

**BARNESVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Barnesville, Maryland**

**CONSTITUTION OF THE BARNESVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH**

**September 15, 2002**

We the members of this Church, united under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God, in order to provide a better instrument of governance for ourselves and our posterity, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution for the Barnesville Baptist Church.

**Article I    Name**

The name of the Southern Baptist Church of Barnesville, Maryland, shall be the "Barnesville Baptist Church".

**Article II    Members**

**Section 1    Qualifications**

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of change of heart and accepting the views of faith and practice held by this Church as set forth in the most current version of the Southern Baptist Convention's *Baptist Faith and Message* approved by the Church, may upon baptism by immersion be received into its membership. Members of other Churches of the same faith and order may be received into membership with this Church upon receipt of a letter of transfer from their respective Churches.

The Pastor or one of the Deacons shall present every application for baptism and/or membership during a monthly Business Meeting. Letters of transfer to churches of the same faith and order may be granted on recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons to members of good standing and by vote of the Church. No member shall be considered dismissed from membership until notification is received of his reception into the Church to which he transferred. Such letters are to be addressed to a specific Church and are valid for six months only, unless otherwise specified.

**Section 2    Duties**

The duties of members to themselves are the acquisition of knowledge, constant progress in grace and spirituality, consistency of external conduct, and the control and eradication of every unholy temper.

Non-resident members are expected, when unable to attend Church services, to communicate with the Pastor or one of the Deacons at least once a year, giving an account of their spiritual condition and religious privileges and stating the reason for not uniting with some other Baptist Church.

It is the duty of members to honor, esteem and love their Pastor, to fervently pray for him daily, submit to him in the scriptural exercise of his official authority, attend constantly upon his administration, manifest a tender regard for his reputation, and to contribute to his support in proportion to their ability.

It is the duty of each member to cultivate and cherish brotherly love for all members of the Church and to promote their spiritual benefit and prosperity.

Toward those who are not connected with the Church, it is the duty of members to bear prudent testimony against evil practices, to be exact in fulfilling obligations and performing promises, and as opportunity and ability may enable, to commend the religion of the Gospel to them.

It is the duty of every member, according to one's ability, to regularly contribute some amount to the support of the Church.

### **Section 3 Qualifications and Selection for Ordination**

Any member may be licensed to preach the Gospel, who in the judgment of the Church gives evidence of his piety, zeal and aptness to teach, and is called of God to the work of the Ministry. Such licensing shall be done after the member in question has exercised his gifts in the hearing of the Church, providing a majority of the members present at a Business Meeting shall agree thereto.

If the Church shall unanimously decide that one of its licensed preachers possesses the scriptural qualifications for full ordination, it shall call a council of ministers and brethren to examine the qualifications of the candidate and to ordain him as a minister of the Gospel.

### **Section 4 Discipline**

When a member of the Church trespasses against another member, if his offense is not of a public character, it is the duty of the offended party to seek an opportunity to privately converse with the offender, with the view of reconciliation. In the matter of such offences the course to be pursued is that laid down in *Matthew 18:15-17*.

Accusations against a member shall be detailed in writing and shall not be presented to the Church without prior approval from the Pastor and Deacons.

Discipline is a judicial act to be exercised by the Church, through the discretion and guidance of the Pastor and Deacons, under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. An offending member may be excluded from the fellowship and communion of the Church for advocating doctrines opposed to that set forth in the most current version of the Southern Baptist Convention's *Baptist Faith and Message* approved by the Church, or for treating the Church contemptuously or pursuing any course of conduct unbecoming good citizens and consistent Christians.

No member may be excluded until notified to appear before the Church and has the opportunity to answer the charges in person which have been made against him except in cases of flagrant immorality, when it shall be the duty of the Church to vindicate its calling by cutting off such offending members without delay.

If any member, having erred, shall voluntarily confess it to the Church and manifest repentance no further proceedings shall be entered against him.

### **Article III Church Body**

The Church shall meet every Sunday for the public worship of Almighty God, conditions permitting.

The Church shall meet at least once a week for prayer and conference, conditions permitting.

The Church shall gather for the observance of the Lord's Supper, or Communion, on the first Sunday of each month, conditions permitting.

### **Article IV Pastor**

#### **Section 1 Pastor Search Committee and Qualifications for the Pastor**

Whenever the pulpit shall be vacant, it shall be the duty of the Church without unnecessary delay to appoint a Pastor Search Committee. The committee shall proceed to nominate some minister of the Gospel who fulfills the biblical qualifications of the Pastor's office as found in *I Timothy 3:1-7*, and adheres to the most current version of the Southern Baptist Convention's *Baptist Faith and Message* approved by the Church, to fill the vacancy. Any such minister of the Gospel shall also be of the Southern Baptist faith and order, and a man of good report. The Pastor Search Committee shall consist of a representative from each of the following Church constituencies: the Deacons, each of the standing committees, and the Congregation. The Deacons' representative may act as the chairman. With earnest and continued prayer by the committee members and the Church, the Pastor Search Committee shall endeavor to secure the services of a qualified Pastor to fill the vacancy as soon as possible.

#### **Section 2 Selection of the Pastor**

Upon recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee, the name of only one man for the position of Pastor shall be presented to the Church to be voted upon at a time. The election shall not take place unless notice is given from the pulpit at least two Sundays before any vote. The approval of at least three-fourths of the members present at the election shall be necessary to the choice of a Pastor. Any nominee that fails to receive the required number of votes shall be eliminated from further consideration. If there is any question about a nominee, he may be given other invitations to be heard and consulted with by the Committee before final action in his case.

Members who for good reasons are unable to be physically present during a vote to call a Pastoral nominee may designate a proxy to vote on their behalf by a signed letter of intent, or in a manner to be determined by the Church at the Business Meeting prior to the vote.

### **Section 3 Selection of the Associate Pastor**

If the pulpit is vacant, the Pastor Search Committee may, at its discretion, nominate a man to serve as Associate Pastor, to be nominated, voted upon, and approved under the same criteria as a nominee for Pastor in addition to the Pastor nominee.

If while the pulpit is filled by a Pastor, and the Church desires an Associate Pastor or some other minister, the Pastor and the Church may appoint a Pastor Search Committee to obtain such a Pastor or minister in the same manner as if the pulpit was vacant.

The Pastor, or the Pastoral nominee in the absence of a Pastor, will jointly decide with the Associate Pastor or minister nominee the manner in which the two men shall serve the Church and the Lord. An Associate Pastor or minister shall serve as Acting Pastor in the absence of the Pastor at any official Church activity.

Unless otherwise specified, the term "Pastor" in this Constitution shall refer to the senior Pastor and any other Pastors of the Church.

### **Section 4 Employment Contract**

The Pastor Search Committee shall have the authority to negotiate an employment contract with the Pastor nominee, specifying the duties and expectations of the office, as well as salary, benefits, and other related matters. Any such contract shall be contingent to the actual approval and hiring of the nominee to the Pastorate, and also shall be subject to the approval of the Pastor Search Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Church before the contract has any binding legal powers or obligations whatsoever.

### **Section 5 Pastoral Duties**

It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach the Gospel; to administer the ordinances and ordain Deacons and ministers; to preside, when present, over all meetings of the Church; to tenderly lead, teach, pray for, and edify the saints as undershepherd of this local Church, conduct child dedications, weddings, funerals and other spiritual rites of passage, serve as chief executive officer of the Church in its daily administration and in its local and denominational relationships. The Pastor shall serve as *ex-officio* member of all committees, and nominate Deacons with the Deacon body, hold Deacons accountable for the completion of their duties, and appoint the members of special and select committees.

A Pastor shall maintain his tenure during good behavior, unless he resigns his office with at least two weeks' notice, or the Deacon body and the Church, each by a three-

fourths vote of those members present, remove the Pastor from his office. In an unusual case, the Church may declare the pulpit vacant by a three-fourths vote of all Church members.

When the pulpit is vacant, the chairman of the Deacons or another Deacon shall serve as the acting chief executive officer of the Church.

## **Article V Deacons**

### **Section 1 Selection and Qualifications**

To nominate a Deacon, the Pastor, in consultation with the incumbent Deacons, shall select a man of mature character and faith who is a Church member in good standing. The nominee, the Pastor, and the Deacons must all agree that the nominee fulfills the biblical qualifications of the Deacon's office as found in *I Timothy 3:8-13*, before being presented to the Church at least one month before the Church votes for approval. Before ordination, the nominee shall successfully complete a training course with the Pastor and/or Deacons. A Deacon shall be ordained for life while a member of this Church.

The total number of Deacons shall be calculated as needed by the Pastor and the Deacons based upon the number of family units in the Church, in addition to the number of Deacons to be on reserve status. A Deacon shall rotate between active service for three years and reserve status for one year, unless the remaining active Deacons choose to re-activate his service.

The Deacon body shall select a chairman to represent the Deacon Body to the Committee of the Whole.

### **Section 2 Duties**

It is the duty of the Deacons, both individually and as a body, to cooperate with the Pastor to meet the needs of prayer, family ministry, Church discipline, general oversight of the Church and the behavior of its officers, baptism and communion assistance, caring for widows and orphans, and Deacon nomination and ordination. The Deacons shall conduct a progress/financial review of the Pastor after the first 90 days of his tenure, with subsequent reviews as occasions arise.

The Deacons shall serve as the Trustees of the Church. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to be the legal representatives of the Church; to hold and control all Church property according to the rules prescribed in the Articles of Incorporation.

## **Article VI Church Government**

### **Section 1 Business Meetings**

This Church, in keeping with its Baptist principles, shall be democratically governed by the will of the majority of the membership. The Church at its monthly Business Meeting shall form itself into a Committee of the Whole, presided over by the Pastor, to receive reports, decide motions, and conduct other business.

The Church shall hold a regular Business Meeting on the first Wednesday evening of each month, except when specified differently. The Annual Business Meeting shall be held on the first Wednesday of October in lieu of the October monthly meeting.

Eight members shall provide the quorum needed to transact business.

Only members over the age of 18 may vote or hold a position of responsibility or leadership, but all members may address the Church body or make a motion.

In the absence of the Pastor, the Church shall appoint a member to act as the presiding officer. All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer. The Church shall adopt such rules and parliamentary procedures as are necessary to conduct its business in good order.

A summary of the minutes of each monthly Business Meeting shall be distributed to the Church.

### **Section 2 Committee of the Whole**

The Committee of the Whole shall directly approve the following by a majority vote: 1) Deacon ordination nominations, 2) the duties and expectations of Church officers, 3) all standing committee chairmanships and membership nominations, 4) filling vacancies in a committee office or position, 5) removing Church officers with the advice and consent of the Pastor and the Deacons, 6) resolving issues relating to Church discipline and membership, 7) granting and receiving letters of transfer and dismissal, 8) approving the annual Church budget, 9) affirming the status of association and convention relations and relations with sister Churches, 10) debating and voting on all motions reported from committees or elsewhere, and 11) resolving any challenge to a ruling by the presiding officer.

The Pastor as presiding officer may suspend a meeting without challenge if the Business Meeting degrades into an un-Christian dispute.

By a three-fourths vote of those members present, the Committee of the Whole may discharge a motion or altogether bypass the committee system to meet an unusual case or resolve an undisputed matter.

The Church Clerk shall keep the minutes of Committee of the Whole, maintain a record of the proceedings of all Church business and prepare all letters of transfer to sister Churches, and maintain a register of all members, noting changes as they occur.

## **Article VII Standing Committees**

### **Section 1 Committee Procedures**

There shall be five standing committees, which are responsible to the Church for providing the oversight and leadership necessary to successfully complete the programs and duties of the Church. All motions offered during a Church Business Meeting, except for those motions pertaining to matters named in Article VI, Section 2 of this Constitution, shall be dealt with as follows: The presiding officer shall assign a motion, upon its introduction, to a standing committee based upon the overall subject matter of the motion. The presiding officer may also concurrently assign a motion to other committees if necessary. Any committee assigned a motion shall study, debate, and revise, if necessary, a motion and report its findings in due time so as to allow its report to be distributed in time for the next Business Meeting.

### **Section 2 Leadership Qualifications**

The chairmen of committees and other leaders of the Church shall be members mature in their character and faith with demonstrated abilities to lead and serve in an organized and efficient manner. Such members shall be reliable in their tithing and in their attendance of worship and other Church functions.

Only members shall serve in positions of leadership. However, since serving as a teacher's helper or a musician involves the exercising of one's spiritual gifts, a non-member may be a teacher's helper or musician if he will affirm that the Bible is God's inerrant and infallible Word.

A chairman shall be responsible for representing his committee to the Committee of the Whole, and for presiding over the meetings of his committee, and providing for the oversight of the committee's jurisdictional responsibilities.

A minister with portfolio, the chairman of a standing committee, or a Deacon shall only serve on one standing committee. A Deacon may not be a chairman unless in the absence of any other qualified member. Sunday School teachers and the Sunday School Secretary may serve on one other committee besides Education. All other members may serve on two standing committees.

A minister with portfolio shall serve as the chairman of a committee if the Church deems it appropriate.

### **Section 3 Education Committee**

The Education Committee shall be composed of all of the Sunday School teachers who are members and the Sunday School Secretary. These people shall have precedence over the selection of any other persons for committee membership.

The jurisdiction of the Education Committee shall cover the Sunday School classes, curriculum, attendance & offering, Bibles and teaching literature selection, Vacation Bible School (VBS), Nursery, Children's Time during Worship, Children's Church, teacher selection and all other pertinent issues relating to education. The Committee shall prepare an annual budget submission for review by the Finance Committee.

The Committee shall provide the leadership and solicit the assistance necessary for the successful execution of the educational programs and duties approved by the Church.

### **Section 4 Finance Committee**

The Treasurer shall chair the Finance Committee. The Treasurer shall faithfully account for all money which may come into the Church's possession through the Unified Budget or otherwise and disburse the same as provided for by the Church. The Treasurer shall also present a report at each monthly Business Meeting and a complete report of the year's financial business at the January Business Meeting.

The jurisdiction of the Finance Committee shall include oversight of stewardship, gifts and tithes, special collections/directed giving, receipts, taxes, issues relating to non-profit status, collection and disbursement, bank accounts and other monetary assets, Pastoral salaries and benefits and all other related financial matters. The Finance Committee membership shall serve as the tellers of the Church. It is the duty of the Finance Committee to prepare the annual Church budget submission for deliberation by the Committee of the Whole.

The Finance Committee shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the Outreach Committee on missions giving.

The Committee shall provide the leadership and solicit the assistance necessary for the successful execution of the financial programs and duties approved by the Church.

### **Section 5 Outreach Committee**

The jurisdiction of the Outreach Committee shall cover local missions activities and support of missions abroad, advertising, hospitality and kitchen issues, bereavement care, Women's Missionary Union (WMU), Church fellowships, the Women's Support Group, and encouragement activities. The Committee shall prepare an annual budget submission for review by the Finance Committee.

The president and secretary of the WMU, elected in the manner that the members of that organization employ, shall be members of the Outreach Committee.

The Outreach Committee shall have concurrent jurisdiction on wedding and funeral assistance with the Worship Committee, and concurrent jurisdiction on missions giving with the Finance Committee.

The Committee shall provide the leadership and solicit the assistance necessary for the successful execution of the outreach programs and duties approved by the Church.

## **Section 6 Internal Administration Committee**

The Church Clerk and the Head Groundsman shall be members of the Internal Administration Committee.

The jurisdiction of the Internal Administration Committee shall cover personnel and staff oversight and employment/salary and benefits, parsonage, grounds and property maintenance, official records and correspondence, the official Church website, historical archives and library, the Church Constitution, articles of incorporation, bylaws, and legal matters. The Committee shall prepare an annual budget submission for review by the Finance Committee.

The Groundsmen are authorized to make necessary expenditures up to one thousand dollars above the amount specified in the budget for emergency maintenance of Church properties without the approval of the Church at its Business Meetings. Such action shall be however reported to the Church at that time. Expenditures above one thousand dollars require authorization from the Church. In cases of extreme emergencies special meetings shall be called for granting of authority for such expenditure.

The Committee shall provide the leadership and solicit the assistance necessary for the successful execution of the internal administration needs of the Church.

## **Section 7 Worship Committee**

The Choir Director, and the Church musicians who are members of the Church, shall be members of the Worship Committee.

The jurisdiction of the Worship Committee shall cover ushers, flowers and other decorations, music selection and arrangement, instruments and hymnals, baptism and communion elements preparations, Choir personnel and supplies, sound systems, special music/creative arts events and guests, Hymn Sings. The Committee shall prepare an annual budget submission for review by the Finance Committee.

The Worship Committee shall have concurrent jurisdiction on wedding and funeral assistance with the Outreach Committee.

The Committee shall provide the leadership and solicit the assistance necessary for the successful execution of the worship programs and duties approved by the Church.

## **Article VIII Select Committees**

### **Section 1 Authorization of Select Committees**

Select committees shall be appointed by the Pastor, or the Church when the pulpit is vacant, for a specific and limited purpose that the standing committees cannot or should not oversee. After that purpose is completed, the committee shall promptly dissolve. At least once every year, there shall be two select committees established: a Select Committee on Auditing, and a Select Committee on Nominations.

### **Section 2 Select Committee on Auditing**

A Select Committee on Auditing shall be appointed by the Pastor to carefully audit the Treasurer's books. Otherwise, the Church shall secure the services of a certified public accountant to perform an annual audit. A report shall be issued at the March Business Meeting for the past year's finances.

### **Section 3 Select Committee on Nominations**

A Select Committee on Nominations shall be appointed by the Pastor to nominate Sunday School teachers and a Secretary, a head usher and ushers, a Treasurer, a head Groundsman and Groundsmen, Church Clerk, and any other committee officers or members that the Church shall authorize. These officers shall be appointed to a two-year term. The Committee shall also secure an attorney licensed in the State of Maryland to counsel the Church in any legal matters that may arise.

The Select Committee on Nominations shall proceed in the following manner to faithfully select its nominees:

- 1 Based upon the number of seats on a committee as determined by the Committee of the Whole, and the number of people willing to remain in their seats, the Select Committee on Nominations shall determine the number of vacancies in each committee that shall be filled.
- 2 For each committee, the Select Committee on Nominations shall determine the representation of people needed to adequately represent the jurisdictional areas in each committee.
- 3 Based upon these needs, the Select Committee on Nominations shall solicit nominees for all such vacancies, and chairmen for all of the standing committees.
- 4 The Select Committee on Nominations shall review the qualifications, term length and duties of a position, as determined by the Church, with each nominee and secure the nominee's willingness to serve, if elected.
- 5 The Select Committee on Nominations shall present five slates of nominees, one per standing committee, to the Church in time (two weeks) for consideration prior to the Annual Business Meeting held in October.

**Article IX Ratification and Amendments**

Ratification by three-fourths of the members present shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution when presented during a specially called meeting of the entire Church. This Constitution may be amended at a specially called meeting of the entire Church, provided the proposed amendment is presented in writing, two week's notice is given, and three-fourths of those members present approve, a quorum being a majority of all members who have attended a Church meeting within a year of the vote. Done at Barnesville Baptist Church in Barnesville, Maryland on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of September in the year of our Lord 2002 in witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names.