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CONSTITUTION
OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF UPPER MARLBORO

Article I: Name

This body shall be known as "The First Baptist Church of Upper Marlboro, Maryland," hereafter referred to as "FBCUM."

Article II: Objectives/Purpose

It shall be the purpose of this church to promote the cause of Jesus Christ, to win the unconverted to Him, and to seek the development of all its members in Christian living.

Article III: Confession/Statement of Faith

This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000.

Article IV: Covenant

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

We will engage in assembling ourselves together while praying for one another. We will strive for and promote the spiritual growth and advancement of the church by; sustaining worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; contributing 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.

As a body of believers, we agree to maintain family and personal devotions, to educate our children in the Christian faith, and to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances. We will seek to avoid all practices or speech which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

We will walk together in Christian love by faithfully caring for, watching over, and admonishing one another as occasions may require. In conflict, we will seek to follow Christ's example of reconciliation without delay. We will always strive to be humble and courteous in our speech and slow to take offense. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with a like-minded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Article V: Polity 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. This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, the Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

This church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland (ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF TRUSTEES OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF UPPER MARLBORO, MARYLAND, INC., dated April 22, 1963, and recorded April 24, 1963).

The church shall elect four or more trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

Trustees shall serve on a rotation basis, with at least one new trustee being elected every year. (See Constitution, Article V. Polity and Relationships.)

By-Laws

Article I: Membership

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, give evidence of regeneration, strive to live consistently with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this church, been baptized by immersion, been received into full membership according to the By-Laws of this church, and willingly submit to the Church Covenant.

Students, military and others who are temporary residents or those who, due to factors beyond their control, cannot apply for full membership in our church may seek to be placed under watch-care of our church as an associate member. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership, except that home church membership must be retained. The Elders shall give direct supervision to this process.

Membership responsibilities extend to all, while privileges of voting and holding a church office extend to those in full membership over the age of 18.

Section 1: Candidacy

Any person may offer himself or herself as a candidate for membership in this church by responding at a commitment time or by notifying the church office. All such candidates shall be interviewed by an Elder (or appropriate designee) of the church and presented to the church at any Members' Meeting for membership. The Elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or other such evidence, as the Elders deem appropriate.

A candidate may be received in any of the following ways: (1) by public profession of faith and baptism according to the policies of this church; (2) by promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church; (3) on a statement of prior conversion experience and believer's baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable; or (4) from another denomination, on affirmation of faith and baptism.

Section 2: Responsibilities

All persons presenting themselves as candidates for membership in this church in any of the ways set forth above shall be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Confession of Faith, and pledge themselves to fulfill their covenant relationship.

Section 3: Church Discipline

The purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by (1) maintaining purity in and unity of the church (1 Cor. 5:6), (2) protecting believers by deterring sin (1Tim. 5:20), and (3) promoting the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to biblical standards of doctrine and conduct (Gal. 6:1).

Members of the church who err in biblical doctrine or conduct shall be subject to discipline according to Matthew 18:15-18. (Such person hereafter will be referred to as an “erring person.”)

Before such discipline reaches its final conclusion:

- It shall be the duty of any church member who has knowledge of the erring person’s unbiblical beliefs or misconduct to warn and to correct such erring person in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.
- If the erring person does not heed this warning, then, the warning member shall again go to the erring person accompanied by one or two witnesses to warn and correct the erring person, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring person still refuses to heed this warning, then,
- It shall be brought to the attention of the Council of Elders. (It is understood that this process will continue to conclusion, whether the erring person leaves FBCUM or otherwise seeks to withdraw from membership to avoid the discipline process.)

The Elders will appropriately investigate any allegation brought by one church member against another. If these allegations are warranted, two or more of the Council of Elders will contact the erring person and seek his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring person refuses to be restored, the Council of Elders will present the matter to the church during a Members’ Meeting. The church may, by an affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of the members present and voting, remove the erring person from membership in accordance with Matthew 18. The

attitude of the church is guided by redemption and restoration rather than punishment, and the church will pray for the restoration of the erring person.

Reinstatement:

If such dismissed member heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance and requests reinstatement, he or she shall be publicly restored to membership by recommendation of the Council of Elders and subsequent affirmative vote of the membership.

Termination of Membership:

Church membership shall be terminated and the member's name removed from the membership roll at the death of the member, transfer of membership to another church, at the written request of a member, or as a result of discipline (1 Cor. 5:12).

The name of any member may be removed from the church roll if: 1) they have failed to fulfill their covenant relationship of assembling together for one year or 2) by confirmed membership (fellowship) with another church.

Names will be removed only after appropriate efforts have been made to contact the member and encourage them concerning their membership duties.

Membership may be reinstated at their request, by the recommendation of the Council of Elders and subsequent affirmative vote of the church.

Article II. Church Officers

Section 1. Elders

There shall be Vocational and Non-vocational Elders. Elders that serve in a paid position at the church shall be termed Vocational Elders. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. A quorum shall be three-fourths (75%) of the Council of Elders. The objective of the church shall be to designate a minimum of four serving Elders. The number of Elders shall be determined by the serving Elders according to need and the availability of qualified men, up to a maximum number of twelve (excluding the Senior Pastor). The Elders shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of Elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. When possible, a majority of the members of the Elder Council shall be Non-vocational. No Elder shall hold the office of Deacon during his tenure. The Elders shall elect a chairman for the Elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their numbers to serve as a moderator for church meetings. The term of service for a non-vocational Elder shall be indefinite. The option for a Non-vocational Elder to request a leave of absence is appropriate as deemed necessary. An Elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an Elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the Elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and I Timothy 5:17–21. Any Elder may be dismissed by a three-fourths (75%) of the members present and voting at any Members' Meeting of the church.

Initial Selection of Elders:

For the initial selection of Elders, the Constitutional Revision Team shall recommend a five member Elder Examination Team to the church. None of the members of the Elder Examination Team shall be considered for the position of Elder with the exception of the Senior Pastor, who serves as an Elder. The Elder Examination Team shall receive nominations from the church for the position of Elder as prescribed below.

The Elder Examination Team shall consist of:

- a. Senior Pastor
- b. Chairman of the Deacon Council or representative of the Deacon Council
- c. One vocational staff member
- d. Two active church members nominated by the Deacon Council

The Elder Examination Team shall make a recommendation of Elders to the congregation. These recommendations must be approved by a three-fourths (75%) affirmative vote of the church members present and voting. Those approved as Elders shall form the Council of Elders and shall begin the process prescribed in their duties.

Subsequent Selection of Elders:

Selections will take place as determined by the Elder Council. The serving Elders will supervise the selection process. Notice of the beginning of the nomination process shall be given in writing to the church membership not less than two weeks preceding the nomination date. A Nomination Review Team will be composed of the Chairman of the Elders as chairman, Chairman of the Deacon Council, one additional

Elder, one additional Deacon plus the Senior Pastor, ex officio and voting. This team will review the nominations carefully and recommend potential Elder(s) to be approved by a vote of three-fourths (75%) of the members present and voting at any Members' Meeting.

The new Elder(s) confirmed by the Congregation must be ordained and installed prior to beginning their service within six months of nomination.

Reconstitution of Elders:

In the event that it becomes necessary for re-formation of the Council of Elders, an Elder Examination Team shall be formed and shall recommend individuals to serve as Elders [with the exception of the Senior Pastor who serves by virtue of his position] to the congregation.

Non-serving Elders:

Non-serving Elders who have previously served at FBCUM may be called upon as a resource for help and counsel by the church.

Elder Duties:

The Biblical responsibilities outlined for the Elders are:

1. The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word.
2. To shepherd the flock of God (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:20; 1 Timothy 3:5)
3. To be an example to the flock, not lording it over those allotted to their charge (1 Peter 5:3)
4. To teach and exhort, thereby equipping the flock for ministry (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9; Ephesians 4:12)

5. To refute those who contradict truth (Titus 1:9,11)
6. To manage the church in their role as overseers (1 Timothy 3:5, 5:17)
 - a. conduct worship services
 - b. administer the ordinances of baptism and communion
 - c. equip the membership for the work of the ministry
 - d. oversee the process of church discipline
 - e. ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions
7. To pray for the sick (James 5:14-15)

Church Oversight Functions:

The Council of Elders shall be responsible for the preparation and presentation of a Master Plan to the church on an annual basis during a Members' Meeting. The Master Plan outlines the direction of ministry for the next year to include the Annual Report. The Elders shall ensure that minutes of the church Members' Meetings are kept by a designated person (clerk).

The Elders shall establish Ministry Teams (such as stewardship, missions, property management and any others) as needed to accomplish the stated mission of the church. Team leaders shall be nominated by the Council of Elders and confirmed by the church membership at a Members' Meeting.

The Elders shall be responsible for the general oversight of all matters pertaining to the work of the church. Their function is to establish policy and monitor the operations and ministries of the church. The Elders are accountable and report to the congregation. Members of the church will have an opportunity to attend designated

Elders' meetings for the purpose of bringing new business items. These business items shall have been presented in writing no less than two weeks prior to the Elder's meeting.

The Council of Elders shall take particular responsibility:

1. to examine and instruct prospective members
2. to oversee the work of the Deacons and Ministry Teams
3. to annually present to the church an itemized budget, after consultation with the Deacon Council and the Ministry Teams. The proposed budget shall be made available to church membership prior to the vote. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the Elders. Matters of staff compensation shall be recommended by the Non-vocational Elders only and the Chairman of the Deacon Council to the church.
4. to establish or dissolve ministry positions or teams and to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The Council of Elders shall appoint Elders, Deacons, or other members of the church to serve as members and leaders of such teams.
5. to enlist nominations from the Deacon Council as candidates for ministry teams.

Section 2: Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor, along with the Council of Elders, is responsible for leading the church.

An ordained Southern Baptist minister shall be chosen as Senior Pastor and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. A Senior Pastor Search Team shall consist of five members: two Non-vocational Elders, one Deacon representative elected from

the Council of Deacons and two members at large nominated by the Council of Elders and elected by the church. This team shall seek out a suitable Pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The team shall bring to the consideration of the church only one candidate at a time. The election shall take place at a Members' Meeting. At least two [2] week's public notice shall be given. Election shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of those members present and voting being necessary for an affirmation. The Senior Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

Termination Process for Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall provide thirty [30] days' notice for his resignation. The church, upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders, may declare the office of Pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a Members' Meeting. An Elder, selected by the Council of Elders, shall serve as the moderator of this meeting. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of the members present and voting. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the Pastor, the church will compensate the Pastor with not less than one twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered within thirty [30] days.

Section 3: Church Vocational Staff

Pastoral Staff

The Pastoral Staff [ex. Assistant Pastor, Associate Pastor] shall be called and employed by church vote upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders. A job

description shall be established for all pastoral staff positions and by an affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of the members present and voting.

Church Ministry Staff

The Senior Pastor is responsible for the church staff and shall, in concurrence with the Council of Elders, have authority to hire or terminate church staff as the need presents itself.

Ministry Support Staff

Support staff members shall be employed at the discretion of the Council of Elders as they determine the need for their services. Staff members shall provide two [2] weeks' written notice for resignations.

Section 4: Deacons

The Deacon Council shall consist of men, both Vocational and Non-vocational, as qualified for the office in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and Acts 6. The number of Deacons and the duration of their service shall be determined by ministry needs at the discretion of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders shall bring the names of prospective Deacons to the congregation for final approval by a three-fourths (75%) affirmative vote of the members present and voting. Deacons shall be subsequently ordained by the church.

Responsibilities

The Deacons shall advise and assist the Elders by:

1. supporting and promoting the ministry of the Word
2. serving and leading ministries of the church
3. caring for the members of the congregation

4. administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress
5. assisting in administering the ordinances
6. assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church
7. caring for and maintaining the church properties
8. other ministries as deemed appropriate by the Council of Elders

Article III: Members' Meetings

Members' Meetings will be held quarterly on a date established by the Elders. Specially called Members' Meetings can be scheduled as a need arises. Notification shall be given to the church at least two weeks in advance. A quorum is met when thirty [30] voting members are represented.

Article IV: Amendment Procedures:

Changes in the Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any regular Members' Meeting provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous regularly scheduled Members' Meeting and a copy of the proposed amendment shall have been made available for any member. Amendments to the constitution and to the by-laws shall be approved by a three-fourths (75%) affirmative vote of the members present and voting.

Article V: Ordination:

In the event the church has been requested to ordain a member who has been called into the gospel ministry, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The church will express approval by a vote of three-fourths (75%) of the members present and voting at any Members' Meeting of the church.
2. The Elders shall establish an Examination Council comprised of representatives from neighboring BCM/D churches, along with the Elders, Deacons, and Pastoral Staff, to examine the candidate concerning his fitness for the ministry.

If the report of the aforementioned Examination Council is favorable, the church shall proceed with the ordination.