

Lexington Baptist Church Constitution

Adopted November 4, 1959

COVENANT

We, the members of Lexington Baptist Church, do in the name of Jesus Christ voluntarily give ourselves to the Lord and to each other according to the word of God, to be one body. Under one head jointly to exist and act by the rules of the gospel and so do promise and engage to do all things by divine instructions in our different capacities and relations that the Lord has commanded and required of us, namely-deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow Christ, keep the faith, assembly ourselves together for prayer, fill our seats at church meetings, attend the appointments for preaching and we further covenant that we will avoid everything that tends to cool love and make disagreeable impressions, namely-talking, backbiting, evil speaking, whisperings and surmisings, and that we will not indulge in evil and suspicious thoughts one towards another and not speak hurtfully of one another but in every case of grievance we will immediately approach one another in the spirit of brotherly love in accordance with the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and make known our grievance and thus seek a reconciliation one with another, bear with one another in love and meekness and strive to promote love and harmony, to advance one another in spiritual knowledge and edification, watch over for good and admonish one another when circumstances require it, but in love and tenderness, exhort and stir up one another to a diligent attendance on the means of Grace and Zeal in holy living and in supporting the Gospel, and finally to honor our Pastor called to preside over us in the Lord and to give what each one may be able to his support, that he may devote his time and talent to his calling, this is the covenant unto which we solemnly enter in the fear of the Lord, humbly imploring his assistance and blessings that we may be built up in the fear of God and the advancement of the Redeemer's interest and the edification and come of ourselves.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the present of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

Amen.

Jude 24, 25

ARTICLE I – Name

This body of believers shall be known as THE LEXINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH, Lexington, Virginia.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

The purpose of this body shall be to provide regular opportunities for public worship, to sustain the ordinances, doctrines and ethics set forth in the New Testament for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ; to nurture its members through a program of Christian Education; to channel its offerings to the support of those objects whose purpose is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and to preach and propagate among all people the gospel of the Revelation of God through Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

ARTICLE III – Government

Section 1:

This Church shall be governed by the majority vote of the congregation of members present and voting; is not a legislative body but administrative only; and recognize and/or acknowledges NO earthly ecclesiastical tribunal higher than herself.

Section 2:

The New Testament is this Church's only and sole all sufficient authority and rule of faith and practice.

ARTICLE IV – Doctrine

It shall be understood that ministry or membership in the Church means embracing and supporting, along with other Christian tenets, equally or comfortable vital, these doctrinal emphases.

The divine inspiration, supremacy and authority of the Scriptures, the Deity and humanity, virgin birth and sinless life, substitutional death and bodily resurrection, ascension and premillennial coming of Christ; likewise the sovereignty of God; the total depravity of all men; the necessity of regeneration; Scriptural believer's baptism as pre-requisite to church membership; the Lord's Supper administered by the local church; the local church as an autonomous body; separated from the world; the doctrine of the Trinity as historically and Spiritually maintained; the rapture of the church as the Christian's hope; the resurrection of the body of Christians concurrent with the rapture; the earthwide reign of Christ; and ultimate judgment of the impenitent; of heaven of eternal duration for the saved; and eternal punishment in a place named "hell" for the lost.

ARTICLE V – Membership

Section 1: Admission

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, giving satisfactory evidence of having been born again, and being in agreement with the doctrines and practices of this Church may become a candidate for membership.

Membership shall be based upon the following four considerations:

- (1) By baptism, upon confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour.
- (2) By letter from any church of like faith and order.
- (3) By Christian experience, if candidate has previously been baptized by immersion as a believer.
- (4) By restoration, upon confession of the cause which made it necessary for the Church formerly to have dismissed him (or her).

Section 2: Dismission

- (1) Any member in good and regular standing shall be entitled to receive a letter of dismissal and recommendation to any Church of like faith and order, upon proper application in writing to the Pastor or Church Clerk. Such a request shall in turn be submitted to the Deacons for consideration and recommendation to the Church, and a two-thirds vote of all members present and voting shall be necessary for dismissal. Upon the granting of said letter, the name of such person shall be removed from the roll of this Church.
- (2) Any member being received into the membership of another group, or a Church of another faith and order, or another Baptist Church without a letter of dismissal from this Church, shall be dismissed and the name of such person be removed from the roll of this Church.
- (3) In the case of non-attendance, EXCEPT WHEN PROVIDENTIALLY HINDERED, after six months (6 mos.) of non-attendance name of absentee shall be read before the Church by the Chairman of the Deacons in a regular monthly business meeting. Every effort shall be made by the members to contact absentee and request same to attend services. If absentee fails to return to services within the next six months (6 mos.) said absentee shall be dismissed from the membership by vote of the Church at the regular monthly business meeting and shall be notified by mail stating reason for Church's action.

Section 3: Expulsion

- (1) Should any member become an offense to this Church and the testimony it seeks to maintain by reason of conduct unbecoming a Church member, such as engaging in an act of gross immorality, or by misdemeanor in office, or by willfully promoting discord or schism in the Church, the Church may censure, reprimand, or remove such an one from membership by action of the Deacons.
- (2) Charges against the character and Christian standing of any member, must be presented to the Pastor and Deacons in writing and the person submitting such charges must be prepared to support the same with reliable witnesses. Such charges may be brought only after an unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation according to the teaching of Christ as recorded in Matthew 18:15-17. A hearing for such charges shall not be arranged until the accused has been notified in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of said hearing. Failure of the accused to appear at such a hearing shall be considered supporting evidence of the charges advanced.

ARTICLE VI – Meetings

Section 1:

This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training and fellowship. It is the duty of each member to support all regular meetings for worship, teaching, training and fellowship and to support the Pastor prayerfully.

Section 2:

This church shall hold regular business meetings at which time the spiritual and material conditions of the church will be discussed, and plans projected for progress in Church endeavors and time.

Section 3:

Other meetings of the church as a whole or of authorized groups within the church shall be set according to the needs of the congregation.

ARTICLE VII – Church Officers

Section 1: Officers

The officers of this church shall be pastor, deacons, trustees, clerk, treasurer, and such other officers as shall be required for the work of the church in any of its departments or organizations. All of these shall be elected by the church and shall be members in good standing. All of these shall subscribe to the doctrinal emphasis in this constitution and by-laws. All officers except the Pastor and Trustees shall be elected annually and no officer except Pastor and Trustees shall hold the same office more than three years without resting one year.

Section 2: Election and Duties

PASTOR

Whenever a vacancy occurs, a pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the pastor or the church. In either case, at least ninety (90) days notice shall be given of termination of the relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed, with both pastor and the church seeking to follow the will of God and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The call of the pastor shall take place at a meeting especially set for the purpose of which at least one week's notice has been given the membership at a regular Sunday morning service. The election shall be upon recommendation of a special committee appointed to seek out and to nominate as pastor a minister of the Gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office of pastor of this church. The Committee shall bring only one name at the time for consideration of the church, and no nomination shall be made except that of the committee, until the nomination by the committee has been voted on. It shall be considered highly preferable that recommendations of the committee shall be the only valid ones. Election shall be by ballot with the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present and voting necessary for a call. Should the one recommended by the committee fail to receive a two-thirds vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another minister and the meeting shall adjourn without debate. The Committee on calling the pastor shall consist of not less than five persons selected with a view to representing the entire membership and interests of the church.

The pastor shall have in charge the welfare and oversight of the church; he shall be ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees; he may call a special meeting of the deacons or any committee, or a business meeting of the church at any time he deems it wise to do so, after announcing it in two previous services. He shall conduct religious services on stated and special occasions, perform other duties that usually pertain to that office; he shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall provide for pulpit supply when he is absent. He shall arrange for workers to assist in revival meetings and other special services. He shall be the administrative head of the church and shall arrange and approve all absences and vacations of all church employees.

PASTORAL STAFF

- A. Pastoral staff membership
 1. When positions of pastoral staff members other than the senior pastor are needed, the church shall hear a recommendation from the senior pastor in consultation with the deacons regarding the creation of the position and salary. Upon the recommendation of the senior pastor in consultation with the deacons, the position and salary may be

- established at a special or regular meeting of the church. Public notice and purpose of such meeting shall have been given two (2) previous Sundays and two-thirds (66 2/3%) vote of the members present is necessary for the creation of the position and salary.
2. Pastoral staff members (associate (s) and assistant (s))
 - a) After the congregation has established the position and salary, the senior pastor in consultation with the deacons shall select the candidate for the position. Before the final selection the church congregation shall have opportunity to meet and become acquainted with the candidate. Only one candidate may be considered at a time.
 - b) All staff members (associate (s) and assistant (s)) are directly responsible to the pastor, or to the deacons when there is no pastor, in the performance of their duties. Loyalty to the church and its leadership is expected.
 3. Dismissal of staff members
Whenever a situation arises requiring the dismissal of a staff member, the termination of service will be done by the senior pastor in consultation with the deacons. Dismissal of staff members for biblically verifiable reasons does not require a church discussion or vote.
 4. Pastoral staff positions
 - a) Associate Pastor (s)
 - 1) He must meet the 22 qualifications listed for an elder in his daily life (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
 - 2) He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in his job description, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the pastor.
 - 3) In the absence or incapability of the senior pastor for definite periods of time (sabbatical, illness or military duty), the associate pastor shall temporarily assume the responsibility for the duties of the senior pastor.
 - b) Assistant Pastor (s)
 - 1) He must meet the 22 qualifications listed for an elder in his daily life (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
 - 2) He shall assist the senior pastor and / or associate pastor (s) in the performance of their regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor.
 5. Secretarial staff member
Upon creation of secretarial positions, secretaries will be selected by, directly responsible to, and terminated by the pastor.

DEACONS

There shall be at least three deacons for the first 100 members of the Church. Then others added as the Church sees fit. These shall be elected from among those members who have proven themselves to have scriptural qualifications (*1 Timothy 3 and Acts 6*). The office Deacon will be one of rotation so that more members who qualify may take part. The church shall elect Deacons for a term of three years, with one rotating out each year. The Deacon being rotated out each year shall be placed on an inactive Deacon list. The Nominating Committee will recommend a man for replacement each year to be elected by the church. The Deacons shall elect annually their own chairman. It shall be the duties of the deacons to engage actively in all spiritual work of the church; to seek out such members as need assistance where there is a need for relief; to visit the sick. Whenever the church is without a pastor the chairman of the deacons may call special sessions.

TRUSTEES

The church shall elect at least three members to serve as Trustees. Their term of office shall be for five years. Having served as a trustee during a previous term will not disqualify a member for re-election.

The trustees shall represent the Church in strict accordance with directives from the church in the execution of all legal matters. They shall have no power to buy, to sell, improve or transfer property or mortgage church property without the majority vote of the church authorizing such action. Neither shall they have any control over the use of the church property except by vote of the church. They shall execute all legal papers relating to the

church and to the community as the church may direct, and shall represent the church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase, improvement and disposal of church property as directed by the church. They shall have general oversight over the upkeep and repair of the church.

CLERK

The clerk shall be elected annually. It shall be his duty to attend or be represented at all church business meetings, to keep an accurate record of all business transactions, to prepare the annual associational letter and to notify officers, members of committees and messengers of their election or appointment. He shall issue letters of dismissal as authorized by the church, preserve all papers and valuable letters and records that belong to the church, and preserve a true history of the church. It shall also be the duty of the clerk to see that an accurate roll of the church membership is kept with dates and methods of admission and dismissal, change in name, correct mailing addresses and other pertinent information. The clerk upon termination of his service shall release all records and church property in his possession to this church.

TREASURER

The treasurer shall be elected annually. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, keep in a bank and disburse by check upon the proper authority all money or things of value that are given to the church and keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements; rendering regular account to the church to be preserved by the church clerk. The treasurer's books shall be audited once a year as arranged by the church and all books, records, and accounts kept by him shall be considered the property of the church. The treasurer shall upon invitation meet with deacons and shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE VIII – Property

Section 1: Definition and Scope

The property shall be understood to include all land, buildings, furniture, and equipment, bonds, bequests, money on deposit in the bank or church money in possession of church representatives though it is not deposited in the bank, or invested, etc. It shall likewise include all physical assets acquired by the church at a later date.

Section 2: The Power

The power to acquire, to control, to retain, sell, to lease or mortgage property shall rest solely in the hands of the majority of the members of the Lexington Baptist Church. Extensive improvements, transfer, lease or sale of church property shall be in violation of this Constitution except when authorized by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a business meeting of the church called for such action. The said action being after due publicity for at least one Sunday prior to said meeting.

ARTICLE IX – Missions

It shall be the policy of this Church to support only missionaries whose doctrine and practice is essentially in agreement with its own.

ARTICLE X – General

Section 1: License

When a member announces to the church that he feels the call of God to the ministry, the church, by majority vote, may license him as an acknowledgement of his call to the ministry and encouragement to make preparation for it. The clerk of the church may furnish the member with a copy of the minutes or a certificate of license as his credentials. It is understood that the performance of civil duties by the member shall be governed by the state law.

Section 2: Ordination

In the even this church has been requested to ordain a member who has been called as pastor of a Baptist Church or as a Baptist Evangelist the following procedure shall be followed. The church will express its approval by the vote of a majority of the members at any regular monthly business meeting of the church. The pastor of this

church will sit in on the examination of the candidate. If the report of the Council is favorable the church shall proceed with the ordination.

ARTICLE XI – Adoption and Amendments

Section 1:

This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when majority of the members present at the business meeting at which vote is taken shall vote in favor of the same.

Section 2:

This constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by a majority vote of the members present at any regular monthly business meeting of the church; provided, however, that such amendment, alteration or repeal must be given to the clerk in writing; and this proposed change shall be presented to the church at least thirty (30) days prior to the time the vote is taken.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – Meetings

Section 1:

The regular worship service of the church shall be held on Sunday and Wednesday evenings, unless otherwise agreed upon by the church. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once a quarter at a time approved by the church. The annual meeting for the election of officers shall be held during the month of September, with the exception of Sunday School Superintendent and Training Union Director. These shall be presented to the church by the Nominating Committee the first Sunday after their first meeting.

Section 2:

The church shall hold a regular business meeting monthly. Special business meetings may be called by the pastor at such time as they are needed. The pastor shall serve as Moderator of the business meetings of the Church. Upon his request the chairman of the deacons may serve as Moderator.

Section 3:

Special business meetings may be called by the Moderator at any time; notice thereof must be given in at least two previous stated services of the church. Only the stated business for which the meeting is called can be acted upon in a called meeting.

ARTICLE II – Other Church Officers

In addition to those named in the Constitution other officers of the Church may be Superintendent of the Sunday School, Director of Music, Pianist-Organist, and such other officers as may be desired. All officers of the Church and its organizations, unless otherwise specified shall be elected for a term of one year.

Section 1: Sunday School Superintendent

The Superintendent of the Sunday School shall have general oversight of the entire school, and shall administer its affairs in approval of the local Church. He should acquaint himself with the best methods of training and endeavor to adopt them in this school. It shall be his duty to counsel with his teachers and officers in the work of the school, giving advice and receiving suggestions from his co-workers. He shall see that a full and accurate report is made of the work of the Sunday School in the regular business meetings of the church.

Section 2: President of the Women's Missionary Union

The president of the W.M.U. shall seek to enlist all the Women and Young People of the Church in a program of Missions, training, giving, and activity according to the missionary program promoted by this Church. She shall be elected annually.

Section 3: Music Director

The Music Director shall be responsible for providing worshipful music at all services. He is to direct the choir, or choirs, in practice and public singing and is to cooperate with the pastor in the selection of suitable music, and the devising of appropriate musical programs for all occasions where services are needed.

Section 4: Pianist-Organist

The Pianist-Organist shall play for all public services and shall assist the music director in a suitable program of music for the Church. The same pianist-organist can be elected each year regardless of how long they have held office.

Section 5: Assistants

The duties of the assistant to the above named officers shall be to aid them in their work, and to act in their offices when they are absent or as they are directed to do so by the Church.

Section 6:

It is understood that the above named officers shall be members of this Church in good standing.

ARTICLE III – Committees

All committees that are necessary in the work of this Church shall be appointed by the Pastor.

ARTICLE IV – Finances

Section 1:

The fiscal year shall begin on January 1st and end on the following December 31st.

Section 2:

All monies raised by the Church or its auxiliary organizations shall be free-will offerings. It is the policy of this Church to advocate strongly the Biblical principle of tithing as set forth in Mal. 3:10 and Matt. 23:23.

Section 3:

No funds shall be contributed to the Church through the sale of any article of merchandise in the Church building for profit. Permission may be granted from time to time, as occasion may arise, allowing the sale without profit to the Church of such literature and Christian material, which has for its sole purpose the attaining of the objectives of the Church.

Section 4:

The promotion of bazaars, lawn fetes or any other social events for the purpose of raising funds for the Church or any of its auxiliary organizations or any constituent members thereof, is prohibited.

ARTICLE V – Voting

Section 1:

The number of members present at a stated business meeting of the Church shall constitute a quorum. The minimum number allowed to constitute a quorum shall be fifteen (15) members of the Church until the membership reaches 100 then fifteen (15%) percent of the total membership of the Church shall constitute quorum.

Section 2:

The right of franchise shall be denied those persons whose names appear on the list of inactive members, neither shall they be permitted to hold any Church office.

Section 3:

Only those members in good and regular standing who have attained the age of ten (10) years or more shall be permitted to exercise the right of franchise.

ARTICLE VI – Auxiliary Organizations

All auxiliary organizations using the Church name, property or influence, shall not be formed without the knowledge and consent of the Church. These said groups shall fully subscribe to and share the doctrine view in this document.

ARTICLE VII – Amendments

Section 1:

These By-laws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when a majority of the members present at the business meeting at which vote is taken shall vote in favor of same.

Section 2:

Amendments to the By-laws shall be made as for the Constitution except that the notice period shall be seven (7) days, and the proposed amendment shall be read in at least one regular business meeting.

ARTICLE VIII – Adoption

A copy of this Constitution and By-laws shall at all times be kept by the clerk among his records and another copy shall be kept in the office of the Church, and all amendments to or revisions thereof shall after passage by the Church, be prepared by the clerk and pasted or fastened in the copies of the Constitution and By-laws and made available to the Church members generally upon request.

ARTICLE IX – Rules of Order

For the conduct of the Church Business Meetings we hereby adopt and will abide by Kerfoot's Parliamentary law as to rules of order.

ARTICLE X – Articles of Faith

A. The Bible

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God breathed.

B. The Godhead

We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Co-eternal in being, Co-identical in being, Co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections.

C. The Person and Work of Christ

1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men.
2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the Cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical bodily resurrection from the dead.
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven bodily, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of representative, intercessor and our Advocate.
4. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will return to this earth again, visibly, bodily, and literally, as the KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS: that His return is imminent; that at the time of His appearing in the clouds the saints, both dead and living, will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and that at a subsequent time He will return to this earth to establish His Kingdom and will rule and reign over the earth.

D. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption.
2. We believe that He is the divine person who guides believers into all truth and life; and that it is the privilege and duty of all saved people to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

E. The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that through a Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and that man is totally depraved, and of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition.

F. Salvation

1. We believe that salvation is the free gift of God brought to man through grace and received by man through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and that it can in no wise be merited, or earned in part or whole, by human effort; that it was earned for us by the shed blood of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice and payment for our sins.
2. We believe that only those who truly repent of their sins can and will have true saving faith in Christ. That this repentance is a sacred duty brought about in the heart by the Holy Spirit as He shows man his sinful and helpless condition, that it involves a genuine sorrow for sin and a determination to forsake sin; and that it is a change of mind about God, sin and self in which the individual truly turns to Christ from his sins and believes savingly in Him.

G. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

We believe that all of the redeemed, once having been saved, are kept saved by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever; and that they are assured of such by the teachings of the Bible that salvation is eternal.

H. The Believer's Two Natures

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural and therefore false.

I. Separation

We believe that all of the save should and will live a life in which there is manifested a measure of holiness which brings glory and honor to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that separation unto the Lord from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations and from all religious apostasy is commanded of God.

J. Satan, a Person

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall of man; and that he is the open and declared enemy of God and of the soul of man, and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire.

K. The Eternal State

1. We believe that in the bodily resurrection from the dead of all men; the saved to life eternal and happiness with God; and unsaved to judgment and eternal punishment.
2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are at death, "absent from the body and present with the Lord," where in conscious bliss they await the resurrection of the just, where soul, spirit and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord.
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the resurrection of the unjust, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne of Judgment, and shall be case into the lake of fire, to suffer everlasting conscious punishment.

L: The Church

1. We believe that the Church is the body of Christ and is composed of all those who have true saving faith in Christ; and that when this body is complete and finally assembled it will be a visible body.
2. We believe that the presently visible manifestation of His body called the Church or assembly, is a group of true believers who have been immersed on a credible profession of faith, having New Testament officers, perpetuating the ordinances, independent in policy, voluntarily banded together for worship, work and the world wide propagation of the gospel.

M: The Baptists

We believe that Baptists originated, not in the reformation, not in the dark ages, nor in any century after the Apostles; that no personality this side of Jesus Christ is a satisfactory explanation for their origin; and that Baptist principles are as old as Christianity; and that the likeness in doctrine and practice of Baptist Churches to the Churches in the days of the Apostles constitute them Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.