

Constitution and By-laws of Oak Hill Baptist Church, Inc.

Preamble

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted principles of Baptist Churches affiliated with the Cumberland Plateau Association, Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties of each individual member of this Church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other Churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

I. Name

This body shall be known as the Oak Hill Baptist Church, Inc. of Crossville, Tennessee.

II. Purpose

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our Church, Community, and throughout the World.

To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.

To be a Church that Ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and the world in Jesus' name.

To sustain the ordinances, doctrines, and ethics set forth in the Old and New Testaments.

To be a Church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

III. Articles of Faith

We do hereby adopt "The Baptist Faith & Message" (adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000) as our Articles of Faith.

IV. Church Covenant

Having been led as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, 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, 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 through 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; 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 drinks 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 feelings and courtesy of speech; to be slow to take offence, but always ready to 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.

V. Character

Section 1. Policy: The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations on mutual council and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist Churches.

Section 2. Doctrine: This Church receives the Scriptures as its sole authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the Southern Baptist Churches in the Articles of Faith herewith.

Section 3. Ordinances: The Church shall observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper at least once every quarter. This Church shall observe the ordinance of Baptism as soon as is practical following the receiving of a candidate for Baptism.

Section 4. Property: All property of the Church is deeded to the Oak Hill Baptist Church Inc., and it is to be held for the use and benefit of the membership, even though they may be a minority, who adhere to, maintain and propagate the doctrines, faith and practices of Southern Baptist throughout the World. A refusal of the membership, though they be a majority, to adhere to, maintain and propagate the faith and practices of Southern Baptist, shall constitute such a deviation from the accepted usage's, practices, customs, and beliefs of Southern Baptist, that said majority shall no longer constitute the true congregation of said Church. The title to the property of the Church shall vest in, and be held for the use and doctrine, faith and practices of Southern Baptist throughout the World.

By-laws

Article 1. Membership:

- I. **Qualifications:** The membership of this Church shall consist of such persons as confess Jesus Christ to be their Saviour and Lord, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have been received by vote of the Church.
 - a. Members shall be received without regard to race, color or national origin.
 - b. A member of a Baptist Church of like faith and practices may be received by vote of the Church upon receipt of a letter of recommendation from that Church.
 - c. Anyone that has been a member of a Baptist Church of like faith and practices and in consequence of peculiar circumstances has no letter of recommendation from that Church may be received by vote upon a statement satisfactory to the Church.
 - d. All those coming from other religious bodies shall be received on their satisfactory statement of an experience of Grace, their accord in the Articles of Faith, Covenant and Principles of this constitution and upon their being Baptized *by immersion*.
- II. **Duties:** Members are expected to be faithful to the Church Covenant and its requirements (Article 4).
- III. **Termination:** This Church shall dismiss or remove from their roll of membership as follows:
 - a. Upon death of the member.
 - b. Those who unite with other Churches, by letter or otherwise.
 - c. Members may be dismissed for failure to strive to live up to their covenant and doctrines as set forth in this constitution, after a period of one year, but only after due process of dealing with such members in Christian love and prayer and then only upon favorable vote of the Church.

- d. Letters shall be granted to Churches of like faith and practices with which this Church is in fellowship and not to individuals.

IV. **Rights:** Only members may vote in the business meetings of the Church.

Article II. Church Officers:

- I. **Pastor:** A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's notice shall be given. A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the Church to seek out a suitable Pastor, and their recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one man at a time. Election shall be by written ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those present and voting being necessary for a choice. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the request of the Church. Thirty days notice, or sooner by mutual agreement, shall be given by the Pastor or the Church upon termination of the Pastor's responsibilities. A special called meeting, with prior notice by letter to the Church body, and a three-fourths majority of members present and voting by written ballot, is required to declare the Pulpit vacant.

Duties of the Pastor:

- a. The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church.
- b. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and organizations.
- c. He shall be authorized to issue the call for a special business meeting and moderate at all Church business meetings.
- d. He shall lead and conduct the worship services for the Church and administer the ordinances.
- e. He shall supervise all employees and staff members.
- f. He is the leader of Pastoral Ministries in the Church. As such, he works with the Deacons and Church staff to: (1) lead the Church in performing its task, (2) lead the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry and application, (3) proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers, (4) care for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

II. **Deacons:**

- a. The active deacon body shall number a minimum of one deacon for every twelve resident families (provided there are Scripturally qualified men to fill the positions). Prior to the new Church year, the Deacons shall recommend to the Church the number of Deacons that will be needed for the coming Church year.
- b. Any Deacon who has served the Church well who becomes unable to serve by reason of age or ill health may, upon the expiration of his term, be made a "Deacon Emeritus" by vote of the Church.
- c. There is no obligation to constitute as an active Deacon a person who comes to the Church from another Church where he has served as a Deacon.
- d. Deacons shall be elected in regular business meeting of the Church as follows:
 1. The names of qualified men will be presented to the Church.
 2. The vote shall be written.
- e. In the absence of the Pastor or in the event the pulpit is vacant the Chairman of the Deacons will assume the responsibility for the conduct of worship service and to moderate business meetings as needed.

Deacon Covenant

1. We covenant with each other to measure up, to the best of our ability, with God's help, to the qualifications set forth in Timothy 3:8-12. To wit:

"Deacons, similarly should be serious outlook and sincere conviction. They too should be temperate and not greedy for money. They should hold the faith as a sacred trust with complete sincerity. Their wives should share their serious outlook, and must be women of discretion and self control...women who can be trusted. Deacons should be men with only one wife, and able to manage their households' properly." (Phillips Translation)
2. We covenant with each other, with God's help, to live consecrated, Christian lives, never bringing reproach by our conduct upon our Church or the cause of Christ.

3. We covenant to be faithful in attendance to the total program of our Church unless we are hindered by some reason that is approved by a good conscience.
4. We covenant to honor God with the tithe of all our material increase bringing it systematically to the Church for the Lord's work.
5. We covenant with each other to be evangelistic and missionary in spirit and to be deeply interested in the salvation of souls at home and abroad.
6. We covenant with each other to be fully cooperative with our Pastor and the Church in its spiritual program of advancement and will assume our responsibilities in the Church family ministry.
7. We covenant with each other to always refrain from destructive criticism of our Pastor, our Church and its members, always willing to settle difficulties in a quiet and Christian manner.
8. We covenant with each other to faithfully attend all regularly and called Deacon's meetings unless providentially hindered.
9. We covenant to keep in confidence those things which, in the best interest of the Church, should not be discussed publicly.
10. With God's help, we covenant with each other always to be the kind of men about whom people say, "He is a good Christian Man".
 - f. In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the Church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the Pastor and staff in performing Pastoral Ministries.

III. **Clerk:** The Clerk of the Church shall be elected annually. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to attend, or be represented at all business meetings, to prepare and maintain an accurate record of all business transactions, to prepare the annual Associational Letter. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal as authorized by the Church, and preserve all papers and valuables, letters and records that belong to the Church, and preserve a true history of the Church. It shall also be the duty of the Clerk to see that an accurate roll of the Church membership is kept with dates of admission and dismissal, change in name, correct mailing addresses, and other pertinent information.

- IV. **Church Sunday School Secretary:** The Church Sunday School Secretary will guide enrollment procedures for the Sunday School, maintain a master enrollment file on all phases of the Bible teaching program, assist department secretaries in maintaining department records, compile requests for literature and other resources from the departments and submit to the Sunday School Director, record the minutes of the Sunday School Council and share copies with Council members.
- V. **Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall be elected annually. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and disburse by check upon the proper authority all money or things of value that are given to the Church, and keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. The Treasurer shall render monthly and annual reports to the Church. All books, records and accounts kept by the Treasurer shall be considered the property of the Church. The books shall be audited every five (5) years or upon election of a new Treasurer, whichever comes first.
- VI. **Moderator:** The Moderator shall be the Pastor. In the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the Clerk shall call the Church to order and a moderator pro tem shall be elected. All special business meetings shall be announced at least two consecutive worship services and only that business announced shall be transacted.
- VII. **Trustees:** Three trustees will hold in trust the Church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the Church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of the trustees are required.
- VIII. **Librarian:** It shall be the responsibility of the Librarian to select and purchase materials as provided for in the budget or by special gifts. The Librarian shall keep a neat and orderly file of library materials. Individual members of the Church desiring materials for personal use must have the approval of the Librarian or her assistants. The Librarian will have the responsibility to promote the use of books, records, magazines, and filmstrips contained in the library. The library shall be open before and after regular services.
- IX. All elected officers and teachers shall be members of the Church.

Article III. Committees and Coordinating Groups:

- I. **Nominating Committee**: The Nominating Committee coordinates the staffing of all the Church leadership positions that are filled by volunteers. The Nominating Committee recommends persons for all volunteer positions to be elected by the Church. It will be elected annually from the floor at a regular monthly business meeting and will consist of five members. They shall serve for one year and shall be presented to the Church in the business meeting prior to the new year so that the newly elected Church Officers may be included in the annual Associational report by the Church Clerk. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be suggested to the Church, however, any member of the Church shall have the opportunity and privilege of nominating from the floor.

- II. **Budget and Finance**: The Budget and Finance Committee shall develop and recommend all finances and stewardship development plans to the Church. It shall be responsible for the preparation and recommendation and promotion of an annual budget. It shall monitor the use of allocated monetary resources and make periodic adjustments during the year as needs arise in keeping with the policies of the Church.

- III. **Pulpit Supply Committee**: When a vacancy occurs in the pulpit the Deacon body shall constitute the Pulpit Supply Committee. It shall be their duty to secure a Minister to fill the Pulpit on the Lord's Day as long as a vacancy exists. This committee may also bring forth recommendations for an INTERIM PASTOR.

- IV. **Pastoral Search Committee**: The Pastoral Search Committee shall be nominated by the Church Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall meet as soon as possible after a vacancy occurs. The persons selected by the Nominating Committee will then be presented to the Church Body for election at a regular business meeting. Nominations from the Church Body may be added to these recommended by the Nominating Committee. Voting will be by secret ballot and the FOUR persons receiving the most votes shall constitute the Pastoral Search Committee. This committee's major responsibility is to prayerfully search out and recommend to the Church prospective Pastors. The Church shall reimburse the committee members for the expenses incurred during the search for a Pastor.

- V. **Church Membership Committee**: The Church Membership Committee shall consist of members of the Church Council (Article III, Section VII). The committee shall use as its guidelines in council, (Article I, Section I).

- VI. **Special Committees**: Special committees shall be elected by the Church for special obligations as desired by the Church. These committees shall be elected by the Church upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee unless otherwise directed by this constitution.
- VII. **Church Council**: The primary function of the Church Council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and Church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by Church Officers and organizations, 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 Church goals and objectives..

The Council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the Church, shall have as regular members the Minister of Music, Sunday School Director, Youth Director, Church Training Director, Women's Missionary Union Director, Brotherhood Director, Outreach Director, Chairman of the Deacons, Church Secretary, Treasurer, and standing committee chairmen.

All matters agreed upon by the Council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the Church for approval. It shall have no implied authority. The Council shall meet as needed.

Article IV. Church Organizations:

- I. **Sunday School**: It shall be the responsibility of the Sunday School to teach the Bible; to reach all prospects for the Church; to lead all Church members to witness and worship daily; to provide organization and leadership for special projects of the Sunday School and to provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and Denomination. The Sunday School Director shall be elected annually and shall have general supervision of the Sunday School Department of the Church. He shall insure that all teachers and leaders are made aware of training opportunities and aids available to them which shall be beneficial to their endeavor.
- II. **Church Training**: There will be a Church Training Program, divided into departments for all ages and conducted under the direction of a general director. Church Training will serve as the training organization for the Church.

The tasks for the Church Training will be to orient new Church members; train Church members to perform the functions of the Church; train Church leaders; teach Christian Theology; Christian Ethics; Christian

History; and Church policy and organization; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and Denomination.

Teachers shall be elected annually to serve during the Church year.

Article V. Meetings:

- I. Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day and Wednesday evening each week.
- II. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least QUARTERLY.
- III. The Church shall meet for the purpose of transacting church business on the Wednesday following the first Sunday of the month. These meetings shall be conducted according to "Roberts Rules of Order Revised".
- IV. Special business meetings may be conducted after the topic of concern has been made known at least two (2) consecutive worship services. ONLY the business announced may be discussed and acted on at this time. All other business shall be conducted at the regularly scheduled business meeting.

Article VI. Miscellaneous:

- I. We believe that this building, grounds and its equipment are dedicated to God and should be used only for Church related activities.

Article VII. Licensing and Ordination:

- I. **Licensing to Preach:** The Church shall by vote license to preach such of its members as are called of the Lord into His service as ministers of the Gospel.
- II. **Ordination of Ministers:** Ministers shall be ordained only upon request of a Baptist Church of like faith and practice in which he is called to Pastor. The Church shall by vote proceed to call an examining council. This council shall consist of ministers from the membership of this Church and such other Churches as the membership shall designate. The council shall inquire of the candidate in all matters concerning his worthiness of his calling. The ordination service shall consist of:
 - a. An ordination Sermon
 - b. A Charge to the Candidate
 - c. An Ordination Prayer

- d. Laying on of Hands
- e. Benediction
- f. Extending Hand of Fellowship

III. **Ordination of Deacons:** The Church shall ordain such of its members as has been elected by the body to serve as Deacons. The active body of Deacons, with the Pastor, shall compose the Ordination council and a recommendation must come from this group.

The service shall consist of:

- a. An Ordination Sermon
 - 1. Charge to Candidate
 - 2. Charge to Church
- b. Ordination Prayer
- c. Laying on of Hands
- d. Benediction
- e. Extending Hand of Fellowship

Article VIII. Amendments:

Changes in the Constitution and By-laws may be made at any regular business meeting of the Church, provided each amendment has been presented in writing at a previous regular business meeting, and proposed change is announced from the Pulpit at least two (2) consecutive worship services prior to vote, and copies of the proposed change is furnished each member present in business meeting. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those voting will be required for passage of such amendments.

Article IX. Affiliation:

Believing that the Cumberland Plateau Baptist Association, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention are organizations which have as their sole purpose the promotion and support of missions, education, and benevolence of the character and in keeping with the Spirit of the Constitution and Articles of Faith of this Church, we therefore agree to participate in these organizations through our duly elected messengers and our support of the cause which these organizations represent.