

Culpeper Baptist Church

The Hands of Jesus Touching Hearts ***Constitution and Bylaws Manual ~ 2005***

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Foreword

This document is intended to be the clearest expression of the spiritual foundations of Culpeper Baptist Church and the practical means for carrying out its mission.

The **Constitution** gives language to our basic beliefs, objectives, and covenants as followers of Jesus Christ.

The **Bylaws** are designed to guide the Body in matters of membership, meetings, ordinances, officers, organizations, committee responsibilities, and general policies.

Culpeper Baptist Church Constitution

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern this Christian body in an orderly manner. Through this constitution h to preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

Article I. NAME

This body shall be known as the Culpeper Baptist Church.

Article II. MISSION STATEMENT

Culpeper Baptist Church is dedicated to the teachings of Jesus Christ. We are committed to fulfilling Christ's commission, "to make disciples" through evangelism and ministry in our church, community, and world. We endeavor to provide an atmosphere for the worship of God and for fellowship.

Article III. STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

The objective of this statement is to set forth certain beliefs that are embraced by us. In recognition of our history and out of the struggle to be free persons in Christ and autonomous in congregational life, we affirm the following basic beliefs:

The Bible: In matters pertaining to faith and practice, the sole authority is the Holy Bible, interpretation of which is the right and responsibility of the individual believer.

Personal Freedom: Every person has free access to God as revealed in Jesus Christ and is accountable to Him.

Salvation: The salvation of the individual is secured through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; is claimed through a personal confession of faith; and is expressed by a disciplined life.

This Church: This church is composed of baptized believers *and worshippers* who are voluntarily associated as a community of faith for learning, worship, and extending the Gospel of Christ.

Religious Liberty: Church and State are free and independent of each other in carrying out the functions for which they are ordained.

To express further our doctrinal position and solidarity as followers of Christ, the church subscribes to the 1963 **Baptist Faith and Message** statement.

Article IV. CHURCH COVENANT

Recognizing the Grace of God as expressed in Jesus Christ, we do hereby confess our faith in Him as Divine Savior and Lord.

Having declared our obedience to Him through believer's baptism and being voluntarily joined to a local body of fellow believers, we therefore covenant as members of the Culpeper Baptist Church to:

1. Gather regularly for corporate worship, for the study of God's Word, and for the equipping of ourselves to be responsible disciples in the world;
2. Strengthen the fellowship of the Body through acts of kindness, understanding, forgiveness, and love in our families and in our relations with all people;
3. Proclaim the Gospel of Christ through word and deed to every person whom our lives may reach;
4. Support the world mission of Christ through the committed stewardship of life and possessions;
5. Guard the moral and spiritual integrity of the church by living daily in the ways of Christ;
6. Share the sorrows, hurts, and joys of one another and be mutually encouraging toward the spiritual maturity of the Body of Christ;
7. Engage in daily prayer for ourselves and others and in family devotion in order to open our lives to the direction and power of the Holy Spirit.

Article V. POLICY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report and be accountable to the church only, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. It recognizes the obligations of mutual cooperation common among Christian churches. Insofar as is consistent with its beliefs, this church will cooperate with and support the Shiloh Baptist Association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article VI. CHURCH ORDINANCES

A. Baptism

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

1. Baptism is an act of worship.
2. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
3. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize.

B. The Lord's Supper

Participation in the Lord's Supper is an act of obedience whereby believers in Christ commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His Second Coming.

The Lord's Supper shall be observed as scheduled by the Church, or by the pastor, and administered under the leadership of the pastor and/or deacons.

Article VII. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be valued as both a right and responsibility in keeping with the objectives, beliefs, and covenant of the Culpeper Baptist Church.

A. Reception

To become a member a person shall voluntarily be presented at a regular worship service and shall be received as a member based upon any of the following declarations:

1. Profession of faith in Jesus Christ and consent to baptism by immersion;*
2. Request for membership transfer from another Baptist Church, provided the candidate was baptized by immersion after the conversion experience. When the candidate is presented to the church for acceptance, the membership shall be informed whether the candidate has or has not received believer's baptism by immersion;
3. Statement of prior conversion to Jesus Christ and of believer's baptism by immersion;
4. Statement of prior profession of faith in Jesus Christ and consent to baptism by immersion.

*Where physical infirmity renders impossible baptism by immersion, the church will act on each situation individually.

B. Discontinuation

Discontinued membership will occur in any of the following instances:

1. Membership letter requested by another Baptist church.
2. Special considerations that may be acted upon at a church business meeting.

Article VIII. AMENDMENTS

Any part of this constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed at any regular or called business meeting of the church, provided that each amendment shall have been submitted in writing at a previous business meeting. Amendments to the constitution shall be made by a three-fourths vote of church members present.

BYLAWS

Article I. CHURCH OFFICERS AND STAFF

The officers of this Church shall be:

A. Pastor and Ministerial Staff

The Pastor is the spiritual leader of the Church. The pastor shall lead the Church in performing its functions and ministries.

The Ministerial Staff members shall be called and employed as the Church determines the need for such ministers. The Ministerial Staff shall perform the priestly and ministerial functions of the Church under the supervision of the Pastor. The Ministerial Staff is responsible for ministry development and implementation as well as day-to-day operations of the Church.

B. Leadership Council

The Leadership Council shall be made up of members of Culpeper Baptist Church. They shall be responsible to oversee the work of the Church.

C. Deacons

Deacons are to be servants of the Church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the Pastor and staff in performing pastoral ministries, caring for church members and other persons in the community, and leading the Church in performing its spiritual tasks.

D. Moderator and Assistant Moderator

The Church shall annually elect a Moderator and an Assistant Moderator. The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings. The Moderator shall be acquainted with these Bylaws and the practices approved by the Church body but shall be otherwise guided by *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, current edition.

E. Clerk

The Church shall annually elect a Clerk. The Clerk *or designee* shall keep in suitable form a record of all the official actions of the Church.

F. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

The Church shall annually elect a Treasurer and an Assistant Treasurer as its financial officers. The Treasurer is responsible for the financial records of the Church and to provide a financial report at regular business meetings.

At the March business meeting of each year, the annual account by the treasurer of the Church budget for the previous year shall be presented to the Church for the records.

G. Trustees

The Church shall elect three Trustees, to serve six-year terms, as legal officers for the Church. After two six year terms a trustee is eligible for election after one year off.

The role of the trustees is to hold title to the property of the Church in trust, but they have no role in its management or use. Upon a specific vote of the Church authorizing each action, the Trustees shall have the

power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property or funds. The Trustees must also execute all documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property.

Article II. CHURCH MEETINGS

A. Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly for worship on Sunday and at special times for preaching, instruction, prayer, and the worship of God. The Pastor shall be responsible for the services. Any scheduling changes are made in consultation with the Leadership Council.

B. Business Meetings

The purpose of business meetings is to allow church members to exercise their responsibilities. Only church members present in person or electronically have the authority for the following actions:

- Call a pastor and full-time ministerial staff members.
- Adopt the budget.
- Change the constitution or bylaws.
- Alter the identity or denomination affiliation.
- Authorize contracts or agreements that require trustee signatures.
- Start or disband a regularly scheduled worship service.
- Approve a financial obligation exceeding 2% of the annual receipts.
- Elect the Leadership Council, deacons, standing committees, Trustees and pastor search committee.
Elect the Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer and their assistants.

1. Regular Business Meetings

- The Church shall hold three regular business meetings per year in March, September and November/December. The Leadership Council, Pastor and Moderator shall schedule the meetings and publish an agenda. In the event the church decided that meeting in person is not practical, an electronic business meeting is acceptable.

2. Special Business Meetings

A special business meeting may be called by the Pastor or the chairman of the Leadership Council in consultation with the Moderator. A notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be given at Sunday worship services at least three days prior to the special meeting.

3. Quorum

The quorum consists of those church members who attend a properly called business meeting.

Article III. EMPLOYMENT OF THE PASTOR

A. Selection

The procedure for the selection of the Pastor shall be as follows:

The Leadership Council shall submit a list of 14 names of active resident church members for nomination to the Pastor Search Committee. During the business meeting, nominations from the floor shall be accepted. Only one member of a household shall be eligible for nomination to this committee. In a business meeting, the Church shall elect a Pastor Search Committee of seven active members. Election of this committee shall be by secret ballot, and of the persons nominated, the seven receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. In addition, the person receiving the eighth highest number of votes shall serve as a non-voting alternate to fill any vacancy. The committee shall elect its own chair.

The Pastor Search Committee shall propose in a regular or special church business meeting the name of a candidate for the pastorate. Only one name at a time shall be proposed. The voting shall be by secret ballot and be determined by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting. After the call is extended and accepted, the search committee shall be available for one year for consultation.

B. Evaluation

Annually, the Leadership Council, Deacons, and Personnel Committee shall select a representative from their respective groups to form a team for the purpose of evaluating the performance of the Pastor. This team shall submit a written recommendation regarding salary and benefits to the Personnel Committee.

The team evaluating the Pastor shall discuss a performance evaluation with the Pastor. A written improvement plan if necessary, detailing areas that need improvement and a timeline for demonstrated improvement, shall be developed with the Pastor. Within 90 days, the Evaluation Team, Personnel Committee and Leadership Council shall determine if improvement is sufficient to continue employment.

If the Evaluation Team, Personnel Committee and Leadership Council determine that the Pastor's employment should be discontinued, they shall request his resignation. If the Pastor refuses to resign, the Evaluation Team shall present the issue to the congregation in a business meeting. Any vote to terminate employment will be by secret ballot and require a majority of the ballots cast.

Article IV. SELECTION OF OTHER MINISTERIAL STAFF MEMBERS AND CHURCH OFFICERS

A. Other Ministerial Staff Members

1. Selection

Other members of the ministerial staff shall be called following a search process directed by the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee in coordination with the Pastor. The Personnel Committee shall bring to the membership for consideration at a business meeting the name of a candidate to fill the vacant ministerial position.

2. Evaluation

Ministerial Staff shall be evaluated annually by the Pastor and the Personnel Committee. The Pastor and Personnel Committee shall discuss a performance evaluation with the staff member. A written improvement plan, if necessary, detailing areas that need improvement and a timeline for demonstrated improvement, shall be developed with the staff member. Within 90 days, the Personnel Committee and Pastor shall determine if improvement is sufficient to continue employment.

If the Evaluation Team, Personnel Committee and Leadership Council determine that the staff member's employment should be discontinued, they shall request his resignation. If the staff member refuses to

resign, the Evaluation Team shall present the issue to the congregation in a business meeting. Any vote to terminate employment will be by secret ballot and require a majority of the ballots cast.

B. Church Officers

1. The Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Church Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer shall be resident members nominated by the Leadership Council or nominated from the floor. These church officers are elected annually by the Church in a business meeting.
2. The Trustees shall be active resident members elected for six-year terms by the Church in a business meeting. The Trustees shall nominate their own members and elect their own chairman.

Article V. LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

There shall be an active body of church leaders who comprise the Leadership Council. This council shall consist of the Pastor along with six lay members who serve on a rotating basis. The term of service shall be three years. The chairman of the council shall be elected by the council to serve a term of one calendar year. Each member of the council shall have been an active member of the Church for at least two years before election to office. A representative from the Personnel Committee and a representative from the Finance Committee shall serve as additional members of the Leadership Council. The Church's Treasurer and/or Assistant Treasurer shall serve on the Leadership Council as a non-voting ex officio member.

Each year the terms of two elected council members shall expire. An election shall be held to fill the vacancies. After serving a term of three years, no person shall be eligible for reelection for two years.

The Pastor shall serve on the Leadership Council ex officio. Ministerial Staff, other than the Pastor, may serve on the Leadership Council without vote.

A. Responsibilities

1. Assist the Church to understand its mission and to define its priorities.
2. Evaluate the progress of programs, ministries, organizations, and activities of the Church.
3. Authorize expenditures each quarter not to exceed 2% of the previous year's receipts, as the need arises.
4. Receive a semiannual report from the Audit Committee.
5. Support the Ministerial Staff.
6. Submit a written report at each business meeting to include actions taken by the Council.
7. Lead the Church in establishing policy and seeing that said policies are carried out.
8. Nominate the following:

Church Officers – Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

Members of standing committees as specified in Article VII. Approve chair of committees

The ad hoc committee to review the constitution and bylaws

9. Members of the Leadership council shall disclose any conflict of interest as defined by Virginia state code.

B. Nomination

1. The Pastor, chairman of the Deacons, vice-chairman of the Deacons, and the chairs of the standing committees will comprise the Leadership Council Nominating Committee and shall meet to decide on nominations to the Leadership Council.
2. The Leadership Council Nominating Committee shall notify the Church body by the second Sunday in September of nominations to fill vacancies on the Council.
3. If vacancies occur during the year, the most recent Leadership Council Nominating Committee shall reconvene to nominate candidates to fill vacancies.
4. Other nominations may be presented to the Church office two weeks before a vote at a regularly scheduled business meeting in September.

Article VI. DEACONS

There shall be an active body of at least twelve Deacons. The membership shall be on a rotating basis. The term of service shall be for three years. A chairman of Deacons shall be elected by the Deacons to serve a term of one calendar year. Each Deacon shall have been an active member of the Church for at least two years before election to office. Deacons should be of strong character and spiritual depth.

Each year an election shall be held to elect a slate of Deacons. After serving a term of three years, no person shall be eligible for reelection for one year.

The nomination and election shall be conducted as follows:

A. Nomination

1. The Deacon Nomination Committee shall consist of the outgoing Deacons, outgoing Leadership Council members, chairs of the standing committees, and the Pastor. The chairman of the Deacons shall preside over this group and convene a meeting to nominate a slate of Deacons.
2. Prior to nomination, candidates for Deacon must have given their consent for nomination and must have attended a Deacon Orientation meeting to assure their understanding of the role of Deacon and their willingness to serve in this capacity. Those members placing names in nomination should give a brief resume of each candidate's interest and dedication. The Deacon Nomination Committee shall then compose a slate of Deacons to be presented at the September business meeting.
3. Two weeks before the business meeting, the nominees' names shall be made available to the congregation. During the business meeting, additional names may be placed in nomination from the floor, provided the same terms as outlined above have been met for each nominee.
4. The Deacon Chairman or Vice Chairman, two Deacons and the Pastor shall conduct the above-mentioned orientation which shall include a session with each individual nominee regarding the candidate's qualifications for nomination and willingness to serve.
5. The slate of nominees shall be introduced to the Church before the election date at a Sunday morning worship service. At the same worship service, a list of these nominees shall be distributed to the Church members present.

B. Election

On a Sunday of November, the Church shall be asked to elect the proposed slate of deacons.

Article VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

The Leadership Council shall nominate the members to all standing committees. Each committee member, unless otherwise stated, shall serve a term of three years, rotating off and ineligible to serve on the committee again until the passage of at least a year. Committees elect their own chairmen. It is recommended that the chairman of a committee be a member who has served on the committee previously. All committee members shall be active residential members of the Culpeper Baptist Church and be elected by the Church. Members of standing committees shall disclose any conflict of interest per the Virginia state code.

A. Audit Committee

1. Structure: The Audit Committee shall be composed of three members who are familiar with accounting and/or bookkeeping practices and are not directly involved or related to anyone involved in the financial affairs of the Church. Audit Committee members shall serve a three-year term. One new member shall be elected and one member shall rotate off every year.
2. Responsibilities: The Audit Committee shall:
 - a. Have access to all financial records of the Church. Individual giving records are confidential and shall not be reviewed by the committee unless there are specific questions related to a particular individual's contributions and then only with that individual's permission.
 - b. Meet twice a year to review a random month's sample from the financial records to examine them for accuracy and reliability. The committee shall review the select financial reports, records and the internal controls of the Church to determine that church assets are being safeguarded. The Audit Committee shall report the results of the review to the Leadership Council and Finance Committee.
 - c. Ensure that the financial practices are in compliance with generally accepted financial policies and procedures
 - d. May arrange for a professional financial review to be conducted once every three years, and present the report to the Leadership Council and Finance Committee.

B. Finance Committee

1. Structure: The Finance Committee shall be composed of three elected members. The Church Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall serve as ex officio members.
2. Responsibilities
 - a. Prepare the Church budget according to the priorities set by the Leadership Council and recommend it for church approval.
 - b. Develop a plan to grow our financial income and consider new sources of revenue. This shall include grants, use of space, fee for services and partnerships.

- c. Establish a list of priorities for any unbudgeted funds and legacy gifts.
- d. Receive and consider items not included in the Church budget and make recommendations for their funding.
- e. Develop and maintain the financial policies and procedures of the Church in conjunction with the Leadership Council.
- f. Have the authority to make line-item transfers in the budget.
- g. Receive, hold, invest and apply the Endowment Fund, from time to time, in trust, on the terms and conditions contained in the Trust Agreement.

3. The fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31.

C. Personnel Committee

- 1. Structure: The Personnel Committee shall be composed of six active members.
- 2. Responsibilities
 - a. Fill staff vacancies.
 - b. Review job descriptions for church staff positions as necessary.
 - c. Develop personnel policies and procedures, including those for evaluating church staff.
 - d. Study and recommend to the Leadership Council, at least annually, all salaries (other than Pastor - see Article III. B.) and benefits based on evaluations of the paid church staff by the appropriate staff supervisor.
 - e. Be available to hear grievances of any staff member and to give aid in resolving the grievance.
 - f. Be supportive of the Ministerial Staff.

Article VIII. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Church may appoint an ad hoc committee to carry out a specified task, at the completion of which it automatically ceases to exist. Examples of special committees are the Pastor Search Committee and the Bylaws Revision Committee.

Article IX. DENOMINATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND OTHER AFFILIATIONS

In keeping with our foundational commitment to religious liberty and sharing the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), Culpeper Baptist Church has historic denominational relationships with the Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Southern Baptist Convention, and may choose to participate in other missional opportunities.

Article X. MINISTRY PARTNERS

Culpeper Baptist Church's mission is to be a blessing to our community and the world by collaboration and engagement in relationships with ministry partners using Memorandums of Understanding or employment arrangements that define mission commitment, use of resources and regular communication. The Leadership Council handles this responsibility. Our current ministry partners are:

Culpeper Baptist Child Development Center, Inc.

Generations Central

The Culpeper

Maranatha Iglesia Bautista

Culpeper Korean Church

Article XI. AMENDMENTS

Any of these Bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed at any regular or called business meeting of the Church, provided that each amendment shall have been submitted in writing at a previous business meeting.

Amendments to the Bylaws shall be made by two-thirds of the members present and voting.

Article XII. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

The Constitution and the Bylaws of the Culpeper Baptist Church shall be reviewed at intervals of no more than five years. The Moderator shall request the Leadership Council to nominate an ad hoc committee of seven members for this purpose. It is recommended that this committee include two members from the previous committee. Current copies of the Bylaws shall be made available through the church office.