

FBC BYLAWS



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First Baptist Church By-Laws: Adopted on May 17, 2015. Reviewed and reaffirmed by officers on October 8, 2018.

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THE BY-LAWS

First Baptist Church of New Castle, Indiana

First Baptist Church exists to transform stories through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

First Baptist Church believes the Bible accurately describes and teaches the faith and practices that are pleasing to God. As followers of Jesus, we are to conduct ourselves according to Scripture the best we are able, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the areas the Bible does not specifically teach, this document provides guidelines we believe are important to represent Jesus well.

ARTICLE 1 - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- A. Persons are eligible for membership after they:
1. Attend a quarterly welcome class;
 2. Are baptized through immersion following a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior or by giving a testimony of salvation and baptism;
 3. Accept our Covenant and Statement of Faith;
 4. Agree to use their Spiritual gifts in this local church for the benefit of God's Kingdom; and
 5. Commit to support the church through regular attendance and financial stewardship.
- B. Privileges of membership:
1. Members, who are at least 18 years old, are eligible to vote at meetings.
 2. Members, after one year of membership, may serve as church officers, teachers and committee/team members.
- C. Persons may be removed from membership of First Baptist Church by:
1. Joining another church.
 2. By written request.
 3. Becoming inactive. Inactive is determined as follows: After three (3) months without attendance the Elders will contact and encourage the member to become active. After a period of nine (9) months of inactivity, the individual may be removed from membership. Exceptions are made for shut-ins and medical issues.
 4. Through an act of church discipline (see Matthew 18).
- D. Membership roll
1. The church staff shall review the membership roll in January of each year. They will verify all changes to the membership roll and prepare a list of active members.
 2. The church staff will prepare an annual report of active members who are 18 years of age and older for the purpose of determining the quorum for all congregational voting for the year.
- E. Transfer of membership
1. By letter. Members may request a letter of transfer to another Christian church.
 2. By resignation.

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ARTICLE 2 - MINISTRY AREAS

- A. The Board of Elders provides spiritual leadership and oversight to First Baptist Church.
- B. The Board of Trustees provides spiritual management and stewardship of First Baptist Church.
- C. All areas of ministry (and their teams) are directly accountable to a staff member, elder or trustee.

ARTICLE 3 – LEAD PASTOR

- A. Responsibilities of Lead Pastor:
 - 1. Maintain a healthy walk with Jesus;
 - 2. Maintain a healthy relationship with his family;
 - 3. Preach the Gospel;
 - 4. Lead those who provide leadership to the church in fulfilling its mission and vision;
 - 5. Shepherd the paid staff and supervise day-to-day operations;
 - 6. Equip the congregation for the ministry of discipleship and evangelism;
 - 7. Strengthen the spiritual welfare of the congregation;
 - 8. Conduct public worship and the ordinances of baptism and communion;
 - 9. Build relationships with the congregation; and
 - 10. Delegate areas of leadership to staff members and/or the FBC Officers as needed.
- B. Privileges of Lead Pastor:
 - 1. The Lead Pastor is an officer of the church and is a member of the Board of Elders and Board of Trustees.
 - 2. The Lead Pastor shall have full voting privilege on these boards.
- C. Calling of a Lead Pastor
 - 1. The Lead Pastor is called to the church through the work of a Search Committee for Lead Pastor, as provided in Article 4.
 - 2. The calling of a Lead Pastor shall be at a called business meeting that has been announced from the pulpit two Sundays prior to the meeting.
 - 3. A vote of eighty-five percent (85%) of the members present and voting by written ballot shall be necessary before the call can be extended.
 - 4. Salary and fringe benefits of the Lead Pastor shall be a part of the Search Committee's recommendation to the church, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, and shall be fixed at the time of the pastoral call.
- D. Resignation/Dismissal of Lead Pastor
 - 1. The Lead Pastor shall give the church, in writing, at least sixty (60) days notice of his resignation, unless an alternative time frame is agreed to with the FBC Officers.
 - 2. Should the occasion arise for the church to dismiss the Lead Pastor, the Moderator shall be informed. The FBC Officers shall initiate the process for dealing with any and all issues raised concerning the Lead Pastor.

3. If First Baptist Church needs to dismiss the Lead Pastor, the Moderator will notify the congregation in written form at least two Sundays preceding the meeting for the vote. At least eighty-five percent (85%) of voting members present must vote for dismissal. The vote shall be by secret ballot. If dismissal is approved, the Lead Pastor is to be given notice and severance as outlined in the personnel policies of the church.

ARTICLE 4 - SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR LEAD PASTOR

- A. When there is a Lead Pastor vacancy, the FBC Officers shall arrange for the selection of a Search Committee of seven members as follows:
 1. One (1) member from the current staff
 2. Two (2) members from the Board of Elders
 3. Two (2) members from the Board of Trustees
 4. Two (2) members from the congregation appointed by the FBC Officers
- B. No more than one person from a household shall be on the Search Committee.
- C. The Search Committee shall elect its own chairperson and secretary.
- D. The Search Committee shall consult the Northeast Area Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky.
- E. The Search Committee shall recommend the candidate to FBC Officers. A vote of eighty-five percent (85%) from the FBC officers is needed to present the candidate to the congregation.

ARTICLE 5 – PASTORAL STAFF

- A. All Pastoral staff shall work under the supervision of the Lead Pastor in fulfilling the responsibilities for which they are called, as stated in their position descriptions.
- B. All Pastoral staff will serve as Elders and meet with the FBC Officers.
- C. The Lead Pastor shall have management responsibility and authority over the Pastoral staff. The Lead Pastor shall be accountable to the FBC Officers for effective management and development of the Pastoral staff.
- D. In the event that new Pastoral staff members cannot be hired from within current membership, a Search Committee shall be formed. The details of this committee are provided in Article 6.
- E. Dismissal of Pastoral staff
 1. When there is a need for dismissal of a Pastoral staff member, the Lead Pastor and the Trustee delegate (who provides oversight to the Personnel Team) will make a presentation to the FBC Officers.
 2. A vote of eighty-five percent (85%) of the FBC Officers is needed for dismissal of a Pastoral staff member. Upon dismissal, the member of the Pastoral staff is to be given notice and severance as outlined in the personnel policies of the church.
 3. The Lead Pastor, in collaboration with the Personnel Team, shall write a statement and the Moderator will notify the congregation (of any dismissal) at the next service of worship.

ARTICLE 6 - SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR PASTORAL STAFF

- A. When the Lead Pastor decides to fill a vacancy or create a Pastoral staff position that cannot be filled within the current membership, the FBC Officers shall form a Search Committee of seven members as follows:
 1. Lead Pastor
 2. Two (2) members from the Board of Elders
 3. One (1) member from the Board of Trustees
 4. One (1) representative from the designated ministry area
 5. Two (2) members from the congregation appointed by the FBC Officers
- B. The Search committee shall recommend the suitable candidate to the FBC Officers for consideration. A vote of eighty-five percent (85%) of the FBC Officers is needed for hiring of a Pastoral staff member.

ARTICLE 7 - THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

A. FBC Officers

1. The officers of the church are:
 - a. Lead Pastor
 - b. Moderator
 - c. Board of Elders
 - d. Board of Trustees.
2. FBC Officers are expected to attend regular services and meetings of the church related to the position.
3. The annual election of officers will be held at a congregational meeting on the second Sunday of November.
4. FBC Officer terms will begin on January 1.
5. FBC Officers, except the Pastoral staff, will serve a 1-year term. Each officer shall be eligible for additional terms as long as God leads an individual to serve in this capacity and affirmed by congregational vote.

B. Vacancies of Officers

1. If there is a vacancy among the FBC Officers during the year, the respective board will recommend nominations to the FBC Officers for consideration.
2. After fourteen days notice at a regular or called business meeting, the congregation shall vote on the nominations.

C. Removal from office

1. If an officer needs to be removed from office, the chair of the respective board should follow the discipline guidelines of Matthew 18.
2. The Lead Pastor and the Board of Elders should be involved, as Matthew 18 requires.

ARTICLE 8 – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- A. The FBC Officers, in cooperation with the Lead Pastor, shall oversee Personnel (human resources) matters pertaining to non-pastoral staff.

- B. The FBC Officers shall have regular meetings. A simple majority (greater than 50%) will be required on a matter that calls for a vote, except when hiring and dismissing pastoral staff members.

- C. Board of Elders
 - 1. The Board of Elders shall consist of at least four lay members, the Lead Pastor and the Pastoral staff.

 - 2. This board may organize itself as necessary to accomplish their purpose as stated in Article 2.

 - 3. The Board of Elders shall strive to meet eligibility guidelines of these Scriptures.
 - a. 1 Peter 5:1-5
 - b. Acts 20:28-32
 - c. 1 Timothy 3:1-7
 - d. Titus 1:6-9
 - e. 1 Timothy 5:17.

 - 4. The Board of Elders shall support and assist the Lead Pastor as necessary (and mutually agreed upon) in fulfilling his responsibilities as stated in Article 3.

 - 5. The Board of Elders will arrange for pulpit supply in the interim period when the church is without a Lead Pastor.

- D. Board of Trustees
 - 1. The Board of Trustees shall consist of at least nine lay members and the Lead Pastor.

 - 2. The Board of Trustees may organize itself as necessary to accomplish their purpose as stated in Article 2.

 - 3. The Board of Trustees shall provide spiritual management and stewardship to the following committees/teams:
 - a. Finance
 - b. Personnel, in cooperation with the Lead Pastor
 - c. Property: building and structure
 - d. Property: grounds and landscaping
 - e. Property: technology equipment
 - f. Property: non-technology equipment
 - g. Other areas may be added as needed

- E. Moderator
 - 1. The Moderator, in consultation with the Lead Pastor, shall prepare an agenda to be published and communicated at least one week prior to any congregational meetings.

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2. The Moderator shall facilitate all business meetings of the church and all meetings of the FBC Officers.
3. In the absence of the Moderator, a member of the Board of Elders shall be the Moderator pro-tem.

ARTICLE 9 – CHURCH CLERK

A. Church clerk

1. The Clerk shall keep accurate minutes of all congregational meetings and officer meetings. These minutes shall be filed in the church office.
2. The Clerk shall work with the office staff whenever needed to assist in:
 - a. Keeping up to date records of membership;
 - b. Official correspondence related to business sessions of the church;
 - c. Maintenance of historical records; and
 - d. The preparation of denominational reports.
3. The Clerk shall obtain from the office an up to date membership roll for congregational meetings for the purpose of determining a quorum.
4. The Clerk shall deliver immediately to the successor all books, files, records, and other documents pertaining to this office.

ARTICLE 10 - COMMON PRACTICES OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

A. Believer's baptism

Believer's baptism shall be administered by immersion. Any voting member may baptize. Candidates for membership, who have not given a witness of believer's baptism by immersion, are to study the Scriptures on baptism and are to be immersed. Exceptions may be allowed where severe health and disability conditions exist.

B. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday morning of each month and other times as led by the Lead Pastor or an appointed designee. Any voting member may assist in the serving of the Lord's Supper. Any Christian may partake from the Lord's Table at First Baptist Church of New Castle, Indiana.

C. Fiscal year

The fiscal year of First Baptist Church shall begin on January 1 and close December 31.

ARTICLE 11 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

A. Congregational meeting formats

1. Regular meetings – The congregation shall meet on the third Sunday in May and on the second Sunday in November.
2. Called meetings – These meetings are convened at the request of the Moderator. Notice of such meetings shall be given fourteen days prior to the meeting. This meeting shall be communicated and published.
3. Special meetings – The Lead Pastor may call a special meeting by communicating to the church from the Worship Center platform at least one Sunday prior to the meeting.

B. The Congregation shall meet to:

1. Vote on church budget;
2. Vote on church officers;
3. Receive reports;
4. Buy and sell real property;
5. Call or dismiss the Lead Pastor;
6. Amend the Articles of Incorporation (Constitution) of the church; and
7. Encumber church real property

C. Requirement of the vote

1. A simple majority vote (greater than 50%) is required to adopt the budget, to elect church officers, buy or sell real property, encumber church real property, amend the Articles of Incorporation, or amend the By-Laws.
2. A vote of eighty-five percent (85%) of a quorum will be required to call or dismiss the Lead Pastor.
3. Quorum shall be twenty percent (20%) of the voting members. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting.
4. The church clerk shall make a tally of all votes by written ballot with a group of individuals. The results of the vote shall be made available to voting members at the church office by the following day.

ARTICLE 12 - AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

- A. The officers of First Baptist Church shall review and evaluate the By-Laws every three years unless a need arises earlier.
- B. By-law amendments are approved by the congregation through a simple majority vote (greater than 50%).

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