



# Constitution & Bylaws

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Boone Trail Baptist Church  
1985 Carroll Creek Road  
Johnson City, TN 37615  
(423) 282-1341

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# **CONSTITUTION**

## **I. PREAMBLE**

With firm conviction that we are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern and protect the body in an orderly and Biblical manner. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

## **II. CHURCH NAME**

This body shall be known as Boone Trail Baptist Church of Johnson City, Tennessee, located at 1985 Carroll Creek Road.

## **III. OBJECTIVES**

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His Deity, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God by seeking the heart of Christ through the hearing and studying of His word.

To be a church who ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and to the world in Jesus' name.

To be a church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

## **IV. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (See Article II of the Bylaws.)

## **V. MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Boone Trail Baptist Church is to reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to involve every member in consistent acts of worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry.

## **VI. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS**

The governance of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership. (See Article I of the Bylaws.)

This church is subject to control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Holston Baptist Association, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

# **BYLAWS**

## **I. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP<sup>1</sup>**

Church membership is a formal covenant relationship between a church and a Christian characterized by the church's affirmation and oversight of a Christian's discipleship and the Christian's submission to living out his or her discipleship in the care of the church.

### **Requirements of Membership (Conditions)**

In order to become a member of Boone Trail Baptist Church, the following requirements must be met:

1. Profession of faith in Jesus Christ;
2. Baptism by immersion, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration;
3. Recommendation by the pastors;
4. Affirmation by the church family;
5. Agreement to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith [Baptist Faith and Message 2000]; and
6. Promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant

### **Responsibilities of Membership (Charge)**

Each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of Boone Trail Baptist Church. Only those who are members of this congregation shall be entitled to serve in the teaching ministries of the church, unless invited by the pastors. Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, decisions regarding membership status, and on any other such matter as may be submitted to a vote.

### **Termination of Membership (Cessation)**

Boone Trail shall recognize the termination/cessation of a person's membership for the following reasons:

1. Death;
2. Joining of another church;
3. By act of church discipline upon the vote of the members at a regular or special called meeting of the members. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

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<sup>1</sup> Article I. "Church Membership" wholly replaces previous Article I. "Church Membership," as adopted by vote at the Family Meeting held on December 8, 2019.

## Church Covenant

As members of Boone Trail Baptist Church, we affirm this covenant with one another by God's grace, for our good, and ultimately for God's glory.

Having been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup> and to surrender our lives to Him<sup>2</sup>, and having been baptized as Christians in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit<sup>3</sup>, we covenant together to glorify God<sup>4</sup> by making disciples<sup>5</sup> of all nations<sup>6</sup>.

Together, we will draw near to God in worship<sup>7</sup>. We will delight in the glory of God<sup>8</sup>, depend on the presence of God<sup>9</sup>, grow in the knowledge of God<sup>10</sup>, and submit to the Word of God as the all-sufficient authority in our lives and in His church<sup>11</sup>.

Together, we will hold fast to the hope we profess<sup>12</sup>. We will regularly participate in communion as we solemnly and joyfully remember the past work of Christ on the cross, celebrate the present work of Christ at the Father's right hand, and anticipate the future work of Christ in His return for His bride<sup>13</sup>.

Together, we will spur one another on to love and good deeds<sup>14</sup>. We will meet with one another consistently<sup>15</sup>, pray for one another regularly<sup>16</sup>, and serve one another selflessly<sup>17</sup>. We will share each other's joys and bear each other's burdens<sup>18</sup>. We will edify one another with our speech<sup>19</sup> and encourage one another with our example<sup>20</sup>. We will humbly and gently confront one another and receive correction from one another in accordance with a New Testament understanding of church discipline and restoration<sup>21</sup>. We will give cheerfully and generously to the support of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations<sup>22</sup>.

Together, we will submit to the leadership of pastors who have been entrusted by God to serve and care for this body by teaching the Word of Christ to us and modeling the character of Christ before us, and we will affirm deacons as leading servants in the church<sup>23</sup>. If we move from this local body, we will as soon as possible unite with another local church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word<sup>24</sup>.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all<sup>25</sup>.

Amen.

## Scripture References:

- <sup>1</sup> Acts 2:38; 16:31; 20:21; Romans 10:9-10
- <sup>2</sup> Luke 14:25-33
- <sup>3</sup> Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41; Romans 6:1-4
- <sup>4</sup> Isaiah 43:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31
- <sup>5</sup> Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2
- <sup>6</sup> Psalm 67:1-2; Revelation 7:9-10
- <sup>7</sup> Hebrews 10:22; Romans 12:1-2
- <sup>8</sup> Psalm 16:11; 37:4; 63:1-11;  
1 Corinthians 10:31
- <sup>9</sup> Exodus 33:14-18; Matthew 28:20;  
John 15:5; James 4:8
- <sup>10</sup> Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:9-12;  
2 Peter 3:17-18
- <sup>11</sup> 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Psalm 19:7-11;  
119:105-112; 2 Timothy 4:2-4
- <sup>12</sup> Hebrews 10:23
- <sup>13</sup> Luke 22:7-23; Acts 2:42;  
1 Corinthians 11:23-32
- <sup>14</sup> Hebrews 10:24
- <sup>15</sup> Hebrews 10:25
- <sup>16</sup> Philippians 1:3-6
- <sup>17</sup> Romans 12:9-13
- <sup>18</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:26; 2 Corinthians 2:3;  
Galatians 6:2
- <sup>19</sup> Ephesians 4:29-32
- <sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1; Philippians 4:9
- <sup>21</sup> Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13;  
Galatians 6:1
- <sup>22</sup> 2 Corinthians 8-9
- <sup>23</sup> Hebrews 13:17; Acts 6:1-7; 20:28-31;  
1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-20; 1 Peter 5:1-4
- <sup>24</sup> Hebrews 10:25
- <sup>25</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:14

## II. CHURCH ORDINANCES

### 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.

#### A. Baptism of the believer is:

1. A symbolic act to communicate his salvation in picture language to any person present, which has already been wrought through Jesus Christ, and his death to sin, burial with Christ, and resurrection to a new life.
2. An act of obedience proclaiming the believer's faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
3. A testimony of his faith in the final resurrection of the dead.

4. An outward picture of an inward experience that identifies them with Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church.
  5. A pre-requisite to the privileges of church membership.
  6. A solemn vow of loyalty to Christ; it is, therefore, the duty of the baptized to live with the purity, the new life, and the loyalty to Christ that Baptism professes.
- B. Baptism shall be by immersion in water. In case of infirmity, an exception may be voted on by 3/4<sup>th</sup> majority church vote after recommendation of the pastoral leadership team.
  - C. Baptism shall be administered by the pastors or other ordained persons as approved by the pastoral leadership team.
  - D. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
  - E. A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastors, ~~church council~~<sup>2</sup> and/or deacons. If negative interest is ascertained, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism and membership.

## **2. Lord's Supper**

We believe that Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper as an Ordinance of the Church to commemorate His sacrificial love for the Church. It is the Lord's Table and all born again believers are welcome to participate, preceded by solemn self-examination.

- A. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly.
- B. The Lord's Supper may be observed in the morning or evening worship services.
- C. The pastors and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

## **III. CHURCH GOVERNMENT<sup>3</sup>**

The government of this church shall be congregational in nature. The final earthly authority for the operation and management of the affairs of this corporation, spiritual and temporal, shall be vested in the membership of the corporation under the authority of Scripture. These bylaws set forth the manner in which congregational authority shall be exercised.

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<sup>2</sup> "church council" omitted to reflect its dissolution, as affirmed by minutes of Family Meeting held on October 29, 2017

<sup>3</sup> Article III. "Church Government" revises previous Article III. "Church Officers," as adopted by vote at the Family Meeting held on May 30, 2021 — portions of previous article retained herein in the absence of revised sections defining the office of Deacon and role of Trustees in the church with respect to amended article.



This church is an independent, autonomous church with full and final authority to determine solely within itself all matters related to the life of this church including but not limited to its financial affairs, affiliations, ownership and uses of property, membership, and pastoral leadership.

(Acts 6:1-7; Galatians 1; Matthew 18:15-35; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11)

## **Biblical Offices**

The Biblical offices in the church are pastors and deacons. In addition and in order to comply with Tennessee State law, our church recognizes the office of trustee under this constitution. All officers must be members in good standing of this church.

### **1. Pastors**

The pastors shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of pastor set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. The Lead Pastor shall have the responsibility for oversight and leadership of the pastoral team. No pastor shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure. The number of pastors shall be based upon the needs of the congregation.

Several terms are used interchangeably in the New Testament related to the role of pastor. Those terms are elder (*presbuteros*), overseer (*episkopos*), and shepherd/pastor (*poimen*), each delineating the overarching responsibilities given to pastors. We have chosen to use the term pastor to refer to this office because that is the term most recognized in the current setting (though overseer and elder are appropriate biblical terms).

- Elder — to lead by example, wisdom, and maturity in the Spirit and Word of God
- Shepherd / Pastor — to rescue, feed, lead, protect, and comfort
- Overseer — to provide administration and leadership

(1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:17, 28-31; 2 Timothy 2:15; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9)

#### **1a. Duties and Service of Pastors**

The pastors shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the biblical principles, the pastors shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

The duties and service of the pastors shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Examine and instruct prospective members
- Examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions
- Oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and teams
- Oversee all administrative functions of the church
- Conduct worship services

- Administer the ordinances of baptism and communion
- Equip the membership for the work of the ministry
- Encourage sound doctrine and practice
- Admonish and correct error
- Oversee the process of church discipline
- Coordinate and promote the ministries of the church
- Mobilize the church for world missions.
- Ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions

(Acts 6:1-6; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-38; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Ephesians 4:11-16)

### 1b. Qualifications of Pastors

The scriptural emphasis concerning the qualifications of pastors is placed upon the character of those pastors rather than issues of personality, leadership ability, charisma, professional acumen, or even academic attainments. Those scriptural qualifications are as follows:

- Above Reproach — blameless; not open to legitimate criticism
- Husband of One Wife — faithful in marriage
- Sober-Minded — behaving in a restrained manner
- Self-Controlled — sensible and moderate
- Respectable — well-ordered
- Hospitable — showing hospitality to strangers
- Able to Teach — rightly dividing the word of truth
- Not a Drunkard — not controlled by alcohol or drugs
- Not Violent but Gentle — gracious and forbearing
- Not Quarrelsome — not contentious
- Not a Lover of Money — not desirous for material gain
- Manages his Household well keeping his Children Submissive — leads his family well
- Not a Recent Convert — spiritually mature
- Well Thought of by Outsiders — Generally Respected by Unbelievers
- Not Arrogant — humble, not stubborn
- Not Quick-Tempered — not inclined toward anger
- Lover of Good — embraces that which is right
- Self-Controlled — living a self-disciplined life
- Upright — being in accordance with what God requires
- Holy — set apart
- Disciplined — exercising self-control
- Holding Firm to the Trustworthy Word as Taught — holds fast and acts according to the Word of God
- Able to Give Instruction in Sound Doctrine — encourages in sound teaching

- Rebuking Those Who Contradict It — calls out false teaching and seeks to correct it

(1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; Philippians 4:8; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Corinthians 13)

### 1c. Selection

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as pastor. Pastors shall serve in their role indefinitely unless removed by action of the church or at the request of the pastor. A pastor may not resign his position if under the process of church-discipline. Specifically, the call of an pastor will be guided as such (under the leadership of the pastors):

1. Recognition of a need either through vacancy of an established position or through the need for an additional position
2. The pastors will recommend to the congregation for approval a search team.
3. The pastors are automatically considered members of and will oversee the search team.
4. The search team will present a candidate to the congregation
5. The Moderator and Church Clerk (or, in their absence, two or more members designated by the pastors) shall count the votes, and any nominee receiving approval by three-fourths shall, in due haste, be publicly recognized as a Pastor and set apart as such.

(Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1; Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 9; Acts 13:2-3; Romans 1:1; Romans 15:15-16; Ephesians 3:7; 1 Timothy 1:1; Hebrews 5:4)

### 1d. Removal from Office

A pastor's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. A pastor may resign from his office should the circumstances of his life preclude the faithful discharge of his duties. Any two members with reason to believe that a pastor should be dismissed should express such concern to the pastors and, if need be, to the congregation. An accusation against a pastor shall not be entertained if lacking at least two witnesses. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord. Any of the pastors may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church. If a pastor is removed from office as a result of church discipline, that pastor shall be publicly rebuked in a regularly scheduled congregational worship service so that others may fear and reverence the Lord.

(1 Timothy 5:19-20; Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Timothy 5:17-21)

### 1e. Appointing Teams and Ministry Positions

The pastors may establish, with the approval of the congregation, ministry positions or teams to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The pastors may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position. The pastors shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

### 1f. Preparing the Annual Budget

Each year the pastors shall, after consultation with the deacons, ministry leaders, the membership, and any other persons they deem fit, present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion and called up for a vote at a scheduled members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the pastors. The pastors shall elect a chairman of pastors' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

## **2. Deacons<sup>4</sup>**

In accordance with the New Testament, deacons are to be the servants of the church and shall not be construed as a governing body. Deacons shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A deacon shall be a man of dignity, not double-tongued, not given to wine, not fond of sordid gain, holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, first tested and found above reproach.

The work of the deacon is to serve with the pastors in performing pastoral ministries; proclaim the gospel to unbelievers and believers; care for church members and other persons in the community; and lead the church to engage in a fellowship or worship, witness, education, ministry, and application of the Christian faith.

Proper ordination shall be required before serving, and a proper time of service as a "yokefellow" of not less than one calendar year shall be required by church prior to ordination.

The church shall seek to have one deacon for each Sunday School Class. Deacons shall serve on a 3-year rotation basis. In case of death or resignation, the church may elect someone to fill that vacancy.

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<sup>4</sup> Article III, Section 3 (page 13) prior to amendment referenced in footnote 3, page 8. If original intent of bylaw revision sought to update sections on Deacons and Trustees along with the section for Pastors, the church may consider returning to that endeavor in the future.

Each prospective deacon elected by the church will be required to complete proper training (or show proof of proper training having been completed) as deemed appropriate by the pastors and chairman of deacons.

A. Deacon Nomination

When a deacon vacancy occurs, the chairman of deacons shall ask the congregation for nominations on two (2) consecutive Sunday mornings. The chairman of deacons will contact each man nominated to review the qualifications and duties of a deacon. The chairman of deacons and pastors will submit the list of qualified candidates willing to serve to the deacon body for its approval

B. Deacon Election

A ballot will be prepared with the list of nominees. Each member of the church will be given a ballot at a called business meeting for the election of deacons, and will vote by designating the number of men required to serve on the deacon body. The men receiving the highest number of votes cast will be elected to fill the vacancies.

C. Deacon Ordination

New deacons all be ordained by the church when qualified men are needed and available. Examination of a deacon candidate's qualification will be scripturally based. Questions concerning interpretation of scripture shall be decided by the deacons and the pastoral leadership team. The duties of deacons shall be in accordance with the New Testament (i.e. they are servants of the church).

D. Removal

A deacon can be removed from office by a 3/4<sup>th</sup> majority vote of the other deacons, ~~church council~~<sup>5</sup> members and pastors. All matters of accountability, conflict resolution, and church discipline will be handled as described in Section 1, Number 10<sup>6</sup>.

### 3. Trustees<sup>7</sup>

~~The church council shall serve as trustees to serve as legal officers for the church~~<sup>8</sup>. They [*trustees*] shall hold trust in the church property.

As a result of a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, trustees shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are

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<sup>5</sup> see footnote 2, page 8

<sup>6</sup> No section exists following amended Article I (3.20.17) — see revised Article I, Section 3.3, page 5

<sup>7</sup> Article III, Section 6 (page 14) prior to amendment referenced in footnote 3, page 8. If original intent of bylaw revision sought to update sections on Deacons and Trustees along with the section for Pastors, the church may consider returning to that endeavor in the future.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, footnote 5

required, trustees shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to the church-approved matters.

#### **IV. NON-MINISTERIAL STAFF<sup>9</sup>**

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. Following approval of the position by the ~~church council and~~<sup>10</sup> pastoral leadership team, the church personnel committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consolation of related committees of the church.

#### **V. CHURCH COMMITTEES & TEAMS<sup>11</sup>**

The church shall have committees and teams as needed to meet the ministry needs of the church. All committee and team members shall be church members recommended and elected by the church.

#### **VI. CHURCH PROGRAMS & ORGANIZATIONS**

All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all program activities are subject to church coordination and approval.

#### **VII. CHURCH MEETINGS**

##### **1. Worship Services**

The church shall meet regularly for the worship of Almighty God.

##### **2. Organizational Business Meetings**

An organizational business meeting will be scheduled quarterly. This will provide a forum for handling the business of Boone Trail and providing updates from the various ministries. ~~The church council shall schedule the business meeting and be responsible for setting the format and agenda.~~<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Amended Article III. "Church Government," Section 1: "Pastors," sub-section 1e. "Appointing Teams and Ministry Positions," page 12, contains language which seems to contradict Articles IV and V.

<sup>10</sup> see footnote 2, page 8

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, footnote 9

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, footnote 10

### **3. Special Business Meetings**

The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of a special nature and significance. A one-week notice must be given for special called business meetings unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, and time and place: and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting.

### **4. Quorum**

The quorum will consist of fifty (50) members<sup>13</sup>. No official vote can be taken in a general or special called business meeting without a quorum present.

### **5. Parliamentary Rules**

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

## **VIII. CHURCH FINANCES**

The church shall be supported only by tithes and offerings.

Fundraisers for special projects are allowed provided they are approved by the church council. The church shall support missions through giving to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program or other missions as designated by the church.

## **IX. AMENDMENTS**

Changes in the Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided each amendment has been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment has been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the Constitution shall be by 3/4<sup>th</sup> majority vote of the quorum present. Amendments to the Bylaws shall have the concurrence of a majority of the members present.

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<sup>13</sup> Amendment adopted by vote at the Family Meeting held on July 30, 2017.