

**CHURCH PROCEDURES
FOR THE
FERNWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH**

I. AUTHORITY

This church shall be a pure democracy subject to the provisions of this document, with every member having an equal voice and vote upon all matters pertaining to the management, policy, and operation of the church. While the church may delegate to its Pastor, Deacons, committees, and employed personnel any matter for consideration and action, the church shall be and ever remain the final authority in the procedure and conduct of its affairs.

A. VISION STATEMENT. Fernwood Baptist Church has announced the following as the statement of its vision: “We aspire to be Christ to each other and our community – doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with our God.”

B. THE MISSION OF FERNWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH. Fernwood Baptist Church has accepted the following as a statement of its mission to the community: “Our Mission ... to be caring Christians offering personal ministry and a credible witness to the greater Spartanburg community. We are a family of faith seeking spiritual maturity, celebrating human diversity and creativity, and proclaiming God’s unconditional love.”

C. THE COVENANT OF FERNWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH. Consistent with its vision and in recognition of its mission, Fernwood Baptist Church has entered into the following Covenant, adopted December 10, 1978:

OUR COVENANT

*Identifying the Church as a community of individuals bound by faith in Jesus Christ,
Believing the Church to be a called-out body whose existence is in the world,
Acknowledging the Church as an instrument of God’s work in the world and
Affirming the Church as the guardian and proclaimer of the new covenant between God
and His people,
We the members of Fernwood Baptist Church,
Claiming...the power of the Father,
Seeking...the personality of the Son,
Trusting...the presence of the Holy Spirit,
Commit Ourselves...*

TO WORSHIP & CELEBRATION, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us as a gathered community into a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, celebrating His presence and influence in our lives;

TO DISCIPLESHIP & GROWTH, letting our lifestyle declare a growing commitment to Christlikeness;

TO EDUCATION & TRAINING, engaging in a program of religious instruction that will increase and deepen our faith through the knowledge of the Bible, enable us to grow in Christian maturity and develop the leadership necessary to be the people of God;

TO WITNESS & MISSION, exemplifying the abundant life of peace and grace that we enjoy through Jesus Christ by sharing the Gospel based on the principles of love and need;

TO MINISTRY & SERVICE, seeking through personal involvement an awareness of the spiritual and physical needs of the people in our areas of concern and responding to them in the name of Christ; and

TO LOVE & FELLOWSHIP, nurturing vital, growing personal relationships within our faith community through the bonds of common commitment to Christ.

II. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- A. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of the church and the conditions for membership.
- B. Any person may offer himself or herself as a candidate for membership in the church. All candidates for membership shall be presented to the church at any church service in any of the following ways:
 - 1. by profession of faith in Jesus Christ and request for baptism;
 - 2. by promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church; or
 - 3. by statement of previous Christian experience and meaningful baptism.

New members may be received by affirmation by those present at any church service.

- C. For those requesting baptism, baptism by immersion shall be the church's practice. The church believes this to be the New Testament mode which best portrays the meaning of baptism – death to old life and resurrection to a new life. An accommodation, however, may be made for persons with physical or mental limitations that would prohibit baptism by immersion. A request for such an accommodation shall be referred to the Church Council for determination.

III. CHURCH OFFICERS

The church shall ordain the following officers: Pastor, other Ministerial Staff and Deacons. The constitutional officers of the church shall be the Pastor, who shall be called by the church, the Chair of Deacons, a Church Clerk and Church Treasurer. The Chair of Deacons and Treasurer shall attest with his or her signature and seal of the church all legal instruments of the church requiring the same. The church shall elect such additional officers as shall be necessary to properly carry on the church business.

- A. **PASTOR AND OTHER MINISTERIAL STAFF.** The Pastor shall be recognized as the spiritual leader of the church. It is the Pastor's responsibility to fill the pulpit at all regularly scheduled worship services of the church. The Pastor shall exercise general supervision over the affairs of the church unless otherwise provided for by the Deacons or the church in conference. The Pastor will be primarily responsible in the areas of worship, outreach, stewardship, administration, and other duties as specified in the job description. Other Ministerial Staff may be called by the church as necessary to fulfill its mission.

The Pastor and the other Ministerial Staff shall be called for an indefinite period. Their services may be terminated only by resignation, death, or disability, or by a vote of two thirds of the members present and voting, provided that written notice has been given to all members four weeks in advance of any contemplated action. Such notice must specify the time and place of the special called conference and the reason or reasons why the conference is called.

- B. **DEACONS.** The church shall elect from the membership a Diaconate (herein called Deacons) consisting of twelve (12) members, or such other number as shall be authorized by the congregation, who shall serve for a term of three years.
1. **Duties.** The Deacons shall be responsible for the pastoral care and spiritual life of the church, maintaining the church's relationships with external organizations in the community, and for long range planning. The Deacons shall be available to serve in an advisory capacity to the Pastor and any church committee requesting such assistance. Reports of all Standing Committees, unless otherwise directed by church action, shall be submitted to the Deacons for study and recommendation to the church. They shall study all matters referred to them by the church, the various committees, the Pastor, or the members of the church, as well as any matters they may elect in their discretion to consider. Thereafter, they may make such recommendations and reports to the church as they shall

deem to be in the best interest of the church and furtherance of the Lord's work.

2. **Eligibility and Election.** A deacon nominee shall be at least 21 years of age and an active member of the church for one year prior to the nomination. At least two weeks prior to any deacon election process, a list of those members who are eligible for deacon nomination will be provided to the Congregation for its consideration. The annual election of Deacons shall be held as follows: on the first Sunday of May of each year, the church shall cast ballots for new deacon nominees, each member voting for no more than the number of vacant terms. Two times this number of persons who receive the highest number of votes and who are willing to serve shall become the nominees. On the third Sunday of May, the congregation shall vote on these nominees, each member voting for no more than the number of vacant terms. Those elected will assume office on September 1. The terms of service for the Deacons shall be so arranged that the term of one third of the membership shall expire annually. In the event of death, resignation or incapacity of a deacon (which shall occur more than three months before the expiration of such deacon's term), a special election shall be called following the same procedure as the annual election of Deacons and a successor elected who shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term. A deacon elected to serve an unexpired term of one year or more shall not be eligible for re-election until a period of one year shall have elapsed from the expiration date of his or her term. A deacon elected and serving a full term shall not be eligible for re-election until a period of two years has elapsed from the expiration date of his or her term.
3. **Deacon Officers.** The Deacons shall elect from their membership a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary whose terms shall be for one year from September 1 through August 31 of the following year.
4. **Meetings.** The regular meeting of the Deacons shall be held once a month and the Chair, or in his or her absence or disability, the Vice-Chair, may call a special meeting at such times as the affairs of the church may require. A quorum for transacting business at any regular or special meeting shall consist of a majority of the Deacons currently serving.

- C. **CLERICAL STAFF.** The church shall employ clerical staff to work under the supervision of the Pastor. In addition to general office duties, a designated member of the clerical staff will also have some financial responsibilities and will work with the Church Treasurer and Finance

Committee to accomplish these duties. This staff member will track all donations and will maintain confidentiality of this information. The Finance Committee will count all funds contributed each week, and this staff member will verify the count and prepare the bank deposit each week. Any requests for reimbursement will be presented to this staff member, and this staff member will interface with the Accounting Team to ensure a check is prepared. This staff member will also be one of three individuals that countersign all checks.

- D. **CHURCH CLERK AND ASSISTANT CHURCH CLERK.** The church shall elect from its membership a Clerk whose duties shall be to perform such services incident to that office and take minutes of all business meetings and conferences of the church. The church shall elect from its membership an Assistant Clerk whose duties shall be to perform the duties of the Church Clerk in his or her absence.
- E. **CHURCH TREASURER AND ASSISTANT CHURCH TREASURER.** The church shall elect from its membership a Treasurer who shall have custody of all moneys and securities of the church and shall furnish bond at the expense of the church in such amount as shall be fixed and designated by the church. The Treasurer and the Finance Committee shall keep regular records and reports of accounts, shall submit them together with vouchers, receipts, and other papers upon request to the Deacons, and shall perform such other and further duties as are incident to the office. Two back-up computer disks/tapes of the financial records shall be kept – one on church premises and one off church premises. An annual audit shall be prepared and submitted to the Deacons. The Treasurer will also countersign all financially related documents and will have oversight of such documents. There will also be an Assistant Treasurer who will also be one of three individuals who will countersign all checks. All checks are to be countersigned by two of the three following officers: Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, or the designated member of the clerical staff.

IV. MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

- A. The annual business conference of the church shall be held by the end of January to approve a budget and to provide statistics of the year just ended.
- B. Church officers and any other elected position established under these Procedures (unless otherwise provided) shall be elected no later than June 30 of each calendar year. Elected officers or other elected individuals shall assume positions on September 1st of that year and continue through August 31st of the following year (unless otherwise provided). The church membership shall receive notice of the nominees for each elected position

at least two weeks prior to the scheduled election.

- C. Church conferences of the members of the church shall be held as often as may be necessary to properly administer the affairs of the church and such conferences may be called by the Pastor, Chair of Deacons or upon the written request of not less than one fourth of the members named on the list of church members maintained by the church clerical staff. Notice of such special church conference shall be given to the congregation in the official church newsletter or bulletin not less than one week prior to the date called, except where longer prior notice is required as specified in this document. The Chair of Deacons, or some member designated by him or her, shall act as moderator.

V. STANDING COMMITTEES AND MINISTRY TEAMS

- A. The Standing Committees of the church shall be composed of church members and shall be as follows:
 - 1. Church Council (9 members)
 - 2. Building and Grounds Committee (6 members)
 - 3. Personnel Committee (6 members)
 - 4. Finance Committee (5 members, plus the church Treasurer who shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member)
- B. All Standing Committees are to be presented by the Church Council and voted upon by the church at the time and by the method provided in Section IV.B of these Procedures. All personnel so elected will assume office as of September 1 of that year and shall serve through August 31 of the following year (unless otherwise provided).
- C. Unless a member is a non-voting ex-officio member or otherwise specified in the Church Procedures, the members of the above mentioned Committees shall serve a three-year term, rotating off for one year before being eligible for reelection to the same committee. Each Committee shall be divided as evenly as possible into three groups of members. The terms of all the members of a group will expire in the same year, and the terms of the members of one of the groups will expire each year. The rotation schedule shall be determined by the Church Council.
- D. Any vacant, unexpired terms on any Standing Committee may be filled by Church Council.
- E. All Ministry Teams shall be organized by Church Council prior to June 30 of each year. All team members shall assume responsibilities as of September 1 of that year and shall serve through August 31 of the following year. All Ministry Team members shall serve a term of one

year. Nothing in these Rules shall prevent any church member from serving on the same Ministry Team for as many terms as he or she wishes.

VI. EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

All committees may have a minister and/or the Chair of Deacons as non-voting ex-officio members.

VII. DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CHURCH COUNCIL: Church Council shall exist as a standing committee of the Church. Church Council's primary concern shall be the internal operations of the Church as it pursues its ministries, conducts business, and uses its resources.

1. **Membership.** The membership of Church Council shall be comprised of the following: a Chair (who shall be a member of a Ministry Team); a Chair-Elect (who shall be a member of a Ministry Team); one representative from the current membership of the Personnel Committee; one representative from the current membership of the Finance Committee; one representative from the current membership of the Building & Grounds Committee; and four at-large members that shall be responsible for representing the interests of the Ministry Teams, which shall be combined according to function in the following four areas: Congregational Ministries, Educational Ministries, Missional Ministries, and Sacred Ministries. No active Deacon shall serve on Church Council.
2. **Election.** The members of Church Council shall be elected at the time and by the methods provided in Section IV.B for the election of Church Officers. The proposed members of Church Council shall be presented as a slate of candidates with the prior term's Chair-Elect included on the slate as the new Chair. The Church shall vote to approve or disapprove the entire slate of candidates. If the church votes to disapprove the proposed slate of candidates for Church Council, the current Church Council shall resubmit the slate of candidates or a revised slate of candidates to the church within one month. The church shall have at least two weeks in which to consider the new slate of candidates for Church Council prior to a vote to approve or disapprove the new slate. The Church Council members then in office shall continue to serve until a new Church Council is elected.
3. **Duties.** The Church hereby delegates the following duties, responsibilities and authority to Church Council:

- a. Church Council shall serve the church as the primary body to receive grievances, concerns, suggestions or other issues pertaining to the life of the church. If any member of the church is unaware to whom to address any such issue, the member should present this issue to Church Council or any member of Church Council. Church Council shall be responsible for delegating or assigning these matters to the appropriate individual or other church body for resolution and consideration.
- b. Church Council shall oversee and coordinate the function, number, responsibilities, needs and composition of the Ministry Teams. Church Council may delegate, assign or direct tasks and authority to Ministry Teams as necessary to consider or resolve grievances, concerns, suggestions or other issues pertaining to the life of the church.
- c. Church Council shall oversee and maintain the church media center and library and provide for the storage and maintenance of documents relating to the church's history.
- d. Church Council shall oversee and coordinate church ministries and activities to ensure efficient and appropriate use of church facilities, equipment, budgeted items and other resources. This duty shall include primary responsibility for scheduling church ministries and activities.
- e. Church Council shall serve as a nominating committee and nominate candidates from the church membership to fill all leadership or committee memberships provided for under these Rules, except that Church Council shall not nominate candidates for the Diaconate, for search committees or for ministerial and non-ministerial staff.
- f. Church Council shall provide the church with a report of its activities on a quarterly basis; maintain and make available to the church the minutes of each meeting no later than the beginning of each succeeding meeting; and maintain a record of all Church business, needs, obligations or other matters presented to Church Council for consideration or resolution, including the status of each matter.

B. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE. The Building and Grounds Committee shall provide for the maintenance and normal upkeep

of the church's existing buildings and grounds and maintain a close working relationship with the custodian. The committee, along with the custodial staff, will determine what expenditures are necessary for cleaning and janitorial supplies, and then shall make a recommendation to the Finance Committee for inclusion in the church budget.

C. FINANCE COMMITTEE. The Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Treasurer, shall oversee all financial matters of the church.

1. **Budgeting.** The Finance Committee shall make plans for budgets and recommend to the Deacons the expenditure of any funds in excess of \$500 not included in the budget. In addition to planning the church budget, the Finance Committee shall be responsible for making the budget presentation to the church for its approval. The Finance Committee has the responsibility to review all special offerings or special monetary appeals not included in the regular budget and recommend them to the Deacons.
2. **Accounting and Reporting.** The Finance Committee shall establish a regular review for the payment of accounts payable, prepare the monthly report of the financial status of the church to the Deacons, and provide for an annual audit of the books by a certified public accountant. Under the leadership of the Finance Committee, an Accounting Team will be formed to handle the financial transactions of the church. The duties of this team will include accounts payable, payroll, and tax-related activities. This team will also generate all reports and prepare all checks but will not countersign the checks.
3. **Insurance and Indemnity.** The Finance Committee shall also ensure the church is covered adequately for any liability of actions by or to the church or its members. The Finance Committee will review insurance policies and verify that proper coverage is maintained. The Finance Committee will also work with other committees and staff members to advise about other insurance issues related to transportation, health, fire and casualty, and the like.

D. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE. The Personnel Committee shall make reports to the Deacons concerning church staff personnel, be responsible for maintaining and implementing an effective evaluation procedure for the church staff and make recommendations to the Finance Committee concerning church staff remuneration. The Personnel Committee, with the advice and consent of the Pastor and the Chair of Deacons, will be responsible for decisions of hiring and retention of non-ministerial employees. The Personnel Committee will cooperate with the Building

and Grounds Committee, the Finance Committee and other church committees or ministry teams with regard to employment of non-ministerial staff who perform tasks related to the responsibilities of these church committees or ministry teams. The committee shall make recommendations to fill vacated staff positions except as provided by these Procedures. The committee will maintain an approved Personnel Policy and shall aid in arbitrating staff responsibilities and conflicts of interest.

VIII. OTHER COMMITTEES, COUNCILS, SUPPORT GROUPS, AND TASK FORCES

Other committees and task forces with a limited scope and time frame may be established by the Church Council. Such committees and task forces shall be appointed by the sponsoring committee. Such committees and task forces may be disestablished by the Church Council upon completion of the project.

IX. SEARCH COMMITTEES FOR PASTOR AND OTHER MINISTERIAL STAFF

- A. When the position of Pastor is vacant, a Pastoral Search Committee composed of seven members shall be elected in the same manner by which Deacons are elected. The Pastoral Search Committee shall be charged with the responsibility of seeking and recommending a suitable Pastor to the congregation. When the position of Pastor is filled, this committee will serve for an additional calendar year to assist the new Pastor during the transition period.
- B. When there is a vacancy in any other Ministerial Staff position, the Pastor, in cooperation with the Deacons and Personnel Committee, will recommend a Search Committee to be approved by the congregation. This committee will seek and recommend a suitable minister to the congregation. When the position is filled, this committee will cease to exist.
- C. A Personnel Committee representative shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member on these search committees as a resource for personnel related issues.

X. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly and any other times deemed appropriate by the Pastor.

XI. INCIDENTAL MATTERS

In all incidental matters such as require neither a meeting of the Deacons nor a church conference, the Pastor and Chair of Deacons shall have power to act.

XII. AMENDMENT OF RULES

These Church Procedures may be amended or repealed by the church at any annual or special business conference which has been called for that purpose, by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment has been mailed to all members not less than one month prior to the time set for this consideration.

XIII. CHURCH PROCEDURES

Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the official guide in all matters not specifically covered in these Church Procedures.

(Voted on and approved by church members in conference, April 11, 2010)