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# CONSTITUTION

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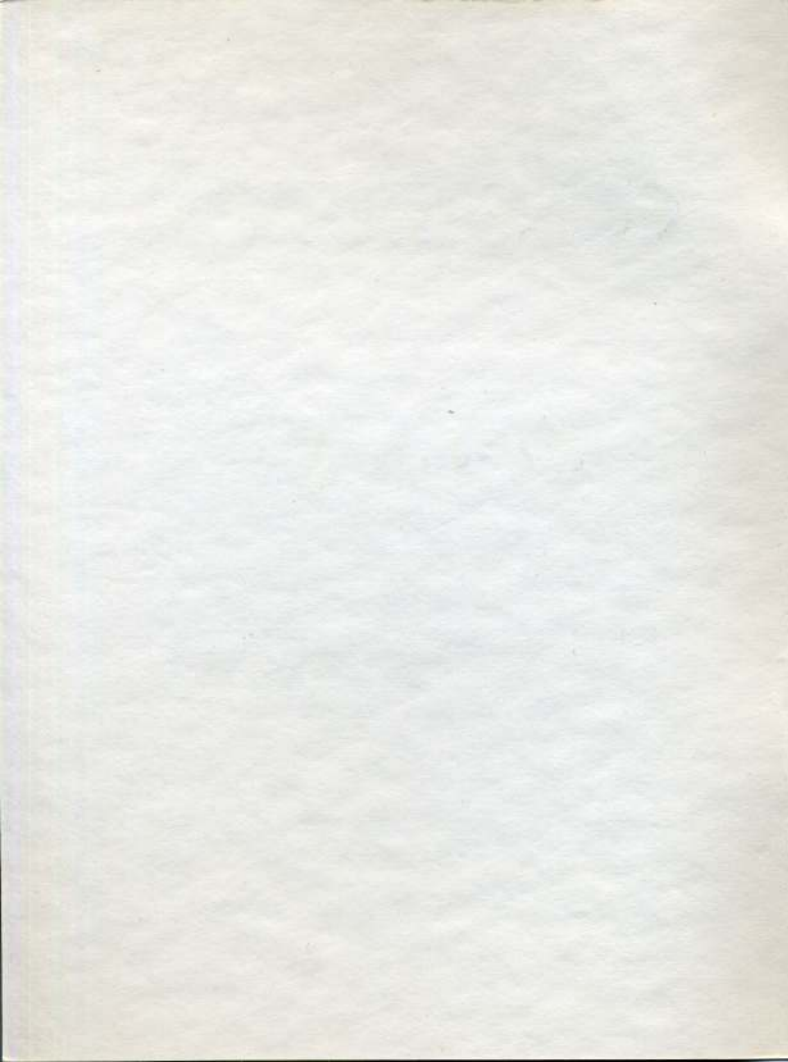
# BY-LAWS

OF THE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

of

Buckhannon, West Virginia



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## ARTICLE I

### **Name**

The name of this church shall be the First Baptist Church of Buckhannon, W. Va.

## ARTICLE II

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this church shall be to maintain public services for the worship of God and for the teaching and preaching of the Gospel; to win souls for Christ through evangelistic and missionary activities both at home and abroad; and in general to promote the interests of the Kingdom of God according to the teachings of Christ.

## ARTICLE III

### **Denominational Affiliations**

Section 1. Co-operation with other bodies.

The church's government is vested in the body which composes its membership; but because its parish is world-wide, it recognizes its obligation and privilege to co-operate with other religious bodies having the same general objectives, and shall be affiliated with the Broad Run Baptist Association, the West Virginia Baptist Convention, and the American Baptist Convention.

Section 2. Church Covenant.

As a summary for principles for Christian conduct among its members, this church adopts

the following church covenant (commonly accepted by most Baptist Churches.)

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; and to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress;



to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Section 3. Statement of Doctrine and Principles.

We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures were written by men divinely inspired, and we accept these Scriptures as a source of inspiration and guidance for our Christian faith.

We further believe in the privilege of each individual member of the church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret the Scriptures in formulating his beliefs.

## ARTICLE IV

### Membership

Section 1. Acceptance

The members of this church shall be such persons as confess Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Saviour, promise to live a Christian life, express loyalty and concern for Baptist principles of faith and belief, accept the constitution and covenant of this church, have been baptized by immersion, and have been accepted by vote of the church membership.

Such members shall be received by:

- (a) Public profession of faith and baptism.
- (b) Presentation of letters of dismissal and recommendation from other Baptist Churches.
- (c) Presentation of satisfactory proof of immersion and membership and experience in some other Christian church.

## Section 2. Dismissal

Termination of membership shall be by:

- (a) Death
- (b) Letter requesting dismissal from the church membership to unite with another duly organized Baptist church.
- (c) Letter requesting dismissal from the church membership to unite with some other church or faith.
- (d) Exclusion.
  - (1) In cases involving gross immorality, members may be excluded when it is so recommended by the Board of Deacons and approved by vote of the church membership.
  - (2) In cases of unknown residence for a period of ten years, members may be excluded when it is so approved by the Board of Deacons and approved by vote of the church membership.

**ARTICLE V**  
**Duties of Members**

**Section 1. Attendance and Support.**

It shall be the duty of every member to attend the services and activities of this church: every member, resident or non-resident, shall contribute regularly to the financial support of the church as he or she has been prospered.

**Section 2. Churchmanship.**

It shall be the duty of every member to be acquainted with the contents and principles of the church covenant and of the church constitution and to strive for their fulfillment in every respect.

**Section 3. Communication.**

It shall be the duty of all members to inform the Church Clerk or Pastor in writing of changes of residence or post office address. Absent members shall communicate with the church by letter to the Clerk or Pastor at least once a year. The Clerk or Pastor shall communicate by letter with non-resident members of the church at least once a year.

**ARTICLE VI**  
**Officers of the Church**

**Section 1. Officers of the church.**

The officers of the church shall be the following:

- (a) Pastor



- (b) Moderator
- (c) Clerk
- (d) Local Expense Treasurer
- (e) Benevolence Treasurer
- (f) Church School Superintendent
- (g) Assistant Church School Superintendent
- (h) Church School Secretary
- (i) Church School Treasurer and Librarian

## Section 2. Election of Officers.

All church officers for the ensuing church year shall be members of the church for at least one year prior to their nomination and shall be elected at the quarterly business meeting of the church in October. With the exception of the Pastor, all church officers will be elected to serve on an annual basis. All members of boards and committees whose election is not otherwise provided for, shall be elected at this meeting.

At least three months before the election of church officers, the church council shall appoint a nominating committee whose duty it shall be to prepare a slate of all officers, boards and committees designating the chairman of said boards and committees, to be elected. This committee's report shall be posted in the vestibule of the church and attention called thereto at one or more public meetings of the church at least two weeks in advance of the October business meeting. The nominating committee shall secure the permission and consent of each nominee to serve in the capacity so designated. If additional nominations are made at the meeting, the nominating com-

mittee shall prepare a ballot containing the names of all nominees. The method of election shall be determined by the Moderator. The church officers shall be elected by a majority vote.

### Section 3. Installation of Officers.

All church officers, with the exception of the Pastor, will be duly installed in their respective offices on the first Sunday in January at the morning worship service. An appropriate ceremony shall be planned and administered by the Pastor of the church.

### Section 4. Duties of Officers.

#### (a) Pastor

The duties of the Pastor shall be those common to such office in the Baptist Church. He shall be considered the chief executive officer of the church. It shall be his duty to conduct services for public worship, to administer the ordinances of the church, to be the helpful friend of all members, and stimulate and oversee the entire church program. He shall be ex-officio an advisory member of all boards and committees of the church. He shall be responsible for maintaining co-operation of the church with the religious bodies mentioned in Article III Section 1. He shall also be the chief liason officer between the church and the community at large.

#### (b) Moderator

The Moderator shall provide an agenda for the business meetings of the church, shall be the presiding officer thereof, shall conduct the election of officers, and shall perform such other

duties as are common to presiding officers. He shall maintain sufficient liason with chairmen of church committees and boards to acquaint himself with church business.

(c) Church Clerk.

The Clerk shall be responsible for all historical records of the church, shall keep a correct and permanent record of all business meetings of the church, shall assume the position of secretary for the transactions of the Church Council, shall keep an accurate catalog of all members, shall record all letters of application for membership, letters of dismissal, baptisms, additions to the church membership and losses in membership, shall submit an annual report for inclusion in the annual report of the church, shall submit a quarterly report to the church in its quarterly business meetings, and shall be the official secretary for the church in the transaction of its business both at home and in connection with Broad Run Baptist Association, the West Virginia Baptist Convention, and the American Baptist Convention.

(d) Local Expense Treasurer

The Local Expense Treasurer shall be the custodian of all local expense funds belonging to the church with the exception of the Fellowship Fund. The treasurer shall make quarterly and annual reports to the church and shall be entitled to an annual audit of the financial records by the Auditing Committee of the church.



(e) Benevolence Treasurer.

All money for benevolent purposes contributed by donors through church channels shall be held in custody by the Benevolence Treasurer who shall dispense such money strictly on the basis of items indicated in the section of the church budget designated Our Baptist World Mission. All contributions shall be forwarded to the office of the West Virginia Baptist Convention in Parkersburg, W. Va., once a month so that all money on hand shall reach the office not later than the thirteenth of the month. Quarterly and annual reports shall be made to the church at the time of such business meetings.

(f) Church School Officers

The church school officers previously named shall have general supervision of the entire church school and shall serve under the direction of the Board of Christian Education.

## ARTICLE VII

### Boards and Committees

#### Section 1. The Board of Deacons.

There shall be a Board of Deacons composed of six members whose term of office shall be on an annual basis. The Deacons shall be elected from the adult membership of the church and shall be associated with the Pastor in having charge of the spiritual interests of the church.

The specific duties of this board are:

- (a) To assist the Pastor in the ordinances of the church; Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

- (b) The examination and sponsoring of candidates for church membership.
- (c) Control of the spiritual and moral use of church property.
- (d) The visitation of the membership and prospective members.
- (e) To provide a pulpit supply in the absence of the Pastor.
- (f) To administer the funds in the Fellowship Fund.
- (g) To meet monthly and to report regularly to the Church Council.

## Section 2. The Board of Trustees.

There shall be a Board of Trustees consisting of three members; term of office shall be on an annual basis. Five years of active membership in the church shall be required for eligibility on this board.

The specific duties of this board are:

- (a) Immediately upon election, each member shall be properly certified as a trustee of the church by the County Clerk of Upshur County; said certification to be signed by the clerk of the church, notarized, and recorded in the records of the County Clerk.
- (b) To hold in trust all property and equipment of the church in accordance with the laws of the State of West Virginia.
- (c) To hold in trust all invested funds, stocks, bonds, and other church assets.



- (d) To represent the church in legal matters involving church property and assets.
- (e) To receive and disburse negotiable assets for the church.
- (f) This board may receive gifts, donations, or legacys in the name of the church provided the donor(s) and motives are acceptable to the Board of Deacons and shall have the responsibility therefore as mentioned above.
- (g) This board shall not buy, sell, or encumber the real estate or other property and holdings of the church unless authorized to do so by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting of the church called for the purpose of considering such a transaction. Such a meeting of the church must be called in accordance with the provisions of the laws of the State of West Virginia which govern the buying, selling, or encumbering of the church property.
- (h) The board shall place insurance upon the church property as recommended by the Budget and Finance Committee and as authorized by the membership in regular business meeting.

### Section 3. Church Council.

There shall be a Church Council consisting of the Pastor, Moderator, Clerk, Local Expense Treasurer, chairmen of all boards and standing committees, the chairman of the Men's Fellowship, chairman of the Women's Organization, and

the Chairman of the Baptist Youth Fellowship, thus forming a group representing the entire scope of the church program and activities. The Pastor shall preside at the meetings of the council and shall be responsible for introducing matters of interest that should be presented to the council meeting and shall prepare an agenda for each meeting. This council shall be the general planning body of the church. It shall seek to correlate the programs of all the departments and groups in the church into one co-ordinated whole. The council shall meet quarterly on specified dates fixed by the council. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or by the chairman of the Board of Deacons. The nominating committee for church officers shall be named by the council at the July meeting.

#### Section 4. The Board of Christian Education.

The Board of Christian Education shall consist of three elected members and the Church School Superintendent and the Pastor. It shall be the duty of this board to familiarize itself with the program of Christian Education in the American Baptist Convention as administered by the Christian Education Department of the W. Va. Baptist Convention and to relate this church to that program insofar as possible. The members of this board shall work together with the officers and teachers of the church school and shall plan and carry out the entire program of the church school.

The specific duties of this board are:

- (a) To be responsible for the organization,

administration, and supervision of the entire educational program of the church.

- (b) To develop and interpret to the constituency of the church the educational objectives and goals.
- (c) To study the educational needs of the church and to consider schedules, housing, equipment, and classes.
- (d) To discover, enlist, and train workers in the educational program of the church.
- (e) To co-ordinate and approve the outreach program of the groups and organizations under its jurisdiction.
- (f) To prepare and administer the educational budget of the church.
- (g) To meet regularly once a month.

#### Section 5. Building and Grounds Committee.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee shall be composed of the Board of Trustees and two elected members. This committee shall be responsible for the upkeep, repairs, and alterations or additions to the church property using funds as provided through the local expense budget and as authorized by the church membership in business meetings.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee may, upon suggestion from the Board of Trustees, recommend to the church membership an extensive program of repairs or alterations to the church property when the cost exceeds the amount allotted in the budget. Upon approval by the church membership of such a program, this committee

shall be authorized to solicit special building funds pledges from membership and friends of the church.

#### Section 6. Pulpit Committee.

When the church is in need of a Pastor, the Moderator of the church shall call a business meeting of the membership at the regular Sunday Morning Worship Service and cause to be elected a Pulpit Committee of five members whose duty it shall be to recommend to the church a desirable candidate for the pulpit. No consideration shall be given by the church to any candidate who is not recommended by his committee; and one candidate shall be considered by the committee at a time. When the pulpit shall have been filled, this committee shall be automatically dissolved.

#### Section 7. Music Committee.

There shall be a Music Committee composed of five members. The choir director and church organist shall be ex-officio members. One member shall be elected by the choir from its membership and two members shall be elected from and by the congregation from a slate provided by the nominating committee.

The specific duties of this committee are:

- (a) To recommend to the nominating committee candidates for the positions of choir director and organist.
- (b) To provide a substitute for the choir director or organist in the absence of



either for a period not to exceed six consecutive weeks. A substitute for a period in excess of six weeks shall be provided by the congregation in the manner provided for in the constitution for the election of church officers.

- (c) To recommend to the Budget and Finance Committee an annual budgetary item for music and choir supplies.
- (d) To have general oversight over the musical ministry of the church.

#### Section 8. Budget and Finance Committee.

This committee shall consist of the chairman of Board of Trustees, the chairman of the Board of Deacons, the Church Clerk, the Church Treasurer, and three other members elected at the business meeting in October.

The specific duties of this committee are:

- (a) To recommend to the church at the quarterly business meeting in October a proposed budget.
- (b) To prepare a program for raising the funds necessary to meet the proposed budget.
- (c) To be responsible for attending to all financial matters of the church not specifically assigned elsewhere.

#### Section 9. Auditing Committee.

There shall be an Auditing Committee composed of three members elected annually by the church membership. It shall be the duty of this



committee to audit the books of both the Local Expense Treasurer and the Benevolence Treasurer at the end of the fiscal year, and to make a report of same to the church membership.

#### Section 10. Board of Ushers.

There shall be a Board of Ushers consisting of ten members elected annually by the church.

The specific duties of this committee are:

- (a) To greet and seat all who attend the worship services of the church.
- (b) To receive the offering.
- (c) To see that the sanctuary is properly lighted and heated or ventilated during the worship services.
- (d) To see that the church is properly closed after the worship services.
- (e) To perform such duties as deemed necessary by the chairman of the Board of Ushers and Board of Deacons.

### ARTICLE VIII

#### Meetings of the Church

##### Section 1. Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1st. and close on December 31st.

##### Section 2. Annual Business Meeting.

The annual business meeting of the church shall be held within the first two weeks in January of each year; the date to be determined by the Church Council. At this meeting the

annual reports of all phases of the church work shall be made in writing and presented to the membership in a unified printed form. This meeting shall be for the purpose of review of all of the church work for the fiscal year just closed on December 31st and will be the initial meeting for the new church officers elected at the quarterly business meeting in October.

### Section 3. Quarterly Business Meetings.

A regular quarterly business meeting for the transaction of business shall be held during the week following Communion Sunday in April, July, and October. The quarterly meeting for January shall be combined with the annual business meeting held within the first two weeks of January. All church officers for the fiscal year beginning January 1st. shall be elected at the October meeting in order that they may become familiar with their offices and duties before the beginning of the new church year.

### Section 4. Special Meetings.

Special Business Meetings of the church may be called by the Pastor or by the Moderator of the church or by the Chairman of Board of Deacons or Board of Trustees.

### Section 5. The Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper shall be commemorated on the first Sunday of each quarter of the calendar year and at other times at the discretion of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

## ARTICLE IX

### Amendments

This constitution may be revised or amended at any business meeting of the church on the recommendation of the Church Council, provided announcement has been made from the pulpit on two consecutive prior Sunday morning worship services. A three-fourth's vote of the members present shall be necessary to carry an amendment or a revision.



## BY-LAWS

### 1. Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board.

This church shall pay its share of its minister's dues in the Retirement Pension Fund of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of the American Baptist Convention provided the Pastor is or becomes a member thereof. The church will inform the Pastor of the advantages of the Retiring Pension Fund membership and urge him to enroll. It will always include in its call to a prospective Pastor the offer to pay its share of his pension dues. The expense involved shall be an item in the regular budget for current expenditures.

### 2. Expenditures in Excess of Budget Allotment.

No individual or organization within the church shall take any action involving church expenditures or indebtedness in an amount greater than \$100.00 over and above the provisions of the budget for the current year, without first securing the authorization of the church membership at a church meeting. This shall not preclude raising funds in any amount and the expenditure thereof for special projects by organizations within the church.

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