

# CONSTITUTION

of the

## NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

### PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

### I. NAME

This body shall be known as the New Hope Baptist Church, 2804 Blackiston Mill Road, Clarksville, Ind. 47129. This church shall cooperate with the Southeastern Association of Baptists, the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

### II. Objectives

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ and the abundant life that He promised with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshipping fellowship experiencing freedom to praise and recognizing the importance of praise as a daily moment by moment experience as well as a major part of congregational worship.

To be a church that teaches living according to Biblical priorities, the first three being  
1) God 2) Family 3) Church and work.

To recognize that each born again person has been raised up with Christ, and seated with Him in heavenly places.

To be a church that walks in a manner worthy of the calling with which we have been called.

To be a church that stands firm in the struggle against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with fellow believers recognizing there is neither black nor white, male nor female, rich nor poor in Christ.

### III. Articles of Faith

see “Baptist Faith and Message”

### IV. CHURCH 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 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 daily with Christ; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and to be example in our conduct.

To avoid all gossip and excessive anger.

To be ever mindful that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit and are to be presented a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable to God.

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.

## V. CHARACTER

Section 1. Polity. The government of this church is vested in this body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains 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. In matters where the Southern Baptists may now or in the future differ from the scriptures the Word of God will be chosen as our guide.

Section 3. Ordinances. This church shall observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper at least four times per year. This church shall observe the ordinance of baptism as soon as is practicable following the receiving of a church member as a candidate for baptism.

Section 4. Property. All property of this church is to be held for the use and benefit of the membership, even though they be a minority who adhere to, maintain and propagate the doctrines, faith and practices of Southern Baptist churches cooperating with the local Baptist Association, Indiana Baptist Convention, and Southern Baptist Convention. Southern Baptist Convention.

## Bylaws

### Article 1. Membership

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of membership.

## Section 2. Candidacy.

Any person may offer himself or herself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- 1) By profession of faith and for believers baptism according to the policies of this church.
- 1) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church, Candidates may be subject to examination by the pastor.
- 3) By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable.
- 4) By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion in another denomination subject to examination of the pastor and deacons.

Section 3. Duties. Members are expected, first of all, to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life; and also to attend habitually the services of this church, to give regularly for its causes, and to share in its organized work.

## Section 4. Voting Rights of Members.

Every active member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or provision has been made absentee balloting.

## Section 5. Termination of membership

- 1) By death
- 2) By letter: Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to any other church is entitled to receive it upon request from that church. The name of the church to which membership is transferred must be indicated in the request, and the letter shall be sent to the pastor or clerk of that church. No letters shall be granted to individuals.
3. Membership is automatically terminated when a person unites with another

church or denomination.

4. By request: If any member requests to be released from his obligations to his church for any reason, such requests may be granted and his membership terminated.

5. Exclusion by action of this church according to the discipline policy of this church.

6. Termination when it is determined that a person has been non-resident for the space of six months or for the same space of time not habitually worshipping with this church.

Section 6. Quorum. Fifteen percent of the active members of this church shall constitute a quorum for voting on business transactions. A 2/3 majority vote of members present is required on items concerning staff, salary, adjustments, and matters of a major undertaking as determined by a majority vote of the church

Section 7. Inactive Members. In case of : failure to manifest any interest in the church, or non-attendance (except for providential hindrances; i.e. sickness. or attendance at a Baptist Mission where a letter is not requested until the mission constitutes into a church., etc.) or nonresidence (moves to a place inaccessible to this church) on the part of a member for a period of six months, he or she shall be designated as an “Inactive Member” and his or her name placed on the inactive roll.

A. Inactive members shall not be entitled to vote on business matters of this church, nor entitled to a letter of recommendation as being in good standing.

B.. Inactive members shall not be counted on any official report of membership.

C. Restoration of “Inactive Members” shall be by vote of the church.

D. It shall be the responsibility of the deacon body to review and update the church membership roll in April of each year so that concerted efforts can be made to regain the interest and fellowship of such members. It shall be the responsibility of the deacon body to make recommendations to the church in regard to placing members on an inactive status.

E. Members being placed on the inactive roll shall be immediately notified by letter.

Section 8. Discipline.

1. It shall be the basic purpose of the New Hope Baptist to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons will be available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline that governs the attitude of one member toward another.

2. Any member having cause of complaint against another must seek to remove it as directed in Matthew 18: 15-17. If this is not sufficient the complaint shall be brought to the attention and council of the deacons, who report their findings, and recommend to the church such action as may seem wise and proper. All discipline shall be formulated and carried out in the spirit of Christ in meekness and Godly fear.

3. In all charges of error in faith, immoral conduct, or conduct unbecoming to a Christian, dishonesty, or any offense of gross impropriety, it shall be the duty of the member knowing of such conduct to report the case to the deacons, who shall make a thorough investigation of the report, and shall give the offending brother or sister a fair and patient hearing. If the Deacons fail to make a satisfactory settlement, they shall report to the church to make a recommendation as to the best course to be pursued in the case. By finding that the welfare of the church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting called for his purpose and the church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

4. Excluded members may be restored to fellowship by their request and evidence of repentance has been presented to the deacons. The request will then be taken to the church in a business meeting where a two-thirds vote must be obtained.

## Article II. Church Officers

All church officers must be members of the church and shall be elected annually except the pastor, and he will be elected for an indefinite period upon the knowledge of the church that he is a cooperating Southern Baptist who has been regularly ordained to the gospel ministry. The officers of this church shall be as follows:

### 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.

After the pulpit committee has agreed on a nomination and before a meeting of the church is held for the purpose of considering the nominee, the deacons shall contact the prospective pastor for the purpose of reaching tentative terms of agreement. This agreement shall be in writing and shall be read at the time the nomination is placed before the church. This agreement shall stipulate the amount of salary, vacation, sick leave, number of revival meetings he may annually have in other churches, arrangements and agreements for those who supply the pulpit in the absence of the pastor and any other duties and obligation of the contracting parties.

This church will participate in the Minister's Retirement Plan of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The pastor will be called by this church with understanding that the church will give him a thirty-day notice of the expiration of his service as a pastor of the church, and that he will give the church a thirty-day notice of his resignation. Earlier termination may be granted upon agreement of both parties.

The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary to a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by mutual consent. The pastor shall have in charge the welfare and oversight of the church. He shall preside at all meetings of the church, except where this constitution provides otherwise.

#### Staff

This church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. A job description shall be written and presented to the church at the time of the nomination. Vocational staff as well as secretaries and custodians shall likewise be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by church action.

#### Trustees

The church shall elect three 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 the church-approved matters.

Trustees shall serve on a rotation basis, with one new trustee being elected every three years.

#### Deacons

Section 1. The deacons shall be called according to the standards set forth in the New Testament Scripture: Acts 6:2-3, with the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13.

Section 2. There shall be a minimum of three (3) deacons (if qualified men are available) up to one hundred (100) members and an additional deacon for each fifty (50) active members thereafter. A man must be a member of the church at least one (1) year before ordination or election as a deacon. A candidate must be at least 18 years old.

Section 3. The election of Deacons:

A. The deacons shall appoint a deacon nominating committee of three (3). They shall submit to the church in any regularly scheduled business meeting the names of qualified men for the office of Deacon. The entire congregation is to be informed of each nominee's family background and status, and his participation in the program of the church.

B. The election shall be by ballot during the morning worship service. Only active members present at the service are eligible to vote. There are to be blank spaces on the ballot so that members may write in nominations, however, a member may not nominate and vote (to make nomination is to vote for that person) for more persons than the stated number needed at the time of election. If more votes than one of the nominees, he would be eligible to be considered for election. The deacons shall then contact the individual and, if qualified, he would automatically be elected.

C. The term of the office shall be indefinite. All elected deacons of this church shall remain active until one of the following prevents such.

- 1). A deacon changes to inactive status at his own decision to do so.
- 2). The pastor, church or deacon board makes a request following the instructions under "Discipline" in this constitution. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is necessary to complete such action at a special business meeting called for such purpose. An opening must occur before the deacon may resume his status as deacon and must be nominated and voted on by the church.

Section 4. Duties. In accordance with the meaning of the word and practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.

A. They are to be zealous to promote and guard the unity of the spirit within the church.

B. They shall serve as a council of advice and conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. With the pastor they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of Christians, and the extension and growth of the kingdom.

C. By proper organization and method among themselves, they are to establish and maintain personal fraternal relations with, and inspiring the oversight of all the membership of the church. Especially are they to seek to know the physical needs and the moral and spiritual struggles of the brethren and sister; and to serve the whole church in relieving, encouraging, and developing all who are in need.

D. In counsel with the pastor, and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct in accordance with the New Testament teachings, they are to have oversight of the discipline of the church, in administering such they are to be guided always by the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5:9-13; I Thessalonians 5:12-14. The deacon shall be free to call upon any member of the church to aid in disciplinary action.

E. The deacons shall serve as a general pulpit committee. In any period when the church is without a pastor, or because of inability of the pastor, unless the church shall otherwise provide, the deacons will arrange the temporary ministry and take counsel with reference to securing a pastor. In case of absence, subject to advice from and conference with the deacons, the pastor will provide for pulpit supplies. It is not intended in any way to prejudice herein the method by which the church shall proceed in securing a pastor.

### Section 3. Method of Procedure.

A. The whole body of deacons shall be organized as a unit for the consideration of all larger problems and general policies. They may organize themselves into such committees as their wisdom may direct for efficiency in service.

B. They shall apportion the membership of the church among themselves, or make plans whereby the entire membership may have the benefit of oversight in Christ of their brethren.

C. Each deacon shall freely confer with the pastor about all matters and cases of discipline which in his judgment would be most wisely and spiritually in private.

### Moderator

The pastor shall act as moderator. In the absence of the moderator the associate pastor or chairman of Deacons shall act as moderator, in the absence of all three the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

### Clerk

The church-elected clerk shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church except as otherwise herein provided. He is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. He shall issue letter of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official report, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office when an office is maintained.

### Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The treasurer's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

### Financial Secretary

He shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the treasurer; and from these he shall give each donor individual credit as provided in the Envelop System of the Baptist Sunday school Board. He may keep the envelopes for reference if he wishes

### Chairman of Ushers

The chairman of ushers shall on the approval of the church, associate himself a sufficient number of aides to care for the seating and comfort of the congregation, the greeting and introductions of visitors, the prevention of interruptions and distractions, and similar needed services.

### Executive Board Member

The church shall elect two (2) Southeast Baptist Association representatives annually. No representative shall serve more than two consecutive years. At each

regular monthly business meeting the representative shall bring a brief summary of associational business.

### Music Director

The music director shall be charged with responsibility to provide worshipful music for all services and departments of the church, and shall have general oversight and direction of the choir or choirs in practice, choosing of piano players and song leaders and is to cooperate with the pastor in the selection of suitable music and the devising of appropriate musical programs for all occasions where such services are needed. In case of absence, the music director shall provide a substitute to fulfill his duties.

The Minister of Music will automatically serve as the music director when one is employed. In the absence of a Minister of Music the church may appoint an acting music director with all the above responsibilities or select a piano player, and a song leader.

Selection of the Minister of Music will be patterned after the process of selection of the pastor in this constitution.

### Officers of Church Organizations

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church. It is understood that the pastor is ex-officio head of all the organizations named, and his leadership is to be recognized in them all.

A. Sunday School Officers. At least three (3) months before the close of the Sunday School year the Director shall be elected, upon nomination of a committee consisting of pastor and the church nominating committee. By September, this committee, supplemented by the Sunday School Director and Church Training Director, will bring to the church nomination of general officers, teachers, and leaders to be elected by the church. Following their election, a public installation service shall be held. The duties of those officers and teachers shall be those ordinarily designated in the approved denominational standards, when a Minister of Education is employed the Sunday School Director will work with him or her.

B. Church Training Officers. The Church Training organization shall be responsible for church member training and church leader training. The Church Training Director and other general officers of Church Training shall be elected by the church upon joint nominations by the Church Training director and the nominating committee of the church. There will be classes for all ages.

C. W.M.U. Officers. The officers of the W.M.U. that shall be selected annually are: W.M.U. Director, Directors of each of the following age-level organizations:

Mission Friends (birth-5); Girls in Action (6-12); Acteens (13-17). All other officers of the various groups may be chosen by that particular group according to their need.

D. Offices of the Brotherhood. The officers of the Baptist Brotherhood will consist of a Brotherhood Director, Royal Ambassador leader, Crusaders Counselors, Pioneer Counselors and Royal Ambassador Committee who shall be elected annually by the church.

\* Note. When the church has among it's staff a Minister of Youth, all selections of any youth groups must be in consultation with him, or her. When there is a Minister of Education the selection of Sunday School and Church Training leaders and teachers must be done in consultation with him or her and the Minister of Education will automatically work with the nomination committee.

### Article III. Committees

The following standing committees shall be elected annually:

A. The Building and Grounds Committee shall be composed of four members. It shall be the duty of this committee to have general charge of the administration and upkeep of the grounds and buildings. This committee may appoint more members to supplement itself by submitting to the nominating committee the names of such persons.

B. Baptism Committee shall consist of two men and two women. It shall be the duty of this committee to make all necessary arrangements for baptism.

1. See that the baptismal gowns are available
2. Reminds deacons to fill the baptistry
3. Assist the candidates with their preparation for baptism
4. Contact the candidate and inform them as to what they should bring the night of their baptism
5. The men should assist the deacons in clearing the pulpit area if there is an insufficient number of deacons present.

C. Nursery Committee This committee shall consist of five members. The chairman shall be selected annually and shall appoint four other members and submit their names to the nominating committee for approval and recording. At least one male shall be on the committee. It shall be the duty of this committee to secure volunteers to maintain the nursery during regular worship service and special meetings.

D. Communication Committee shall consist of two members. This committee shall assist the pastor in promoting and publicizing various ministries or programs of the church.

E. Library Committee shall consist of a chairman and as many members as he feels necessary. This committee has the responsibility of caring for the library, book, and purchasing and cataloguing new books. The committee also has the responsibility of promoting use of the library.

F. A Committee on Nominations shall be appointed annually by the moderator at least four (4) months prior to the annual election of officers, consisting of pastor (ex-officio) and five others, whose duty it shall be to bring to the church nominations of officers and committees as provided heretofore. Other than the pastor the five shall consist of the Minister of Education, the newly elected Sunday School director and Church Training director when these are available. The remainder shall be appointed by the moderator from the church. This committee shall canvas the church rolls and otherwise seek to discover persons suitable for office bearing, and tactfully obtain from members expression as to preferences for persons to fill the various offices. This committee must be committed to prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

G. Finance Committee shall be composed of five members, elected annually by the church, and the pastor (ex-officio). The treasurer shall serve as one of the members of this committee. A chairman for this committee shall be so designed.

The Finance Committee shall supervise and promote the raising of all monies within the church and have general supervision over the expenditure of the same.

This committee shall prepare and submit to the church, at its regular business meeting in September, a prepared budget for the ensuing church year, beginning October 1.

H. The Kitchen Committee shall be responsible for the care and upkeep of the kitchen, its equipment and supplies. They shall also act as fellowship committee. This committee shall be chosen annually consisting of two members.

#### Article IV. Church Finance

Section 1. The finance committee, in consultation with the pastor, deacons, and responsible leader of various organizations, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval at the annual business meeting (Or at such other time as may be deemed best by the church) an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local expenses and purposes, and in like manner for all denominational or other approved non-local causes.

Section 2. All funds, for any and all purposes, shall pass through the hands of the treasurer and be properly recorded on the books of the church except those established organizational efforts outside the approved budget. The Expenses of

all organizations, as approved by the church, shall be paid from the local expense fund as heretofore provided.

Section 3. Special offerings may be sought by the church or by any of its organizations only upon the approval of the church or organization. This does not preclude individuals making special offerings at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

Section 4. It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Each new member shall therefore be approached by a representative of the finance committee and given a copy of the church budget and encouraged to support the ministry of the church through their giving.

## Article V. Meetings

### Section 1. Worship

A. Public services shall be held statedly on the Lord's Day and on some regular evening or evenings of each week.

B. Occasional religious meetings may be appointed by the pastor at his direction, or by the vote of the church.

### Section 2. Business

A. The church shall have regular business meetings once each month, or otherwise according to the current need.

B. The pastor may, and shall when requested by the deacons, trustee, or a standing committee, call from the pulpit special business meetings, the particular object of the meeting being clearly stated in the notice.

### Section 3. Special

A. Any recognized organization shall call special meeting for their own purposes if they have properly coordinated such meetings through the pastor and the church calendar. This applies to meetings that involve the church building only.

B. There shall be no groups meeting in the church if the leaders have not been recognized by the nomination committee.

## Article VI. The Church Council

Section 1. The Church Council, upon being established by authorization of the church, shall seek to correlate and coordinate the activities and organizations of the church yet

with advisory powers only.

Section 2. The Council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall be composed of pastor, clerk, staff, treasurer, chairman of deacons, and representatives from each of the church organizations (Sunday School, Church Training, W.M.U., Brotherhood), and the congregation at large.

Section 3. The council shall meet on call of pastor or chairman of the council (if not the pastor) at any time deemed necessary.

Section 4. All matters agreed upon by the Council, calling for action not already provided for, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval

#### Article VII. Amendments

Changes in the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided such amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of the members present. Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

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