

CONSTITUTION OF THE STAMFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

Preamble: We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

I. Name:

This body shall be known as the Stamford Baptist Church located in the Village of Stamford, NY

II. Objectives:

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.

To be a church that ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and world in Jesus' name.

To be a church whose purpose is to be Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

III. Statement of Faith:

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

IV. Relationships:

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical; this church will cooperate with and support the association and state convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

V. Church Covenant:

We, the members of Stamford Baptist Church, do hereby covenant with each other before God to:

Be family; to be committed to each other; to love, accept, and forgive each other until death or God's call causes us to part.

Live in Jesus Christ and take His commands seriously.

Help one another grow toward Christian maturity by bearing one another's burdens, encouraging one another, exhorting one another, praying for one another, confessing our sins to one another, speaking the truth in love to one another, admonishing one another, building up one another, teaching one another, comforting one another, submitting to one another, serving one another, patiently bearing with one another, being hospitable to one another, greeting one another, living in peace with one another, regarding one another as more important than ourselves, caring for one another, exercising our spiritual gifts to serve one another, being kind and tenderhearted to one another, being devoted to one another, accepting one another, forgiving one another, loving one another.

We invite fellow members to pray for us, teach us, correct us, or rebuke us, if necessary, in a spirit of gentleness and humility should we stray from our Lord's commands, because the thing we desire most in life is to serve Christ. We voluntarily submit ourselves to one another and to the discipline of the church. Such discipline will always be for the loving purpose of restoration—restoration to fellowship with God and with the covenant community—and it will always be done in accordance with Matthew 18:15-22.

Bring honor to the body of Christ by maintaining a good testimony.

We enter into this covenant because we have the common purpose of obeying Jesus Christ, and because we believe that we need one another's help to do this.

As believers, and disciples of Jesus Christ, we have entered into a covenant relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—with the God who revealed Himself in Jesus. Since the blessings and promises of the covenant have been freely extended and given to us, out of wonder, love, thanksgiving, and reverence, we hereby accept and take up the covenant responsibilities that go with such a privilege. This is our reasonable service, and we should do nothing less.

God helps us all! We rely on His grace and hold fast to His promise that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

BYLAWS:

1. Membership:

Section 1. General:

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Candidacy:

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism
- (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another church of like faith and order
- (3) By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a church of like faith and order when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

Section 3. New Member Orientation:

New church members will be expected to participate in the church's new member orientation plan.

Section 4. Voting Rights of Members:

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the congregational meeting, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

Section 5. Termination of Membership:

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death, (2) dismissal to another church of like faith and order, (3) exclusion by action of this church.

Section 6. Discipline:

(1) It shall be the basic purpose of the Stamford Baptist Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another.

(2) Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem. A spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance shall pervade all such proceedings. But, finding that the welfare of the church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose; and the church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

(3) Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has made it necessary for the church to exclude him may upon his request be restored to membership by a vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation.

II. Church Officers:

All church officers must be members of the church. The officers of this church shall be as follows:

Section 1. Pastor:

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in a church. As such he works with the deacons and church staff to: (1) lead the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

A pastor selection committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. Any member has the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until his request or the church's request terminates the relationship. He shall preside at meetings of the church. The pastor shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as pastor.

Section 2. Church Staff:

This church shall call or employ such staff as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined. Vocational staff members other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by the church council and employed by church action. At least two weeks notice at the time of resignation should be given.

Section 3. Deacons:

(1) The number of deacons, and their term of service, shall be set by the congregation at a congregational meeting based on the available, and willing, men who would qualify to serve. Deacons shall be elected at a regular congregational meeting of the church by secret ballot.

In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the church from another church where he has served as deacon.

(2) In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing pastoral ministry tasks: proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers; care for church members and other persons in the community; lead the church to achieve its mission.

Section 4. Moderator

The pastor shall serve as moderator unless the meeting is related to issues that involve him personally. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

Section 5. Clerk:

The church shall elect a clerk who shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office when an office is maintained.

Section 6. Treasurer:

The church shall elect a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The treasurer shall be bonded.

All records of the Treasurer are a part of the permanent records of the church.

Section 7. Trustees:

The pastor, clerk and treasurer shall serve as trustees and will hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase or rental, of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required.

III. Committees and Coordinating Groups:

Section 1. General:

Committees shall be established by the congregation upon recommendation of the church council or by motion from the floor in a congregational meeting.

Section 2. Church Council:(1) The primary functions of the council shall be: (a) to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals; (b) to review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; (c) to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; (d) and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives. (2) The council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall have as regular members the pastor, clerk, treasurer and ministry leaders. (3) All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

IV. Program Organizations:

Section 1. General:

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

Section 2. Sunday School:

There shall be a Sunday School conducted under the direction the Sunday School Director, or such person as designated by the congregation, for the study of God's Word.

Section 3. Worship Team:

There shall be a worship team designated by the congregation for the purpose of leading the worship in music at the morning worship, and such other times as agreed upon by the team and the congregation.

V. Ordinances:

Section 1. Baptism:

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes Him publicly at any worship service; and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the church shall authorize. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and observance of, baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
4. The pastor and/or staff and deacons shall counsel a person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time. If negative interest is ascertained, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper:

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His Second Coming.

1. The Lord's Supper shall be observed monthly, preferably the first Sunday of the quarter, or as otherwise scheduled.
2. The Lord's Supper shall be observed in the worship service.
3. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
4. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

VI. Church Meetings:

Section 1. Worship Services:

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. These meetings will be open for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

Section 2. Special Services:

Revival services and any other church meetings, which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church, shall be placed on the church calendar.

Section 3. Regular Congregational Meetings:

Regular congregational meetings shall be held for the purpose of considering church business every other month beginning in January at a time and manner designated by the church council.

Section 4. Special Congregational Meetings:

A specially called congregational meeting may be held to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable.

Section 5. Quorum:

The quorum consists of those who attend the congregational meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6. Parliamentary Rules:

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

VII. Church Finances:

Section 1. Responsibility

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures:

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer, or financial secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. The officer(s) shall be bonded.

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the church council.

Section 3. Fiscal Year:

The fiscal year of the church shall run concurrently with the church year, which begins on September 1 and ends on August 31.

VIII. Church Operations Manual:

Section 1. Policies and Procedures:

Church policies and procedures shall be described in the church operations manual. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available to any member of the church. The church secretary shall maintain the manual.

Any church member or organization may initiate changes in policies and procedures. Addition, revision, or deletion of church policies requires (1) the recommendation of the church officer or organization (including committees) to whose areas of assignment the policy relates, (2) discussion by the church council, and (3) approval by the church.

Procedures may be added, revised, or deleted by (1) recommendation of the appropriate officer or group, (2) approval by the church council, and; (3) approval of the church if deemed necessary by the church council.

IX. Tax Exempt Status

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, Stamford Baptist Church is organized exclusively for one or more purposes as specified in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and shall not carry on any activity not permitted to be carried on by any organization exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding provisions of any subsequent tax law.

No part of the net earnings of Stamford Baptist Church shall inure to the benefit of any member, trustee, director, officer of Stamford Baptist Church, or any private individual (except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to or for Stamford Baptist Church), and no member, trustee or officer of Stamford Baptist Church or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of Stamford Baptist Church assets on the dissolution of Stamford Baptist Church.

No substantial part of the activities of Stamford Baptist Church shall be carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, (except as otherwise provided in Section 501 (h) of the Code), or participating in, or intervening in (including publication or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

In the event of dissolution, all of the remaining assets and property of Stamford Baptist Church shall after payment of necessary expenses thereof be distributed to such organizations as shall qualify under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent Federal tax laws, or to the Federal government, a State, or local government for a public purpose, subject to the approval of a court of competent jurisdiction within the State of New York.

In any taxable year in which Stamford Baptist Church is a private foundation as described in Section 509 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code, Stamford Baptist Church shall distribute its income for said period at such time and manner as not to subject it to tax under section 4942. Further, Stamford Baptist Church shall not (a) engage in any act of self-dealing as defined in Section 4941 (d); (b) retain any excess business holdings as defined in Section 4943; (c) make any investments in such a manner as to subject Stamford Baptist Church to tax under Section 4944; or (d) make any taxable expenditures as defined in Section 4945.

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X. Amendments:

Changes in this constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of all members of the church present entitled to vote; amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

Adopted: March 18, 2001
Amended: April 7, 2002