



733 Main St., Westbrook, Maine 04092

RATIONALE

One-Board Governance – Revised and Adopted March 3, 2024

Our Purpose:

We will be a reaching, equipping, nurturing, worshiping, and sending community of committed followers of Jesus.

Our Vision:

We will be a vibrant grace-saturated church, transforming individuals, the community, the Church, and the world.

An Overview:

As we build on the bylaws which were adopted in 2015 through this revision, we want to acknowledge that the faithful service of those who remained at First Baptist Church during some challenging times in its history allowed the opportunity for our current church body to grow in number and reach for the benefit of all who we're called to serve, and most especially our community in Westbrook, where God has planted us.

The changes which were bravely begun during that season of revitalization led toward FBC embodying a mission-centric, outwardly focused church culture. To this end, our church has utilized a single governing board structure for church governance; in this structure, we are a leadership team-governed, pastor-led, staff/volunteer-managed church, where the congregation is equipped and empowered to do ministry.

Background:

One of the key strategies to growth is a simplified and unified structure that keeps the church focused on its mission and points it in a direction with purpose and accountability.

A church needs a good support system just as a home needs a strong foundation to build upon. That foundation involves staying as accountable as possible so that the most people can spend their time in hands-on ministry rather than attending numerous meetings. Releasing people from their obligations to sit in committee meetings gives them more opportunities to be in ministry.

This new model will require trust on the laity's part and competent leadership on the pastor's part. It requires a pastor-led church (the pastor recruits, trains, equips, and aligns) where the pastor serves as coach of the team, not a pastor-centered church model, where only the pastor cares for the congregation and conducts ministry.

In single-board governed churches annual membership meetings take on more of a reporting and celebrating character as new officers are voted in to oversee the governance of the church in the coming year.

Mission of the Leadership Team:

To ensure that the purpose and vision of First Baptist Church is defined, protected, and promoted.

Responsibilities of the Leadership Team:

- Set, review and approve the annual budget with input from ministry teams to be presented at an annual meeting.
- Provide an annual review for the Lead Pastor
- Oversee all land acquisitions, facility construction and significant legal matters.
- To appoint ministry teams for the work of the church ministries when needed
- Actively pursue learning opportunities as they relate to large church structure and development.
- Set policy that gives guidelines within which all other ministry teams work (such as: fund raising, entering into contracts, staff policies, etc).
- Maintain articles of incorporation.

Membership of the Leadership Team:

The Leadership Team will consist of 6-11 active members within the body of First Baptist Church. Any paid pastoral positions would also be voting members of the LT, to not exceed 15 total members of the leadership team. Please see Article V for length of service and nomination process.

Legal Criteria for LT Membership:

- Must be an active, involved member of the First Baptist Church family.
- Must be at least 18 years of age.

LT Members must actively fulfill the following expectations:

1. Models a commitment to worship seen by regular attendance.
2. Be growing in faith through worship, prayer and Bible study or small group.
3. Be serving in ministry, using gifts.
4. Supportive and aligned with the purpose and mission-focused character of First Baptist Church.
5. Be available to participate in meetings and fulfill requirements of the Team.
6. Be forward thinking and enthusiastic about crafting a vision toward the future of First Baptist Church.
7. Willing to give leadership to ministry teams as needed (visitation, education, worship, outreach, finance, property, etc)

Structure:

Because of changes in society, it has become too difficult to find members who are able to commit to multi-year terms of service. By restricting service opportunity to only those who can commit to terms, the church loses the potential for involvement and individuals lose the opportunity to serve.

This format of church government allows greater flexibility to the pastors and Leadership Team to create task forces and project groups based on the need while assuring that all areas are covered by individual Team members serving as the coordinators of each area.

For example, the Leadership Team member overseeing Care will assemble a team of people to provide visitation and pray. Assimilation will ensure that efforts are always included to move visitors to committed church family members. The overseer of facilities will work with others gifted in taking care of the physical plant of First Baptist Church.

A work in progress

These bylaws, being new to us as a body, will be a work-in-progress. Changes, additions and adjustments will certainly need to be made in response to changes and needs of our church body.

First Baptist Church in Westbrook, Maine
BYLAWS REVISION PROPOSED MARCH 2024

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization is First Baptist Church in Westbrook, Maine.

ARTICLE II – OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

To invite people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and a community of Christian love, develop in them Christ-like maturity, and mobilize them for service to His church and the world, in order to glorify God.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Responsibilities of Membership

We believe that eligibility for church membership is dependent upon the individual's profession of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; that is, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the individual is justified and saved or has supplied a letter of transfer. Members will be encouraged to follow Christ's example in being baptized by immersion.

Members are expected to:

- Worship regularly at First Baptist Church in Westbrook.
- Support First Baptist Church in Westbrook and its ministries financially and through personal service.
- Live in concert with the Purpose Statement of First Baptist Church in Westbrook and the Statement of Faith.
- Seek to understand and use their spiritual gifts in service to Christ's church and in the world for His sake.

Admission of Membership

Any person who agrees to assume the Responsibilities of Membership, satisfies the First Baptist Church in Westbrook membership requirements and is recommended for membership by the Leadership Team, may become a member of this church.

Termination of Membership

- A. By Letter of Withdrawal: Members in good standing may, on their request, be granted Letters of Transfer or Withdrawal of Membership.
- B. By Reason of Inactivity: People who no longer attend and are no longer connected to the ministries here will be removed from membership after an approximate period of one year unless they have requested that their membership be held for a reasonable transition period. Inactive members may be removed from Membership roll by vote of the Leadership Team at any meeting.

Non-Resident Members

Members permanently absent from the Westbrook area will be encouraged to connect themselves with another local church for weekly worship because we believe in the local church.

Privileges of Members

Members shall have the privilege of voting at all congregational meetings of the church. Members shall be eligible to serve in all offices and committees of the church.

The Leadership Team shall have the responsibility of maintaining the list of active church members.

Church Discipline

Should a member become an offense to the Church and to its good name by reason immoral or unchristian conduct or by the persistent breach of his/her covenant vows, the Church, on the recommendation of the Leadership Team, may censure such member by suspension or termination of membership by a two-thirds vote at a duly called congregational meeting, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such a member to amendment in accordance with the law of Christ as expressed in Matthew 18:15-17.

Any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored by vote of the Leadership Team, by two-thirds vote of the congregation, and by public Reaffirmation of Faith.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS, STAFF AND TASK FORCES

The officers of the Church shall be the members of the Leadership Team filling the roles of church administration (such as moderator, clerk, treasurer, missions, CE, Caring Ministries, Worship, trustee rep with others added as need develops).

The activities of the Church are staff-led partnership/team. The final authority for the Lead Pastor and officers rests with the congregation at large, such congregation being a quorum at any duly-constituted church meeting.

The creation and accountability of task forces will vary and be determined by the LT based on current ministry needs. Day to day operation of the church is the responsibility of the Lead Pastor and staff. Where not specified in the By-laws, the LT shall have the authority to institute term limits as needed.

ARTICLE V – ELECTIONS

The Leadership Team shall be church members and shall be presented at the Annual Meeting after prayer and review. The existing Leadership Team shall recommend new members to fill positions at each annual meeting after interviewing and vetting potential candidates. A special meeting will be called in the event that the LT needs to replace or add members.

Nomination:

Annually or as the need arises, the Leadership Team members will evaluate for any vacancies on the leadership team, seek input from active members of the church body and discuss potential qualified candidates, then invite those candidates to pray about the opportunity for serving on the team. Once a potential new leadership team member has accepted the invitation to participate, the leadership team will confirm that individual's nomination to the team by vote, then present them as a candidate to the church body for input and confirmation by vote at the annual meeting or any church wide meeting.

When nominated to the leadership, each individual will serve a 3 year term (unless they chose to end their term of service before that time has elapsed), with the option of serving one additional consecutive term. Under usual circumstances, no individual will serve more than six successive years.

There are two potential exceptions to serving more than six consecutive years:

- A) If a leadership team member is engaged in a project which requires additional time to complete or is involved in the launch of a new ministry which would benefit from continued participation on the leadership team, they could request additional time to remain on the leadership team, serving up to an additional three year term.
- B) In the event that the leadership team follows its nomination process to fill a vacancy on the leadership team, asks at least two potential qualified replacements for that position, but is unable to fill the position, the individual currently serving in that role may indicate their willingness to continue in that position for an additional term.

If either circumstance is enacted, the Leadership Team would vote to approve that individual's continued participation on the leadership team, and then would submit the proposed exception to the church body for input and confirmation at a church wide meeting by vote of a 75% majority. In either case, that member would serve no more than nine successive years.

The annual fiscal year shall be May 1 to April 30.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

All officers besides LT chair and LT members can be filled by any member of the congregation. Support staff do not need to be members (in accordance with state and federal hiring guidelines).

Moderator

The Moderator shall call an Annual Meeting of the congregation, and such other special meetings as judged to be in the interest of the congregation. The Moderator shall preside at all regular and special congregational meetings.

The Moderator shall oversee, but not supervise, the work of the Clerk. In the absence of the Moderator, a member of the Church Leadership Team shall assume all responsibilities and powers of the Moderator.

Clerk

It shall be the duty of the Clerk to keep an accurate record of the minutes of any congregational meeting, the minutes of all Leadership Team meetings and any records provided by task forces, the names of all persons admitted to or removed from the membership of the church, and of all the baptisms, deaths, etc. with the dates of same.

The Clerk shall issue Letters of Transfer and Recommendation approved by the Church Leadership Team and conduct such correspondence of the Church as may be necessary.

The files of the Clerk shall be accessible to the church body.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall hold and disburse all monies belonging to the Church, subject to the approval of the Leadership Team.

The Treasurer shall hold bank account(s) in the name of the Church and shall keep a separate account of all Church monies, making a full report of the same at the Annual Meeting.

The treasurer will endeavor to involve and mentor an assistant who will serve as second signatory agent.

The Treasurer shall have power, subject to control and direction of the Leadership Team, to invest and reinvest the money, funds, and other property belonging to the Church; shall assign, sell or transfer any of its securities or other property; and shall draw checks in payment of investments made. Designated gifts over \$1000 will be under the review of the Leadership Team to recommend to the congregation for vote.

The Treasurer may sign all contracts and deeds of the Church at the discretion of the Leadership Team.

The Church shall furnish bond for the Treasurer for the faithful discharge of his/her duties as the Leadership Team shall require.

Auditor

The Leadership Team will appoint an internal reviewer to review the accounts of the Treasurer annually and report back to the LT. Every 5 years or as deemed necessary by the LT, the LT shall contract an outside CPA to conduct a full review.

Pastors

Each pastor shall be called by the Church and shall be installed when the Church and Pastor shall so agree. The Lead Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of public worship, and perform such other duties as belong to the Pastoral Office. The Lead Pastor shall be a member of the Leadership Team and ex officio member of all other task forces of the Church.

The Benevolence Fund disbursements will be at the discretion of the Lead Pastor with the Chair of the Leadership Team and one other Leadership Team member.

Other Pastors

The duties and responsibilities of other Pastors shall be determined by the Leadership Team and shall be under the direction of the Lead Pastor. Termination will be in conjunction with input from the Leadership Team.

Support Staff

The Support Staff positions shall be determined by the Leadership Team as needed. The staff shall be under the direction of the Lead Pastor.

Leadership Team Chair

Duties shall include:

- To act as legal representative of the Church in all matters as required by its Certificate of Incorporation and the laws of the State of Maine.
- To serve as President of the Corporation.
- To hold an annual meeting of the corporation to elect officers and to transact whatever other business may legally come before the meeting, as required by State Law. The Clerk will record the minutes and maintain a record thereof.
- To have general charge of all church property and the maintenance thereof.
- With the approval of the Leadership Team, to employ persons for the ongoing maintenance and care of facilities.

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team shall be responsible for the oversight, counsel, and support of all other Church task forces and ministries, serving as guide and leaders to the Church in all matters concerning its administration and actions.

The Leadership Team, in conjunction with the Lead Pastor, shall be responsible for financial procedures (budget, finances, staffing) as well as spiritual (intercessory prayer, healing, counseling, and teaching) matters relating to the direction and operation of the church.

They shall authorize all collections and disbursement of funds, with the exception of the Benevolence Fund which will be overseen by the Lead Pastor (or an assigned staff member), the Chair and a representative of the Leadership Team.

Prior to the Annual Meeting, the Leadership Team shall approve a proposed budget for the upcoming year and report the present financial status of the Church. This shall be distributed with the Annual Report and presented for congregational approval.

The LT will oversee officers and support staff as they act as custodian of all legal documents pertaining to major Church business such as deeds, mortgages, purchase and sale agreements, corporation records, etc. and to maintain an inventory thereof.

The LT shall review the insurance coverage annually and ensure that adequate fire, liability and workers compensation coverage is afforded for the protection of all church properties and employees.

The Leadership Team shall have the authority to hire or discharge staff and/or officers with the exception of the Lead Pastor who is called or dismissed by a congregational vote called by the Leadership Team or any 25 active members making a request in writing.

The Leadership Team shall be comprised of not more than eleven spiritually-mature members of the Church, in addition to any paid pastoral staff (up to a maximum of 15 members of the leadership team). Every effort will be made to maintain a full Leadership Team depending on the size of the congregation and availability of qualified members.

A Chairperson and Secretary shall be elected from within the Leadership Team and shall not be the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor and the Chairperson shall be responsible for the agenda of all Leadership Team meetings.

The Leadership Team shall operate with an understanding of confidentiality and strive for unity in all matters of administration of the Church.

Legal Criteria for LT Membership:

- Must be an active, involved member of the First Baptist Church family.
- Must be at least 18 years of age.

LT Members must actively fulfill the following expectations:

1. Models a commitment to worship seen by regular attendance.
2. Be growing in faith through worship, prayer and Bible study or small group.
3. Be serving in ministry, using gifts.
4. Supportive and aligned with the purpose and mission-focused character of First Baptist Church.
5. Be available to participate in meetings and fulfill requirements of the LT.
6. Be forward thinking and enthusiastic about crafting a vision toward the future of First Baptist Church.
7. Willing to give leadership to ministry teams as needed (visitation, education, worship, outreach, finance, property, etc)

Qualifications for LT Members:

Taken from 1 Timothy 3:1–7, we recognize the following qualifications for leadership team members:

- Above reproach
- Faithful to their spouse
- Sober-minded
- Self-controlled
- Respectable
- Hospitable
- Able to teach/lead
- Not struggling with addiction
- Gentle, not explosive
- Not argumentative
- Not a lover of money or materialism
- Has a good home life
- A dependable parent
- Not a new believer
- Well respected by people outside the church

Leadership Structure

Each of the Leadership Team members shall oversee a specific area of ministry within the ministry of First Baptist Church. These areas will shift and change as the church responds to the needs of our constantly changing culture.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

Public services for worship shall be held on a weekly basis not restricted to Sundays only. At any time attendance and need indicates, additional worship services may be added under the direction of the Lead Pastor with the Leadership Team

The Church fiscal year shall begin May 1 and end April 30. The Annual Meeting of the Church, for the election of officers and transaction of business, shall be held on such date in June as is chosen by the Leadership Team and approved by the Moderator. Due notice of such Annual Meeting shall be given from the pulpit two Sundays preceding.

Special meetings may be called at any time by the Moderator, the Leadership Team, or on written petition of twenty-five members to the Lead Pastor or the Clerk, due notice being given of the purpose of the meeting from the pulpit on the two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

QUORUM: A quorum for all congregational meeting shall be 33% of voting members with a majority of the Leadership Team in attendance.

ARTICLE VIII – AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations within the church body and auxiliary organizations of FBC Westbrook (i.e. Open Door Kitchen) which use the church property shall be subject to the oversight of the Lead Pastor and the Leadership Team.

ARTICLE IX – CONTRACTS/ANNUAL REVIEW

The contracts for all paid ministry staff members may be released after four weeks' notice by either party or by mutual consent to ensure smooth transition and the health of the church whenever possible. All contracts will automatically be renewed if no notice or termination is given.

Contracts shall be signed by the Chair of the Leadership Team with other members constituting a majority.

ARTICLE X – AMENDMENT AND SUSPENSION OF RULES

These By-laws may be amended or temporarily suspended by a 75% vote of a quorum at any regular or duly-called meeting of the Church.

HUGH MORTON MEMORIAL OUTREACH FUND

Missions and Policy Statement

The Hugh Morton Memorial Outreach Fund is a permanent fund established by the Morton Family in 2001 to aid members and friends of the First Baptist Church in Westbrook, Maine, in short and long-term missions work. The interest, which accrues, is to be used exclusively to send representatives of the congregations to participate in foreign and domestic outreach experiences, that they might personally share the love of Jesus Christ and the message of the Gospel with those who need hope, healing and salvation.

The permanent funds of the HMMOF may be increased through the gifts of members and friends of the church, and only the interest on any such gifts will be used to support the sending of missionaries to the field.

Policy Statements

The Leadership Team shall be responsible for developing procedures for:

- Selecting missionaries to be sent to the field
- Disbursing the proceeds of the fund
- Establishing other protocols as deemed necessary to ensure that the intent of the HMMOF is fulfilled
- The monetary investment and accounting of the fund is managed by the Leadership Team in accordance with the Church's Constitution and By-Laws.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND

Mission and Policy Statement

The First Baptist Church Endowment Fund is a permanent fund to aid in the operating costs of the First Baptist Church in Westbrook, Maine. The fund was established by Church vote in 2001 for the purpose of providing a subsidy source to the general operating budget, thus supporting the day to day expenses of the Church. The fund may be increased through specific gifts from members and friends of the church. Such gifts will remain a permanent part of the principal of the account and only the earnings of interest, gains and dividends may be spent.

The fund is managed by the Leadership Team in accordance with the Church's Constitution and By-Laws.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FELLOWSHIP FUND

Missions Statement of the Fellowship Fund

The purpose of the Fellowship Fund of the First Baptist Church in Westbrook, Maine, which was established by Church vote in 1999, is to aid Church members with personal hardship, missionary work, worship and the spreading of God's word.

Policy

This fund was established by loving gifts from the members of the First Baptist Church in Westbrook, Maine with the understanding that the minimum fund balance, before any disbursements, would be \$50,000 (reached in September, 2000). All donations of cash or other liquid donations (e.g., stock, bonds, etc.) shall not be available for disbursement from the fund unless specifically authorized by the donor. Rather disbursements shall be made from the earnings on the principal balance.

The treasurer or other designee serving in a finance role shall have custody of the money and securities and shall keep the books and accounts of the Team in such a manner that makes clear:

- 1) the outstanding principal balance (gifts)
- 2) the amount available for disbursement (earned, not spent, income)
- 3) the detailed records of expenditures, by LT vote.

The books and accounts shall be open for inspection by two or more LT members at all reasonable times, except for the specific information which would compromise confidentiality of hardship beneficiaries. Additionally, the records shall be made available to the church auditors or other designee serving in a finance role before the annual church meeting.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH RETIREMENT FUND

Mission Statement of the Retirement Fund

The purpose of the fund is to be an investment vehicle for employee retirement benefits from First Baptist Church by utilizing our investment broker who oversees our portfolio of securities, bonds, and mutual funds.

Policy

Each full time employee interested in utilizing the benefit with the church will negotiate a percent of their yearly base salary to be used for this retirement account. These deposits will be made quarterly into the church investment portfolio. Separate ledger accounts will be maintained for each employee. Interest and/or gains or losses will be calculated at each calendar year end. The calculation is to determine how the portfolio has performed for the calendar year. The performance rate will be applied to each employee account. Each employee will be eligible for the performance rate of the portfolio on the first year the payments start going into the fund.

Once employment is terminated an employee has the option of withdrawing the balance of their account during the month of January, which allows calculation for the previous year's earnings or loss. This can be done by a letter and turned into the First Baptist Leadership Team no later than 30 days prior to December 31. A terminated employee may leave his or her account in the fund for as long as they choose and enjoy the growth of the portfolio during future years.

Each employee will be provided a detailed statement annually showing the activity in their account during the year.

These calculations, deposits, and annual statements will be provided and maintained by the church Treasurer or other designee serving in a finance role.