

**UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA**

**CONSTITUTION**

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# **UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **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 tenets of our New Testament faith, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body, we do declare and establish this Constitution.

### **ARTICLE I: CHURCH IDENTITY**

#### **Section 1. Church Mission**

University Baptist Church is a caring and diverse family of Christians united in love who acknowledge Christ as our Lord and the Bible as our authority. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, our mission is to:

- (a) Glorify God and share His love through worshiping with a spirit of openness.
- (b) Proclaim the message of God's salvation through Jesus Christ to our community and the world.
- (c) Teach, equip, and nurture people for Christian growth and service.
- (d) Minister to the needs, hurts, and joys of all people within and beyond our church fellowship.

#### **Section 2. Church Covenant**

Having been led, as we believe of 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 believers in Christ.

We pledge ourselves therefore by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk in Christian love; to be just in our dealings with one another; to be faithful in our witness; and to strive for the spiritual and material growth of this fellowship through worship, proclamation, education, and ministry.

We further pledge to watch over one another in Christian love; to remember one another in prayer; to help one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy and feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense; but always to be ready for reconciliation and mindful of the admonition and example of our Savior to secure it without delay.

### **Section 3. Core Values**

We are guided by these principles and values.

#### **God Centered:**

- We owe our existence to the grace of God.
- We owe our eternal salvation to Jesus Christ.
- We are led by the Holy Spirit.

#### **Biblical Authority:**

All Scripture is valuable for Christian growth and discipleship. The ministry and teachings of Jesus are our perfect example. Intellectual honesty enhances our Christian faith.

#### **Equality:**

- All people are of equal value and importance to God.
- Men and women have equal privileges and responsibilities in God's service.
- Clergy and laity differ in function and calling, not in status or purpose.
- Our church is autonomous and is governed solely by its members.

#### **Discipleship:**

- Our Christian fellowship seeks to develop and equip its members.
- We live out Christ's calling by growing in knowledge and a deeper relationship with him.

#### **Loving Others:**

- We promote God's kingdom through the loving testimony of life example, personal witness and mutual trust.
- We share our time, talents, and material resources with others.

#### **Section 4. Policies For Cooperation**

- (a) This church shall be subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but shall recognize and sustain the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptists. In keeping with this policy, all meetings of the church as a whole, committees, councils, and/or other groups shall be open to any of the members, except as provided for in the Bylaws.
- (b) Insofar as practical, this church shall cooperate with and support the Baptist Association of Greater Baton Rouge, Louisiana Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Convention, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.
- (c) This church will work with other Christian bodies, locally and on a broader scale, to bring about the redemption of the world through God's love as shown in Jesus Christ.

#### **Section 5. Business Meetings**

- (a) Meetings of the membership shall be held as provided in the Bylaws or by resolution of the membership.
- (b) The membership may act upon any matter pertaining to the business or affairs of the church at any regular or special meeting so long as it does not conflict with any provisions of the Constitution or Bylaws.

### **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section 1. Rights And Duties**

The government of this body shall be vested in the members, who shall have the ultimate decision-making authority in accordance with this Constitution and the Bylaws. Each member shall be entitled to one vote upon any matter before the church. The duty of each member is to actively participate in the affairs of the church; uphold the Constitution and the Bylaws; and consistently uphold the Church Covenant and Core Values as adopted by this church.

#### **Section 2. Receiving Members**

Reception of members shall be by majority vote of the existing members present at any worship service or business meeting. Individuals may be received in one of the following manners:

- (a) Faith. Any person publicly confessing personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and after being baptized, may be admitted into the membership and fellowship of this church.
- (b) Letter. A member from another Baptist church, holding the same faith and order may be received into membership upon granting of letter of transfer by such other church.
- (c) Statement. A person who has made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and who has been baptized may be received into the membership of this church.
- (d) Restoration. A person who has been excluded from membership may be restored upon request and by evidence of repentance and reformation.

### **Section 3. Affiliate Members**

Any person publicly professing faith in Jesus Christ may come under the watchcare of this church by presenting himself or herself for affiliate membership. Affiliate members are granted all privileges of the church ministries. They are not full members of the church in that they have no voting privileges. The affiliate membership cannot be transferred to another church. The names affiliate members will be removed from the rolls when they leave the community.

### **Section 4. Termination Of Church Membership.**

Membership in this body shall be terminated as follows:

- (a) Death. Upon the death of a member, the member's name shall be removed from the church roll.
- (b) Letter. A letter of recommendation shall be issued to any member in good standing who requests such letter either personally or through another church and this member's name shall be removed from the church roll.
- (c) Exclusion. If any member is guilty of conduct unbecoming a Christian, so that the names of the church and Christ are brought into disrepute, the Pastor(s) and Deacons may counsel with and attempt to help him or her obtain his or her repentance and reformation. If they are not successful, the Pastor(s) shall report to the membership of the church and, upon majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting of the church, that person's name shall be removed from the church roll. The Deacons and the Pastor shall continue to maintain contact with the excluded person and attempt to help obtain his or her repentance and reformation.
- (d) Affiliation With Another Church. Upon satisfactory evidence of a member's affiliation with another church, the member's status shall be changed to affiliate member or the member's name removed from the church roll.

- (e) Extended Absence From Church Participation. A member who cannot be located or who has not participated in the life of the church for an extended period of time may be given an "inactive" status or be removed from the church roll in accordance with policies established by the Governing Board.

## **ARTICLE III: GOVERNING BOARD**

### **Section 1. Governing Board**

The Governing Board shall be made up of members elected by the congregation as set forth in the Bylaws. Subject to the congregation, the Governing Board is the governing authority of the church and is responsible for both governance and ministry. The Governing Board will work in cooperation with the Pastor(s) and others to successfully perform these functions, and will manage the church's legal and financial affairs, security, safety, maintenance, and enhancement of the church's physical facilities. The Governing Board shall govern by direct involvement and/or by delegating responsibilities and authority to other persons or groups along with appropriate policies and guidelines. The board is responsible for four key functions:

- (a) Discernment - How well is the church achieving its mission statement, or does the statement need to be modified?
- (b) Strategic Planning - What do we need to do over the next few years to better achieve our mission statement?
- (c) Management - Giving a balanced set of responsibilities, authority, and guidelines to others, which will empower them to help achieve the mission of the church.
- (d) Oversight - Evaluation of those to whom responsibilities and/or authority have been delegated so that they are held accountable.

## **ARTICLE IV: MINISTERS**

### **Section 1. Pastor(s)**

- (a) **Employment.** The Pastor(s) shall be called by a three-fourths vote of the membership of the church present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose, upon the recommendation and approval of a Pastor Search Committee selected as set forth in the By-laws. The Pastor(s) shall serve until that relationship is terminated by resignation, retirement, mutual consent, or by majority secret ballot vote of the membership of the church present and voting at a business meeting called for that purpose.
- (b) **Authority and Responsibility.** The Pastor(s) shall be the spiritual leader(s) of the church, and shall work in partnership with the Deacons, the Governing Board, and others to facilitate the church's ministry activities, including:
  - 1. Providing advice, leadership and encouragement.
  - 2. Nurturing the spiritual growth and development of the members.
  - 3. Ministering in times of severe crisis to those in need.
  - 4. Helping provide a vision for the future.

### **Section 2. Other Ministerial Staff**

- (a) **Employment.** As the need arises, employment of other Ministers will be recommended by the Governing Board and called by a three-fourths vote of the membership of the church present and voting at a regular business meeting of the church, or at a special meeting called for that purpose. Each member of the Ministerial Staff shall serve until his/her relationship with the church is terminated by retirement, resignation, mutual consent, or by a majority vote of the membership of the church present and voting at a business meeting called for that purpose.
- (b) **Authority and Responsibility.** The Ministerial Staff shall cooperate with and report to the Pastor(s) in carrying out the ministry of the church.



## **ARTICLE V: DEACONS**

### **Section 1. Deacons**

The Deacons shall work in partnership with the Pastor(s), to implement the various ministries of the church. They will act as key servant leaders and workers to support church ministries through active participation in various ministry programs and activities. They are expected to exemplify the church Covenant and to bear witness to its Core Values.

## **ARTICLE VI: CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **Section 1. Moderator**

The Moderator shall be the chair of the Governing Board. The Moderator will plan the agenda for and preside at church business meetings. Where necessary, the Moderator will ensure that all prior notice requirements for church meetings or actions are satisfied.

### **Section 2. Vice-Moderator**

The Vice-Moderator shall be the Vice-chair of the Governing Board and shall assist the Moderator and assume the duties of the Moderator in the event the Moderator is absent or incapacitated.

### **Section 3. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be elected by the church and shall:

- (a) Serve as chair of the Finance Committee
- (b) Present monthly statements of the financial conditions and affairs of the church to the Governing Board
- (c) Make such other reports to the membership of the church as may be required.

### **Section 4. Parliamentarian**

The Parliamentarian shall be elected by the church and shall:

- (a) Ensure that all church business meetings are conducted in accordance with the parliamentary rules approved by the church in order to promote the effective democratic functioning of all church business meetings.
- (b) Assist the Moderator and other church officers, as well as committee chairs and other church members, in understanding the parliamentary rules approved by the church.

### **Section 5. Sunday School Director**

The Sunday School Director shall be elected by the church and shall:

- (a) Ensure the implementation of a comprehensive program of Bible teaching for all ages.
- (b) Maintain Sunday School attendance records with the help of the church staff.

### **Section 6. Election Of Church Officers**

Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, the officers of the church shall be elected by majority vote of the membership in attendance and voting at any regular or special business meeting after due notice and shall serve for a term of one calendar year. Any vacancy other than that of Moderator or Vice-Moderator shall be filled for the remainder of the term by majority vote of the church at any regular or special business meeting after presentation of nominations by the Governing Board or its designated committee. Successive terms for officers will be permissible, but only up to three successive terms. Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, members of the Governing Board will not be eligible for service as a church officer.

## **ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS**

### **Section 1. Amendments**

The Governing Board shall be responsible for making periodic recommendations for changes to the Constitution. Changes may be adopted upon two-thirds vote of the membership in attendance and voting at any regular or special business meeting. At least three weeks advanced notice shall be given through appropriate means such as announcements in the church worship bulletin, newsletters, and announcements from the pulpit at worship services.