

April 12, 2015(revised 2022)

**THE GUIDING DOCUMENTS  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH WEST JEFFERSON, NC**

**CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

This body shall be known as:  
First Baptist Church West Jefferson, Ashe County, North Carolina.

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The *vision* of First Baptist Church West Jefferson, NC:  
*To be a harbor of God's love and a beacon of Christ's hope.*

The *mission* of First Baptist Church West Jefferson, NC:  
*To grow in Christ's likeness.*

**ARTICLE III: CORE VALUES**

**Acceptance: *Romans 8:1-11***

- We believe:
  - The Gospel of Jesus Christ is for everyone.
  - God created all people in God's image.
  - God calls us to celebrate the diversity of people and gifts that comprise the body of Christ.
- Our promise to the community:
  - We will accept and respect one another in the fullness of God's grace.

**Freedom: *2 Corinthians 3:17***

- We believe:
  - Freedom is at the core of who we are in Christ.
  - Freedom in Christ includes the freedom of every individual to:
    - ◇ Read and interpret Scripture.
    - ◇ Discern the movement of the Holy Spirit.
    - ◇ Respond to God without pressure.
    - ◇ Be who they are through the expression of ideas, questions, and inquiries.
  - As a church, we are free from outside authority.
- Our promise to the community:
  - We will exercise our freedom to witness for God.
  - We will extend to individuals the same freedoms we enjoy.

**Community: *Matthew 22:39***

- We believe:
  - That as the body of Christ, we are called by God to live together in community.
  - In community, we study, worship, serve, fellowship, play, support one another, and hold one another accountable.
- Our promise to the community:
  - We will follow God's command to "love our neighbor as ourselves."

**Compassion: *John 13:35***

- We believe:
  - Because of God's great compassion for us, God calls us to have compassion for one another.
  - That the world will know we are Jesus' disciples by our love for one another.
- Our promise to the community:
  - We will build relationships on a foundation of love, care, and forgiveness for one another.
  - We will extend Christ's compassion to everyone, remembering that "just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it for me."

**Initiative: *Ephesians 4:1-6***

- We believe:
  - Following the initiative of Jesus and the movement of the Holy Spirit, God calls us to make progress toward the fulfillment of Jesus' vision "on earth as in heaven" – the Kingdom of God.
- Our promise to the community:
  - We will continue our tradition of community leadership, humbly illustrating the best of what it means to be "First", "Anyone who wants to be first, must be the very last, and servant of all." *Mark 9:35*.
  - We will intentionally seek to apply Jesus' vision to our future.

**Spiritual Growth/Formation: *Mark 12:30-31***

- We believe:
  - God's call is to love God with our whole being.
  - God's call is to love our neighbor as ourselves.
  - That all we do, say, hear, and experience as individuals and as a community forms us, including: worship, missions, personal prayer and study, discipleship groups, and fellowship – even committee meetings.
- Our promise to the community:
  - We will faithfully follow Jesus, growing in Christ-likeness through our love of God and neighbor.

**Fellowship: *Acts 2:46***

- We believe:
  - God calls us together to delight in one another.
  - This community is our family.
  - Our spirits receive nourishment as we gather in worship and around table to share food and story.
  - Our hearts find healing in one another's laughter and support.
- Our promise to the community:
  - We will share as we have received.
  - We will receive the stranger as Christ.

## **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**

There shall be four pathways to membership: New Believer, Transfer, Statement of Faith, and Associate.

Membership shall be sought and supported in the following ways:

### ***New Believer:***

- Profess Jesus as Lord.
- Participate in believers' baptism by immersion, or in the case of special circumstances or needs, a different mode of baptism.
- Make a commitment to grow in Christian discipleship (through the life and ministries of this church).
- Encourage participation in a new member's orientation.
- Endorse and make a commitment to live by the vision, mission and core values of this church.

### ***Transfer:***

- Transfer membership from another Christian church.
- Display a commitment to grow in Christian discipleship (through the life and ministries of this church).
- Encourage participation in a new member's orientation.
- Endorse and make a commitment to live by the vision, mission and core values of this church.

### ***Statement of Faith:***

- Affirm a commitment to Jesus as Lord by statement of faith.
- Affirm or participate in believers' baptism.
- Display a commitment to grow in Christian discipleship (through the life and ministries of this church).
- Encourage participation in a new member's orientation.
- Endorse and make a commitment to live by the vision, mission and core values of this church.

### ***Associate:***

- Be a member of another Christian church.
- Display a commitment to grow in Christian discipleship (through the life and ministries of this church and one's church of full membership).
- Encourage participation in a new member's orientation.
- Endorse and make a commitment to live by the vision, mission and core values of this church.
- Be in fellowship and under the watch-care of this faith community during their limited residency in the area.
- Associate members: at the request of a member of another Christian church, a person shall be eligible to be accepted as an associate member. Such persons shall remain a member of their home church but have all privileges and responsibilities of active membership in this church except voting on Guiding Documents in church sessions and having primary leadership over any ministries or committees.

## **ARTICLE V: AFFILIATIONS**

- Affiliations are the officially organized Christian and Baptist partner groups with which our church identifies the most as it relates to our vision, mission, and core values. These groups include:
  - The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
  - The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina
  - Women's Missionary Union
  - WMU of NC
  - Baptists on Mission (of NC)
  - Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
  - Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
  - Ashe County Ministerial Association

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I: OFFICERS\***

The officers of this church shall be:

- A. A pastor and other vocational leadership as needed
- B. Deacons
- C. Trustees
- D. Church Clerk and Assistant Church Clerk
- E. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer
- F. Librarian and Assistant Librarian
- G. Discipleship Director

Duties and responsibilities are listed in Policies and Procedures Manual

### **ARTICLE II: COMMITTEES**

#### **Administrative Committees:**

The committees of this church shall be:

- A. Personnel
- B. Leadership Development
- C. Properties and Space
  - Property and Space Planning
  - Building and Grounds Maintenance and Upkeep
  - Communications and Technology
  - Transportation
  - Foods and Kitchen
- D. Stewardship
- E. Church Documents
  - Guiding Documents-Policy and Procedures Manual
- F. Congregation Information
- G. Safety and Security

Duties and responsibilities are listed in Policies and Procedures Manual

### **ARTICLE III: COUNCILS**

The councils of this church shall be:

- Church Council
- Music Ministry Council
- Children's Ministry Council
- Youth Ministry Council
- Ministry Ideas Council

Duties and responsibilities are listed in Policies and Procedures Manual

## **ARTICLE IV: MINISTRY TEAMS\***

Purpose of Ministry Teams and Task Directives are listed in the Policies and Procedures Manual

### **BASIS FOR MINISTRY TEAMS**

Ministry Teams are the heart of the Biblical concept of leadership and service.

*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

– Ephesians 4:16 (NIV)

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

– Corinthians 12:4-7

### **MINISTRY TEAMS WILL...**

- Begin with people who desire involvement and will build around individuals' gifts.
- Be dedicated to blending varying talents in trying to achieve desired goals.
- Consciously utilize spiritual gifts.

### **MINISTRY TEAM TYPES and PURPOSE**

There will be three kinds of teams:

1. **Mission Teams (Community Oriented):** Carries out a concerted ministry for the church.
2. **Service Teams (Church Oriented):** Work is periodic, easily rotated, and/or requires little planning time.
3. **Teaching Teams (Discipleship Oriented):** Provides leadership in the Sunday Morning Bible Study or in training disciples.

*\* current committees, teams, members and coordinators can be found in the Policies and Procedures Manual and the Leadership Development Committee Report*

## **ARTICLE V: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

*Section 1:* If and when a majority of the members present at the business session at which vote is taken, shall vote in favor of the adoption, these Guiding Documents shall be considered adopted and in effect on January 1, 2016.

*Section 2:* These Guiding Documents may be amended, altered or repealed by a majority vote of the members present at any regular business session of the church, provided, however that notice and proposal of such amendment, alteration, or repeal shall have been given in writing at the preceding regular business session of the church.

*Section 3:* The adoption of these Guiding Documents shall affect a repeal of all previously adopted rules.

*Section 4:* These Guiding Documents shall be reviewed by the Documents Committee every five (5) years.

*Section 5:* The Policies and Procedures Manual shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the Documents Committee.