



The Constitution and Bylaws

Christ Baptist Church

Revised 2003

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ARTICLE I – Title

The name of this church shall be Christ Baptist Church of Worcester, Massachusetts.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

The purpose of this congregation is to give visible form to that faith and fellowship to which God has called his people. We acknowledge ourselves to be a local manifestation of the universal church in and through which Jesus Christ continues to minister to the world by his Holy Spirit. It shall seek to fulfill this purpose through the public worship of God, the preaching of the Gospel, consistent Christian living by its members, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor and Christian education.

ARTICLE III – Policy

Its government shall be vested in the body that is comprised of the active membership. We are a local independent New Testament church that will maintain affiliation and cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE IV – Doctrine

This church accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired record of God's revelatory actions in human history and as authoritative basis for its doctrine and practice. As a summary of the principles for Christian conduct among its members it adopts the following 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 the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God 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 advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel through all nations. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to teach our children the Christian truths; to seek salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements, exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further 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 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 Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant, the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE V – Membership

Section 1. **Admission of members** - Persons may be received into membership by any of the following means, subject in each case to the recommendation of the board of deacons and the vote of the church;

By Baptism: Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and adopts substantially the views of faith and principles of this church and is baptized by immersion may be received into the fellowship of the church.

By Letter: Any person, who is in substantial accord with the views of faith and principles of this church, will be received by letter from any Baptist church. Members received into this church by letter from any other evangelical church are entitled to all rights and privileges of the church.

By Experience: A believer of worthy character who has formerly been a member of a Baptist church, and is in substantial accord with the views of faith and principles of this church, but cannot present a letter from that church for sufficient reason, may be received upon statement of his/her Christian experience and approved by the appropriate church governing body. Members received into this church by experience from any other evangelical church are entitled to all rights and privileges of the church.

By Restoration: Any person, who has lost his/her membership for any reason, may be restored to membership upon recommendation and approval of the appropriate church governing body.

Section 2. **Dismissal of members** - Persons may be dismissed from membership by any of the following means;

By Death

By Letter: Any member who desires a letter of dismissal to any other church may receive it upon request and upon the recommendation of the board of the deaconate and the vote of the church. The name of the church to which membership is requested shall be named in the request and the letter shall be sent to the pastor or clerk of that church.

By Exclusion: Should any member become an offense to the church and its good name, by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by consistent breach of his/her covenant vows, the church may terminate his/her membership, after due notice and a hearing before the board of the deaconate and faithful effort has been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.

Section 3. **Duties of members** – Members are expected to be faithful in all spiritual duties essential to the Christian life, to attend the services of this church regularly, and give regularly for its support and benevolences, and to share in its organized work.

Section 4. **Discipline of members** – When a member has been inactive for a period of one year, without manifesting any interest therein by attending services, communicating with the church and contributing to its support as stated in the scripture, the church may, upon recommendation by the board of the deaconate, transfer his/her name to the Inactive Membership List. Consideration of such action shall only be made after a reasonable number of calls have been made to encourage and assist in a renewal of the covenant relationship. This procedure shall have no application if the absence, delinquency, or arrearage is excused by the Pastor and approved by the appropriate church governing body on account of sickness, lack of income, or other reasonable cause. Persons whose names are on the Inactive Membership List shall not be counted or reported as members, may not have voting privileges in church matters and may not hold office. Any person on this list, who renews his/her active walk with the church and the fulfillment of his/her covenant obligations, may be restored to active membership as approved by the appropriate church governing body.

ARTICLE VI – The Pastor and Officers

Section 1. **The Pastor** – The pastor shall preach the Gospel, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, watch over the membership, and have in his charge 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 and its auxiliary organizations. The pastor shall work with the various boards and committees in the maintenance and development of the total program and outreach of the church.

Section 2. **The Moderator** – The moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the church and at all meetings of the church council. This person shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one year.

Section 3. **The Vice Moderator** – The vice moderator shall serve in the absence of the moderator and shall be elected at the annual meeting for a one-year term.

Section 4. **The Church Clerk** – The clerk shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one year. The duties of the clerk are:

- a. To keep complete records of the transaction of all business at the meetings of the church and the church council.
- b. To present this record for approval at the next following meeting of the church or the church council.
- c. To maintain active and inactive membership lists with records of baptisms and dismissals.
- d. To issue letters of dismissal as approved by the church
- e. To assist in preparing denominational reports.
- f. To prepare the clerk's portion of the annual report.
- g. To preserve on file all communications and written reports.
- h. To give legal notice of all meetings where such is required by this constitution.
- i. To notify all officers, committee members and delegates of their election or appointment.
- j. To deliver immediately to his/her successor all books and records that are the clerk's responsibility

Section 5. **The Church Treasurer** – The treasurer shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one year. The duties of the treasurer are:

- a. To act as the custodian of church funds except the deaconate fund.
- b. To write all checks and deposit funds in the name of the church.
- c. To keep separate accounts of all funds raised or contributed for particular purposes.
- d. To disburse such funds only for their specific purposes.
- e. To act as custodian of all securities, investments, title papers and other valuable documents of the church as well as access to the safe deposit box accompanied by either the pastor or the chairperson of the board of trustees. At least two of the three aforementioned individuals must be present to open the safe deposit box.
- f. To distribute funds for the support of the church and the reduction of the church indebtedness upon the order of the board of trustees.
- g. To present to the church an itemized report of receipts and disbursements showing the actual condition of the church at each church business meeting and annual meeting. The annual report is to be audited at the discretion of the church council.
- h. To pay all funds received for the wider mission of the church regularly.
- i. To occasionally recommend the transfer of funds from the checking to the savings account of the church at any business meeting.
- j. To transfer such funds upon the approval of the church.
- k. To present any other financial reports as may be requested by the church.
- l. To immediately deliver all books and records that are the treasurer's responsibility to his/her success each annual meeting to serve for one year. The duties of the financial secretary are:

Section 6. **The Financial Secretary** – The financial secretary shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one year. The duties of the financial secretary are:

- a. To supply each member of the church with pledge cards and envelopes for contribution to the church expenses and *benevolences*.
- b. To keep a record of all pledges made.
- c. To collect all monies contributed and keep a correct account thereof between the church and

- its members.
- d. To deposit weekly such collections in the bank selected by the board of trustees and render a statement thereof to the treasurer.
 - e. To report at the end of each fiscal year to the church at the annual meeting an account of the funds received for the various purposes of the church.
 - f. To report annually to the board of the deaconate, the names of church members who have made contributions of record toward church expenses or benevolences.
 - g. To act as the receiving agent for funds contributed by members for missions and benevolences.
 - h. To notify the family of any deceased member of any contributions made to the church in memory of the deceased.
 - i. To notify the church of any contributions to the Memorial Fund.
 - j. To deliver immediately to his/her successor all books and records that pertain to that office.

Section 7. **The Superintendent of the Church School** -- The superintendent shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for one year. The duties of the superintendent are:

- a. To be the administrator of the church school, exercising the authority and performing the duties pertaining to this office following general directives and policies of the board of Christian Education.
- b. To work with the Board of education in developing and carrying out the Christian education program of the church as an ex-officio member of the board.

Section 8. **Qualifications of Officers** -- All officers elected by the church must be active members and eighteen years of age or older.

ARTICLE VII -- THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Section 1. **Membership** -- The Church Council shall be composed of the elected officers of the church, the chairpersons of the boards, one at-large member from the church who is elected annually and is not a member of any of the boards. A representative from any auxiliary organization of the church that has been in active existence for a period of at least two years, may be represented, but will not have voting privileges. After the two years, the church council must approve the organization.

Section 2. **Duties and Function of the Council** -- The council shall serve as the coordinating body of the church to determine the overall policy and activities of the various boards and committees. The specific functions of the council are:

- a. To evaluate all plans and programs of the church with the interest and welfare of the church as a whole in mind.
- b. To consider matters of importance to the church or its members.
- c. To appoint all standing and ad hoc committees.
- d. To appoint all delegates to represent the church in all church bodies in which the church is entitled to official representation.
- e. To fill any vacancies in offices until the next annual meeting.
- f. To provide for a periodic auditing of the church financial records.
- g. To carry out any long range planning for the church.
- h. To prepare a proposed budget for presentation to the church at the appropriate time. When meeting to consider the budget, the council will recognize as a nonvoting member a replacement for any absent council member. If the absent member is a chairperson of a board, the replacement must come from that board. Any other absent council member may appoint a replacement from the church body.

- i. To initiate programs for the church and recommend to the respective boards appropriate action.
- j. To request reports from its members and require each to report to his/her constituency the action and recommendations of the council.
- k. To authorize the church clerk to report on its activities and actions at all church business meetings and the annual meeting.
- l. To monitor and supervise with the pastor, all church boards and committees and have final authority over them.

Section 3. **Absentee Representation** – Any chairperson of a board on the council may appoint a member of that board to represent him/her at meetings of the council in the event of absence. Any other person on the council may appoint a replacement from the church body at large in event of absence. These replacements do not have voting privileges.

Section 4. **Meetings** – The church council will meet throughout the year when there are matters of importance worthy of its consideration.

ARTICLE VIII – THE BOARDS

Section 1. **The Board of Deacons/Deaconesses** – This board will consist of a maximum of seven members elected for three years at the annual meeting. Any member may serve two consecutive terms. If after that period of time a suitable replacement cannot be found, the deacon or deaconess may continue to serve indefinitely with a periodic review after each additional term. This board is responsible for the Fellowship Fund that is collected on every Communion Sunday. The board must report the amount of this fund at the business meetings, and report to the church council all expenditures of the fund. This fund will be disbursed in cases of financial need and distress within the church membership. Also, this money may be disbursed to families and/or persons outside of the church where financial need and distress is present only on a unanimous decision of the board. The qualifications for the office of deacon are the qualifications found in I Timothy 3:8-13.

Deaconesses are deacons' assistants who will help in performing their duties. The duties of this board are:

- a. To choose a chairperson and secretary/treasurer annually.
- b. To meet monthly unless the chairperson feels it is not necessary and informs the members in advance.
- c. To assist the pastor in carrying out the pastoral duties.
- d. To consider all applicants for church membership and all requests for letters of dismissal.
- e. To cooperate with the pastor in providing pulpit supply and the leaders of the prayer meetings in cases of absence by the pastor.
- f. To visit members and care for the sick, needy, and distressed of the church.
- g. To provide for the Lord's Supper and aid in its administration.
- h. To prepare a written report for each annual meeting of its activities and involvement in the ministry of the church.

Section 2. **The Board of Trustees** – This board shall be composed of a maximum of five members, three of whom shall be elected at the annual meeting for terms of three years. The other two members are the treasurer and the financial secretary who hold full membership with voting privileges. Those members serving three -year terms may serve two consecutive terms. If after that period of time a suitable replacement cannot be found, the trustee may continue to serve indefinitely with periodic review after each additional term. The clerk shall be present when so requested by the board. The board shall hold in trust all property belonging to the church and shall take all necessary measures for its protection, management and upkeep. The duties of this board are:

- a. To choose a secretary and chairperson annually.

- b. To meet monthly unless the chairperson feels it is not necessary and informs the members in advance.
- c. To determine the use of the church buildings for all extra or secular purposes but shall have no power to buy, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without specific vote of the church authorizing such action.
- d. To designate the bank where the funds of the church shall be deposited.
- e. To secure the services of a caretaker when instructed by the church at such salary as is authorized by the church and to supervise this work.
- f. To plan for the maintenance of the physical plant of the church either through the use of volunteers or paid workers. It is not implied that the trustees do the work themselves.
- g. To make a written report to the church at the annual meeting and at such other times as may be requested.

Section 3. **The Board of Christian Education** – There shall be a board of Christian education composed of a maximum of five members. The membership shall be elected at the annual meeting for three-year terms. Any member may serve two consecutive terms. If after that period of time a suitable replacement cannot be found, that member may continue to serve indefinitely with a periodic review after each additional term. The duties of this board are:

- a. To choose a chairperson and secretary annually. If a superintendent is not elected to office, the chairperson shall assume those duties.
- b. To meet monthly unless the chairperson feels it is not necessary and informs the members in advance.
- c. To be responsible for the organization and administration of the entire educational program of the church.
- d. To develop and interpret to the constituency of the church the educational objectives and goals.
- e. To study the educational needs of the church and to make the appropriate decisions on such issues as, scheduling events, use of classrooms, assignment and training of teachers and workers, evaluating and choosing appropriate curriculum and educational resources, developing new ways of doing Christian education, and any other issues that fall within the purview of this committee.
- f. To prepare an annual budget for the educational program.
- g. To make a written report of its work to the church at the annual meeting.

Section 4. **Special Meetings and Quorums** – The chairpersons of the respective boards and/or the pastor may call special meetings of the boards. The quorum at any board meeting shall consist of a majority of the elected members. This shall also apply to church council meetings.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

Section 1. **The Music Committee** – This committee, appointed by the church council, shall cooperate with the pastor in the selection of an organist and choir director and in the arrangement of the music for the church services, especially at times when the choir is not regularly performing. It shall incur expense only as authorized by the church council.

Section 2. **The Ministry of Courtesy Committee** – This committee, appointed by the church council, shall make arrangements to greet people, attend to seat the congregation, and receive the offering except as otherwise provided.

Section 3. **The Nominating Committee** – This committee shall be appointed by the church council. Its

purpose is to prepare in advance a list of nominations of those qualified to serve in the offices and positions that open each year, and to present this list to the church at the annual meeting. This committee should interview each nominee proposed and ascertain his/her willingness to serve if elected. This list should be posted in the church at least a week before the annual meeting.

Section 4. **The Pulpit Committee** – When the pastorate is vacant, a pulpit committee composed of five members of the church representing the various boards and offices shall be appointed by the church council. This committee shall take the necessary steps to secure a pastor. It shall investigate the merits of each candidate under consideration in regard to personal character, education, ministerial record, and preaching ability in determining his fitness for this pastorate. When a suitable person is found, the committee shall recommend that person to the church council for presentation to the church.

Section 5. **The Pastoral Relations Committee** – This committee shall consist of the pulpit committee that was involved in calling the present pastor. This committee will change only with the coming of another pastor. Its purpose is to foster constructive communication between the congregation and its pastoral leadership and to implement the congregation's responsibility for its pastor's professional and personal well-being.

Section 6. **Other Special Committees** – The church council has the power to appoint any other committees that it may deem necessary for the carrying out of the ministry of this church in a more effective way. These special committees are responsible to the council for direction and appropriate action and may be dissolved by decision of the council.

ARTICLE X – The Pastorate

Section 1. **Calling a Pastor** – The call of a pastor shall come before the church at a regularly called business meeting. Notice of such meeting and its purpose is to be read from the pulpit on two consecutive Sundays. A vote of three-fourths of the members present and qualified to vote, (providing there are seventy five percent of the members present and voting), shall be necessary to extend a call. Only one candidate shall be presented to the church at one time. The vote shall be by written ballot.

Section 2. **Termination of the Pastorate** – The term of office may be ended upon sixty days notice on the part of the pastor, or of the church, or upon a shorter time by mutual consent.

ARTICLE XI – Elections

Section 1. **Time** – The annual election of officers shall be held during the annual meeting of the church during the month of May.

Section 2. **Qualifications of Voters** – All matters pertaining to the purchase, sale or mortgaging of property shall be voted on only by active members who are eighteen years of age or older. On all other matters active members sixteen years of age or older are eligible to vote.

Section 3. **Procedure** – At least one week before the election, the nominating committee shall post, in the church, the names of one or more persons for each office to be filled

Section 4. **Vacancies** – See Article VII, Section 2.

ARTICLE XII – Meetings

Section 1. **Worship Services** – Public worship services shall be held on each Lord's Day. Church school shall hold weekly meetings at a time fixed by the church council and approved by the church. Other meetings and activities shall be held at appropriate times subject to the approval of the church council. The Lord's

Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday morning of the month and at such other times as the church may determine. Occasional religious meetings may be scheduled by the pastor, at his discretion, by the Board of Deacons/Deaconesses, or by vote of the church.

Section 2. **Business Meetings** – The annual business meeting shall be held during the month of May on a day decided upon by the church council. At this meeting the annual reports of the various officers, boards, and any other organization within the church, will be presented along with the election of new officers and members of the boards. Other appropriate business will be transacted as well. A fall business meeting, if needed, will be held in October. Signed written reports may be required at these meetings of the various officers and board chairpersons. The quorum for the transaction of business at the business meetings of the church shall be twelve active members.

Section 3. **Special Church Meetings** – Special business meetings may be called at any time by the pastor or by the clerk. Notice of such meeting and the subject for which it is called shall be given from the pulpit at least one week in advance of the date of the meeting. At any regular meetings of worship, however, the church may without notice act upon the reception of members or the dismissal of members to other churches, but not upon extraordinary business.

ARTICLE XIII – Pulpit Use

Any guest speaker, preacher, or minister who wishes to take the pulpit of the church on any given occasion, must first obtain approval from the deaconate and then the pastor, since he is the spiritual leader of the church. In the event that the deaconate and the pastor disagree, the church council will resolve the matter. The church should not place anyone in the pulpit without prior approval. Taking the pulpit would include preaching or officiating at weddings, funerals or other special events.

ARTICLE XIV – Church Year

The fiscal year of the church shall be from May 1st through April 30th.

ARTICLE XV – Amendments

This constitution and by-laws may be amended at any regular or called business meeting of the church by a two-thirds vote, provided a quorum is present and voting and that notice of such amendment, stating the proposed change, shall have been given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays.

ARTICLE XVI – Transition

Members of boards and committees who are in office during the changeover to the revised constitution will finish out their respective terms and then become subject to the revised constitution.