

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **OF THE**

### **FBC CHARLOTTE DEAF MISSION**

*Adopted by the membership on: August 20, 2008;*

*Updated March 6, 2013*

*Updated September 4, 2014*

*Updated September 21, 2015*

#### **Preamble**

We, the members of FBC Charlotte Deaf Mission, agree to accept and establish the following articles and to willingly and humbly obey them.

#### **Article 1 - Church Name**

The name of this church is FBC Charlotte Deaf Mission.

#### **Article 2 - Purpose of the Church**

This church was founded by the grace of God and for the glory of God; therefore all church activities will be done for the glory of God.

This church gives God glory by loving Him and obeying His commandments through:

1. Worshiping Him
2. Helping Christians grow through Bible instruction and study,
3. Announcing the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal evangelism, and any other way following the teaching of Scripture,
4. Encouraging, supporting, and being involved in mission work; local, national and international,
5. Administering the practice of baptism and the Lord's Supper,
6. Encouraging all believers to gather in fellowship as Scripture commands,
7. Serving other people, families, and churches by providing for their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs in the name of Jesus Christ, and
8. Encouraging fellow churches to remain faithful and true to Scripture.

#### **Article 3 - Church Membership**

##### Section 1 - Qualifications for Membership

To become a member of this church, a person must:

1. Believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,
2. Show evidence of regeneration,
3. Be baptized in obedience to Christ, and
4. Believe in the Christian faith as recorded in Bible.

Each member must agree to follow the teachings of the Bible as recorded in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and promise to keep the commitments recorded in the Church Covenant. The Pastor

and Deacons will be responsible for determining the qualifications for membership based on person's testimony or other evidence as the Pastor and Deacons feel proper.

### Section 2 - Process of becoming a Member

A person becomes a member of our church when the Pastor and Deacons recommend the person for membership and the person is approved through a vote by Church members at any regular or special members' meeting and at that point on the person will be released from membership of other churches.

### Section 3 - Responsibilities and Rights of Membership

Members shall obey responsibilities as recorded in the Church Covenant, and also each member has the right and responsibility to participate in and give to the ministry of the Church and church fellowship as God leads with gifts, time, and resources each has received from God. Only members of this Church are allowed to serve in ministries of this church. Non-members can serve temporarily with approval of the Deacons. Non-members can also serve the church for reasons of administration and professional consultation.

After Christ, the membership governs our church. Therefore members have the right and responsibility to participate in all members' meeting and vote on officers, decisions of new membership, and all other issues requiring vote.

### Section 4- Associate Membership

Students and other people living in the area temporarily, who are members of an evangelical church, can become associate members in the same process as regular membership, as recorded in Article 3.1, except the person's home church will keep the member on record. A letter of recommendation will be requested from the person's home church.

The duties and rights of associate members are the same as regular members except:

- When absent from area for long periods, the person will be released from responsibilities to attend church services, and
- Even though associate members are encouraged to participate in members meetings, they cannot become officers or vote.

The removal of associate membership for disciplinary reasons will be the same as regular members, except Deacons will inform the Pastor of their home church. An associate's membership will normally cease immediately after moving away from the area.

### Section 5 - On Church Discipline

Any member who continues to neglect duties recorded in the Church Covenant and constitution or does something that brings dishonor to our Lord Jesus Christ and causes harm to the spirit of this church, will be reprimanded by the Pastor and Deacons and disciplined by the church following the Lord Jesus' instructions in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline should normally proceed only if private one-on-one counsel fails.

Church discipline may include reprimand by Pastor and Deacon or the church, suspension from church fellowship for a certain time, removal from office, or removal of membership. (see Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

The purpose of Church discipline is:

1. To encourage repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth (*see Proverbs 15:5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; I Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; I Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; I Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22*);
2. To teach godly living as an example to other Christians (*see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; I Corinthians 5:11; 15: 33; Colossians 3:16; I Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10:24-25*);
3. To keep the church faithful and true to Scripture (*see I Corinthians 5:6-7; II Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2*);
4. To keep our church, as one body, a witness to non-Christians (*see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; I Timothy 3:7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3:10*); and
5. Most importantly; for the glory of God and as a reflection of his holy character (*see Deuteronomy 5:11; I Kings 11:2; II Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; II Corinthians 6:14-7: 1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; I Peter 2:12*).

## Section 6 - Termination of Membership

If a church member dies or resigns, the church will remove his name from membership. A member's name may also be removed by church discipline when recommended by Pastor and Deacons and a 2/3 vote of members at any regular or special member meeting.

## **Article 4 - Meetings**

### Section 1 - Worship Meetings

Church worship will be held every Lord's Day and may be held any other day of the week as the Church decides.

### Section 2 - Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members will have a spirit of cooperative trust, honesty, love, and concern for others which is proper for the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At least 4 times a year, the church will have a regular members' meeting at the Wednesday evening service or at any other time approved by membership.

A Church Council member chosen by the Council shall moderate all members' meetings. The Council shall make sure members' meetings are regularly held and reports are given to members in a timely manner.

A quorum is the number of members attending the meeting. All votes will be counted based on the number of votes by members in attendance.

An annual budget will be given to members for approval during the June members' meeting before the start of the new fiscal year on July 1.

When needed, the church may elect officers to fill positions at any regular or special meeting.

The church may call a special meeting at the Council's request, when a member gives a written request for a special meeting to the Council, or a 50% members' vote in favor of a special meeting.

The date, time, and reason for a special meeting will be announced at all services and meetings two (2) weeks before the appointed date of the special meeting. If a member gives a written request for a special meeting to the Council and the request is approved, the Council will call a special meeting within one month after receiving the request.

## **Article 5 - Officers**

### Section 1- Deacons

The office of the Deacon will include at least 3 men who meet the requirements of the office of the Deacon as recorded in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7.

As the church wishes, the Deacons will oversee the ministry and evangelical concentration of the Church. Because Deacons want to follow the principles recorded in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, they shall focus their time in prayer and ministry of the Word through teaching and encouraging biblical doctrine and shepherding God's people.

The church will recognize men gifted and willing to serve as Deacons. These men shall be considered as Christ's gift to his church and set apart as Deacons. This church will affirm the Deacon's calling for life.

The Deacon's time in office may end by resignation or by removal of the church. Any two members having reason to believe a Deacon should be removed should express the concern to the Pastor and, if needed, to the Church. Any action as such will proceed following our Lord's instruction in Matthew 18:15-17 and I Timothy 5:17-21. Any Deacon may be removed by a 2/3 vote at any members' meeting.

Deacons are specially responsible to examine and train prospective members, examine and recommended all possible candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of church council and appoint church agents and committees, do worship services, oversee the practice of baptism and Lord's Supper, train membership for work of ministry, encourage sound doctrine and godly living, remove and correct error, supervise the church discipline process, supervise and encourage church ministries and prepare the church for World missions. Deacons also have the responsibility to make sure all who preach the Word to our church, including outside speakers, share our essential beliefs.

Deacons can establish church ministry positions or committees as part of their responsibilities. Deacons may also propose funding for new paid staff position. Members must approve all possible hires before filling the positions.

The Deacons will receive, hold, and distribute the benevolence fund and, reporting the distribution to the church membership, only reporting the total funds received and distributed. The Deacons and Pastor can distribute up to \$500 total or one time per fiscal year for emergency needs that cannot be made by the scheduled business meeting.

Deacons will elect among themselves a chairman.

### Section 2- The Pastor

The Pastor will satisfy the requirements of the office of elder as recorded in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

His call will not require triennial reaffirmation as with the Deacons as recorded in Article 5.1 nor have a term limit as recorded in article 5.3 for the Church Council. The Pastor's call will be explained in article 6.3.

He will preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinance of baptism and Lord's Supper and do any other duties that apply to the Pastor's office or recorded in the constitution.

When the Pastor is absent or not capable, the Deacons will assume responsibility for his duties which can be delegated.

The Pastor will limit accepting requests for leading out-of-town weekend revivals or conferences to two (2) a year in addition to helping with the North Carolina state Baptist conferences and SBCD.

Along with the Pastor's duties to the church, he also will help with some duties with First Baptist Church of Charlotte.

Pastor cannot perform marriage for anyone except for the members of the church. The only marriage ceremony that the Pastor can perform is between one man and one woman

### Section 3- The Church Council

The church will recognize members who give themselves to the service of the church and who are recognized to have certain gifts of service. These members are Christ's gifts to His Church and will be set apart for his use as the Church Council. The Council will include 3 members; one member elected yearly; each elected to one term lasting three (3) years and cannot be re-elected until after a one-year rest.

The Council is specifically responsible for the continual changing needs of the church and its membership, keep watch over the resources and needs for church worship and encourage and support those with gifts of service and those with gifts of administration.

Annually the Council, with recommendation of the Treasurer and Deacons, will form the Budget Committee, and will present the church with a detailed budget at a regular members meeting. This budget shall be presented for discussion at that time and called up for a vote at the next members' meeting. No money shall be applied or used by or for the church or any of the ministries without approved of the membership.

The Church Council will record minutes of all regular and special members meeting of the Church, to keep accurate roll of membership and to make reports as requested by the Pastor, the Council, Deacons, or the Church.

The Church Council will make sure copies of the most recent revision of the Constitution are available to all Church members.

### Section 4- Treasurer

The Treasurer, who cannot be a current council member or paid church staff, shall be responsible for giving regular reports of financial balances, earnings, and expense of the church at each members meeting. The responsibilities may be delegated with the approval of the Council. The Treasurer will also make sure full and accurate records of earnings and expense records are kept in the books belonging to the church and make sure enough control is delegated to guarantee all funds belonging to the church are properly and honestly handled by church officers, workers, or

assistants. The Treasurer will annually create a report to the Council of all financial transactions and on the financial health of the church. The Church Council will assist the Treasurer and help him/her in advisory situations and in the planning of the annual budget. The Treasurer will be the chairperson of the Budget Committee. The Treasurer will make sure all church finances and investments are properly secured in banks, financial institutes, or depositories; whichever is appropriate. The office of Treasurer will not have a term limit because of the unique gift required of the office.

## **Article 6 - Elections**

### **Section 1- Principles of Election**

The process for church elections will be understood and applied to fulfill following rules:

1. Much prayer, both personal and church-wide, should be an important part of the election process,
2. Nominations should proceed with the support of the Council.
3. All candidates for church office should be treated with grace, kindness, and honesty which is proper for evaluating fellow members
4. Election process will emphasize spirit of the same trust, open, and loving consideration for others as is appropriate in body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Section 2- Selection of Officers**

The election of officers may occur at any members' meeting. The names of nominees to serve as officers will be announced by the Council at the previous member meeting at least four (4) weeks before an election and will proceed as led by the moderator.

The Council should ask recommendation and involvement from the church membership in the nomination process. Any member feeling that one person nominated is not qualified for an office should inform the Council of their concern. Members who feel the need speak opposition to a person nominated should express their concern to the council as far in advance as possible before church members proceed to vote.

The moderator will announce the persons elected who receive at least 75% of the votes for the office of Church Council. For the other offices, the moderator will announce all persons receiving at least 50% of votes. Members who chose not to vote will not be recorded in the minutes.

Candidates elected will assume their office immediately after the election if no other date was previously assigned.

### **Section 3- Calling of the Pastor**

If this church wishes to call any man to Pastor, the same basic process of calling a Deacon must followed, except the membership must have enough opportunity to study the preaching gifts of any possible Pastor and must receive assurance from the Deacons that, after interviewing the candidate, the Deacons have no doubt to his agreement to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and the Church Covenant.

## **Article 7 - Dispute Resolution**

Because the church believes that the Bible commands Christians to always try to live at peace and solve disputes with each other in private or within Christian churches (for example, Matthew 18:15-20, I Corinthians 6: 1-8), the church shall encourage its members to solve conflicts among themselves according to biblical-based principles, without depending on the world courts. Because the church is expected to make peace, the church will encourage members to apply biblical-based principles and avoid lawsuits to solve disputes between oneself and to those outside the church whether Christian or non-Christian or whether an individual or institute. The Deacons will adopt policies and procedures to help members fulfill these goals.

## **Article 8 - Amendments**

The Church Covenant can be amended by a three-quarter vote of the members present at a members' meeting only if that amendment was announced in writing at the previous members meeting and must have been announced from the pulpit at the church services two consecutive Sundays before the vote.

The Constitution can be amended by 2/3 vote of members present and voting at members meeting if the amendment was announced in writing at the previous members meeting and was announced from the pulpit at the church service two consecutive Sundays before the vote.

## **Article 9 - Liaison**

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. In situations before an outside authority, the Pastor is appointed to act as a representative. The church may appoint another member if the Pastor is unable to fulfill his role as a representative.

## **Article 10 - Facilities Use**

All facilities use shall be under First Baptist Church of Charlotte's guidelines. Charlotte Deaf Mission cannot approve any facilities use except by express permission of First Baptist Church.

Last revised 08/20/2015

# **Church Covenant**

*of*

## **FBC Charlotte Deaf Mission**

We believe we have been led by God's 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 the Holy Spirit, we now, relying on His gracious help, humbly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other:

- We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the union of peace.
- We will walk together in brotherly love, as is proper for the members of a Christian Church, exercise a loving care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully reprove and encourage one another as the time may require.
- We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for worship and fellowship, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.
- We will work hard to seek the salvation of our family and friends by a pure and loving example whenever possible with the help and careful guidance of our Lord.
- We will rejoice at each other's happiness and attempt with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.
- We will seek, with God's help, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and unrighteousness, and remembering that there is placed on us a special responsibility now to lead a new and holy life as we have been willingly buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave.
- We will continually work together for a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we continue its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will give 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 will, when we move from this place, join with some other church as soon as possible where we can continue to carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.