

Main Street Baptist Church

Constitution

*Adopted by the membership in 1964
Re-Constituted on: October 24th, 2021*

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Constitution

PREAMBLE

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in 1964 under the name Eastside Baptist Church, and then became known as Main Street Baptist Church of Spindale, NC, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day;

and Whereas we, the members of Main Street Baptist church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to more closely conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Now therefore we, the members of Main Street Baptist Church, do hereby organize ourselves in accord with the North Carolina Nonprofit Corporation Act and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of, and bring glory to, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this church is: Main Street Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

Worshipping Him;

Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;

Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;

Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international;

Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;

Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;

Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ;

and Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Qualifications

The membership for this church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration by the Spirit of God, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have subscribed to the church covenant, articles of faith, and constitution of this church, and who have been received into membership by vote of the church. 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 such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2 – Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be ordinarily, but not necessarily, recommended by the elders for admission and must be accepted by vote of the members at any regular Family Meeting or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3 – Church Membership Practices

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend Family Meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section 4 – Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15–17; 1 Timothy 1:20, 5:19–20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5). The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined;

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them;

For the purity of the church as a whole;

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians;
and Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

Section 5 – Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and it shall also recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her self-professed apostasy as confirmed by congregational vote. Additionally, the church may recognize the termination of a person's membership after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any Family Meeting or special meeting of the members. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

ARTICLE IV. GATHERINGS

Section 1 – Gatherings for Worship

This church shall hold regular gatherings for worship on the Lord's Day and throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2 – Family Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be regular Family Meetings, at least twice per year, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the elders. Any member designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at each Family Meeting.

The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present.

All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present. Congregational approval shall proceed, without amendment, as a single vote on a any given motion, including financial endeavors. Previously approved expenditures may continue in a perpetual fashion until otherwise decided at a Family Meeting. At any regular or special Family Meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Special Family Meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

ARTICLE V. OFFICES

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 1 – Elders

The elders shall be comprised of not less than two men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. The elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 1 Peter 5:1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine and rebuking those who contradict it), and shepherding God’s flock. The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders.

An elder's 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 of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any Family Meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. Further, the elders should seek to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, affirm our fundamental gospel convictions and do not teach our church anything contrary to the Statement of Faith. The elders may also establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The elders shall, as provided by law and the action of the church, hold in trust the title to all property of the church and shall represent the church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase, improvement and disposal of church property. They shall execute all legal papers relating to the church and to the community as the church may direct. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action; neither shall they have any control over the use of the church property except by the vote of the church.

Section 2 – The Lead Pastor

The lead pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 1, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called

to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 3. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution. The lead pastor shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member or elder. In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor, the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

Section 3 – Associate Pastors/Staff

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the lead pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 1, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 4. He shall assist the lead pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

If a staff position is developed by the elders and the nature of this position is some other type of leadership role besides that of elder/pastor, the above description will not be required. The function of that uniquely created staff role will be determined by the elders, based on the needs of the church's purpose and mission. The call however, will be defined in the same order per Article 6, Section 4.

Section 4 – Deacons & Deaconesses

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3:8–13. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, these members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. They shall work together with the elders, but do not have teaching and oversight authority in the church. The deacons and deaconesses, with agreement of the elders, shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only. The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Section 5 – Clerk

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular Family Meetings and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the elders or the church. The clerk, who shall be a member in good standing, shall be appointed by the elders. The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

Section 6 – Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff member, shall be a member in good standing. The treasurer shall support the elders in providing oversight of the financial and accounting activities of the church, shall not have custody of church funds, and shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each Family Meeting. This responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also see that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to ensure that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders, whenever they may require it, an account of all activities as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation.

ARTICLE VI. ELECTION OF OFFICES

Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;

Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 – Nomination and Affirmation

The election of officers shall be held at a Family Meeting. Names of nominees to serve as elders, associate pastors/staff, deacons, deaconesses, or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at the previous Family Meeting, providing that previous meeting occurred at least **four weeks prior**, and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator. The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant Family Meeting. The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a **two-thirds majority** of all votes cast for the office of elder at the Family Meeting. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a **simple majority** of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Section 3 – Calling of the Lead Pastor

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential lead pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as lead pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife, if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services prior to the final vote at a Family Meeting.

Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastors/Staff

The same order for nomination and affirmation in Section 1 above shall be prescribed for associate pastors/staff. Each of these individuals should receive two-thirds majority of all votes cast at the Family Meeting. Notice of the nomination of an individual to be elected to membership and called as a staff person (which shall include, if necessary,

election to membership of their spouse, if they are married) must be given at two Sunday morning services prior to the final vote at a Family Meeting.

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH POLITY

Section 1 – Elder-Led Congregationalism

The government of this church shall be distinctly Baptist, practicing both congregationalism and an elder-led polity. The elders have full authority to use the God-breathed Scriptures to teach, reprove, correct, and train the members in all righteousness, practicing the oversight that is required of an undershepherd, that the saints may be complete and equipped for every good work. The congregation has full authority, with the use sound doctrine and the aid of the Holy Spirit, to elect their leaders, constitutional practices, statements of belief, financial endeavors, affiliations, and to receive or terminate members. The final authority in this church belongs not to elders or the body, but to the Head, Christ Himself.

Section 2 – Affiliations

This church is a free, autonomous, and independent body, free of any outside control, authority or power, whether governmental or otherwise, including the use of its property and all church policies. However, this church does recognize the value and mutual helpfulness in the voluntary association of churches which are in such agreement in faith and good will. It is recognized that association and cooperation between such churches will influence the missionary, educational and benevolent interest of each other. The church does, therefore declare its intention, as far as conscience will allow, to work in mutual cooperation with other Baptist groups;

Upon the adoption of this constitution this church shall be deemed to have affiliated itself with the Green River Baptist Association;

Upon the adoption of this constitution this church shall be deemed to have affiliated itself with the Pillar Network of churches;

Upon adoption of this constitution this church shall be deemed to be in friendly cooperation with the aims and purposes of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and of the Great Commission Baptists (SBC).

ARTICLE IX. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1 – Constitution

This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when a two-thirds majority vote is taken at a Family Meeting, not less than thirty 30 days after formal presentation of the constitution to the church. This process will remain for further amendments to the constitution, should they arise. Any amendments, alterations, or repeals from the congregation should be **given in writing to the clerk with signatures from at least 15% of the current membership** to be reviewed by the elders. Elders recommending an amendment do not need signatures for consideration. The vote will take place not less than 4 weeks after formal presentation of the amendments to the church in a Family Meeting.

Section 2 – Deviation from Constitution

If a church member believes the church to be out of accord with this constitution, he or she should inform an elder. When the elders determine that the church is out of accord with this constitution, they must provide an update at each Family Meeting until the situation is remedied.

ARTICLE X. INCORPORATION AND DISSOLUTION

Section 1. *Statement:* In the year of 2021, this congregation shall be an incorporated organization known as Main Street Baptist Church. This corporation shall maintain a principal office in the state of North Carolina. The location and post office address of the registered office of this corporation shall be 327 E Main St. Spindale, NC 28160.

Section 2. *Tax Exemption:* This Corporation is organized exclusively for one or more of the purposes as specified in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (hereinafter the "Code") pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 317A of the State Statutes Annotated, known as the State Nonprofit Corporation Act, and laws amendatory thereto, as enacted or hereinafter amended, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. There shall be no capital stock issued, and this corporation is not organized for profit, nor shall any person or member derive any benefit whatsoever, nor shall any pecuniary profit or benefit inure to the members of this corporation, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, this corporation shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes of this corporation, or is not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Section 3. *Objective and Purpose:* The purpose of this corporation shall be to establish and maintain a church modeled after the early Biblical, Christian community as recorded in the book of Acts, for the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both in local and foreign communities, and to provide Christian fellowship for those of like faith where Jesus Christ may be honored.

Section 4. *Dissolution:* In the event that the elders of the church determine that there is reasonable cause to dissolve Main Street Baptist Church as a corporate entity, the elders shall recommend dissolution to the membership. They shall call a special Family Meeting as set out in Article VII, Section 4. Notice of the meeting shall be sent in writing to the membership and posted at all entrances to the church building no less than 4 weeks prior to the meeting. The notice shall state that the purpose of the Family Meeting is to consider dissolution of the corporation and how the assets of the corporation will be distributed after all creditors have been paid. At least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposal of dissolution. After approval of dissolution by the members, all of the corporation's debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated, as approved by a simple majority of the members present at a Family Meeting, to either the presiding Baptist Association in network or another local church in need of property which meets the qualifications described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of exclusively for such exempt

purposes by a court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the corporation is then located.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF COVENANT

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 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 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 bring our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; 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 abuse of any food, drugs, and intoxicating drinks that may negatively affect Christ's worship or may grieve a brother in the faith, pursuing peace above all; 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 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 rules of our Saviors 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.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We affirm the *Baptist Faith and Message*, a doctrinal statement adopted and revised by the Great Commission Baptists (SBC) in 2000, published in Nashville, Tennessee.

We affirm the *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith* (also known as the *Second London Baptist Confession*), a doctrinal statement composed by pastors and adopted by Particular Baptists at the London General Assembly of 1689, published in London, UK.