



*Constitution and Bylaws of
Mill Springs Baptist Church*

Revised and approved June, 2007

Revised and approved: March 1, 2009

Revised and approved: February 21, 2010

Revised and approved: October 23, 2011

Revised and approved: August 5, 2015

---CONSTITUTION---

ARTICLE I: NAME

This body shall be known as the Mill Springs Baptist Church of Jefferson City, Tennessee. This church is an incorporated entity under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

ARTICLE II: VISION STATEMENT

To evangelize the lost at home and abroad and then to disciple believers into Christlikeness.

ARTICLE III: DOCTRINE

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as amended reflects the doctrinal position of this church.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH POLITY

The government of the church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but insofar as it is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Jefferson County Association, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

---BY-LAWS---

ARTICLE I: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

This is an autonomous and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 1: Qualifications for membership

The membership of this Church shall consist of such persons who confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord, and who have been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Transfer members coming from participating Baptist churches must present a letter from their previous church indicating that they are currently a member in good standing and be affirmed by the congregation of MSBC.

Transfer members coming from non-Baptist churches must give a testimony consistent with Christian conversion, be Scripturally baptized by immersion with the understanding that baptism is symbolic of the new life in Christ, and be affirmed by the congregation of MSBC.

As Watchcare Members. The Watchcare Ministry at MSBC is primarily for college students or other seasonal residents or our community, who are members of another church and yet desire to be connected with a local church family while living in our community. A watchcare member may participate in corporate worship, discipleship, fellowship, evangelism, and service at MSBC without transferring membership from his home church. Watchcare members are not allowed to vote on congregational matters. In addition, watchcare members must meet all additional conditions and approvals as may be required by the church to enter into various types of service. Watchcare members must present a letter from their previous church indicating that they are currently a member in good standing and also be affirmed by the congregation of MSBC. All members, including Watchcare Members, must adhere to the Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality found in Section 6.

Section 2: Rights and duties of church membership

Such members as are in full and regular standing, are hereby interpreted to mean those members of the church who are sound in doctrine, engaged actively in the work of this church, regular in attendance at the stated services of this church, and contribute regularly and systematically to the support of the church.

Church members who do not meet these criteria are considered to be inactive members.

Active members of the church are entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present. The deacon body would make the final determination in the event of a dispute concerning the eligibility of an individual member's vote.

Only active church members are eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church.

Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church.

Section 3: Termination of church membership

Membership shall be terminated by death, transfer of letter to another Baptist church, or exclusion by church action (See Article 1, Section 4).

Section 4: Discipline

It shall be the basic purpose of the MSBC to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church, staff and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment will be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member towards another. Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the welfare of the church will best be served by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose; the church will proceed to declare the offender to no longer be in the membership of the church.

Section 5: Restoration

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has made it necessary for the church to exclude him will upon his request be restored to membership by two-thirds vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation.

Section 6: Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, including, but not limited to, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, attempting to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, who join into any type of formal membership in the church as defined in Section 1 above or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be reprimanded as such actions are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

ARTICLE II: CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1: Pastor

The Senior Pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church.

The Senior Pastor leads the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

Duties of the pastor

The Senior Pastor of this church shall be a regularly ordained minister of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Senior Pastor shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the church under the authority of Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd. The Senior Pastor shall minister to the church at all regular and appointed times of worship and service and to individual members whenever possible.

The Senior Pastor shall act as moderator of church business meetings.

The Senior Pastor shall function as the general supervisor of all church staff. The deacons will be consulted if conflicts involving a staff member and the Senior Pastor cannot be resolved (Section 3:A Duties of Deacons).

The Senior Pastor shall counsel with the deacons and/or Finance Committee regarding changes in employee status (i.e. full-time/part-time), employee benefits, and/or changes in salary. If approved by the deacons, the deacons shall bring a motion on the proposed changes before the church for approval in a properly called business meeting.

The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for the enforcement of all policies and procedures related to employees and staff. Should changes to these procedures be warranted, the Senior Pastor shall make such recommendations in writing to the deacon body for approval.

The calling of a pastor

The Senior Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. A pulpit committee shall be nominated by the deacons and elected for the purpose of calling a Senior Pastor. The pulpit committee shall have no more than seven members, three of which shall be deacons and the committee will be chaired by a deacon. The election of the Senior Pastor shall take place by the congregation at a meeting called for this purpose, of which at least ten (10) days notice has been given. Only one candidate may be nominated at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for confirmation.

Resignation of pastor

The Senior Pastor may relinquish the office as pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church at the time of resignation. The Church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant; such action taking place at a meeting called by the deacons. A minimum of (10) days notice shall be given to the congregation for such a meeting. The moderator for this meeting will be decided by the deacons. The vote to dismiss the Senior Pastor shall be by ballot and require three-fourths affirmation of the members present.

Section 2: Church staff

Ministerial staff

All ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices.

The church may elect to vacate ministerial staff positions upon the recommendation of the deacons and majority vote of the church at a meeting called for this purpose of which at least ten (10) days notice is given. Additionally administrative leave may be implemented by the deacons until such time as a special-called business meeting can be held.

Non-ministerial staff

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for such positions.

All paid employees shall be nominated by the deacon body and elected by majority vote of the congregation at a meeting called for this purpose of which at least ten (10) days notice is given.

The church may elect to vacate non-ministerial staff positions upon the recommendation of the deacons and majority vote of the church at a meeting called for this purpose of which at least ten (10) days notice is given.

Additionally administrative leave may be implemented by the deacons until such time as a special-called business meeting can be held.

Section 3: Deacons

In accordance with the New Testament, deacons are servants of the church and oversee the spiritual and physical well-being of the congregation. Deacons support the pastor by ministering to the congregation, leading the church to achieve its mission, proclaiming the gospel, administering church affairs, and caring for church members and other persons in the community.

A. Duties of deacons

Deacons must be above reproach and serve as examples to the congregation guarding the unity of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Deacons serve as a council of advice and in conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. They work with the pastor to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress in the church in evangelism and discipleship.

Deacons are responsible to establish and maintain personal relations with and inspiring oversight of all church members. Deacons must seek to know the physical needs and the moral and spiritual struggles of the members and serve the whole church in relieving, encouraging, developing, and serving all who are in need.

Deacons have oversight, along with the pastor, for the discipline of the church. Such oversight shall be in cooperation with the pastor, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and in obedience to the principles set forth in Matt 18: 15-17; 1 Cor 5:9-13; 1 Thess 5:12-15. The deacons shall be free to call upon any members of the church to aid in disciplinary process.

Deacons may provide for pulpit supply in the case of absence or inability of the pastor subject to advice from and conference with him. In any period when the church is without a pastor, the deacons will arrange for temporary pulpit supply and recommend a pulpit committee to the church for approval.

The deacons will, with the pastor, serve as the deacon nominating committee for all prospective deacon nominees to assure that such men they recommend to the church for the office of deacon have met the qualifications set forth in Section 3B of these bylaws.

The deacons shall assist the pastor in preparing and administering the Lord's Supper and provide assistance as needed at baptismal services.

The deacons shall oversee the receiving, counting, recording, and securing of all offerings.

The deacons are responsible for approving the policies and procedures that govern the internal operations of all standing and non-standing committees.

The deacons are responsible for overseeing the process for calling ministerial staff and hiring non-ministerial staff as outlined in the church's policies and procedures.

The deacons shall serve as the primary governing body in the event a conflict arises between staff members (ministerial and non-ministerial) and the Senior Pastor. Any employee or staff member can request to meet with the deacons during any regular or special-called Deacon's Meeting.

B. Qualification of deacons

Deacons must be committed to the spiritual qualifications as set forth in I Tim 3:1-13 and in Acts 6:1-7.

Deacons should be those filled with the Holy Spirit and of proven Christian character and habits, faithful in practicing Biblical stewardship of his time and finances.

Deacons should be able ministers and servants to others and capable of assisting the pastor in ministering to the spiritual needs of the congregation.

Deacons should be respected men in the church, the home, and the community, and should demonstrate mature judgment in all matters.

Deacons shall be members of this church willing to participate actively in all deacon functions, faithful and loyal to all programs of the church, and regular in worship service attendance.

A deacon shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age and a member of this church for at least one year at the time of election.

Only one member of any immediate family shall serve as deacon at any one time.

C. Nomination and election of deacons

Vacancies in the deacon body may occur in the event a deacon elects to become inactive, moves church membership, dies, or is terminated (see section F).

Upon being notified that a vacancy exists, the deacon nominating committee shall initiate action to fill the vacancy.

The church will be informed regarding the number of deacon vacancies and the Deacon Nominating Committee will solicit the names of eligible men from the congregation at that time.

The Deacon Nominating Committee shall be composed of all active deacons and the pastor.

The Deacon Nominating Committee will consider each candidate, conduct interviews, pray, and seek a consensus prior to presenting recommendations to the church for approval during a regular or special called business meeting.

All candidates being nominated to the church by the Deacon Nominating Committee must share their testimony before the church and answer any questions from the congregation during a previously announced meeting occurring no less than one week prior to deacon election.

D. Ordination of deacons

All elected and non-ordained candidates shall be ordained prior to serving as deacon.

E. Number of deacons

There may be seven (7) deacons for the first two hundred fifty (250) or less whose names are on the church roll and one (1) additional deacon allowed for each additional fifty (50) members.

F. Termination of deacons

Deacons who fail to perform their duties or prove unworthy of the office of deacon may be relieved of their responsibilities by vote of the church membership at a regular business meeting at which at least ten (10) days notice is given.

Section 4: Moderator

The moderator of this church shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor, the duty as presiding moderator will go in the following order: associate pastor, chairman of deacons, or another deacon. In the absence of all the above so named, the meeting will be rescheduled.

A. Duties of Moderator

The church moderator is to call the church to order and preside over the business meeting.

Section 5: Church clerk

The church clerk, also known as the Secretary of the corporation, is nominated by the Committee on Nominations and voted on by the church. An assistant clerk (Secretary) shall be also appointed in the same manner.

A. Duties of church clerk

The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping a record of all official actions of the church and maintaining an up-to-date record of all church members. All church records are church property, and shall be kept in the church office.

Section 6: Church treasurer

The church treasurer shall be known as the Financial Officer of the corporation.

A. Duties of Church Treasurer

The Financial Officer will be nominated by the Committee on Nominations and voted on annually by the church. An assistant treasurer (Financial officer) shall also be appointed in the same manner.

It shall be the duty of the Financial Officer to periodically reconcile all money counting records and deposit slips, review all payment vouchers, financial invoices and payroll calculations prior to disbursement of funds, and periodically reconcile bank statements. The financial records may be audited at any time.

Section 7: Trustees

The trustees, also known as the Board of Directors, shall be composed of the pastor, a deacon designate, and three active church members nominated by the Committee on Nominations and approved by vote of the church. The Board of Directors shall elect a chairman who is referred to as the President of the Corporation.

A. Duties of Trustees

The Board of Directors shall have oversight of all physical assets legally titled to and/or owned by the corporation.

The Board of Directors will bring motions to the church involving alterations, improvements, acquisitions, and/or usage plans involving the corporation's physical assets. All such motions must be approved by the church during a regular or special called business meeting.

The Board of Directors shall take measures to legally protect and secure the corporation's physical assets and make a report to the church periodically regarding such measures.

The Board of Directors shall transact all legal affairs authorized by the church. The Board of Directors cannot conduct any business for the corporation except as authorized by the church in accordance with these bylaws.

ARTICLE III: CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The church shall maintain programs such as Bible teaching, church member training, church leader training, new member orientation, mission education, action and support and music education, training and performance. The Sunday School shall be the basic organization of the Bible teaching program. The church shall provide human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH COMMITTEES

Committees shall be composed of active church members.

Nominations to fill committee vacancies may be presented by the Committee on Nominations at any regular business meeting or special called meeting.

The Committee on Nominations may recommend, with church approval, special committees to the church as special needs arise.

All committees are responsible for electing their own chairman.

Committees must keep accurate minutes of all meeting and give a report to the church at each quarterly business meeting.

All committees shall operate according to internal policies that are set by the Committee on Nominations and agreed on by the deacon body but any polices that conflict with these bylaws are invalid.

Section 1: Committee on Nominations

The Committee on Nominations consists of the pastor, a deacon designate, and three active church members who are nominated by the deacons and voted on by the church.

The Committee on Nominations shall make nominations to fill committee vacancies (except the Committee on Nominations) to the church for congregational approval at any business meeting.

The Committee on Nominations shall make nominations to fill all elected teacher positions.

The Committee on Nominations oversees the appointment of all committee members to the church's standing committees.

Section 2: Finance Committee

The Finance Committee consists of the pastor, the financial officer, a deacon designate, and three active church members who are nominated by the Committee on Nominations and voted on by the church.

The Finance Committee shall, after consideration of budget requests from staff and church membership, develop, and present the church budget for congregational vote for each calendar year.

The Finance Committee is responsible for a system of accounting for the handling of all church funds.

The Finance Committee shall, after consideration of the budget receipts and expenses, offer recommendations for the salary schedules of all paid staff members to the church for approval.

ARTICLE V: CHURCH ORDINANCES

Section 1: Baptism

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

Baptism shall be by immersion in water.

The pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism.

Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.

Section 2: The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is an act of worship whereby members of this church and other Christians present partake of bread and the fruit of the vine, which symbolize Christ's broken body and shed blood for us, in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross.

The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly.

The pastor, and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper in the worship services and to infirmed members at other times and/or places as appropriate and as requested by such members.

ARTICLE VI: CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1: Worship services

The church shall meet regularly at regularly appointed times for worship. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the elements of these services.

Revival and other special services shall be held at the discretion of the pastor.

Section 2: Regular business meetings

The church shall hold regular quarterly business meetings during which committee's may report and/or the church may conduct business in accordance with these bylaws.

Section 3: Special-called business meetings

The church may conduct called business meetings at any time and for any matter provided a ten (10) day notice is given to the congregation.

Such notice may be given at regularly scheduled worship service and include the general subject for the meeting, date, and meeting time.

ARTICLE VII: MISCELLANEOUS

Section 1: Quorum

The quorum consists of all church members who attend the business meeting, provided such meeting has been properly called.

Section 2: Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

Section 3: Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

Section 4: Amendments

The deacons shall serve as the review committee for proposed changes to the constitution and by-laws, and shall recommend such amendments to the church for vote at any business meeting.

All proposed amendments must be presented to the congregation, in writing, at least fourteen days prior to the vote.