

By-Laws for Larkinsville Baptist Church

362 Harvey Wilborn St. Scottsboro Alabama

(Adopted 10/07/1998; Amended 00/00/0000)

Preamble (see I Cor. 14:40)

For the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and so that this body may be governed in an orderly manner, we do declare and establish this constitution.

Article I: Name

The legal name of this church is Larkinsville Missionary Baptist Church. We are also known as Larkinsville Baptist Church or Larkinsville Baptist. We understand as time progresses Names, Titles, and Acronyms can associate with others with different beliefs. We desire to be known by what we believe and the principles stated in this constitution.

Article II: Mission (see Mt. 28:19-20; II Tim. 3:16; Heb. 11:6)

The mission of our church is to evangelize the lost and edify the saints (see Mt. 28:19-20). We believe in the articles of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message and strive to live by these articles. If that document should change from the version stated and unless stated in this constitution, It should be understood that this church believes in the articles of the 2000 BFM as the best organizational summary of Biblical beliefs.

Article III: Members

A. Qualifications

1. The membership of this church shall consist of such persons as confess Jesus Christ to be their Saviour and Lord enter into its covenant.

2. The membership of this church shall consist of such persons who, after due examination by the church as to their Christian experience (personal testimony) enter into its covenant.
3. The membership of this church shall consist of such persons who, if coming from other churches, as to their letters of dismissal and recommendation or satisfactory substitutes therefor; having been accepted by vote of the church, and having been baptized; enter into its covenant.
4. Persons received into membership of this body must receive a majority vote of the members present and voting . Those coming by letter from other churches will become members in full standing when letters are received into the church.

B. Duties

Members are expected, first of all, to be faithful in all the duties essential to the Christian life; and also to attend habitually the services of this church, to give regularly for its support and its causes, and to share in its organized work.

C. Rights

Such members as are in full and regular standing and do not hold letters of dismissal, and such only, may act and vote in transactions of the church.

D. Quorum

Ten percent of the church membership shall constitute a quorum (a minimum of 10 members).

E. Termination

The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles of Scripture and especially as follows:

1. Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to any other Baptist Church is entitled to receive it upon his request. In case of removal to another community, he should promptly make such request .
2. If a member in good standing requests to be released from his covenant obligations to; this church for reasons which the

church may finally deem satisfactory, after it shall have patiently and kindly endeavored to secure his continuance in its fellowship, such requests may be granted, and his membership terminated.

3. Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by: Reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his covenant vows, or nonsupport of the church, the church may terminate his membership, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such members to repentance and amendment (Matt. 18: 15—17)
4. The membership of any person shall not be terminated (except by letter) at the meeting when the recommendation for such action is made.
5. Any member having changed faith will be dropped from roll.

Article IV: Church Officers

A. Pastor

1. A pastor of like faith and beliefs, shall be chosen and called by the church whenever vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one—week notice shall be given. A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendation will constitute a nomination though any member has the privilege of making other nominations. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. The pastor shall be elected for one year of service, but may be terminated by the pastor upon thirty (30) days notice to the church or, the service of the pastor may be terminated by the church upon thirty (30) days notice to the pastor.
2. The pastor is to receive two-week's annual vacation with pay.
3. The pastor shall supply the pulpit at his expense except while on vacation or sick.

B. Deacons

In accordance with the meaning of the word and practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.

1. They are to be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds; of peace.
2. The election of deacons, (unordained) , will be by the church (Acts 6: 3) after due examination and qualifications being met and approved, these men will be ordained to active deacons of this church.
3. Deacons coming from other churches by transfer of letter will become active deacons of this body by invitation of the present active deacons and approved by the church.

C. Moderator

The moderator shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor the chairman of the deacons (vice— moderator) shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and a moderator protem shall be elected.

D. Clerk

The clerk of the church shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church including committee reports, except as otherwise herein provided. **The clerk shall keep a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms.** The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these by laws. The clerk shall consider it a part of his or her responsibility to promote loyal and efficiency in church life.

E. Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a treasurer . It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out as authorized by the church, all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements . The treasurer will give a monthly report to the church at the regular business meeting, and an annual report at the end of the church year.

F. Trustees

The trustees are elected **by the duties being to** represent the church in all legal matters required by law. Executing such

documents as may from time to time be authorized by the church. They shall, further, be in—trusted with the care of all current papers, documents, maps, blueprints, and property maintenance. All recommendations of the trustees involving buying, selling, or mortgaging of church property shall be presented in writing to the church for approval or disapproval. Such recommendations shall be presented to the church two (2) weeks in advance of church action. Such action by the church shall require two—thirds (2/3) vote of approval of the members present and voting.

G. Organizational Officers

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, and officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

These officers include church clerk, treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent, general secretary, chorister, pianist, teachers, and any other officers the church may deem necessary.

The term for the named officers shall be for one year.

Article V: Committees

The church shall elect, or appoint, such committees\ as shall be necessary to assist in the ministry of the church, both physical and spiritual . These committees shall consist of an annual standing committee or, temporary committees, their need and length of service determined by the church.

Article VI: CHURCH FINANCE

The financing of the Lord' s work is to be financed as He taught in His Word, by tithes and offerings. All funds coming into the church through any regular or special offering will go into the church treasury. Designated gifts will be kept in separate funds. All financial activities will be done in the name of the church.

Article VII: Meetings

A. Worship

1. Public services shall be held stately on the Lord's day and on some regular evening or evenings of each week.
2. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at such times as determined by the church.
3. Revivals and religious meetings shall be held at such times as determined by the church.

B. Business meetings

1. The regular monthly business meeting of this church shall be held on Wednesday evening after the first (1) Sunday of each month.
2. Urgent business that calls for immediate action (business not otherwise restricted by previous statements of this constitution and by—laws), may be transacted at any regular meeting of the church.
3. The pastor may, and shall, when requested by the deacons, trustees, or standing committee, call from the pulpit special business meetings, the particular object of the meeting being clearly stated in the notice.
4. The annual meeting of the church shall be held on Wednesday after the first (1) Sunday in September, or at a date deemed appropriate by the church. If at a date other than stated, advance notice must be given by the church.
5. Roberts' rules of order shall be the parliamentary guide in all business meetings .

Article VIII: Discipline

1. Should any unhappy difference arise between members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.
2. Should any case of gross breach of covenant, or of public scandal, occur, the deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense by personal visitation, if such effort fail, shall report the case to the church .
3. If the church vote to entertain a complaint, which must be made in writing, it shall appoint a reasonable time and place of hearing and notify the person in question thereof, furnishing him with a copy of the charges.

- 4 At such hearing, the accused member may call to his or her aid any member of the church as counsel . If he or she shall not present themselves at the time appointed, or give satisfactory reasons for his or her neglect to do so, the church may proceed in his or her absence.
- 5 All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish the offender or declare him or her to be no longer in the membership of the church.

Article IX: Amendments

This constitution and accompanying by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present and voting at a meeting specially called for that purpose. Said proposed change having been laid before the church in writing at a business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action, and read from the pulpit four consecutive Sundays in the morning services.

Article X: Church Covenant

Having been lead, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angles and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advance of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the church, relief of the poor and spread of the Gospel through all nations. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to religiously educate our children, to seek the salvation of our own kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in

our deportment; to avoid all tattling, back-biting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage and to be ' zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour. We furthermore engage to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian's sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our • Saviour to secure it without delay. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will 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 XI: Declaration of Faith

A. Of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is a perfect treasurer of heavenly instruction; that it has God for it' s author, salvation for it' s end, and truth without any mixture of error for it's matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain unto the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

B. Of the True God

We believe that there is one, and only one living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the maker and Supreme ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the . Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine! perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the work of redemption.

C. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his maker; but by voluntary -transgression

fell from the holy and happily state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but by choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

D. Of the way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the Mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection's, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and all-sufficient Saviour.

E. Of Justification

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

F. Of the Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by cordial penitent and obedient faith; and nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

G. Of Grade in Regeneration

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life .

H. Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contribution, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King; and relying on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

I. Of God's purpose in Grace

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility love, of His free mercy that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it is ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian experience; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the up-most diligence .

J. Of Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is progressive work. That sanctification is begun in regeneration. Sanctification is carried on in the hearts of

believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter. Sanctification is carried on in the continual use of the appointed means; that is especially, the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

K. Of the preservation of the saints

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare, and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

L. Of the harmony of the Law and Gospel

We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is Holy, just and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the Holy law, is one great end of the gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

M. Of a Gospel Church

We believe that a true New Testament Church is a local, visible congregation of baptized believers in Christ, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word; that its only scriptural officers are bishops, or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus; that it is the chief duty of churches to see that the gospel is preached to all men everywhere;- that each local church has the absolute right of self-government; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the furtherance of the gospel, but that each church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; and that on all matters effecting the membership, discipline, government, policy or benevolence of the church, the will of the church is final.

N. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, by the authority of the local church; to show forth in solemn and beautiful emblem; our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; proceeded always by solemn self examination.

O. Of the Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of each week is the Lord's Day and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God.

P. Of Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, continuously honored, and obeyed except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

Q. Of the Righteous and the wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wretched, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

R. Of the End of this age and the coming of Christ

We believe that the end of this age is rapidly approaching; that this age shall end in the personal, bodily and pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ to the earth; that at this time the dead in Christ shall be raised and living saints changes, and that this shall constitute the first resurrection; that after this resurrection Christ shall judge the works of all believers and give rewards for faithful service; that after the millennial reign of Christ on earth with His saints, the wicked dead shall be raised to the White Throne Judgment, from which they shall be cast into a hell of eternal fire, while the righteous shall enjoy the bliss of heaven forever in the presence of the Lord.

S. Lawsuits between Believers (Amendment)

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32) .

Note: Amendment S was presented to Larkinsville Missionary Baptist Church on September 9, 1998; September 13, 1998; September 20, 1998; September 27, 1998; October 4, 1998; and accepted by vote on October 7, 1998 (Moderator: Pastor Donald Hutchins; Motion: Bro. Jimmy Culver; Second, Bro. Ronnie Dolberry) .