

**THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS  
OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, SHELBY, MONTANA  
751 MARIAS AVENUE  
SHELBY, MONTANA**

**CONSTITUTION**

**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 relation to other churches.

**ARTICLE I:       NAME**

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church, Shelby, Montana.

**ARTICLE II:       OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this body shall be to provide regular opportunities for public worship, to sustain the ordinances, doctrines, and ethics outlined in the Holy Bible for the church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to nurture its members in Christian fellowship through a program of Christian education; to channel its offerings to the support of the objects of the Redeemer's Kingdom and to preach and propagate among all people the gospel of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

**ARTICLE III:   STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Holy Bible is the inspired work of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963.

1. We believe the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God, without any error, the all-sufficient authority in all matters of faith, doctrine, and Christian living.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and that He is a faithful God and true man. He died on the cross for our sins. He rose bodily from the dead ascended into heaven where He sits at the Father's right hand and is now High Priest and Advocate.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost. Only through regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit can man's salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

5. We believe that eternal salvation is the free gift of God, entirely apart from man's works, and is possessed by any and **ALL** who have faith in and received Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.
6. We believe in the regenerated church membership of persons who have believed and received Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
7. We believe that baptism is by immersion and the Lord's Supper is a memorial to His suffering and death on the cross. These are ordinances to be observed by the church in its present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means for salvation.
8. We believe in the personal, bodily, imminent, and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ and that His second coming inspires believers for dynamic and zealous living and service for Him while waiting for His return.
9. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, the everlasting blessedness of the saved in heaven, and the everlasting punishment and separation from God of the unsaved in Hell.
10. We believe in the autonomy of the local church. The church shall manage its own affairs and shall not be subject to any other religious body or organization.

## **ARTICLE IV: CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led, as to believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and on the 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.

## **BYLAWS=**

### **ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP**

#### **SECTION 1. How Candidates for Church Membership Are Received**

- a. The membership of this church shall **be** composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration, who have been baptized by immersion upon authority of a regular Baptist church, who have subscribed to the covenant and constitution of this church, who have been received by the vote of the church.
- b. A member of another Baptist church of like faith and order may be received by vote of the church upon a letter from that church which recommends them for membership into our fellowship.
- c. Anyone who has been a member of a Baptist church, and in consequences of peculiar circumstances has no letter of dismissal, may be received into our fellowship upon their statement of faith satisfactory to the church.
- d. Those seeking church membership coming from another denomination will **be** received providing that: they have given evidence of regeneration by receiving

Christ as their Lord and Savior and that they have been immersed in water constituting a believer's baptism which symbolizes, but not in any sense causing salvation and they have embraced the covenant and constitution of this church and have been received by vote of the church.

- e. Any person seeking membership at First Baptist Church-Shelby, MT shall be encouraged to share evidence of their personal conversion and baptismal experience with the pastor and deacons.

Scripture references: John 3:16, Acts 16:30-31, Romans 10:10, Ephesians 1:13-14

## SECTION 2 NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

All persons seeking membership will be encouraged to attend the New Members Orientation classes.

## SECTION 3 VOTING RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

Every active member of the church who is at least 18 years of age is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business meeting, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting by public announcement at each service for a period of two weeks previous to the voting. Absentee ballots will be accepted and received in sealed envelopes only and on prescribed forms. Secret ballot may be requested for any vote of the church.

## SECTION 4. TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

This church recognizes the following types of membership:

- a. **ACTIVE:** Any member who routinely and regularly contributes to the right and responsibilities of this church. This includes any member who is unable to attend due to physical disabilities, military duty, or extended travel.
- b. **IN-ACTIVE:** Any member who fails to give evidence of active support. **\*\*** Any member who has inactivated their membership by choosing to leave First Baptist Church- Shelby, MT and follow another church have no right of franchise.

## SECTION 5. INACTIVATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- a. When a member of this church actively participates in a church of different faith, Membership in this church will inactivate.
- b. After two consecutive years and a member who has made no attempt to contact or attend this church, their membership in this church will be inactivated.

## SECTION 6. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- a. Letters of recommendation may be granted to any church of like faith and order for members in good standing. When letters are granted, membership in this church will terminate.
- b. Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of legal, ethical, moral, doctrinal, or conduct, the church may terminate said membership by a three-fourths vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose, but only after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and reformation.

## SECTION 7. DISCIPLINE

Should any unhappy differences arise between members, the aggrieved members shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in Matthew 18.

## SECTION 8. MEMBER RESTORATION

Any member whose membership has been terminated or inactivated for any condition which has made it necessary for the church to exclude him, may, upon his request, be restored to membership of the church by a vote of the church, upon evidence of this repentance and reformation.

# ARTICLE II: GENERAL CHURCH OFFICERS

All officers of the church and its organizations, other than those who are employed, unless otherwise specified, shall be elected for term of one year, upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee and election of the church.

## SECTION 1. PASTOR

A pastor shall be chosen and called 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. The election shall be upon the recommendation of a special committee appointed to seek out and nominate a pastor, a minister of the Gospel, who's Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office of pastor of this church. The committee shall bring only one name at a time for consideration of the church, and no nomination shall be made except that of the committee.

Election shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of 90% of those present and voting necessary for a call, by all active church members 18 years of age and older.

Should the one recommended fail to receive the 90% vote, the committee shall be instructed to seek another minister and the meeting shall be adjourned without debate.

Christ is to be the head of the church and the pastor is the shepherd of the people. The pastor shall have oversight of the welfare of the church; he shall be ex-officio member of all

organizations, departments and committees; he may call a special meeting of the deacons or any committee according to procedures which may be set forth in the bylaws; he shall conduct religious services on stated and special occasions, administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; minister to members of the church and community and perform other duties that usually pertain to that office; he shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall, in cooperation with the pulpit committee or the deacons, provide for pulpit supply when he is absent and arrange for workers to assist in revival meetings and other special services. The pastor shall preside at all meetings of the church except as otherwise stated in the bylaws. He shall arrange and approve all absences and vacations of church employees.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF A PASTOR

1. Biblical qualifications of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
2. The pastor must have received and accepted the call of God for salvation and into the ministry.
3. The pastor should **be** a faithful shepherd of his flock (the church), leading kindly, sometimes rebuking, sometimes teaching, but always loving and always patient and manifesting the fruits of the Holy Spirit.
4. The pastor should **be** sound of doctrine and in agreement with First Baptist Church of Shelby, Montana's Constitution and Bylaws. This is derived from the words "holding the mystery of the faith in I Timothy 3:9. If the pastor's personal theology or doctrine changes from that of his calling to this church, he should resign.

## DISMISSAL OF A PASTOR:

The pastor should seek the Lord's calling to this church and also **be** sensitive to the Lord's leading if the Lord wants him to serve the Lord in another place.

When a pastor resigns, he needs to give a two week notice that he will **be** resigning, so the church can continue its ministry with a supply pastor.

If conflict begins to form in the church, the pastor and /or deacons are encouraged to contact "Peace Makers" to come in and help resolve the conflict. If the conflict cannot be resolved, a vote of confidence is to be taken by the active church members 18 years of age and older.

If the pastor does not receive at least a 75% confidence vote, his call as pastor of First Baptist church, Shelby, Montana, will be terminated in two weeks.

The pastor will receive two weeks severance pay after he resigns plus any unused vacation time.

## SECTION 2. OTHER STAFF MEMBERS

This church shall call or employ such members 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 personnel committee and employed by church action. In the event of a resignation, at least two weeks notice will be given.

### SECTION 3. DEACONS

1. The qualification for a deacon are found in I Timothy 3: 8-13 and Titus 1.
2. The deacon's responsibility is to help solve church problems and further the cause of unity and church harmony in order that the Gospel may be preached without difficulty and divisions. The deacon must be willing to serve the church Acts 6:1-4
3. Nominees for deacons shall be Southern Baptist in conviction and an active member of this local church, supporting its programs for a minimum of six (6) months.
4. In accordance with the meaning of work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The role of the deacon is to serve the pastor and staff in performing pastoral ministries, proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers; care for the church members and other persons in the community; lead the church to engage in a fellowship or worship, witness, education, ministry and application; and lead the church in performing its role.

### SECTION 4. MODERATOR

The pastor shall act as moderator. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of the deacons shall preside, in his absence, the church clerk shall call the meeting to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

### SECTION 5. CLERK

The clerk shall be elected by the church. It shall be the duty of the clerk to attend or be represented at all church conferences, to keep an accurate record of all business transactions, to prepare the annual associational letter, to notify all messengers of their election and/or appointment. The clerk shall keep an accurate record of any deaths of members, as well as an accurate record of all baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal as authorized by the church. It shall be the duty of the clerk to see that an accurate roll of the church membership is kept with dates and methods of dismissal and admission, change in name, correct mailing addresses and other pertinent information. The clerk shall preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records should be filed in the church office, when an office is maintained.

## SECTION 6

### TRUSTEES

- a. The church shall elect at least three members to serve as trustees. Vacancies may be filled at any time as deemed necessary.
- b. The trustee shall, as provided by law and the action of the church, hold in trust the title to all property of the church and shall represent the church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase of, improvement of and disposal of church property. They shall execute all legal papers relating to the church and to the community as the church may direct. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action; neither shall they have control over church property except by the vote of the church.

## SECTION 7.

### FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The financial secretary shall receive the empty offering envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons. From these the financial secretary shall give each contributor individual credit as provided in the record system of the church. Envelopes shall be kept for reference as the church directs. Records shall be kept of receipts from envelopes, offering plate, miscellaneous and special offerings. The financial secretary shall also be responsible for preparing and mailing statements to all contributors of the church, by the end of January for income tax purposes, or as the church directs. These records, owing to their nature, are not open for inspection by anyone other than an individual wishing to inquire into their own record.

## SECTION 8.

### TREASURER

The church shall elect a treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve and pay out upon request 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's books shall be audited as deemed necessary.

The treasurer shall upon invitation meet with the deacons and shall be an ex-officio member of the Stewardship Committee.

## SECTION 9.

### ADDITIONAL CHURCH OFFICERS

These officers include Sunday School Director, Church Training Director, Woman's Ministries Director, Brotherhood Director and Director of Church Music Ministry, plus Pianist and Organist and such other officers as the church may determine advisable in carrying out its purposes.

#### **SECTION 10. METHOD OF FINANCING THE CHURCH PROGRAM**

This church and all of its programs shall be financed solely through tithes and offerings received by it. Any inner church organization desiring to raise funds must have deacon and or church approval.

#### **SECTION 11. LOANS**

All loans and purchasing of property are to be authorized by 75 % of active church members 18 years of age and older present at a business meeting. Absentee ballots will be accepted and received in sealed envelopes only on prescribed forms according to guide lines set forth in section 3 page 3 voting rights of members.

### **ARTICLE III CHURCH MEETINGS**

#### **SECTION 1. WORSHIP SERVICES**

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

#### **SECTION 2. SPECIAL SERVICES**

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

#### **SECTION 3. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Regular business meetings shall be held monthly.

#### **SECTION 4. SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS**

A special called business 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 special called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable.



## SECTION 5. QUORUM

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

## SECTION 6. PARLIAMENTARY RULES

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

# ARTICLE IV 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 indicated a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism.

- a. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- b. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or-whomever the church shall authorize.

## SECTION 2. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is open to all believers in Christ and is a symbolic act of obedience, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ and anticipating His second coming.

- a. The Lord's Supper shall be observed quarterly, or as appropriately.
- b. The Lord's Supper shall be observed in the morning or evening services.
- c. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- d. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

# ARTICLE V COMMITTEES

## SECTION 1. GENERAL

- a. The church shall elect such standing committees as may be deemed necessary to carry on the various phases of the programs of the church efficiently and effectively. In any event, the church shall at all times have the following standing committees: Nominating, Stewardship, Building and Grounds. Any additional committees may be elected by the church.
- b. Special committees shall be elected for specific obligations by the church. These committees shall be elected by the church unless the church directs their appointment in a different way.
- c. The nominating committee of three shall be elected by the church at least three months prior to the beginning of the new church year. Upon their election by the church, the Sunday School Director, Church Training Director, Woman's Ministry Team Leader, Brotherhood Director, Church Music Ministry Director, shall automatically become members of the nominating committee.
- d. The chairman of all church committees shall be elected by the committee and approved by the church. All committee members will be elected by the church.

## **SECTION 2**

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The nominating committee shall consist of three persons, at least, plus the directors of the program organizations.

The purpose of this committee is to lead the church in filling all church elected leadership positions.

#### **DUTIES:**

- a. Assist church leaders to discover and enlist qualified persons to fill church-elected positions of leadership in their respective organizations.
- b. Present workers to the church for election.
- c. The report of the nominating committee shall be suggestive to the church and any member of the church will have the privilege of a nomination from the floor.

## **SECTION 3.**

### **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

- a. This committee shall be composed of five (5) members selected from the membership at large. The deacon body shall be represented on this committee.
- b. This committee shall prepare annually a proposed budget including local expenses, education, missions, benevolence and shall submit same to the church in regular business meetings at least two (2) months prior to the beginning of the fiscal or budget year. In preparing the budget the committee shall confer with the head of each organization of the church. Upon adoption of the budget, it becomes the duty

of the Stewardship committee to lead in a stewardship emphasis as adopted by the church.

#### SECTION 4. BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

- a. This committee shall have at least three (3) members and shall consist of both men and women.
- b. It shall be the duty of this committee to give attention to and study conditions and state of repair and appearance of the buildings and grounds including the parsonage property, making such repairs and improvements as authorized by the church and included in the church budget. Expenses exceeding the budget for repair or improvement and items of equipment shall be referred to the Stewardship Committee for recommendation to the church.
- c. The committee shall be responsible for the work of persons employed in the capacity of caring for the building and grounds. The chairman of the committee shall arrange for the purchasing of supplies as they are needed.
- d. Persons who work in a janitorial or cleaning service, shall be recommended to the church by the Building and Grounds Committee for employment by church action. It shall be the employees duty to so care for the physical plant as to contribute helpfully to the comfort and well being of the members at all services.
- e. This committee shall see to the cleanliness, ventilation and upkeep of the buildings.
- f. This committee shall see that the grounds are kept in such a way as to be in keeping with what would be expected of God's House.

#### SECTION 5 MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The purpose of this committee is to assist the church and its organizational leadership by making studies of community needs, recommending plans and administering the work assigned to it.

##### DUTIES:

- a. Conduct studies and recommend plans for local missions work.
- b. Work through the church to coordinate the mission work of the church.
- c. Obtain and administer resources according to the church's policy and procedure for the work assigned to it.
- d. Establish and maintain communication with the associational missions committee and other appropriate groups outside the church.
- e. Draw up terms of sponsorship of a mission which shall be mutually agreed upon by the church and the mission.

- f. Direct the work of the mission, serving as the liaison committee between the church and the mission.

## SECTION 6 CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council membership is composed of church leaders who have been elected to direct church program organizations and services, plus the chairman of the Deacon Body and a representative from the youth. Committee chairmen's and church-elected officers shall serve and give input into the meeting. As Church council members, these leaders are responsible for thinking in terms of the total church program rather than just the welfare of the organization they lead.

The primary function of the Council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations and committees; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of the church goals and objectives and to study long range church and community needs, analyze the present effectiveness of the church's work, set long range objectives, goals and strategies.

All matters agreed upon by the Council calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the church for approval.

## SECTION 7. CHURCH USHERS COMMITTEE

A church usher chairman shall be elected by the church and have the necessary personnel to receive the tithes and offerings.

## SECTION 8. GREETERS COMMITTEE

The greeters Committee are to greet people as they enter and leave the church and make them feel welcome, seat people at the proper time, provide bulletins and /or other materials at the time of seating them.

## SECTION 9. HISTORY COMMITTEE

The duty of this committee is to preserve the historical records of the church. The committee is especially concerned with gathering and preserving available church records, recording full and accurate records and using the records to help members understand and appreciate their heritage and mission.

## SECTION 10. HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

This committee is to coordinate and oversee all functions in the church that deal with food , (Pot lucks, banquets, funeral dinners, visiting ministers, ETC. Also be overseers of the kitchen area.

## **SECTION 11. WOMEN'S MINISTRY TEAM LEADER**

To oversee and coordinate all women's ministries in the church. These currently are: flowers, missions, social, prayer chain, outreach, Bible studies, and visitation.

## **SECTION 12 OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES**

Additional committees shall be elected as desired by the church and serve for the purpose designated.

# **ARTICLE VI; PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES**

## **SECTION 1. GENERAL**

All organizations and program services of the church shall be under church control, and shall be recommended by the church nominating committee for election by the church and shall present their respective reports to the church at the regular business meetings, at least every quarter.

## **SECTION 2. SUNDAY SCHOOL**

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes according to the needs for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director for the study of God's Word.

The task of the Sunday School shall be to teach the Bible; reach persons for Christ and Church membership; perform the functions of the church within its constituency provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The director of the Sunday School shall have general oversight of the entire school, and shall administer its affairs in cooperation with and according to the plans and methods of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, subject to the approval of the church. They shall acquaint themselves with the best methods of religious education and endeavor to adopt them in our church Sunday School. It shall be the director's duty to council with the teachers and officers through officers and teachers meetings, in the work of the school, giving and receiving suggestions from co-workers.

## **SECTION 3 CHURCH TRAINING**

The Church Training, shall be divided into departments for all ages and conducted under the direction of a general director. The church training shall serve as a training organization of the church.

The tasks of the Church Training shall be to orient new church members, train church members to perform the functions of the church, train church leaders, teach Christian theology, Christian history, Christian ethic, and church policy and organization; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The director shall have charge of the activities of the church training. He shall acquaint himself with the program and methods outlined by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention for this organization and shall endeavor to adopt such programs in this church subject to the approval of the church.

#### SECTION 4                      WOMEN'S MINISTRY TEAM LEADER

The Women's Ministry Team Leader shall seek to enlist all the women and people of the church in a program of missions, training, giving and activity according to plans promoted by the Women's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention.

#### SECTION 5                      BROTHERHOOD

There shall be a Brotherhood with such organization as needed. This program shall be directed by a director. The tasks are to teach missions; engage in mission action; support world missions, through praying and giving; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

#### SECTION 6                      CHURCH MUSIC MINISTRY

There shall be a church music program under the direction of the Music Director. Such officers and/or organizations shall be included as needed. The music director shall be responsible providing worshipful music at all services. He is to direct the choir or choirs, in practice and public singing and is to cooperate with the pastor and leaders in the selection of suitable music and the selection of appropriate musical programs for all occasions where such services are needed.

#### SECTION 7                      PIANIST AND ORGANIST

The pianist and organist shall play for all public services and shall assist the music director in suitable program of music for the church.

#### SECTION 8                      CHURCH MEDIA CENTER

The church media center shall serve as the resource center for the church. The church media center staff will see to provide and promote the use of printed and audiovisual resources. The staff will also provide consultation to church leaders and members in the use of printed and audiovisual resources.

### ARTICLE VII:                      GENERAL

## SECTION I.

### LICENSE AND ORDINATION

The church shall license and ordain only those men who are recognized and confirmed by the church of an evident call of God to the Gospel ministry. This represents the judgment of competent brethren of the candidate's fitness to undertake the duties of the Christian ministry, a partnership with him in his future ministry and a commendation of him to the sisterhood of churches.

Licensing a man to preach is the liberating of the candidate to exercise his spiritual gifts. Ordination, as a rule, should not take place until a man is called to a definite field of labor.

The candidate must meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7 before he is licensed. He must be recommended to the church by an examining council appointed by the church. The church then votes, by ballot and must have a three-fourths majority before proceeding with the licensing.

Since ordination involves other churches and the denomination as a whole, it places upon the ordaining church heavy obligation not to lay hands lightly on any man. Request for ordination having come from one of its members, the church, by vote, should proceed to call an examining council, usually made up of ordained men from its own ranks and from neighboring churches. Prayerful and sympathetic, but searching inquiry should be made into the candidate's experience of grace, and soundness of his conversion, the certainty of his call, the adequacy of his preparation, the quality of his character, the vitality of his faith, the worthiness of his concept of his calling, the steadfastness of his loyalty to the Christian body whose representative he becomes, the determination which he discloses as to his future life of sacrificial devotion and continuous advancement toward the ideal of "a good minister of Jesus Christ."

There should ordinarily be a sufficient lapse of time between examination and ordination that no embarrassment would be felt should the candidate's request be denied or postponed.

## SECTION 2.

### AFFILIATION WITH ASSOCIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

We recognize that there is mutual helpfulness in the association of churches who are in such agreement in faith and practice as to encourage the spirit of fellowship and good will. We also recognize that there have been devised, through the voluntary cooperation of churches of like faith and order, organizations whose purpose it is to implement the missionary, educational, and benevolent interests and obligations of the individual Christian and his church family.

Believing that the Montana Triangle Association, The Montana Southern Baptist Convention (former Northern Plains Baptist Convention), and the Southern Baptist Convention are organizations which have as their sole purpose the promotion and the support of missions, education, and benevolence of the character and in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution and the Articles of Faith of this church, we therefore agree to participate in these organizations through our duly elected officers and our support of the causes which these organizations represent.

This church may withdraw from affiliation with the Montana Triangle Southern Baptist Association, the Montana Southern Baptist Convention or the Southern Baptist Convention by the majority vote of the members present at any regular arranged business meeting of the church, if advance notice has been given that this vote will be taken.

### **SECTION 3                      PROPERTY HOLDING**

It is agreed that the securing and maintaining of real property, buildings, and equivalent by this church shall be for the express purpose of providing facilities for public worship and for the encouragement of missionary, educational and benevolent interest of this church, of the character and in the spirit of the Constitution and the Articles of Faith of the congregation.

If at any time this church shall determine to alter the quality of its beliefs and practices so as in important respects to be at variance with the character described in this Constitution and in the Articles of Faith, if the decision is by less than unanimous vote of those present at a regular business meeting of the church, it is understood that the rights of the property of the church shall inhere in that part of the congregation which shall agree to continue to use the property for the purpose for which it was purchased and has been to that time maintained.

## **ARTICLE VIII:    ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION**

### **SECTION 1.                      ADOPTION**

This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present at a regular business meeting at which vote is taken shall vote in favor of the same. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty (30) days after formal presentation of the constitution to the church.

### **SECTION 2.                      AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the church membership present at any regular business meeting of the church, provided, however, that such amendment, alteration, or repeal must be given to the church clerk in writing, and this proposed change shall be presented to the church at least thirty (30) days prior to the time the vote is taken.

## **ARTICLE IX.            ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS**

### **SECTION 1.                      ADOPTION**



These bylaws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when a majority vote of the members present at the regular business meeting at which a vote is taken shall vote in favor of same. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty (30) days after formal presentation of the Bylaws to the church.

## SECTION 2. AMENDMENTS

Any of the rules of these Bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed by a majority vote of the members present at any regular business meeting of the church, providing; however, that notice and proposal of such amendment, alteration, or repeal must be given to the church clerk in writing at the proceeding regular business meeting of the church.

## **ARTICLE X. RETENTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

The adoption of this Constitution and Bylaws shall at all times be kept by the church clerk among the record, and another copy shall be kept in the church office and all amendments to or revisions thereof shall, after passage by the church, be prepared by the clerk and included in the copies of the Constitution and Bylaws and made available to the church members generally upon request.

This proposed Constitution and Bylaws was prepared in July, 2008.

Adopted in general at the regular business meeting of  
Final adoption of this Constitution was on