



UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH FAYETTEVILLE, AR

THE CONSTITUTION OF UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH Fayetteville, AR

Adopted 1/29/23

PREAMBLE

Since it pleased God, by His Holy Spirit, to establish a congregation here in 1953 under the name of University Baptist Church of Fayetteville, Arkansas, for the worship of God and spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and since He has continued this work to the present day; and whereas we have searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to conform the polity of this congregation more closely to His will for the church in this age and to prepare ourselves for greater effort in His name; now therefore, we do hereby organize ourselves in accord with the Arkansas Nonprofit Corporation Act of 1993 and adopt this Constitution as our legal bylaws and articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed and instructed in the Holy Bible and articulated in our Statement of Faith and Church Covenant.

The government of this church is vested in the members who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. University Baptist Church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and the Washington Madison Baptist Association, but is not governed by these bodies.

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ARTICLE 1. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications

- **Clause 1.** To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized in obedience to Christ following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to, submit to, and uphold the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

Section 2. Admission

- **Clause 1.** To be admitted into church membership, all candidates will be received as a member of the church upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting, and will at that point relinquish their membership in any other church.

Section 3. Duties & Privileges of Membership

- **Clause 1.** In accord with the Church Covenant, each member is expected to participate actively in the ministry and life of the church by:
 - i. regularly attending its Lord's Day meetings;
 - ii. faithfully observing its ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper;
 - iii. submitting to its discipline;
 - iv. attending its members' meetings and voting on matters pertaining to the election of the church's officers, decisions regarding membership, and all other matters submitted to the congregation's vote.
- **Clause 2.** Only members are permitted to serve in or lead any ministry of the church, except with the prior approval of the elders.

Section 4. Removal from Membership

- **Clause 1.** The church will recognize the termination of a person's membership in one of the following ways:
 - i. Upon his or her death;
 - ii. Upon his or her rejection of faith in Christ as confirmed by congregational vote of at least two-thirds majority;
 - iii. After he or she has committed to another evangelical, gospel-preaching church, and the congregation has subsequently approved to release the individual into the care of that church by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting on the question at any

members' meeting. The church will have authority to refuse a member's transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with the process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason;

- iv. As an act of church discipline, which the church will have authority to exercise over its members, which would involve removing any member guilty of serious, demonstrable, unrepentant sin by which the reputation of Christ and his bride, the church, is dishonored. Any such action will be done in accordance with the instructions of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 and 2 Corinthians 2:6-8. A member will be removed from membership as a matter of church discipline upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

ARTICLE 2: MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Gatherings

- **Clause 1.** Per the command of Hebrews 10:24–25, the church will meet together for public worship each Lord's Day morning, except for in extenuating circumstances as determined by the elders.
- **Clause 2.** The church may meet at other times throughout the week as determined.

Section 2. Members' Meetings

- **Clause 1.** The church will hold a regular members' meeting at least every other month, which will not be held in place of the regular Lord's Day worship gathering, but at some other time. At least one week's notice will be given prior to the members' meeting in question.
- **Clause 2.** The elders, whenever they deem necessary, or within thirty days of receiving a written request signed by ten percent of the membership, will call a special members' meeting. If a special members' meeting is called, at least one week's notice, including a stated purpose, will be given.
- **Clause 3.** The members present at any members' meeting will constitute a quorum to do business.
- **Clause 4.** Members' meetings will proceed according to a reasonable order, with Robert's Rules to be used as a general guide for parliamentary rules of procedure. Motions will be adopted according to Robert's Rules of Order, except

on matters otherwise provided for in this Constitution.

- **Clause 5.** The elders will select a moderator from among their number to moderate every members' meeting.
- **Clause 6.** Prior to a vote at a members' meeting, discussion opportunities will be given.
- **Clause 7.** The church, duly assembled in members' meetings, will be responsible to:
 - i. Elect church officers (elders & deacons);
 - ii. Elect a treasurer and clerk;
 - iii. Receive member candidates into church membership;
 - iv. Recognize removal from membership due to death, transfer of membership, or rejection of faith in Christ;
 - v. Exercise church discipline;
 - vi. Approve, once in every fiscal year, a church budget;
 - vii. Hear reports from the elders, and from time to time, the various deacons, church staff and other members;
 - viii. Approve any amendments to the Statement of Faith, Church Covenant, or this Constitution; and
 - ix. Take any other action deemed necessary or desirable, insofar as it is intended for the edification of the body and not contrary to God's Word.

ARTICLE 3: CHURCH OFFICES

Section 1. Summary

Jesus Christ is the head of the church, occupying the office of prophet, priest, and king, and, according to instructions he set forth in his word, has designated biblical offices for his church. These biblical offices are elders and deacons, but final earthly authority is vested in the assembled congregation in matters pertaining to membership, doctrine, church discipline, and the election of biblical church offices.

Section 2. Elders

- **Clause 1.** The elders will be comprised of a plurality of qualified men per the instructions set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. In accordance with 1 Timothy 2:11–12 women are not permitted to serve as elders.
- **Clause 2.** The elders will oversee the spiritual health of the church and manage the affairs and resources of the church in accordance with the Constitution. In compliance with the Arkansas Nonprofit Corporation Act, the elders will serve as the directors of the corporation.

- **Clause 3.** With the exception of the elders serving as pastors in the pay of the church, elders will be reaffirmed by vote of the church triennially, and after having served two consecutive three-year terms, must take a sabbatical of at least one year before being eligible to be reelected. Elders on staff with the church will not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, or to any term limit.
- **Clause 4.** An elder's term of office may end by resignation, end of term, termination of membership, termination of employment, or disqualification according to the provisions outlined in Article 3.2.5.
- **Clause 5.** An elder will be removed from office by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting. Any such action will be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 5:17-21.
- **Clause 6.** The lead pastor, in conjunction with the elders, may remove an elder in the pay of the church from his staff position and his eldership. Should the staff elder who's been removed from his staff position object to his removal, he may petition the elders. And if he's not satisfied, he may bring it before the church at a duly called member's meeting.
- **Clause 7.** In terms of formal authority, there is no distinction between an elder on staff with the church and any other elder.
- **Clause 8.** No elder will hold the office of deacon or treasurer during his tenure as an elder.
- **Clause 9.** The elders will choose their Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman will assume his responsibilities. In compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of Arkansas, the chairman of the elders will serve as the president of the corporation.
- **Clause 10.** The elders will, in keeping with the principles set forth in the Scriptures, especially Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; James 5:14; and 1 Peter 5:1-4, undertake the responsibility of devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word, and eagerly shepherding the flock of God under their care. In so doing, they will have particular authority to:
 - i. Plan and oversee worship services;
 - ii. Oversee the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper;
 - iii. Examine and instruct prospective members;
 - iv. Oversee the process of church discipline;
 - v. Examine and recommend candidates for all offices and positions;
 - vi. Oversee the work of the deacons and all other agents of the church;

- vii. Oversee and evaluate the performance of, and when necessary terminate paid church staff;
 - viii. Manage the financial affairs of the church; and
 - ix. Take any other action necessary and proper for faithfully overseeing and shepherding the church, including delegating any of these responsibilities to an elder or subset of elders.
- **Clause 11.** The elders may establish ministry positions or ad-hoc committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.
 - **Clause 12.** Recognizing elders are gifts of Christ (Eph.4:11), established by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28), and are a natural product of elders raising up the next generation of elders (2Tim. 2:2), we will pray for and faithfully labor toward a regular practice where a majority of the elders will not be in the regular pay of the church.

Section 3. The Lead Pastor

- **Clause 1.** The lead pastor will be an elder. He will perform the duties of an elder described in Article 3.2 above, and will be recognized by the church as set apart to the full-time ministry of the word and prayer.
- **Clause 2.** He will regularly preach on the Lord's Day, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the Constitution. In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor, the elders will assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

Section 4. Associate Pastors

- **Clause 1.** Other particular pastoral responsibilities may be vested in associate pastors. An associate pastor will aid the lead pastor in the performance of his regular duties and will perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of elder. The lead pastor will define the responsibilities of the associate pastor(s). The associate pastor will perform the duties of an elder described in Article 3.2 above, and will be recognized by the church as set apart to the full-time ministry of the word and prayer.

Section 5. Assistant Pastors

- **Clause 1.** The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the lead pastor is that of assistant. An assistant pastor will be an elder. He will perform the duties of an elder described in Article 3.2 above, and will be recognized by the church as set apart to the full-time ministry of the word and prayer.

- **Clause 2.** He will assist the lead pastor and associate pastor(s) in the performance of their regular duties, and will perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor. The lead pastor will define the responsibilities of the assistant pastor(s).
- **Clause 3.** An assistant pastor, if he is called from within the congregation, will be selected in the manner described in Article 3.7.1 below. If he is called from outside the congregation, he will be selected in the manner described in Article 3.7.2 below.

Section 6. Deacons

- **Clause 1.** Particular service to the church will be provided by deacons, the number of which will vary as the church has need, and who satisfy the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- **Clause 2.** Each diaconal position will serve a particular need of the church, and will be created or dissolved by the elders.
- **Clause 3.** In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6, deacons do not exercise a ministry of spiritual authority, but support the elders’ ministry of the word and prayer by maintaining the unity of the church in caring for the physical and temporal needs of the church.
- **Clause 4.** Deacons will be reaffirmed by vote of the church triennially, and after having served two consecutive three-year terms, must take a sabbatical of at least one year before being eligible to be reelected to the office of deacon.
- **Clause 5.** A deacon’s term of office may end by resignation, end of term, termination of membership, if the diaconal position is dissolved, or upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a three-fourths majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members’ meeting.

Section 7. Election of Church Officers

- **Clause 1.** Church members are encouraged to recommend qualified candidates to the elders. The elders will carefully consider each recommendation, not laying on hands hastily (1Tim. 5:22), but soberly and diligently selecting qualified candidates to be nominated to the congregation.
- **Clause 2.** Any nominee for the office of elder or deacon will be selected by the congregation as follows: the elders will at any members’ meeting present to the congregation a list of nominees to the office of elder or deacon. For a period of

at least two weeks, the church will consider if such nominees are qualified for the office. If any member believes a nominee to be unqualified, that member must express concern to the elders, who may on the basis of that advice withdraw names from the list of nominees. At the next members' meeting, the elders will again present the nominees to the church, who will vote yes or no by written ballot on each nominee separately. At least one elder and another member who is not an elder will count the votes, and any nominee receiving approval by three-fourths of the members present and voting on the question, will immediately assume the office to which they have been elected.

- **Clause 3.** Any elder in the pay of the church (Lead, Associate, or Assistant Pastors) will be selected as follows: the elders at any members' meeting will present to the church the name of a nominee for the corresponding position. Prior to voting on the nominee and after having heard him preach in the church's Lord's Day worship gathering, for a period of at least two weeks the church will consider the nominee's gifts in preaching and teaching, and his commitment to minister personally to the members of the church. If any member believes the nominee to be unqualified, that member must express such concern to the elders. When a period of at least two weeks has elapsed, the elders will at the next members' meeting present the nominee to the church, who will vote yes or no by written ballot on his selection as such. At least one elder and one member, who is not an elder, will count the votes, and if the nominee receives the approval of three-fourths of the members present and voting on the question, he will be a member of the church and an elder, whom the church will publicly recognize as such.
- **Clause 4.** Only members of this church can serve as officers.

ARTICLE 4: STAFF & ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. Staff

- **Clause 1.** The lead pastor, in conjunction with the elders, may hire pastoral assistants. Though pastoral assistants are not pastors, they may become pastors should they be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation in accordance with Article 3.7.1 above, at which point they will become assistant pastors. The lead pastor will assign the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s).
- **Clause 2.** The lead pastor may hire additional support staff to assist with administrative and operational responsibilities, or may delegate the hiring to an associate pastor.

Section 2. Clerk

- **Clause 1.** It will be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of any members' meetings of the church and to render reports as requested by the elders or the church.
- **Clause 2.** The clerk, who must be a member, will be selected to serve a renewable term of three years upon the recommendation of the elders and subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting upon the question at any members' meeting.
- **Clause 3.** In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders will appoint another member to temporarily perform the duties of the clerk until some other member can be duly recognized by the church.
- **Clause 4.** For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of Arkansas, the clerk will serve as the secretary of the corporation.
- **Clause 5.** The clerk may be removed from their role upon the individual's resignation, by a decision of the elders, or by a majority vote of the members present and voting upon the question at any members' meeting.

Section 3. Treasurer

- **Clause 1.** The treasurer must be a member and may not be an elder, deacon, or church staff member during their tenure as treasurer. The treasurer will ensure that the church properly holds all its funds and securities in appropriate institutions; keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the church; implement adequate controls to guarantee that any officer, employee, or agent of the church handles its funds appropriately; provide reports of church account balances, revenues, and expenses at least once a year or as requested by the elders; and provide regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church.
- **Clause 2.** In the absence or incapacity of the treasurer, the elders will temporarily appoint another member to perform the duties of the treasurer until some other member can be duly recognized by the church.
- **Clause 3.** The treasurer will be selected to serve a renewable term of three years upon the recommendation of the elders and subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting upon the question at any members' meeting.
- **Clause 4.** The treasurer may be removed from office upon the individual's resignation, or the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent

agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

Section 4. Contractual and Legal Actions

- **Clause 1.** A minimum of two signatures is needed to execute any legal document. Authorized signers are a designated elder, and either the treasurer or the clerk. They will have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any real property without a majority vote of the church in a members' meeting.
- **Clause 2.** No person or group may solicit money on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the prior approval of the elders.

ARTICLE 5: AMENDMENTS

Section 1: Of the Statement of Faith or Church Covenant

- **Clause 1.** Amendments to the Statement of Faith or Church Covenant may be offered in writing by a member or the elders at any members' meeting, but will not be voted upon until the following regularly scheduled member's meeting. An agreement of a three-fourths majority of the members present and voting upon the question at the following members' meeting is required for acceptance, provided the proposed amendment was distributed to the congregation and announced to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the vote.

Section 2: Of this Constitution

- **Clause 1.** Amendments to this Constitution may be offered in writing by a member or the elders at any members' meeting, but will not be voted upon until the following regularly scheduled members' meeting. An agreement of a three-fourths majority of the members present and voting upon the question at the following members' meeting is required for acceptance, provided the proposed amendment was distributed to the congregation and announced to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the vote.

ARTICLE 6: DISSOLUTION

Section 1: On Dissolving the Corporation

- **Clause 1:** In the event that the elders determine that there is reasonable cause to dissolve the church as a corporate entity, the elders will recommend dissolution to the membership. The elders will call a special members' meeting in accord with Article 2.2.2. Notice of the meeting will be announced to the membership at least thirty days prior to the meeting. The notice will state that the purpose of the meeting is to consider dissolution and how the assets of the

corporation will be distributed after all creditors have been paid.

- **Clause 2:** At least three-fourths of the members present and voting on the question by written ballot at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposal of dissolution. At least one elder and another member who is not an elder will count the votes.

Section 2: On the Disposal of Property & Assets

- **Clause 1:** After approval of dissolution by the members, if all of the corporation's debts are fully satisfied, distribution in kind of some or all properties, real and personal, may be made to religious organizations meeting the qualifications described in Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which are in agreement with the UBC Statement of Faith. All remaining property, real or personal and all other assets, will be sold and the proceeds distributed as provided in the event there is unsatisfied corporate debt.
- **Clause 2:** If there is unsatisfied corporate debt after approval of dissolution by the members, all property, real or personal and any other assets will be sold, either through private or public sale. From the proceeds, all the corporation's debts will be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings will be divided among the members.
- **Clause 3:** Any remaining funds will be designated, as approved by a simple majority of the members present and voting upon the question at a members' meeting, to one or more religious organizations which meet the qualifications described in Article 6.2.1.
- **Clause 4:** Any such assets not so disposed of will be disposed of exclusively for such exempt purposes by a court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the corporation is then located.