

CONSTITUTION
WALTER HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Adopted April 18, 2004

PREAMBLE

This constitution is established for the purpose of declaring, preserving, and making secure the principles of our Christian faith. We affirm that this body of believers will be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the teachings of the Holy Bible and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

I. NAME

This body of believers shall be known as **Walter Hill First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, Inc.** (May be referred to in this document as “Church.”)

II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Walter Hill First Baptist Church is the Body of Jesus Christ called first and foremost to a loving and intimate relationship with God that is real and personal. We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are called to be on mission with God and make disciples and minister in the name of Jesus Christ. Our field of ministry begins in Murfreesboro, and extends to wherever God is working throughout Tennessee, the United States of America and to the ends of the world.

Our ultimate goal is to glorify God. We will bring God glory by worshiping Him, loving other believers, becoming like Christ, serving others with our gifts, and telling others about Him.

The Word of God is our sole basis of authority. Our leaders are called by God to equip every member for service, unity, knowledge and maturity in Christ. Jesus is our Head and speaks through the Holy Spirit in the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and church members to lead His church.

We exist for God’s purposes alone. He is the vine and we are the branches and apart from Him we can do nothing. To God be the power, the honor, and the glory forever.

III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for our statement of faith. The Church adheres to the doctrinal statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000.

IV. CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND AFFILIATIONS

Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government. This body of believers is subject to the control of no other religious body. Insofar as is practical, this Church will cooperate with and support the Concord Baptist Association, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. This is to

stay informed on issues that uphold the beliefs and positions of our membership, and to participate in the spread of the gospel through ministry and evangelism.

V. CHURCH COVENANT

We, the membership of Walter Hill First Baptist Church, having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and, on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ, to walk in such a way that others see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

1. We will protect the unity of our church family by:
 - Acting in love toward other members.
 - Refusing to gossip and stir up dissension.
 - Honoring and following the leaders.

2. We will share in the responsibilities of our church family by:
 - Praying for its growth.
 - Inviting the unchurched to attend.
 - Warmly welcoming those who visit.

3. We will serve the ministry of our church family by:
 - Discovering our gifts and talents.
 - Being equipped to serve.
 - Developing a servant's heart.
 - Remembering each other in prayer.
 - Aiding each other in sickness and distress.

4. We will support the testimony of our church family by:
 - Attending faithfully.
 - Giving regularly.
 - Living a godly life.
 - Supporting by our practice its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine.

5. We will commit to maintain a Christlike lifestyle by:
 - Maintaining family and personal devotions.
 - Training our children in the ways of the Lord.
 - Seeking the salvation of our family, friends, and acquaintances.
 - Being fair in our dealings, faithful in our commitments, and exemplary in our behavior.

WALTER HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

BY LAWS

Adopted April 18, 2004

I. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS

The membership of this Church shall consist of baptized believers who confess Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and upon affirmation of the Church. The Church shall receive members as follows:

1. By Profession of Faith and Baptism.

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior may be received into Church membership through believer's baptism by immersion as a symbol of salvation.

2. By Letter.

Members from other Baptist churches of like faith may be received as members upon request of a letter of transfer from such church.

3. By Statement.

When no letter is obtainable, members may be received upon their statement of prior conversion experience (acceptance of Christ as Savior) and believer's baptism by immersion as a symbol of salvation. The prospective member shall be counseled about believer's baptism.

4. By Restoration.

Any person whose membership has been excluded for any offense may be restored by consent of the Church, upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

SECTION 2. NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

New memberships may be granted after the completion of the new member orientation and by affirmation of the Church. New member orientation may include a visit to the prospective member, video and study guide, sharing of their salvation and baptism experience, and possible new members class.

SECTION 3. REMOVAL FROM MEMBERSHIP

Members may be removed from membership in the following ways:

1. Transfer of Letter

Any member in good standing shall be entitled to a transfer of letter upon the request of a Baptist church of like faith and order. The Church shall issue these letters by majority vote.

2. Removal by Death.

The Church will remove deceased members' names from the membership roll and will record the reason for such action.

3. Uniting with Another Denomination.

Should it be definitely established that a member has united with a church of another denomination or faith, the Church will terminate their membership and will record the reason for such action.

4. Voluntary

By personal request.

SECTION 4. EXCLUSION FROM MEMBERSHIP

1. Exclusion from Membership for Cause.

If any member shall become, through immoral or unchristian conduct, an offense to Jesus Christ, the Church may exclude the individual from membership according to Matthew 18:15 – 17; but only after biblical efforts to secure reconciliation by the pastor, called staff, and deacons has failed. Any recommendation seeking exclusion from membership shall be presented to the deacons. The deacons will take whatever action is proper and fitting for the circumstances involved. If all efforts of reconciliation have failed, the matter shall be brought before the Church and upon a three-fourths vote of the members present, the Church will exclude the individual from membership. In all proceedings of such nature no effort shall be spared to bring about reconciliation of the delinquent member with the Church.

II. CHURCH OFFICERS

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

SECTION 1. PASTOR

1. Qualifications

The pastor shall:

- a. Be a man called of God into the gospel ministry; evangelical in theology as defined by the *Baptist Faith and Message*.
- b. Demonstrate a deep conviction concerning the Great Commandment (love God and love people), and the Great Commission (make disciples of all nations).
- c. Be a servant of God led by God to serve in this Church.
- d. Possess a deep conviction concerning the authority and inerrant nature of the Bible; and in the beliefs of a Southern Baptist Church;
- e. Be devoted to Christ in his personal life and in service through His Church;
- f. Shall meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:5-9.
- g. Possess unquestioned integrity;
- h. Demonstrate a cooperative attitude and the capacity to work effectively and harmoniously with others to fulfill the purpose and accomplish the ministries established by the Church.

2. Selection

- a. When it becomes known that the pulpit will be vacated the Church shall elect a Pastor Search Team nominated by the Nominating Ministry Team. One week's written notice shall be given prior to such election. The election shall be held at a regular or special called business meeting.

- b. The Pastor Search Team shall proceed with as little delay as possible to select a pastor whose gifts, character, and calling fit him for the office to be filled.
- c. Interim pulpit supply shall be the responsibility of the deacon fellowship. The chairman of the deacons, working with the Personnel Ministry Team shall recommend to the Church a transitional pastor, salary, and ministry description. Vote to call a transitional pastor shall be by two-thirds vote of members present and voting.
- d. The pastor shall be called by vote of the Church on recommendation of the Pastor Search Team. Two weeks written notice by mail shall be given. Election shall be by secret ballot with the affirmative vote of three-fourths of members present and voting at a special called business meeting on a Sunday morning for this purpose.

3. Term

- a. The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time.

4. Termination

- a. The pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the Church's request. The pastor may relinquish the office as pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the Church at the time of resignation.
- b. The Church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two week's written notice by mail has been given to the resident membership.
- c. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the Personnel Ministry Team and the deacons or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident membership.
- d. The moderator for this meeting shall be someone other than the pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present.
- e. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor so excluded from office, the Church shall compensate the pastor not less than one-twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

SECTION 2. CHURCH CALLED STAFF

The church called staff shall be those called to serve the Church such as, but not limited to, the pastor, minister of worship, minister of pastoral care, etc.

The Personnel Ministry Team, working with the Nominating Ministry Team and with the Pastor and/or his designee, shall nominate a staff search team to recommend called staff members, other than the pastor, to the Church.

Recommendations for these called staff positions require a two weeks written notice by mail. Election shall be by secret ballot with the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting at a special called business meeting on a Sunday morning for this purpose.

Termination/Resignation procedures are covered in the Church Personnel Manual.

1. Qualifications

The called staff shall:

- a. Be called of God into the gospel ministry; evangelical in theology as defined by the *Baptist Faith and Message*.
- b. Demonstrate a deep conviction concerning the Great Commandment (love God and love people), and the Great Commission (make disciples of all nations).
- c. Be a servant of God led by God to serve in this Church;
- d. Possess a deep conviction concerning the authority and inerrant nature of the Bible; and in the beliefs of a Southern Baptist Church;
- e. Be devoted to Christ in their personal life and in service through His Church;
- f. Shall meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:5-9.
- g. Possess unquestioned integrity.
- h. Demonstrate a cooperative attitude and the capacity to work effectively and harmoniously with others to fulfill the purpose and accomplish the ministries established by the Church.

SECTION 3. DEACONS

1. Selection

- a. The Church shall determine the number of active deacons and when additional deacons are needed.
- b. A two weeks notice shall be given prior to a regular business meeting in which nominations will be received for deacon vacancies and/or additions. The deacon fellowship and the pastor shall meet with each candidate to determine their willingness to serve and to insure they meet the qualifications as set by the Church.
- c. Those candidates which are qualified and willing to serve will be presented to the Church on a Sunday morning special called business meeting. A two weeks prior written notice shall be given for this special called business meeting. The manner of election shall be by secret ballot. The candidates with the majority number of votes shall become new deacons.

2. Qualifications

Deacons shall:

- a. Be a born again believer in Jesus Christ and an active member in a Baptist church of like faith and order for a minimum of three years;
- b. Be twenty-five years of age or older;
- c. Have been an active member of this Church for one year;
- d. Have knowledge and sound convictions of biblical doctrines and in the beliefs of a Southern Baptist church.
- e. Have proved themselves spiritually mature;
- f. Shall meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-12.
- g. Shall refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages;
- h. Support the Church with time, talents, possessions, and spiritual gifts; have a personal goal of tithing 10% or more to this Church and encourage others to do the same.

- i. Faithful in attendance of church services and supportive of total church ministries including missions and church outreach.

The deacon fellowship is charged with the watch-care of the members and the distribution of the Lord's Supper.

The deacon fellowship shall meet regularly each month and/or as called by the deacon chairman.

SECTION 4. MODERATOR

The pastor shall act as moderator at all business meetings. In his absence, the chairman of deacons shall act as moderator. In the absence of both, the Church shall elect an interim moderator.

SECTION 5. CHURCH CLERK

The church clerk shall accurately record the official actions of all church business meetings. A copy of the records of meetings shall be kept permanently on file in the church office and will be available for review at the church by any church member during normal business hours and with a minimum of 24 hours notice.

All church records are church property and shall be accessible to the church office.

The Nominating Ministry Team shall nominate to the Church annually a person to serve as church clerk and assistant church clerk.

SECTION 6. TREASURER

The Church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer. The church treasurer is responsible for the proper recording, accounting, and disbursement of church funds within policies established by the Stewardship Ministry Team.

A copy of the monthly church financial statements shall be kept permanently on file in the church office and will be available for review at the church by any church member during normal business hours and with a minimum of 24 hours notice.

All church financial records are church property and shall be accessible to the church office.

SECTION 7. ASSISTANT TREASURER

The assistant treasurer shall assist the treasurer in his/her responsibilities as needed.

SECTION 8. TRUSTEES

The trustees are the legal agents of the Church and shall be composed of members elected by the Church. Trustees will act as agents for the Church in actions regarding selling, buying, leasing, mortgaging, renting, maintaining, insuring, or transferring real property. Their actions shall be subject to formal authorization of the Church. The trustees, working in concert with the pastor, called staff, and ministry teams are responsible to insure that proper policies are established and followed. The trustees will also serve as the Insurance Ministry Team.

III. MINISTRY TEAMS

SECTION 1. GENERAL

All ministry teams shall be established or terminated by action of the Church upon the recommendation of the pastor and called staff with the Church Leadership Team. Ministry teams fulfill specific functions essential to the operation of the Church and its ministries. Ministry team members are nominated by the Nominating Ministry Team and elected by the Church.

Ministry teams shall function in their assigned areas for the best interest of the total church family. They shall perform their duties following church guidelines. A called staff member will be assigned to serve as liaison with each ministry team. Ministry teams shall develop goals and objectives for the ministry area and shall report to the Church at least annually.

Ministry team meetings shall consist of not less than a majority of the team. A majority vote of those present and voting shall suffice to bind the action taken.

SECTION 2. CHURCH LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Church Leadership Team, working with the pastor and called staff, shall serve as the primary planning / coordinating body of the Church. They shall implement and evaluate goals and achievements consistent with the statement of purpose. They shall develop, monitor, and update the Church Operations Manual. The Church Operations Manual shall include but not be limited to church policies and procedures, ministry team mission statements and guidelines, and position descriptions.

Members shall consist of the:

- Pastor
- Other called staff members (full and part-time)
- Chairman of Deacons
- Chairperson of the Stewardship Ministry Team
- Chairperson of the Missions Ministry Team
- Other church ministry leaders

The Pastor, or his designee, shall serve as the chairman of the Church Leadership Team.

In May the Church Leadership Team shall submit nominations to the Church for persons to fill upcoming vacancies on the Nominating Ministry Team. The Church Leadership Team will submit nominations for persons to serve on the Nominating Team whenever a vacancy occurs on the team.

SECTION 3. NOMINATING MINISTRY TEAM

The Nominating Ministry Team, working with the pastor and called staff, shall present nominations to the Church for all volunteer church leadership positions, including vacancies that occur during the year. The Team shall also present nominations to the Church for membership on all church ministry teams, except the Nominating Ministry Team. The Nominating Ministry Team shall work with the other ministry teams to develop, monitor, and update, as necessary, mission statements and guidelines for all ministry teams. The Nominating Ministry Team shall publish and maintain a ministry team roster with current mission statements for each ministry team.

IV. MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION 1. GENERAL

All organizations of the Church shall be under the supervision of the pastor and called staff, with the support of the Church Leadership Team approval.

SECTION 2. SUNDAY SCHOOL

1. The Sunday School is the foundational strategy for leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for developing Christians through open Bible study groups that engage people in evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship.
2. The Sunday School shall meet regularly on the Lord's Day and shall develop Bible study groups at other times as deemed necessary and expedient to meet the needs of the Church and community.
3. The Sunday School director, working with the pastor and called staff, shall lead the Sunday School.

SECTION 3. DISCIPLESHIP

1. The Discipleship ministry will provide Christian growth and ministry-equipping opportunities designed to encourage and facilitate individual growth leading to Christlikeness and spiritual transformation.
2. The discipleship director, working with the pastor and called staff, shall lead the Discipleship ministry.

SECTION 4. OTHER MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

1. Other church ministry organizations shall be established/terminated by action of the Church, upon the recommendation of the pastor and called staff working with the Church Leadership Team.

V. ORDINANCES

SECTION 1. BAPTISM

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by repentance and faith shall be received for baptism.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. Baptisms shall be administered by the pastor or his designee. The Baptismal Ministry Team and, as needed, the deacons, shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.

SECTION 2. THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. The Lord's Supper shall be observed under the supervision of the pastor, called staff, and/or deacons. This shall be in obedience to the command of Christ and to remember His death and resurrection until He comes again.

2. Members and other Christians present are invited to examine themselves and participate in the observance of the Lord's Supper according to 1 Corinthians 11:27-29.
3. The pastor, called staff, 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.
5. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper will be observed at least once every quarter.

VI. MEETINGS

SECTION 1. WORSHIP SERVICES

The Church shall meet for worship regularly each Sunday and at other times specified by the Church.

SECTION 2. BUSINESS MEETINGS

All business meetings shall be conducted in a manner pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ according to the by laws and with the Scriptures as our ultimate guide.

1. Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held on the Wednesday following the second Sunday every month. Business conducted at the regular business meeting will include reports from organizations and ministry teams, financial reports, recommendations from the deacons and/or other items of business.

In case of some other meeting, revival, etc., the regular business meeting may be postponed and/or rescheduled by announcement from the pulpit one week prior to the scheduled time. The method of voting will be left to the discretion of the moderator.

2. Special Business Meetings

Special called business meeting requirements:

- a. Recommendations for called staff positions require a minimum of two weeks written notice by mail to the resident members.
- b. All other special called business meetings must be announced publicly in a regularly scheduled worship service at least one week in advance with the purpose of the meeting stated.

3. Emergency Meetings

In the event of a disaster involving the church property or membership, emergency decisions will be made by agreement of three of the five following persons: Pastor, Chairman of Deacons, Chairman of Trustees, Treasurer, and Chairman of the Building and Grounds Ministry Team. Such decision-making authority will last until such time regular or special business meetings can be resumed as described in 1 & 2 above.

4. Voting Procedures

Every member of the Church present and in the place of balloting is entitled to vote at all elections and all questions submitted to the Church. No absentee ballots will be accepted on any elections or questions submitted to the Church.

5. Parliamentary Procedures

Twenty (20) church members shall constitute a quorum, except when calling a pastor. When calling a pastor, seventy-five (75) church members shall be required to constitute a quorum.

A motion shall be decided by a majority vote of members present and voting, except when calling church staff. No less than seventy-five percent of the members present and voting shall suffice for issuing a call for pastor and called staff.

6. Rules of Order

In all meetings, the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is expected to act in a manner worthy of her standing as the Bride of Christ, thus desiring to be pleasing to Him in all things. In all parliamentary proceedings, *Roberts Rules of Order* (newly revised) shall govern. The moderator will have available a copy of the Church by laws and *Roberts Rules of Order* (newly revised). When the Scriptures and parliamentary procedures differ, the Scriptures shall take precedence.

VII. FILLING OF POSITIONS

SECTION 1. VACANT POSITIONS

The church-elected positions and vacancies occurring during the year will be filled in regular and/or special called business meetings.

SECTION 2. OFFICERS AND MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS

All church officers and ministry team members shall be active members of the Church. Active membership shall include, but not be limited to, regular worship attendance, active in Sunday School, and faithful giving to the Lord Jesus Christ through the Church.

SECTION 3. UNSPECIFIED POSITIONS

The Church may establish and fill positions not specifically provided for in these by laws by vote of the Church at regular business meetings.

VIII. CHURCH FINANCES

SECTION 1. BUDGET

The Church shall be supported by tithes and offerings.

1. The Stewardship Ministry Team, in consultation with the pastor, called staff, and Church Leadership Team, shall prepare an inclusive budget each year, indicating the amount needed for funding each line item.

2. Offering envelopes will be provided for contributions.
3. Each member of the Church should lovingly demonstrate their spiritual responsibility to support the work of Jesus Christ through His Church by regular and proportionate giving.
4. All contributions must be kept confidential.

SECTION 2. ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer, assistant treasurer, or financial secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the Church.

A system of accounting that conforms to generally accepted accounting principles will provide for the collection, recording, and dispensing of all funds. This shall be the responsibility of the Stewardship Ministry Team.

All individuals who handle church funds shall be bonded by the Church. These shall include, but not limited to:

- Church Treasurer
- Counting Committee
- SS General Secretary
- Financial Secretary
- Church Secretary

SECTION 3. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

SECTION 4. AUDIT

An audit is for the protection of the church treasurer and financial secretary who are responsible for the handling of church funds.

An independent audit of church contributions and expenditures shall be performed annually and reported to the church at a regularly scheduled business meeting. The trustees shall be responsible for seeing that the independent audit takes place.

IX. INCORPORATION PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. REGISTERED AGENT

The Chairman of Trustees shall serve as the registered agent of the church.

SECTION 2. INCORPORATORS

Incorporators shall be the Chairman of Trustees and the Chairman of Deacons.

SECTION 3. DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of the Walter Hill First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, Inc. all real property shall revert back to the Trustees of the Third Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in accordance with the deed of record in Deed Book 293, Page 524, Register's Office of Rutherford County, Tennessee. Any other assets shall be transferred to the Concord Baptist Association. The trustees shall be responsible for the transfer of such assets.

X. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. ADOPTION

This constitution and by laws shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the church meeting in which it is submitted for adoption. Upon adoption, this constitution shall supersede all other adoptions and amendments.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENTS

This constitution and by laws shall be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular or called church meeting. However, a detailed written notice of such amendment must be provided to the resident membership 30 days in advance of the church meeting in which the amendment is to be considered.