

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF NICEVILLE, FLORIDA

CONSTITUTION

November 6, 2016

Last Amended – August 8th, 2021

PREAMBLE

We hereby declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern this Church Body in an orderly manner. The primary purpose of this Church is to exalt Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord and to engage our membership and our society with the principles, teachings, and truths of the Bible, God's Holy Word. This Constitution preserves the liberties of each individual Church member and the freedom of action of this Church in relation to all other churches and ecclesiastical organizations.

ARTICLE I

Name, Organization, Polity, and Relationships

Section 1. Legal Status and Incorporation

This Church was incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida on October 1, 1975 as the First Baptist Church of Niceville, Florida (FBCN), located at 622 Bayshore Drive, Niceville, Florida 32578. The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and Chapter 617 of Florida Statutes.

Section 2. Organization, Polity, and Relationships

This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. All internal groups created and empowered by the Church shall report to and be accountable only to the collective Active Membership of FBCN, unless otherwise specified by Church action. Following the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the primary authority and responsibility for all decisions and actions is vested in the collective Active Church Membership. The primary responsibility and authority for the function, worship, fellowship, spiritual maturity, unity, and growth of the Church is delegated to the Senior Pastor, working with and through the Pastoral Staff and the Deacon Body. The primary responsibility and authority for Church governance is delegated to the Board of Trustees working with and through the Pastoral Staff and the various Ministry Leadership Teams. Insofar as practical, this Church will cooperate with and support the Emerald Coast Baptist Fellowship, the Florida Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE II

Mission Statement and Statement of Faith

Section 1. Mission Statement

The First Baptist Church of Niceville, Florida exists to transform the lives of all peoples and nations by making and maturing followers of Jesus Christ in both His Word and example. We carry out this mission primarily by focusing on the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) and through the unified efforts of: worship (Psalms 95:6-7), prayer (John 14:13); Bible study (2 Tim 2:15); discipleship; evangelism (John 15:8, 2 Tim 4:2); and missions and ministry projects in our community, state, nation, and throughout the world (1Tim 6:18, James 1:22).

Section 2. Statement of Faith

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God as the basis for our beliefs, doctrine, and polity. It is truth without any mixture of error in all it affirms. It is the standard for our faith and practice as Christians individually and for this Church Body collectively. This Church subscribes to the doctrinal statements contained in "The Baptist Faith and Message" (2000 edition), as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention and is hereby incorporated into this Constitution by reference.

ARTICLE III

Membership

The membership of this Church shall consist of individuals who have: (1) committed their life to Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord (Eph 2:8-9); (2) been Biblically baptized by immersion (Acts 2:41); (3) specifically requested membership; (4) completed New Member Orientation; and (5) been formally approved for membership by the Church Body.

ARTICLE IV

Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall lead and equip the church staff, organizations, and collective congregation to: worship, witness, disciple, educate, minister, and be faithful stewards of their time, spiritual gifts, and possessions. The Senior Pastor shall be in charge of the overall spiritual welfare and oversight of the Church membership. The Church shall provide the Senior Pastor with appropriate Associate Pastors and Lay Leadership to assist in accomplishing approved Church objectives.

ARTICLE V

Board of Trustees

The FBCN Board of Trustees shall be made up of a Chairman, the Chairman of Deacons, and the Chairperson of the five Ministry Leadership Teams (MLTs) consisting of: Stewardship; Personnel; Missions; Community Outreach and Evangelism; and Discipleship. In order to maintain continuity, the Chairman of Trustees shall be a man selected from either the current or past MLT membership. The Trustees shall elect their own Secretary. The Trustee Chairman (President), Stewardship MLT Chairperson (Treasurer & Chief Financial Officer) and Secretary shall fill the equivalent corporate roles for the 501(c)(3) corporation. For the purposes of rotation and injecting new talent into the organizational structure, no individual may serve for more than three consecutive years as a Trustee, without rotating off for at least one year. This three-year limitation does not include any contiguous time serving as a "member" of an MLT.

ARTICLE VI
Ordinances, Church Year, and Meetings

Section 1. Ordinances - The First Baptist Church of Niceville observes two ordinances:

- A. **The Lord's Supper:** This Church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly. The Deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparation of the Lord's Supper elements. Administration of the Lord's Supper shall be accomplished by the Senior Pastor and/or members of the ordained Pastoral Staff, assisted by the Deacons. Any individual professing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior may participate in the Lord's Supper.
- B. **Baptism:** The Church shall observe the ordinance of baptism as often as may be required. The Senior Pastor, a retired minister, or a member of the ordained Pastoral Staff shall administer baptism. This may include participation by a Deacon who has a special relationship with the individual being baptized.

Section 2. Church Year

For financial and legal purpose, the Church year and fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31. Other calendars or schedules may be established to meet specific Church needs.

Section 3. Worship Services

As a minimum, public Worship Services shall be held on Sundays. Other worship, teaching, training, fellowship, or Church sponsored events may be held on Sundays and/or other days of the week as determined by the Church.

Section 4. Meetings

- A. **Annual Meeting/Town Hall:** The Church shall call an annual business meeting for the purposes of presenting and approving the budget and approving Church Leaders for the following year, including Trustees, MLT Chairpersons, and MLT members.
- B. **Town Hall Meetings:** The Church shall have a Town Hall Meeting to celebrate the growth, vision and direction of the Church. At this meeting, new Church members will be approved and departing members will be recognized. God's blessings will be shared, the Church vision will be promoted, and the business affairs of the Church will be conducted.
- C. **Town Hall Communications:** The Church will disseminate quarterly communication documents celebrating growth, vision and direction of the Church.
- D. **Special Called Business Meetings:** The Church, in conference, with a simple majority vote, may schedule a Special Called Business Meeting at any time or one may be called by the Senior Pastor or the Trustees. All Special Called Business Meetings must be announced and publicized at least seven (7) calendar days before the meeting.
- E. **Parliamentary Procedure:** Any business meeting or conference, whether held as a part of the Town Hall or Special Called Business Meeting, shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order (fourth or the most current edition).
- F. **Moderator:** The Trustee Chairman or his appointed designee shall act as moderator at all Church business meetings.

ARTICLE VII
Church Covenant

We hereby collectively subscribe to the following Church Covenant. This Covenant will be provided to each new member for affirmation through signature, as a part of new member orientation, before being approved for membership by the Church Body.

“Confessing that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and that the Spirit of God raised Him from the dead, and having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit as a profession of our faith, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with this body of believers who affirm the Baptist Faith and Message (2000):

To walk together in Christian love; to sustain the Church in worship, ordinances, doctrine, and discipline; to enthusiastically contribute to the financial support of the ministry, the relief of the poor, the spread of the gospel throughout all nations, and the expenses of the Church; to freely give of our time, spiritual gifts, and talents to further the work of this Church in our community, state, nation, and around the world; and to seek to share the Gospel with the people who God places around us.

We commit ourselves to God and to the other members of this Church Body to protect the unity of our church, support the testimony of our church, and accomplish the vision of our church by praying for our church, being an example of Christlike character to those in our church and in our community, and by participating in accountability and church discipline as needed.

We also pledge to maintain personal and family devotion to the Word and to take responsibility for the beliefs, faith and doctrine of those in our homes as far as it depends on us through example, service and leadership as the Lord determines.

We, moreover, engage that when we move from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other Church of "like faith and order" where we can carry out the spirit of this Covenant and the principles of God's Word.”

(Romans 10:9-10, Acts 2:37-41, Colossians 2:11-12, 1 Peter 3:21-22, 1 Corinthians 5, Ephesians 5:1-5, Romans 1:16-32, Hebrews 10:19-25, 2 Timothy 3:10-17, Matthew 18:15-20, 2 Corinthians 9, James 1:27, Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:1-6, John 13:34-35, Philippians 2:1-11, Galatians 6:1-10, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Ephesians 5:21-33)

ARTICLE VIII
Administrative Directives

Section 1. Implementation of Constitution

The principles, policies, and directives of this Constitution shall be delineated, expanded upon, and implemented through the By-Laws of this Church. These By-Laws, or any amendments thereto, shall be approved by Church action.

Section 2. Amendments to Constitution

This Constitution may be amended by a simple majority vote of members present and voting at a Town Hall or a special business meeting called for that purpose. The Board of Trustees shall submit the proposed amendment to the Church, in writing or by other accepted media, at least two weeks (14 days) in advance of the said meeting. Announcement of the meeting shall be announced from the pulpit in regular Sunday morning worship services at least one week preceding the meeting.

This Constitution was approved by FBCN in business session on 6 November 2016.

Amended – August 8th, 2021

Authenticated and Signed:

Chairman of Trustees/Moderator

Church Administrator

Date: _____