

**Church Constitution
Massaponax Baptist Church**

**Article 1
Name**

The body of this organization is known as Massaponax Baptist Church of Spotsylvania County.

**Article 2
Purpose Statement**

To reach people for Christ in the community and the world, while growing in our understanding of who Christ is as we grow in fellowship with one another; finding ways to minister to each other and worshipping God with all of who we are.

Mark 12:30 -- "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

Matthew 28: 19&20a -- "Therefore go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

**Article 3
Ordinances**

A. Baptism by immersion

The pastor will arrange for baptismal services as often as necessary.

B. The Lord's Supper

1) This ordinance will be observed on the first Sunday of the month during the worship service.

2) It will be the policy of this Church to invite all Christians present with us to join in the observance of this ordinance.

**Article 4
Affiliations**

This Church is affiliated with the churches of the Baptist denomination through the Fredericksburg Area Baptist Association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

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Article 5 Membership

A. Candidacy

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this Church. All such candidates shall be presented to the Church for acceptance at any service or special meeting. Prerequisites for membership are:

- 1) a personal profession of Christ as Lord and Savior
- 2) baptism by immersion as a public symbol of one's faith
- 3) completion of a membership class
- 4) a signed commitment to abide by Massaponax Baptist Church's membership covenant.

B. Rights and Responsibilities

- 1) Every member of the Church is entitled to vote on all issues submitted to the Church in membership meetings.
- 2) Every member of the Church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for servant leader positions in the Church as outlined in this constitution.
- 3) All members are expected to adhere to the Church Covenant and the Church's Purpose Statement and to uphold the Church's Statement of Beliefs.

C. Termination

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- 1) Death of the member.
- 2) Withdrawal to another church upon request.
- 3) Exclusion by action of this Church.
- 4) Deletion upon request.

D. Discipline

- 1) It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastors, other members of the ministerial staff, and Deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.
- 2) Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, the Pastors and the Deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the Church to take action to exclude a member, a special meeting will be called and a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting shall be required for exclusion. The Church may then proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the Church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

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3) This Church may restore to membership any person previously excluded upon request by the excluded person, by a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting at a special or membership meeting and upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

Article 6 Church Leadership

“ As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” 1 Peter 4:10 (KJV)

Elected servant leaders are those serving who help to achieve the purposes of our Church as outlined in scripture. Unless specified, these leaders must be members of this Church for six months after completion of a new member training class. Non-members may be involved in support roles within the Church.

Elected Servant Leaders

A. Pastoral Staff

Job Description

Complete job descriptions as well as biblical methods for conflict resolution may be found in the Massaponax Baptist Church Personnel Policy Manual.

Need Determination and Selection Process

- 1) The Church Council will determine if there is a need for additional permanent or temporary pastoral staff and, if so, will call a special meeting of the church for the purpose of electing a pastoral search team.
- 2) Nominations for membership on the search team will be made by the nominating team and/or from the floor.
- 3) The number chosen will not be less than five or more than seven.
- 4) Election to the membership on the search team will require assent of three-fourths members present for each nominee.
- 5) Upon election, the search team will choose one of their members to serve as chairman and another as secretary.
- 6) After careful consideration, and having reached by at least three-fourths of the team, the search team will recommend a candidate for the pastoral position. The team leader will advise the Pastor or Moderator, if necessary, of the need to call a special meeting of the congregation for the purpose of acting on the recommendation of the search team. In no case will the search team recommend more than one candidate for the pastoral position at any one meeting of the congregation.

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- 7) In order that a valid call may be issued to the candidate, there will be assent of a three-fourths vote of all members present.
- 8) During the ministry of a Pastor with the Church, the Personnel Team will be a liaison between the Pastor and the Church for matters of consultation, guidance, and evaluation.

Resignation and Dismissal

- 1) A member of the pastoral staff will give at least two weeks written notice of resignation to the Deacon Team Leader.
- 2) Biblical methods and the procedure for conflict resolution with the pastoral staff may be found in the Massaponax Baptist Church Personnel Manual.
- 3) If it is deemed necessary for the Church to dismiss a Pastor, a special membership meeting to be moderated by the Deacon Team Leader will be called with at least two weeks written and verbal notice. A three-fourths majority vote will be required to dismiss a Pastor.

B. Non-Pastoral Staff

Need Determination and Selection Process

- 1) Staff members (salaried, hourly or voluntary) will be added as the Church Council determines the need for their services.
- 2) Any additional staff member requiring money not budgeted must be approved in Church membership meetings.
- 3) The Church Personnel Team will have the authority to employ and terminate services of non-pastoral staff members.
- 4) Employment and termination of services will be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of the related teams of the Church.
- 5) All resignations must be submitted in writing to the Leader of the Personnel Team.
- 6) The Church membership will be informed of such actions as soon as possible.

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C. Servant Leaders (Nominating Team Recommended)

All teams will submit to the Church Council a monthly report consisting of significant actions and changes in membership. All teams will elect a team leader for a term of one year.

Selection Process

All appointments, whether through expired or un-expired terms, will be filled by a nominee presented either by the Nominating Team or from the floor receiving a majority vote during a membership meeting. Any unexpired term of more than 50% will be considered as a full term. Any position with limited terms requires a one year lapse before being re-nominated. All notices of resignation should be given to the Nominating Team Leader.

a) Deacon Team (3 years- 2 terms)

- 1) Two Deacons chosen by the Deacon Team will serve as ex-officio members of the nominating team in reference only to nominations of Deacons.
- 2) Candidates then must be unanimously chosen by the Deacons in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:8-15. A candidate must be a member of the Church for one year before being considered.
- 3) The number of Deacons serving will be determined by the Deacon body as they deem necessary to fulfill the needs of the Church.
- 4) It will be the duty of the Deacons to assist the Pastor(s) in the administration of the ordinances as outlined in Article 3 of the Church Constitution.
- 5) In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church. Their task is to serve with the Pastor(s) and staff in performing the pastoral ministries by:
 - a) leading the Church in the achievement of its purposes
 - b) proclaiming the Gospel to believers and non-believers
 - c) caring for the Church's members and other persons in the community.
 - d) developing a plan of redemption and reconciliation according to the Biblical model of Matthew 18:15-17 and 2 Corinthians 2:4-8 in all matters of Church discipline.

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b) Moderator (unlimited terms)

- 1) The principle duty is to preside at all membership meetings.
- 2) If unable to preside at a membership meeting, the Pastor or Deacon Team Leader will serve, or a temporary Moderator will be selected.

c) Parliamentarian (1 year - unlimited terms)

The Parliamentarian will provide guidance for matters of parliamentary procedure in the conducting of Church membership meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

d) Clerk (1 year - unlimited terms)

- 1) This is the clerical leader of the Church.
- 2) Duties:
 - a) Be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the Church in membership meetings, and this record will be distributed to the Church on the Sunday prior to membership meetings.
 - b) Be responsible for keeping a register of names of members with dates of admission, dismissal, death or deletion, together with a record of baptisms.
 - c) Issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports and give required notice of all meetings when notice is necessary.
 - d) Be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the Church to the Association.
 - e) All Church records are Church property and will be kept in the Church office. A duplicate copy of all records will be maintained off site.

e) Assistant Clerk (1 year - unlimited terms)

- 1) The Assistant Clerk will serve in the absence of the Clerk and will assist the Clerk in all of his/her duties.
- 2) The Assistant Clerk will take minutes of all Church Council meetings. Minutes will be made available to the Church one week after all Church Council meetings.

f) Treasurer (2 years - unlimited terms)

- 1) The Church Treasurer is responsible for the proper receipt, accounting, disbursement and reporting of Church funds within the policies established by the Church for adequate financial control.
- 2) For a complete description of this position, see the Massaponax Baptist Church Financial Guidebook.

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g) Assistant Treasurer (2 years - unlimited terms)

The Assistant Treasurer will be responsible for assisting the Treasurer in all of his/her duties.

h) Financial Secretary (1 year - unlimited terms)

- 1) The Church Financial Secretary is responsible for the proper recording of all contribution gifts into personal contribution records.
- 2) For a complete description of this position, see the Massaponax Baptist Church Financial Guidebook.

i) Assistant Financial Secretary (1 year - unlimited terms)

The Assistant Financial Secretary will be responsible for assisting the Financial Secretary in all of his/her duties.

j) Finance Team (2 years/ 2 terms)

- 1) The Church will elect *five* financial representatives who will serve with the Treasurer (ex-officio) to form the Finance Team.
- 2) The Church Finance Team is a recommending body that is responsible to work with the Treasurer to assist in providing financial direction and financial discipline with regard to Church income and expenditures.
- 3) For a complete list of duties and responsibilities, please refer to the Massaponax Baptist Church Financial Guidebook.

k) Trustees (5 years - unlimited terms)

- 1) The Church will elect three Trustees who will be presented to the Circuit Court to serve as the legal representatives of the Church.
- 2) Trustees will hold in trust the property of the Church, and only by a specific vote of the Church will they have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any Church property.
- 3) When signatures are required for legal documentation, at least two Trustees must sign.

l) Space and Property Team (2 years - unlimited terms)

- 1) There will be a team of at least five and no more than ten who will assist in all areas related to properties administration.
- 2) Duties include:
 - a) Assist the Church in the care of all properties and buildings.

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- b) Study and recommend the use of space and furnishings as they relate to all programs and activities.
- c) Study the need and recommend acquiring property and creating space.
- d) See all projects through to completion using the Project Team Guidelines.

m) Personnel Team (3 years/ 2 terms)

- 1) There will be a team of five to assist in matters of personnel.
- 2) For a complete description, please refer to the Massaponax Baptist Church Personnel Policy Manual.

n) Historical Team (1 year - unlimited terms)

- 1) The Historical Team of at least five will safeguard all historical records and memorabilia of the Church and update written Church history as needed.
- 2) This team will be a liaison between county and state officials with regard to historical matters.

o) Technology Team (2 years – unlimited terms)

The team of at least six will be responsible for the general maintenance and repair of all equipment (including telephones, the copier, and computer systems, and the audio system in the sanctuary), for the location and purchase of all needed technological equipment and resources, and all audio-visual equipment. The team will also maintain the Church's web site and seek to keep the Church on the "cutting edge" in its use of technology in its various ministries.

p) Council Leadership Team(s) Worship Team, Ministry Team, Evangelism Team, Fellowship Team, Discipleship Team (3 years/ 2 terms)

A team leader and two members will be elected for each Purpose Driven team. They will be instrumental in the Church's fulfillment of its mission statement. See Church Council section (Article 7) for additional information.

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D. Servant Leaders (Church Council recommended)

All teams will submit to the Church Council a monthly report consisting of significant actions and changes in membership. All teams will elect a team leader for a term of one year.

a) Nominating Team (2 years - 2 terms)

This team of five to seven persons who are spiritually led will nominate members for the vacancies in Article 6 Section 1 C (Servant Leaders, Nominating Team Recommended).

b) In the absence of staff leadership in the children's and/or youth ministries, the Church Council will recommend leadership in those areas.

**Article 7
Church Council**

“I appeal to you brothers, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another, so that there may be no divisions among you, and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

The Church Council serves as a forum for the Church leaders to guide planning, coordination, conducting, and evaluation of the total work of the Church. The Council is made up of Purpose Driven Teams serving together to create an organization that implements the Church's ministries with equal emphasis according to God's designed purposes. As chair of the Church Council and vision leader, the Senior Pastor will lead in the development of a unified program that prioritizes immediate needs.

A. Duties

- 1) Help the Church fulfill its purpose statement by defining better ways to accomplish its purposes.
- 2) Coordinate studies of Church and community needs to include appointments of special teams with special terms and assignments.
- 3) Recommend to the Church coordinated plans for Worship, Ministry, Evangelism, Fellowship and Discipleship.
- 4) Coordinate the Church's schedule of activities, special events, and the use of facilities according to program priorities.
- 5) Evaluate progress and the priority use of Church resources.
- 6) Recommend Nominating Team members representative of the Church who will be sensitive to the needs of a Church with a balanced purpose driven structure.

B. Meetings and Feedback

- 1) The Church Council will meet monthly with a required quorum of fifteen members. If a quorum is not achieved, members present will determine a future date for the meeting.
- 2) The Council will provide feedback in the form of published minutes to the Church membership no more than seven days following the meeting.
- 3) The Council will compile a report from all teams of the Church for membership meetings. These reports will be made available to the membership one week prior to the scheduled meetings.
- 4) All meetings pertaining to the negotiation of sale or purchase of properties and any related indebtedness will not be open to the membership. All other meetings may be attended by members who may speak with the permission of the Council.

C. Structure

- 1) The Church Council will consist of the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), and Leadership Teams. Members of the Leadership Team serving on Church Council will be the team leader and two team members. A person may only hold one position on Church Council.
- 2) The Leadership Teams will be recognized as **Worship Team, Ministry Team, Evangelism Team, Fellowship Team, Discipleship Team, and Administration Team.** The elected Assistant Church Clerk will serve as a non- voting member.

Leadership Team	Team Leader	Team Members
Worship Team	Worship Leader	1 _____ 2 _____
Ministry Team	Ministry Leader	1 _____ 2 _____
Evangelism Team	Evangelism Leader	1 _____ 2 _____
Fellowship Team	Fellowship Leader	1 _____ 2 _____
Discipleship Team	Discipleship Leader	1 _____ 2 _____
Administration Team		Treasurer Finance Team Leader Space/Property Leader Technology Team Leader

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- 3) All Associate Pastors with the exception of youth and children's pastor(s) will serve as team leaders in their area of giftedness.
- 4) In the event that the Pastoral representation for the children and/or youth is absent or unfilled, the acting leader of those age groups as determined by Church Council will serve on the Church Council.

D) Function

- 1) Worship Team **“Express our love to God”**
“Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only” (Matthew 4:10)
This is a team designed to lead the Church in exalting our Lord and Savior both corporately and individually.
- 2) Ministry Team **“Love your neighbor as yourself”**
This is a team designed to lead the Church in meeting the needs and healing the hurts of others in the name of Jesus. Needs may be spiritual, relational, or physical.
- 3) Evangelism Team **“Go and make Disciples”**
This is a team that leads the Church in communicating God's word to others. We are to tell the world of Christ's coming, His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His promise to return.
- 4) Fellowship Team **“Baptizing them”**
“You are members of God's very own family and you belong to God's household with every other Christian” (Ephesians 2:19)
This is a team that leads the Church in providing fellowship for believers. It is fellowship that symbolized our identification with the body of Christ. Baptism is not only a symbol of salvation, it is a symbol of fellowship.
- 5) Discipleship Team **“Teach them to obey”**
“We continue to preach Christ to each person, using all wisdom to warn and to teach everyone, in order to bring each one into God's presence as a mature person in Christ.” (Colossians 1:28)
This is a team that leads the Church in educating God's people. Discipleship is the process of helping people to become more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings, and actions.

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Article 8

Membership Meetings

All matters pertaining to the approval of the annual budget, the election of servant leadership and the disposition or acquisition of major assets or properties of the Church must be referred to the Church membership for approval. All other matters will be decided in Church Council meetings unless the Council deems it necessary to call a special membership meeting.

A. Regular Meetings

- 1) The election of servant leaders whose terms will begin on September 1 will occur during an April membership meeting on the third or fourth week of April.
- 2) The adoption of the budget which will become effective on January 1 will occur during a called membership meeting at least 30 days following its presentation to the Church.

B. Special Called Meetings

- 1) The Church may conduct special called membership meetings to consider matters of a special nature and significance.
- 2) The Church Moderator will call a special meeting only upon the request of the Church Council, the Senior Pastor or 10 or more petitioning members.
- 3) The agenda may consist of only the matters defined in the calling of the meeting.
- 4) No less than one week's notice must be given for a special called membership meeting. The notice will appear in writing and include the date, time, place and subject. It will also be announced in the regular service of the Church with at least a one week notice.

C. Quorum

The quorum consists of a minimum of thirty members who attend the membership meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called. If a quorum is not achieved, members present will determine a future date for the meeting.

D. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all membership meetings of the Church.

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**Article 9
Annual Budget**

Input and Presentation

- 1) Team Leaders for Personnel, Space and Property, Technology Team, and Council Leadership Teams must present their budget needs for the upcoming year to the Finance Team Leader by September 1st.
- 2) The Finance Team will then compile the annual budget, making recommendations to present to the Church Council by October 1st.
- 3) The Church Council will then review the upcoming year's budget for approval.
- 4) After approval by the Church Council, the Finance Team will distribute the new budget in October, allowing at least thirty days for member review.
- 5) The annual budget will be approved in a special called membership meeting.

**Article 10
Licensing of Ministers**

The Church may license a member of the congregation in recognition of that person's calling to a specific ministry and as a sign of the Church's support and encouragement of such calling.

**Article 11
Ordination of Ministers**

Upon the recommendation by the Deacon Ministry Team, the congregation may proceed to the ordination of a candidate of the Gospel Ministry by the following method:

- 1) Hear the candidate's statement of religious experience and call to the ministry at any regular or special membership meeting of the congregation.
- 2) By a three-fourths majority vote at said meeting instruct the Church Clerk to request the Ordination Council of the Fredericksburg Area regarding his ordination.
- 3) Upon receiving the favorable recommendation of the Ordination Council, the Pastor and Deacons will arrange a service of ordination for the candidate.

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4) Stipulation: It is to be understood that in the last analysis the local congregation is the ordaining body and may proceed to ordain, if it so elects, regardless of the recommendation of the Ordination Council. The congregation is also within its rights as a Baptist Church if it chooses to circumvent the suggested procedure of the Association and reverts to the historical Baptist practice of calling an ordination council “of like faith and order”.

Article 12 Amendments

Changes in this Constitution may be made at a special membership meeting, provided each amendment has been made available to all members through written and verbal notice no less than thirty days prior to the membership meeting. Amendments to the Constitution will be by an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of those members present and voting.

Review:

This document will be subject to review at a minimum of every three years starting in the year 2010.

The Church Constitution was adopted October 12, 1951.

Articles Amended: October 7, 1960
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November 1988
January 1990
August 2000
April 2002

