, and caring for the needs of sick and distressed members of the Church using budgeted benevolence funds as needed.

The Diaconate Ministry shall promote Christian instruction and ministry to the Church membership, provide for the Lord's Supper and aid in its administration. In addition aid in the administration of baptism, provide for the care of souls and direct evangelism and outreach efforts.

Section 11. Advisory Council Ministry - There shall be an Advisory Council Ministry, consisting of the elected/confirmed officers of the Church, servant leaders of standing ministries and a representative from all support ministries. All matters of importance shall be considered by the council before being submitted to the Church. It shall advise the pastor, seek coordination of all Church activities and be instrumental in the development of the Church program.

The Council will annually elect its own officers and the servant leader will serve an initial term of three years but no more than two successive terms (six years total). The Council shall ~~and~~ meet regularly and/or as requested by the pastor.

ARTICLE VIII - STANDING AND SUPPORT MINISTRIES

These ministries relate to the total work of the Church for the transformation of persons and conditions. Each has an assigned task(s) and is expected to provide financial support and fellowship for its members.

Section 1. Christian Education Ministry – There shall be a Christian Education servant leader appointed by the pastor and endorsed by the Church. The servant leader and the ministry will elect its other officers and meet regularly.

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The Christian Education servant leader shall be responsible for the organization and administration of the entire educational program of the Church. The ministry shall be responsible for developing and interpreting to the constituency of the Church and the educational objectives or goals. The ministry shall be responsible for the study of the educational needs of the Church and for developing programs that address those needs and shall communicate those to the congregation. The ministry will be responsible for the following: scheduling, class organization, Vacation Bible School, determining and addressing equipment needs, elimination or addition of events or classes, curriculum evaluation and revisions, enlistment and training of educational workers, and the preparation and disbursing of the budget for education.

Section 2. Worship and Activity Ministry – The worship and activity ministry is appointed by the pastor and endorsed by the Church. The servant leader will be appointed by the pastor for a three-year term. The ministry will elect its other officers and meet regularly. This ministry shall be responsible for the Church calendar, the designation of program responsibility, the planning, development, implementation and/or facilitation of programs and quality worship events and communal activities in the life of the Church. The ministry prepares a budget for worship and activities and works in close cooperation with the pastor and trustees in planning and programming.

Section 3. Hospitality and Services Ministry – The hospitality and services ministry shall be appointed by the pastor and endorsed by the Church. The servant leader will be appointed by the pastor to a three-year term but not more than two successive terms (six years total). The other officers will be elected by the ministry and shall meet on a regular basis.

The ministry will supervise and facilitate the preparation and serving of all meals in the Church, acquire and maintain all equipment and resources needed for hospitality and services and encourage and stimulate the sharing of Christian hospitality with all who come into our midst. The ministry prepares a budget for hospitality and services activities and works in close cooperation with the pastor and trustees in planning and programming.

Section 4. Social Concerns and Justice Ministry – The social concerns and justice ministry is appointed by the pastor and endorsed by the Church, shall provide information, encouragement, programs, and events by which the liberating Christ's presence and the prophetic witness of the Church may be acknowledged and expressed in relationship to social issues within the family, community, nation, and world. The ministry prepares a budget for social concerns and justice activities and works in close cooperation with the pastor and trustees in planning and programming.

Section 5. Scholarship and Education Ministry – The scholarship and education ministry is appointed by the pastor and endorsed by the church, shall oversee the application for academic scholarships and disbursement of funds. The servant leader of the ministry is appointed by the pastor to serve an initial term of three-years but no more than two successive terms (total of six-years). The ministry prepares a budget to include

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proceeds from the Gardner Fund and contributions from the congregation and works in close cooperation with the pastor and trustees in planning and programming.

ARTICLE IX – SUPPORT AND HELP MINISTRIES

Section 1. Missionaries: To provide, in cooperation with the pastor and diaconate, care, comfort, prayer, support and services to the physically and mentally ill, bereaved, needy, distressed, and incarcerated in our Church and community while encouraging and nurturing fellowship and spiritual development and guidance.

Section 2. Pastor's Aid: To provide resources, services, prayers and support for the ministerial ministry and visiting ministers to encourage and facilitate a more effective ministry.

Section 3. Ushers: To welcome, provide information, Christian hospitality, and direction to all who enter our Church space and life.

Section 4. Music Ministry: To provide quality and meaningful ministry through music to the glory of God and the edification of the saints. All musical staff persons are recommended by the related choir, but they are hired only after consultation with the pastor, official ministries, and the endorsement of the Church. Groups presently in the music ministry are:

1. Anointed Voices
2. Male Chorus
3. JW Kinney Singers
4. Joyful Noise
5. Mass Choirs
6. Unified Voices
7. Empowered
8. Additional groups can be added as recognized.

With the recommendation and endorsement of the Church, other groups may be formed to support this ministry.

ARTICLE X – The Pastorate

Section 1. Calling a Pastor –When the pastorate is vacant, the Advisory Council Ministry and/or the Diaconate Ministry shall select a representative pulpit committee of five or more members of the Church, including at least one trustee, one deacon, one member of the advisory council, and representatives of the constituent groups in the congregation. Working in full consultation with the executive secretary of the Baptist Convention and other appropriate agencies, this committee shall advertise the pulpit vacancy, the qualifications for applicants, and any necessary information related to applying for the vacancy. It shall request from their sources and from persons whose

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names have been submitted for consideration full information about their history, record, experience, and qualifications. No applicant who has not been thoroughly examined and vetted will be considered. After securing qualified applicants, the committee will determine which will move forward through the process and sit for an interview with the search committee. After the full exercise of the assessment process, as many as three candidates may be invited to speak before the congregation. After preaching before the congregation, additional interviews may be required. When after prayerful, careful, and complete consideration, a suitable person is affirmed by the committee, the committee shall recommend that person to the congregation for final approval. The committee will submit one name only or a specific leadership proposal to the congregation. If the committee cannot affirm fully any candidate or alternative leadership model, the search process will be reinitiated. During the interim, our current qualified pastoral team will supply the congregation and provide pastoral leadership. In the alternative, if the current pastoral team is unable to fulfill this responsibility, the pulpit committee will secure an ordained minister to serve as the interim pastor. The interim pastor will fulfill only pastoral functions, to include preaching and teaching the gospel. That appointed individual shall have no administrative duties.

The call of a pastor shall be considered by the Church at a regularly called meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on four consecutive Sundays and communicated through other mediums of communication and social media. A majority vote of those members present 18 years of age and older is required to extend a call. It is recommended that the election of a pastor occur after a regular morning service in order to establish a quorum.

Only one candidate shall be presented to the Church at a time.

Section 2. Termination of Pastorate – The term of office may be ended upon ninety days' notice by the pastor or the Church. Termination of the office shall be voted at a regularly called business meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on four successive Sundays. A majority vote of those members present 18 years of age and older is required to terminate a pastor.

ARTICLE XI – ELECTIONS

Section 1. Time – The annual election and confirmation of officers shall be held during the annual meeting of the Church, which shall be held on the Third Sunday morning in the month of January.

Section 2. Qualification of Voters – A majority vote of those members present 18 years of age and older is required for all matters pertaining to the pastorate, select administrative and financial oversight and related matters.

ARTICLE XII – Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services – Public services shall be held each Lord's Day, and the fellowship groups and the Sunday Church school shall hold weekly meetings at a time to be fixed by the Advisory Council Ministry and approved by the Church.

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The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday morning of each month, or at such other times as the Church may determine.

Occasional religious meetings may be established by the pastor at his or her discretion, or by the Advisory Council Ministry with the consent of the pastor, or by the vote of the Church.

Section 2. The Church Meeting – The annual meeting shall be held on the third Sunday morning in January for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of individual officers, ministries and committees of the Church and its auxiliary organizations, the election of officers, the transaction of necessary business; and the discussion of issues vital to the life and witness of the Church. There will be two semi-annual Church meetings and at least two semi-annual Advisory Council meetings.

A quorum for the transaction of a properly called business meeting requires a majority of those members present 18 years of age and older.

Special business meetings may be called at any time by the senior pastor or by their designee.

Notice of such meeting, and the subject for which it is called, shall be given from the pulpit at least two consecutive weeks prior to date of the meeting. At any of the regular meetings of worship, however, the Church may, without notice, act upon the reception of members, upon the dismissal of members to other churches, and upon the appointment of delegates to councils, but not upon extraordinary business.

ARTICLE XIII – Church Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall be the calendar year.

ARTICLE XIV – Amendments

These articles of agreement may be revised or amended at a regular or called meeting of the Church by a majority vote of those members present 18 years of age and older.