

CONSTITUTION
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF
BLOWING ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA

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 consistent with the Statement of Faith contained herein and the Charter of this church. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and declare the relationship of this body to other bodies of the same faith.

ARTICLE I: NAME

This church is incorporated under the laws of the State of North Carolina as The First Baptist Church of Blowing Rock, North Carolina and has its principal office at 350 Sunset Drive, Blowing Rock.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Section A:

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God and to seek and discern His purposes in the world. It shall seek to accomplish this by being the Church of Jesus Christ in its day and generation. It shall propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ among all people through a strong program of education, evangelism, fellowship, missions, ministry, and administration.

Section B:

This church shall operate exclusively for charitable, educational, and religious purposes within the meaning of Sections 501(c)(3) and 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provisions of any future United State Internal Revenue laws (the "Code");

Section C:

This church may engage in any lawful activity for which corporations may be organized under Chapter 55A of the General Statutes of North Carolina so long as the corporation does not engage in any activity or activities not in furtherance of one or more tax exempt purposes as contemplated in section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and the basis for our beliefs. The church subscribes to the following doctrinal statement:

1. *Scriptures*

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of saving knowledge, faith and obedience. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

2. *God*

There is but one God, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of all things, having in and of Himself all perfections, and being infinite in them all; and to Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence and obedience.

3. *The Trinity*

God is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

4. *Humanity*

The creation of humanity in the image of God is the climax of God's creative work. Sin is humanity's rebellion against God, resulting in separation from God that can only be healed by the redeeming work of Christ made available through the Holy Spirit. Each person is competent to interpret the Scriptures and to exercise saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. *Jesus Christ*

Jesus Christ is the unique incarnation of God in history and through His perfect life, atoning death, triumphant resurrection, and present intercession redeems humanity from sin and spiritual death to eternal life and Christian service.

6. *The Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit is God present in the world as the Spirit of Christ, leading persons to conviction, repentance and faith, and it is the Christian's privilege and duty to heed and obey the Spirit of Christ in all things.

7. *The Experience of Salvation*

In response to the witness of the Holy Spirit, each person must repent of sin, trust and obey Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and undertake to live as a dedicated disciple of Christ.

8. *Sanctification*

Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection

through the presence and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

9. *The Church*

The church is an autonomous body of baptized believers in Christ who are associated by covenant in the fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, and seeking to extend His kingdom to all mankind. It operates through democratic processes in which the members share equal franchise and responsibilities.

10. *Biblical Marriage*

We stand on the Biblical conviction that marriage is, by definition, the physical and spiritual uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive covenant commitment for their joint lifetime. Christian Marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church.

11. *The Ordinances*

As Baptist, we believe Christ gave the church two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are symbolic reminders of the essence and central teachings of the gospel, and as such are to be observed in obedience to Christ as Lord.

Baptism by immersion of the believer on profession of faith in Christ symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for the redemption of humanity and the spiritual death, burial and resurrection of the believer in transition from the old life in sin to the new life in Christ.

The Lord's Supper symbolizes the atoning love unto death of Jesus Christ for human redemption; and it symbolizes the church being constituted as the body of Christ through its reception and participation in His shared body and blood and, thus, also in His eternal life.

12. *The Culmination of History*

God in God's own time and way will bring history to its culmination in the personal return of Christ, and in the resurrection and final judgment.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section A: *Autonomy*

This church is and shall be a self-governing, independent and an autonomous body. All matters involving the tenets, policy, program and activities of the church shall be decided by vote of the church in conference so long as said vote shall be consistent with the aforesaid Statement of Faith, the Charter of this corporation and this Constitution. The members of this corporation shall be those individuals who meet the requirements set forth in Article VI and shall have voting rights as there stated. There is no limit on the number of members and no limit on the term of membership.

Section B: Organization

This Constitution, and Bylaws to be adopted consistent herewith, are authorized by the Charter of this incorporated church. Final authority in all matters pertaining to the church shall rest with the members, to be exercised in a manner in keeping with this Constitution.

The function and authority of directors of this corporation, as contemplated in Item Four of the Charter, shall be vested in the Board of Deacons. Any proposal requiring or intended to receive approval by the members of the church shall first be submitted to the Board of Deacons and then to the members with the Deacons' recommendation.

The function and authority of corporate officers shall be vested in the following church officers:

President	Chairman, Board of Deacons
Vice President	Vice Chairman, Board of Deacons
Secretary	Church Clerk
Treasurer	Church Treasurer

Section C: Affiliations with Associations and Conventions

The church recognizes that there is a mutual helpfulness in the association of churches which are in such agreement in faith and practice as to encourage the spirit of fellowship and goodwill. This church also recognizes that there have been devised through this voluntary cooperation of Baptist churches organizations whose purpose is to implement the missionary, educational, and benevolent interests and obligations of the individual Christian and his church family.

Currently this church participates in causes acceptable to it which are sponsored or represented by The Three Forks Baptist Association, The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and The Southern Baptist Convention,

The church may also affiliate with any other Christian body it deems appropriate in the propagation of the Kingdom of God in this world and the ministry in God's name to people. This may be done by majority vote of the church in conference after thorough study by the Board of Deacons and only after the membership has been duly notified by mail at least one month prior to consideration at church conference.

Members of the church present and voting in church conference shall elect messengers to the meetings of the above organizations.

ARTICLE V: COVENANT

The Covenant of this church, is as follows:

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we now solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant as one body in Christ.

We dedicate ourselves individually and as a church to walk together in Christian love, to seek daily to grow in grace and in the truth as it is revealed in Jesus Christ and in the Bible, and to give generously and regularly of our tithes and offerings, that the ministry of the church and the Kingdom of God may be strong and fruitful in our midst and in the world.

We also engage in this covenant to maintain family and personal devotions, to rear our children in Christian fellowship, to witness to our kindred and friends concerning the saving grace of our Lord, to conduct ourselves as citizens in the world community in such manner as to bring honor to our Lord, and in all things to seek to advance the Kingdom of God on earth.

We further engage to observe at all times the principles of Christian fellowship in manner and speech, in ministering to each other in times of need, and in prayer for each other.

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.

ARTICLE VI: MEMBERSHIP

Section A: Membership Requirements

The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have requested membership, given evidence of regeneration, and who have been received by vote of the church. Membership may be established as follows:

1. Full Membership shall be received:

A. By Profession of Faith

Persons may be received into this church based upon their public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and upon their submission to the ordinance of believer's baptism by immersion. Baptism by immersion will not be required in the instance of physical incapacity or other circumstances, which might endanger the health of the candidate for membership.

B. By Letter

A member of another Baptist church of like faith and order may be received by submitting a letter of request for dismissal from that church, and pending receipt of a letter of dismissal may be held under watchcare of the church.

C. By Statement

Anyone who has once been a member of a Baptist church, or of a church whose doctrine and form of baptism are like our own, and in consequence of peculiar circumstances has no regular letter of dismissal, may be received into our fellowship upon a statement satisfactory to the church.

2. Associate members shall be received:

Members of Christian churches may be extended fellowship and spiritual identity with this church as Associate Members and as such shall be entitled to all privileges of membership, with the exception of;

- a. Voting on church business
- b. Serving on the diaconate or as a church officer
- c. Serving on standing committees or search committees
- d. Serving as official messengers of the church to the National or State Baptist conventions or Associational meetings
- e. Those who were associate members prior to the adoption of the constitution on April 29, 2009 will continue to attain all voting privileges as specified in previous constitutions.

Associate members may modify their relationship with the church to that of full church membership any time upon satisfaction of the membership prerequisites set forth in this Article. A roster of Associate Members and the date of their membership shall be established and maintained by the Clerk.

Section B: Reception of members

The reception of all members shall be upon majority vote of the members present and voting at a regular worship service and at church conference.

Section C: Race/National Origin

Believing that the redeemed are one in Christ, this church welcomes baptized believers without restriction as to racial or national origin.

Section D: Letters of Dismissal

1. Full Membership

Letters of dismissal may be granted to any church of like faith and order for members requesting such. When letters are granted, membership in this church shall terminate. When a member joins a church of a different faith, order or denomination or makes known their affiliation or association with another church, membership in this church shall terminate. A letter of recommendation may be provided for persons who join other Christian denominational groups.

2. Associate Membership

Associate members will be removed from membership upon request from said member or when they are moved from active status.

Section E: Types of Members

Full Members are those members who are neither on the Inactive list nor the list of Non-resident members and shall not include Associate Members.

Section F: Inactive List

Members of this church who are physically able but have chosen not to attend Sunday worship services at this church for a period of one year shall be placed on an Inactive list established and maintained by the Clerk. After two years of inactivity they shall be removed from the church membership rolls. Those on the inactive rolls shall have their voting and committee/ministry team privileges suspended. Any person on the inactive rolls can return to active status by re-establishing a pattern of membership through regular attendance in worship and support or by publically expressing a desire for active membership to the church body.

Section G: Non-Resident

Members whose permanent or seasonal residence is not in the immediate Blowing Rock area, and who do not regularly attend worship services when in the Blowing Rock area, shall be placed on a list of Non-resident Members established and maintained by the Clerk. Members of the church who move from the Blowing Rock area and who are therefore unable to fulfill the duties of church membership shall be classified as nonresident members, and their names placed on a nonresident membership roll.

Section I: Discipline

It shall be the desire and prayer of the church to maintain at all times an atmosphere of Christian discipline to ensure that all members are active in dedicated service and spiritual fellowship. It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist that would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a quorum vote (see VII sec C.) of the total membership is required, and the church at a called church conference may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. At such proceedings a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance shall prevail.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded by church discipline, upon request of the excluded person, by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

Section A: Worship and the Lord's Supper

The regular worship services of the church shall be held on Sundays and Wednesdays, unless otherwise agreed by the church. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once each quarter at a time set by the Pastor and Deacons.

Section B: Church Conferences

The church shall have a church conference quarterly, said conference to be held on a Wednesday evening each January, April, July and October, and shall be so designated on the church calendar. If weather or other events preclude the scheduled time, the meeting can be rescheduled as quickly as possible. Such meetings shall be official business meetings of the church and at such meetings full reports shall be given concerning all aspects of the church programs, their progress, recommendations, and the financial condition of the church.

1. The Board of Deacons shall designate a called Wednesday evening conference in June as the annual business meeting. At such meeting all annual reports shall be submitted and elections of officers and standing committee members shall be conducted.
 - a. Nominations from the floor may be made for all positions for which a nomination is made by committee upon prior approval from nominee.
 - b. No notice of such conferences shall be required other than publication of such in the church bulletin at least one week in advance.

A church conference may also be called to occur at any regular worship service of the church by the board of Deacons or pastor and may be adjourned to a later called conference upon majority vote of those in attendance and voting. Notice of such called conference shall be given orally and printed in the church bulletin at a regular worship service of the church at least one week prior to such called conference. If such printing is not possible because of lack of time, a written summary of business to be transacted shall be mailed to each church family not less than three days preceding the date of such conference. No business other than that specified shall be considered at such called conference.

Section C: Voting/Quorums

Unless otherwise required in this Constitution, action by members of the church shall be by majority vote of a quorum of Full Members. A quorum shall be twelve percent of the Full Members, except for a vote to call a pastor or associate pastor, a quorum for which shall be forty percent of Full Members. Only Full Members fifteen years of age or older shall be counted in quorum determinations and shall be entitled to one vote, which shall be cast in person or by absentee ballot

1. Motions being made by the Board of Deacons, a committee or an individual should be given to the Pastor or office administrator in writing at least seven days prior to the church conference. The information will be provided to church members in accordance with procedures established by the deacons. Motions may be considered and acted on without advance notice if there are no objections from the floor.
2. Any motion or resolution, which if adopted would result in the employment or discharge of a church officer or ministry staff member, shall not be eligible for consideration unless it is accompanied by a recommendation of the Board of Deacons.
3. Any motion that would require an expenditure of funds not in the operating budget of more than \$2,000 must be accompanied with a notice from the Stewardship Committee indicating where the funds could be taken.

Church conferences shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order (see by-laws 1.7) and shall be presided over by the chairman of the Board of Deacons or, in his or her absence or at his or her direction, by the vice chairman or other deacons selected by the chairman. All church conferences shall be held at the principal office of this corporation.

Section D: Voting by Ballot

Voting by ballot at church conferences shall be required for the election of officers, for the election of a Pastor Search Committee, a vote on a motion for dissolution of the relationship of Pastor and church, issues where voting by ballot is directed by the Deacons, or upon majority vote of the full members present and voting. No vote tally shall be announced until the total tally is completed.

Whenever a vote is taken by ballot, a ballot shall be given to each church member immediately before the vote. If a ballot is blank or the intended vote cannot be determined from the ballot, the ballot shall not be counted for any purpose.

Section E: Absentee Voting

Absentee ballots shall be issued only;

1. For the vote to call a pastor
2. The election of other church officers
3. The election of a Pastor Search Committee
4. Any other voting procedure for which the Board of Deacons specifically designate that absentee voting will be permitted.

In order to qualify for absentee voting a church member must be incapacitated, serving in other church services, or be out of town. The following is the only procedure for absentee voting permitted:

1. The church member must request the absentee ballot from the church office no later than seven days prior to vote.
2. The church office shall give, mail or email to the church member an official

ballot and a stamped self-addressed envelope upon request. The return envelope only shall be numbered.

3. The church office shall maintain a record of those receiving absentee ballots and the numbers indicated on the return envelopes.
4. The absentee ballot is to be returned in the numbered self-addressed envelope, sealed, or by email no later than the beginning of the announced time of the church conference.
5. Absentee ballots are to remain in the sealed envelopes and are to be opened only by those tabulating the ballots cast at the designated church conference.
6. In the case where absentee balloting forms can be created on the official church website, those submitted ballots will be printed by the Office Administrator on the day of the vote and given to those tabulating the ballots.

ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH OFFICERS

All who serve as officers of the church and as members of committees shall be members of this church. The officers shall be: Pastor, Associate Pastor, Deacons, Clerk, and Treasurer.

Section A: The Pastor:

The pastor is responsible for leading the church in living the aforesaid Statement of Faith and in leading the congregation, staff and organizations of the church in carrying out their missions. The pastor shall be selected by vote of a three-fourths majority of members present at a church conference called for the purpose of such vote. Provisions governing qualifications, the search for and call of the pastor and associate pastor, the pastor's pulpit and staff responsibilities, and termination shall be set forth in the Bylaws.

The Pastor shall be a minister of the gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit the expectations for the office and is charged with the welfare and oversight of the church. He shall be an ex-officio member of all organizations, departments, committees, and councils. He may call a special meeting of the Board of Deacons or any committee or council by written or oral notice of such meeting.

He shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall provide for pulpit supply when he is absent or for special occasions and arrange for workers to assist in revival meetings and other special services.

He shall be the administrative head of the church with general supervision over all salaried staff members and employees.

The Associate Pastor shall have such responsibilities as defined by a current job description and other responsibilities that may be assigned by the Board of Deacons and Pastor.

Section B: Deacons

The deacons shall be servants of the church, persons whose character is beyond reproach and whose leadership is respected in the church and community. They shall serve with the pastor and staff in leading the church in the achievement of its mission, proclaiming the Gospel to believers and unbelievers, and caring for church members and other people in the community. The Board of Deacons, acting as the Board of Directors by this corporation, shall oversee all areas of worship, evangelism, education, fellowship, missions, ministries, and the administration of the church.

The Board of Deacons shall be composed of not more than fifteen Full Members and shall serve on a rotation basis. When possible, each year the term of office of one-third of the deacons shall expire and an election shall be held to fill vacancies created by the expiration of such terms, death or incapacity to serve. After serving a three-year term a deacon shall be eligible for reelection only after a lapse of at least one year.

The election, ordaining, installation, organization, and meetings of deacons, and the removal of a deacon shall be as prescribed in the Bylaws.

This church recognizes as ordained deacons all persons who have been ordained as deacons in this church or any other Baptist church of like faith and order. In this Constitution and in the Bylaws, the term “deacon” refers to a person who is in active service of an elected term of office as a deacon of this church.

Section C: Clerk

The Clerk shall maintain accurate records of all regular and called church conferences, give all notices required by law and this Constitution, and have such other responsibilities as set forth in the Bylaws. Nominations for and election to this office shall be as prescribed by the Bylaws. The holder of this office shall not be eligible to serve as Treasurer. Assistant Clerk(s) may be appointed to assist the elected Clerk as allowed under 1.4 (K) of the Bylaws.

Section D: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds and securities belonging to the church, shall receive, manage and disburse church funds, and have such other responsibilities as set forth in the Bylaws. Nominations for and election to this office shall be prescribed in the Bylaws. The holder of this office shall not be eligible to serve as Clerk. Assistant treasurer(s) may be appointed from the Stewardship Committee to assist the elected treasurer as allowed under 1.5 (H)

ARTICLE IX: STAFF AND OTHER CHURCH EMPLOYEES

Section A: Pastoral Staff

The Pastoral staff may consist of the Pastor and any Associate Pastors that have been ordained to the ministry. Their responsibilities shall include the administration of all Pastoral ministries of the church including but not limited to; the church ordinances, funerals, wedding and ministerial counseling and visitation.

Section B: Ministerial Staff

The Ministerial Staff may consist of both ordained and non-ordained staff such as; the Minister of Youth, Minister of Education, Minister of Music, Minister of Children, and other ministerial staff approved by the church based on the need and job description. Each Ministerial staff shall have responsibilities based on their job description and other responsibilities as assigned by the Pastor. A staff member may have his\her job description revised based on input from the Pastor and Personnel Committee. When a vacancy occurs, the Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Stewardship Committee regarding compensation, and the Pastor, shall hire a replacement to the church. A search committee may be formed to interview, meet and present a candidate for consideration by the Personnel Committee for each of these positions as needed.

Section C: Church Employees

The other church employees are Office Administrator, Church Secretary, Receptionist, Bookkeeper, Custodian, Director of the Child Development Center, CDC workers, paid Nursery workers, Pianist, Organist, Youth Interns and other employees approved by the church based on the need and a job description. Each employee shall have responsibilities based on their job description and other responsibilities as assigned by the Pastoral staff. The job description of an employee may be revised through input from their supervisor and the Personnel Committee. When a vacancy occurs, the Pastoral staff in consultation with the Personnel committee and the stewardship committee, regarding compensation, shall recommend a replacement to the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons may make the final decision in hiring Church Employees and at their discretion may involve other committees, or the church in conference for consideration.

Should the performance and/or Christian character of a Ministerial Staff member become unsatisfactory, the Personnel Committee shall consider this and, if it deems termination or disciplinary action to be necessary, the matter shall be presented to the Deacons for review and appropriate action. When deemed necessary, the entire active deacon body in a majority plus one vote may terminate the employment of any member of the Ministerial Staff. When circumstances exist that any other church employee needs to be terminated the Pastor in consultation with the Personnel Committee may make that decision. Counsel from the Pastor should be sought for any termination action.

ARTICLE X: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section A:

It shall be the policy of this corporation to indemnify to the maximum extent permitted by Chapter 55A of the General Statutes of North Carolina any one or more of the Deacons, officers, staff or employees, and former Deacons, officers, staff or employees of the corporation, against judgments, penalties, settlements and other liabilities incurred by them in connection with any pending, threatened or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, investigative or administrative (a "proceeding") and against reasonable costs and expenses (including attorneys' fees) in connection with any proceeding, where such liabilities and litigation expenses were incurred incident to the good faith performance of their duties.

Section B:

The seal of the corporation shall bear the name of the corporation and the letters “N.C.”

Section C:

All checks, drafts or orders for the payment of money shall be signed by the Treasurer and/or such other officers or individuals that the Stewardship Committee may from time to time designate.

Section D:

The Board of Deacons may by resolution require any or all officers, agents or employees of the corporation to give bond to the corporation, with sufficient sureties, conditioned upon the faithful performance of the duties of their offices or positions and to comply with such other conditions as may from time to time be required by the Deacons.

Section E:

No loans shall be contracted on behalf of the corporation, no evidence of indebtedness shall be issued in its name, and there shall be no conveyance or encumbrance of real property unless authorized by a resolution of the Board of Deacons. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section F:

The fiscal year of the corporation shall be the period ending June 30th of each year.

Section G:

A Full Member is entitled to inspect and copy the records of this corporation to the maximum extent required by Chapter 55A of the General Statutes of North Carolina, upon making a written request five days in advance of the inspection.

Section H:

References in this Constitution and in the By-Laws to “him” or “her” shall include both genders.

ARTICLE XI: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT

This constitution shall be adopted at a church conference by two-thirds vote of a quorum (12%) of Full Members and may thereafter be amended or repealed at a church conference by two-thirds vote of a quorum of Full Members.

The vote to adopt this Constitution or to amend or repeal it, and to adopt, amend or repeal Bylaws, shall be taken not less than seven days after formal presentation of same to members at a duly called church conference. A written copy of any such proposed amendment shall be provided to any member on request.

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

At Church Conference on the 31st day of January 2016 by a vote of not less than two-thirds of the members present, the existing Constitution and Bylaws were repealed and the foregoing Constitution was adopted.

Jeff Foster
Chairman, Board of Deacons

Russell. L Guenther
Pastor

John Speagle
Church Clerk