

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
WINN'S CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
HALIFAX, VIRGINIA 24558

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner, consistent with the accepted beliefs of the missionary Baptist denomination, and for the purpose or preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body, with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I NAME

This body shall be known as the Winn's Creek Baptist Church, of Halifax, Virginia.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is set forth in it is covenant, to wit: "Having been led, as we believe, by the spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ. We engage, 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 engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; To remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place 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 III ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. We believe that the Bible is God's Word to man and that it is the only sufficient authority as the rule of doctrine and practice.
2. We believe in a regenerated church membership and that the conversion experience is a prerequisite to church membership.
3. In the New Testament the candidate was taken to the water, not the water brought to the candidate; the candidate was placed in the water, not the water put on the candidate; so we believe in immersion only as answering Christ's command of baptism and symbolizing the heart of the gospel message – death, burial, resurrection.
4. We believe in the New Testament order of baptism and the Lord's Supper. New Testament Christians were baptized before taking the Lord's Supper.
5. We believe in the right of each member of the church for a Baptist church is a true democracy at work.
6. We believe in the freedom of the individual conscience; in the voluntary principle, not the coercive principle, in religion.
7. We believe in the total independence and separation of church and state.

ARTICLE IV CHARACTER

Section 1: Polity. The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches.

Section 2: Doctrine. This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the Baptist churches as indicated in the Articles of Faith herewith.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Qualifications: The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration, who have been baptized by immersion, who have subscribed to the covenant and constitution of this church, and who have been affirmatively voted upon by the church. Members of other churches of the same faith and order who have been affirmatively voted upon by the church may be received by letter of recommendation and dismission from their respective churches. A letter of dismission shall be granted upon request of each regular member to unite with another church after affirmative vote by the church. Names of members of the church shall be removed from the roll of members after death or upon affirmative vote of the church.

Section 2: The duties of members are: continual growth in scriptural knowledge, constant development of the spiritual life through worship, fellowship and prayer; consistence in Christian morals and faithfulness in Christian responsibility; faithful attendance at the services of the church; giving regularly and systematically to its support and kingdom causes; and sharing in its organized work.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS & DUTIES

The officers of this church shall be a Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, a Clerk, a Treasurer, a Sunday School Director, a Training Union Director, a Financial Secretary, a Music Director, and such other officers as may be necessary and desirable.

Pastor: A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given. A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendation will constitute a nomination, though any member has the privilege of making other nominations. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary to make a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by mutual consent. (i.e. at least one month's notice by either party) The pastor shall have in charge of the welfare and oversight of the church. He shall preside at all meetings of the church, except as hereinafter provided.

Deacons: Deacons shall be elected by a majority of members present and voting after at least two weeks notice of said election. Their term shall be that of three years, allowing one vacant year before re-election. Duties: it shall be the duty of the deacons to assist the pastor in the administration of the ordinances; to visit the sick, the poor and the afflicted of the church; to investigate cases which may be represented to require discipline; to admonish members who may be delinquent in their covenant duties; to uphold and strengthen the hand of the pastor in his labors, and in concert with him exercise a general superintendence over the spiritual interests of the church and congregation.

Trustees: The church shall have three trustees. They shall be charged with the responsibility of holding in trust the property of the church but shall have no power to buy, mortgage, sell, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action.

Clerk: The clerk shall be elected annually. It shall be his or her duty to attend, or be represented at all church business meetings, to keep an accurate record of all business transactions, and to prepare the annual associational letter. He or she shall issue letters of dismission as authorized by the church, preserving all papers and valuable letters and records that belong to the church, and preserve a true history of the church. It shall also be the duty of the clerk to see that an accurate roll of the church membership is kept with the dates and methods of admission, and dismissal, change in names, correct mailing address and other pertinent information.

Treasurer: It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive all money that is given to the church. The treasurer and financial secretary shall coordinate the disbursements of all money as directed by the church. The treasurer, combining efforts with the financial secretary, shall make a quarterly report to the church of all transactions and shall furnish the Finance Committee with whatsoever information they may desire.

Sunday School Director: The director of the Sunday School shall have general oversight of the entire school, subject to the approval of the church. He shall acquaint himself with the best methods of religious education and endeavor to adopt them for the school. It shall be his duty to counsel teachers and officers in the school, giving advice and receiving suggestions from those co-workers. He/she shall see that a full and accurate report is made of the work of the Sunday School in the business meetings of the church.

Training Union Director: He/she shall have charge of the activities of the Training Union, subject to approval of the church. He/she shall see that a report is given at the business meetings of the church.

Financial Secretary: The financial secretary shall receive the empty envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by persons designated by the church and from these, give each contributor individual credit. It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to order and make available contribution envelopes to all members and persons desiring them. The financial secretary shall coordinate with the treasurer the disbursement of all money as directed by the church. Assist, if necessary, the treasurer in preparation of the quarterly report to the church and/or finance committee whenever desired.

Music Director: The church shall elect annually a director of music. He/she shall be charged with the responsibility of developing a comprehensive church music program.

Other Officers: All officers whose duties are not defined above shall perform the duties usually incumbent upon such officers.

ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES

Section 1: The Board of Deacons, the Treasurer, and the Financial Secretary shall constitute what is known as the Finance Committee of this church. It shall be the duty of this committee to see that the financial affairs of this church are conducted in a business like manner. Before the beginning of each church year (October) the Finance Committee shall make a tentative budget for the coming year and submit it to the church for final consideration.

Section 2: The finances of this church shall be borne by the membership of the church accordingly as God has prospered them, remembering the scriptural injunction to tithe. It shall be the duty of each member to contribute annually in weekly installments as nearly as possible to the support of their pastor and other expenses of the church.

Section 3: The building and grounds committee shall keep watch over the property and buildings of the church making recommendations to the church for needed repairs and shall supervise the maintenance work seeing that it is completed at the earliest possible date.

Section 4: The nominating committee shall consist of at least three members. Throughout the year, this committee shall have the responsibility of nominating to the church persons to serve in the various capacities and positions of the church and its organizations, and on standing and special committees, vacated from time to time, by removal, death, expiration of term of office or failure to function.

ARTICLE VIII SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Special committees shall be elected for specific functions as desired by the church. These committees shall be elected by the church upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee unless the church directs their appointment in a different manner.

ARTICLE IX COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper shall be observed quarterly. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE X DISCIPLINE

Section 1: We have the right to expect that every person joining our church shall live in accordance with the Divine Law. Those who do not show any such disposition are to be dealt with by the church.

Section 2: Any member who is out of harmony with the church and desires to remain so to the extreme action of the church shall be taken to withdraw fellowship from such member at a regular business meeting of the church.

Section 3: In case of grave difficulty, the church will be ready, if requested, to ask the advice of an acceptable council from neighboring churches.

ARTICLE XI CHURCH BUILDING AND CEMETARY

Section 1: The church building shall be used only for the activities that are sponsored by the church.

Section 2: No fee is to be charged for use of the old portion of the cemetery which contains family plots, as many of these plots have previously been purchased by church members for burial. As for the new part, all individual plots for non-members of the church will cost \$200.00, payable in advance, or if a parent or legal guardian are church members and have a child who is twelve (12) years of age or lower which dies, that child may be buried without charge.

ARTICLE XII AMENDMENTS

Changes in this Constitution and By-laws may be made at any regular business meeting by voting members of the church (i.e. fifteen (15) present who are thirteen (13) years of age or over). Changes shall be effected after one months notice of proposed change.

ARTICLE XIII ADOPTION

The adoption of this Constitution and By-laws shall effect a repeal of all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith.