

LITTLE ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH CLINTON, MARYLAND

BY-LAWS AND GUIDELINES



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Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by 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, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with 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 and holiness; to give place in our affections, prayers and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, toward its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the Church, we will look to the bible as the alternate authority.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; to abstain from the sale and the use of intoxicating substances; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will toward all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows, to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthews, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid an evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other Church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's work.

Article I Church Membership

Qualification.

The members of this Church shall consist of persons who have confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, having followed Him in Baptism.

Membership.

Individuals seeking membership of the Church must have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, believing in the scriptural doctrine of the Bible. Individuals may be received by the following methods: by baptism, letter, Christian experience, rededication or watchcare.

Duties and Stewardship.

New members are required to attend New Members' class as soon as possible. Upon completion of the new members class, they will receive the righthand of fellowship and can become active in ministries.

Members are expected to attend services regularly and to share in the organized work and to contribute regularly to the support of the Church and its causes. Specific envelopes are provided for tithing and other financial contributions. It is extremely necessary and important that these envelopes be used for accounting and bookkeeping purposes.

Failure to Fellowship.

If a member has failed to attend regular worship service with this Church over a period of two consecutive months, the Pastor and/or the Chairman of the Deacon Board or a pastoral designee shall contact the member and try, through prayer, to bring the member back into communion and fellowship. If the member fails to respond favorably within a month, the Official Board shall direct that a letter be sent to the member. If no response after a period of six months, the member shall be removed from the Church Roll and not be considered a member of this Church Body. Person(s) removed from the Church Roll may reunite with the Church being led by the Holy Spirit. Such persons, however, will be prayed with and counseled by the Pastor, other minister(s) of the Church and/or pastoral designee concerning their return. This will constitute the necessity of their receiving the Right Hand of Fellowship.

Resignation/Termination.

The membership of individuals in this Church may be terminated in any of the following ways:

Letter:

Any member desiring a letter of recommendation is entitled to receive it upon request.

Uniting with Another Church:

If a member unites with another church, their membership shall be terminated automatically.

Prolonged Inactivity:

This Church may, after faithful efforts to make such action unnecessary, terminate membership of persons whose names appears on the inactive membership rolls for at least four (4) months.

An Offense to the Church:

Should any member become an offense to the Church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or consistent breach of the duties of Church Membership, the Church may terminate his/her membership but only after due notice and hearing before the Board of Deacons and after faithful efforts have been made to bring the members to repentance and amendment.

Article II Church Boards

Official Board

The Official Board shall consist of: the Pastor and a member(s) from the Deacons Board, Ministerial Board, Trustee Board, and a member at-large. It shall be responsible for transacting all authorized business of the Church and report to the Church as deemed necessary by the Board or as requested by the Church. The Official Board is empowered to disburse, maximum of \$2,500.00 outside the normal operating expenditures, with prior vote of the Church.

Pastor

- 1.) The pastor shall preach the gospel, administer the ordinances, watch over the membership, and have charge of the spiritual welfare of the congregation and the stated services of public worship. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the church.

- 2.) When it is necessary to call a pastor, the church shall select a representative Pulpit Committee of seven (7) members. It shall be the duty of this committee to take necessary steps to secure a pastor. The committee shall investigate the merits of every candidate under consideration in regards to personal character, education, ministerial record, and preaching ability in determining his fitness for said position. When a suitable candidate is found, the committee shall recommend that person to the church for consideration.

- 3.) The call of a pastor shall come from the church at a regularly called business meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on two (2) successive Sundays. A vote of two-third (2/3) of the members present, shall be necessary to extend a call. Only one candidate shall be presented to the church at any one regular meeting. The vote shall be by written ballot.

- 4.) The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time. The salary shall be fixed at the time of the call and may be changed by vote of the church at any regular business meeting, provided that such a change has been considered by the Board of Deacons and Trustees in a joint meeting. The salary shall be paid in equal installments. The pastor shall be given an annual vacation of four (4) weeks with pay.

- 5.) A pastor's term of office may be ended upon thirty (30) days of notification on the part of the pastor or of the church. Termination of the office shall be voted on at a regularly called meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on two (2) successive Sundays.

- 6.) In the event the church considers it wise to have one or more assistant pastors, the pastor is given authority to select such an assistant, subject to consent and approval of the church body.

Ministerial Board

- 1.) The ministers have been called of God and sent to preach the Gospel of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in accordance with 1Timothy 3:1-7, 4:6-16, 2Timothy 4:2, and will be appointed by the pastor and presented to the church body. They will serve under the direct authority of the pastor supporting him in all areas considered necessary and appropriate to enhance the spreading of the Gospel and leading of souls to Christ.
- 2.) The ministers will strive for the enrichment of the entire spiritual scope of the Little Rock activities. They will be loyal first to God then to the pastor, whereby the utmost trust can be developed.
- 3.) They must support the pastor in his absence by spiritually carrying out his normal duties in such a harmonious manner that the congregation might not suffer any loss of continuity, or more important, spiritual growth.
- 4.) They will assist the pastor in arriving at various decisions by the input of recommendations, realizing that all final authority is invested in the pastor, and that no authority should be assumed or implemented by the ministers without the expressed permission of the pastor.
- 5.) They will serve indefinitely, unless determined to be detrimental to the spiritual growth and welfare of the pastor and congregation. They may be dismissed by mutual consent and the granting of two (2) weeks notice if requested, or by two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members and the pastor.
- 6.) Ministers selected by the Pastor will cooperate and work with the Official Board of which they will be a voting member.

Deacons Ministry

- 1.) The Deacons Ministry shall consist of at least seven (7) Deacons, more if necessary. The deacons shall be considered in accordance with qualifications outlined in 1Timothy 3:8-13, and shall be ordained to their work according to (Acts 6:1-8).
- 2.) When the need arises, prospective deacon candidates will be recommended by the Deacons with concurrence of the pastor and selection by two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members present at a regular constituted business meeting. Once selected, prospected deacons will undergo rigorous training and preparation for the task. When deemed ready for consideration by the Pastor and upon recommendation of the Church, the candidate or candidates shall be ordained.
- 3.) Deacons shall hold offices as long as they shall faithfully discharge their duties. A deacon who fails to perform the duties of his office faithfully may be dismissed of his duties upon recommendation of the Pastor and/or the chairman of the Deacon Ministry.
- 4.) The Deacon Ministry shall choose annually a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary and shall meet regularly each month. Special meetings may be called by the chairman or his secretary at the chairman's request.

5.) The Deacon Ministry shall in every way assist the Pastor in attending to the welfare of the Church, spreading the Gospel of Christ, witnessing to lost souls, care and welfare of the widows, orphans and needy and visitation of the sick.

6.) The deacons shall promote Christian instruction and ministry to the church membership, provide for the ordinances and aid in their administration. Deacons should be watchful guardians of the purity and good order of the church, always striving to maintain a healthful tone of Christian faith and activity in the body.

7.) The Deacon Ministry should act in conjunction with the pastor and not independent of him, except in very rare and urgent cases.

8.) In the lack of a pastor, the chairman and members of the deacons ministry shall assume the leadership of the church and shall seek assistance of a ordained minister as the need arises.

Trustees

1.) There shall be a Board of not less than four (4), Trustees, one of whom shall be the church financial secretary.

2.) One-third (1/3) of the trustees, except financial secretary shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of three (3) years. Members of the board shall be able to succeed themselves.

3.) The Trustee board shall choose annually a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary and shall meet regularly each month. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson or by the secretary who shall notify the other members. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.

4.) The Trustee Board shall hold in trust all property belonging to the church and shall take all necessary measures for its protection, management, and upkeep. It shall determine the use of the church building for all extra or secular purpose. It shall have no power to buy, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without specific vote of the church authorizing such action. It shall designate the bank where the funds of the church shall be deposited. All bills authorized by the church shall be cleared through the Board of Trustees before payment is made. It shall, when so instructed by the church, secure the services of a custodian at such salary as is authorized by the church, and secure from him/her acceptable service. It shall also, when instructed by the church, secure the services of a church secretary. It shall perform such other duties as are imposed upon it by the Church and State.

5.) The Trustee Board shall supervise ways and means of raising the necessary funds for the support of the church. It shall supervise the disbursements of these funds as appropriated. It shall make written reports to the church at the quarterly business meeting and at such other times as may be desired.

6.) The Trustee Board will be empowered to disburse a maximum of \$250.00 per occurrence not to exceed \$1000.00 for church needs with proper documentation; without consulting the Official Board.

7.) The Trustee Board shall have responsibility of defining the Church budget at the beginning of each calendar year.

Member-at-Large

1.) The Member-at-Large is selected by the church body pending approval of the Pastor to represent the church body.

2.) The Member-at-Large will serve on the Official Board and act as the liaison and should inform the Board of concerns brought forth by the church body.

3.) The Member-at-Large has the responsibility to inform the church body of decisions made by the Official Board or their concerns.

Article III Church Officers

The elected officers of this Church shall be:

1.) Official Board

Official Board duties are set forth in Article II.

2.) Church Secretary

The church secretary shall be selected by the pastor and will serve for an indefinite period of time. The secretary must be a member of Little Rock Baptist Church and in possession of the knowledge and experience normally required in secretarial duties. Dismissal may be accomplished by the pastor. The secretary will keep accurate records of all official church meetings, and maintain final transactions in a binder or notebook. The secretary should maintain on file all communication and official reports on behalf of the church. The secretary shall provide each church member with a certificate of important activities, such as: church membership, baby dedication, baptisms, weddings, ordinations, and deaths. The secretary shall also be responsible for official correspondence deemed necessary by the pastor or the church. The secretary should maintain a proper record of membership and issue letters of action as voted by the church, and or pastor. Incumbent shall provide assistance to the church clerk as needed, and such other duties as deemed appropriate and necessary.

3.) Assistant Secretary

The assistant secretary shall be selected by the pastor and will serve for an indefinite period of time. Dismissal may be accomplished by the pastor. The assistant secretary must be a member of Little Rock Baptist Church and in possession of the knowledge and experience normally required in secretarial duties. The assistant secretary shall assist the church secretary and church clerk in performance of their assigned duties. The assistant secretary maintains a roster of members in attendance at business meetings.

4.) Church Clerk/Assistant Church Clerk

The church clerk and assistant church clerk shall be elected at the annual meeting by the members and approved by the pastor to serve for three years. The clerk(s) must be a member of Little Rock Baptist Church and knowledgeable of record keeping and typing. Incumbent(s) shall be responsible for preparation of the church bulletin and the church calendar with assistance from the church secretary. The clerk(s) shall be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date roster of all members of the church. Incumbent(s) shall provide each member with a copy of the roster of the membership, the church guidelines and by-laws. The clerk(s) is responsible for making announcements during the Sunday morning service. Incumbent(s) shall provide assistance to the church secretary as needed, and other duties as deemed appropriate and necessary.

5.) Treasurer

The treasurer shall be the chairman of the Deacon Board. The treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the church and all the deposits made in the name of the church, and all checks drawn by the treasurer shall be in the name of the church. The treasurer shall receive all monies belonging to the church, except the fellowship funds or others so designated by the church. The treasurer shall ensure separate accounts are kept of all funds raised or contributed for a particular purpose. No funds shall be disbursed by the treasurer except for the purpose for which they were raised or contributed. The treasurer shall have custody of the securities, investments, title papers, and other valuable documents of the church. The treasurer, will ensure within seventy-two (72) hours shall deposit the monies received, in a bank selected by the Trustee Board. Funds received for the support of the church and for the reduction of the church indebtedness shall be disbursed by the treasurer. The treasurer shall submit to the trustees, upon their request, information as to the condition of the treasury. The treasurer shall keep a summary or the financial standing of the church before the members, through bulletins or other publications. The treasurer shall submit to the church an itemized report of receipts and disbursements, showing the actual financial conditions of the church at each official meeting. At the annual meeting of the church, upon receipt of the treasurer's report, the books shall be submitted to the auditors as selected by the membership at-large.

6.) Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall be selected by the pastor and will serve for an indefinite period of time. The financial secretary will serve as a member of the Trustee Board.. Dismissal may be accomplished by the pastor. The duties of the financial secretary shall be: To furnish each member of the church envelopes for contribution to church funds; to keep a record of pledges made. To keep an accurate account of all monies received by the church. To send out personal statements to all members once a year, listing their gifts. To report to the trustees an account of the matters pertaining to his/her office at each trustee meeting or upon request of the trustees. To report to the pastor the names of those members who have failed to make any contributions on records toward church expense or funds. To provide a statement of financial contributions to the official board monthly. To submit records upon request of the church to the auditors.

Article IV Boards and Ministries

Deaconess Ministry

1.) The Deaconess Ministry shall assist the pastor in developing the spiritual life of the women and the young ladies of the church for the best possible Christian service. It shall cooperate with the pastor and the board of deacons in visiting the members; in the care of the sick, needy and distressed; and in the preparation of the observances of the ordinances of the church (Lord's Supper and Baptism).

2.) Deaconess shall hold office as long as they shall faithfully discharge their duties. Any deaconess who, for a period of three (3) months, fails to perform faithfully the duties of her office automatically vacates the same. The church may for good sufficient cause, remove any deaconess from office.

3.) The deaconess ministry shall choose annually a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary and shall meet regularly each month. Special meetings may be majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

Christian Education Ministry

1.) The Christian education ministry shall consist of a director, appointed by the pastor. The director shall appoint appropriate department heads with the approval of the pastor. The board shall be responsible for the organization, administration, and supervision of the entire education program of the church.

2.) The work of the education ministry will be divided into the following areas: Sunday school, vacation bible school, youth enrichment, scholarship, bible study (adult and youth studies), new member's class, tutoring and training.

3.) Teachers, teaching ministries and support personnel will be selected from the church membership based upon needs, interest and willingness to serve.

4.) The board and pastor will be responsible for reviewing Christian educational programs, workshops etc.; to insure it adheres to the Bible and Little Rock Baptist Church guidelines.

Usher Ministry

1.) The usher ministry shall consist of as many members as is deemed necessary to provide the seating and comfort of the congregation at all state worship services. They should assist in the prevention of interruptions, distractions, collection of tithes and offering during the services.

2.) The usher ministry shall consist of a president, who is selected by the usher staff and approved by the pastor. Officers may be selected as needed by the membership of the usher board.

Music Ministry

- 1.) The music ministry shall consist of the directors, presidents of each choir, and musician(s).
- 2.) The music ministry will establish a schedule for each choirs' responsibility to support the ministry of the worship service at home and away. Members interested in becoming a choir member will contact the director of the music ministry or president of the particular choir.
- 3.) When vacancies occur in the position of musician or director, the ministry members will interview applicants and make a recommendation to the pastor or his representative for selection.
- 4.) The choirs of the church will support the pastor in spreading the Gospel of Christ through the ministry of music. Tenure as a choir member is indefinite based on choir decorum, performance and church conduct.
- 5.) The choirs will be governed by one set of by-laws that allows for various specifications as established by the music ministry and choir members.

Benevolent/Hospitality Ministry

- 1.) The Benevolent Ministry shall consist of at least three (3) members. The chairperson shall be selected within the ministry. Members will serve for an indefinite period of time based on performance. Members may be dismissed by the pastor.
- 2.) The ministry will support the requested financial assistance from Little Rock Baptist Church and needs that the church may become aware of concerning individuals. The committee will investigate each crisis, report its findings to the official board and make recommendation for financial support.
- 3.) The service on this ministry requires spiritually motivated and responsible individuals, knowledgeable in the Word Of God, due to the sensitive and confidential exposure of the private lives of individuals. The benevolent ministry is authorized a maximum of \$250.00 per crisis and in the event of needs arising greater than \$250.00 recommendations will be taken to the official board.
- 4.) The ministry will be responsible for the cards, flowers, fruit baskets, and/or donations presented to members and/or their immediate family members as appropriate.

Pastor Search Committee

- 1.) The Pastor Search Committee shall be elected whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of pastor. It shall be the duty of the pastor search committee to seek out suitable candidates for pastor in accordance with Article II.

Missionary Ministry

1.) The Missionary Ministry is the support group for the church. The missionary ministry will provide spiritual support to families and/or organizations during weddings, funerals and special functions.

2.) The Missionary Ministry is responsible for visitation of any ill member regardless of whether confined at home or hospitalized.

Article V Elections

1.) Time

The annual election of the officers shall be held during the annual meeting of the church, which shall be held no later than the thirty-first (31st) of December.

2.) Qualification of Voters

Only members duly admitted to this church are eligible to vote at election or to hold office. Eligible members to vote must be twelve (12) years of age or older.

3.) Voting

A two-thirds ($2/3$) majority vote of the membership will be necessary to elect or dismiss officials. All elections shall be written ballot, a majority of the ballots as being necessary for the election of any officer. Vacancies occurring during the year may be filled for the expired term at any business meeting. A majority vote of those present will be needed for all other matters. All business matters requiring a member's vote will be announced one week in advance during a regular worship service unless otherwise designated.

Article VI Meetings

1.) Worship Services.

Public services shall be on the Lord's Day, the Youth Fellowship and Sunday School shall meet at times fixed by the Board of Christian Education and approved by the Pastor. Additional worship services may be scheduled upon the approval of the Pastor.

The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month, and at such other time as the Pastor may determine.

Baptism shall be held as needed prior to the first Sunday.

2.) Business Meetings.

The annual business meeting shall be held during the month of December for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of individual officers, boards, ministries of the church, and auxiliary organizations.

The election of officers.

The transaction of such other business as is proper to come before this meeting.

Business meetings will be conducted in decency and order. No point of business can be brought up unless previously discussed by the official board.

The semi-annual business meeting shall be held during the month of June.

3.) Special Business Meetings.

Special business meetings may be called at any time by the pastor or by five (5) members in good standing who are qualified. Notice of such meetings and the objective for which it is called shall be given on the Sunday preceding the date of the meeting.

4.) Procedure for Church Business Meetings.

The business meetings of the church shall be open to only members of this church. All business meetings shall be conducted according to the guidelines of Little Rock Baptist Church, unless the church adopts an agenda.

Each business meeting will be chaired by the Pastor.

The guidelines are:

- Reading and Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting.
- Take care of Unfinished Business.
- Reports of Officers: Pastor, Ministerial Staff, Deacons, Trustees, Financial Secretary, Treasurer.

- Reports from Boards, Ministries, Special Committees.
- New Business.
- Adjournment and Prayer.

Article VII
Amendments

The Guidelines and By-Laws may be amended at any regular or called business meeting of the church by a two-third (2/3) vote of those present and voting, and that notice of such amendment, stating the proposed change, shall have been given to the pulpit on two (2) successive Sundays.