

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the Church body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual Church member and the freedom of action of this Church body in its relation to other Churches.

ARTICLE I: NAME

This Church body shall be known as the May Memorial Baptist Church, located in Powhatan, Virginia.

ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

To be a Christian fellowship 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 help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.

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

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

May Memorial Baptist Church subscribes to the position of autonomy, and to the writings prepared by the Committee on Denominational Crisis, Baptist General Association of Virginia, "On these truths we stand."

Therefore, because of New Testament guidance, by the term "Priesthood of Believer", Baptists have meant that a believer is once and for all saved by grace through the one and only "High Priest", Jesus Christ our Savior. The biblically-centered doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer affirms: every person has the privilege of approaching God for himself or herself without the need for any human intermediary; and every person has equal access to the Bible. The access gives every person the right of interpretation led by the Holy Spirit and therefore, no authority can force or pressure to compel submission to his or her interpretation of belief by another believer.

The ordinances of May Memorial Baptist Church are baptism and The Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE IV: ORDINANCES

Baptism

A person who receives 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, shall be received for baptism.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water (unless candidate is physically incapacitated).
- B. Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor or whomever the Church shall authorize.
- C. Baptism shall be administered as soon as possible as an act of worship during any worship service.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

- A. The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of each month, or as otherwise scheduled by agreement of the Chairman of the Board of Deacons and the Pastor.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed in the morning worship service, or as otherwise scheduled by agreement of the Chairman of the Board of Deacons and the Pastor.
- C. The Pastor and Deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- D. The Deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE V: ORDINATION

Ordination is the act of the church by which, in the name of God, it delegates to a qualified person who has responded to the call of God a wide range of ministerial functions and responsibilities. The church recognizes God's call in a person's life for vocational ministry by observing a person's maturity, gifts for ministry, love for God, love for the Church, and theological education. When such recognition is made, the church shall set that person apart for vocational ministry by the laying on of hands and prayer.

- A. A person seeking ordination shall notify the pastor of his or her call and intention, and the pastor shall notify the Deacons of the request.

- B. The Deacons shall assist the pastor in assembling a council for the purpose of examining the candidate. This council may include members of May Memorial Baptist Church, Middle District Baptist Association, Baptist General Association of Virginia, the candidate's home church, and the candidate's educational institution.
- C. After the examination process is completed, the council shall make one of three recommendations to the deacons: 1) ordination should proceed; or 2) ordination should be deferred to some future date, stating the reasons; or 3) ordination should not take place.
- D. Upon hearing the recommendation, the deacons shall proceed following the recommendation of the council. If the recommendation is to ordain, the ordination service is to be planned and announced only after the recommendation has been given.
- E. The pastor and the ordained shall plan the ordination service in conjunction with other church staff and leaders. Great care should be given to include members of May Memorial Baptist Church and to follow both Biblical examples and historic Baptist principals for ordination.

ARTICLE VI: RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this Church is vested in the body of baptized believers who compose it and is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. It recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist Churches. When practical, this Church will cooperate with and support the Middle District Baptist Association (MDBA) and the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV). Our mission offerings, consisting of state, national and international funds, are distributed through the BGAV according to the instructions established by May Memorial Baptist Church.

ARTICLE VII: CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of 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 pledge, 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; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also pledge to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk together in

Christian love; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all tale bearing, slandering, and excessive anger. Recognizing that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we purpose not to abuse them in harmful habits and to observe Christian temperance in our daily lives.

We further pledge to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer, to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling

and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the teachings of our Savior, to seek peace and harmony without delay.

We pledge that when we leave this Church fellowship we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other Church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND WORSHIP SERVICES

Membership

The membership of this Church shall be composed of persons who have accepted and confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, have been baptized in accordance with the teaching and commandment of the New Testament, and do accept and subscribe to the Church Covenant, doctrines and practices of this church.

Worship Service

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and as otherwise scheduled for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the Church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor.

Special Services

Revival services and any other Church meeting which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the Church shall be placed on the Church calendar.

ARTICLE VIX: ADOPTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF CONSTITUTION

Adoption: This constitution shall require for adoption at least two-thirds (2/3) affirmative votes of the votes cast by the voting members present at a regular or a special called meeting for this purpose. A 30-day notice is required for a meeting to consider and vote on proposed changes to the Constitution. Copies of all proposed changes must be made available to the members 30 days prior to the announced meeting date. This constitution shall become effective on and from the date of its adoption and any previously adopted constitution is hereby repealed.

Amendment: Any article or section of this constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by at least two-thirds (2/3) affirmative votes of voting members present and voting at any

regular or special called business meeting of the membership of the Church, provided however, that such proposed changes must be submitted to the membership of the Church in writing at least thirty (30) days before the action on the amendment.

Changes Recorded: The Clerk shall promptly show all such changes and shall see that an amended copy is recorded in Church files.

Distribution of Governing Documents: The Clerk shall make available a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws each year to new leaders in the Church. Copies shall be furnished to new members coming into the Church and to such others as may request them.

