

*Constitution and By-Laws of  
First Baptist Church, Newcastle, Wyoming*

**ARTICLE I – Organization**

- Section 1.** Name and address. This organization shall be known as the First Baptist Church, located at 903 S. Summit Avenue, Newcastle, Wyoming 82701.
- Section 2.** Organization. This organization was chartered as a church in Weston County, Wyoming, on March 29, 1950.
- Section 3.** Incorporation. This organization was incorporated as a non-profit corporation according to the laws of the State of Wyoming on April 29, 1950.
- Section 4.** Purpose Statement. The purpose of First Baptist Church is to bring people to Jesus and membership in His family, to develop them to a Christ-like maturity, and to equip them for their ministry in the church and their life-mission in the world, in order to magnify God’s name.
- Section 5.** Mission Statement. The mission of First Baptist Church is to speak, teach, and live the truth in love.
- Section 6.** Statement of Faith. First Baptist Church adheres to the Baptist Faith and Message, as amended in 2000. A copy of this statement may be viewed on the church web page at [www.fbcnewcastle.net](http://www.fbcnewcastle.net).

**ARTICLE II – Membership**

- Section 1.** Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a new birth, having been scripturally baptized, being willing to contribute to the support of the church, and adopting the view of faith and practice held by this church may be received into its membership.
- Section 2.** Those persons making their initial public profession of faith in Jesus Christ shall be received as candidates for baptism, and shall not be entered onto the membership roll until they are scripturally baptized. All persons must successfully complete pre-baptism training prior to being baptized.
- Section 3.** Members from other churches holding the same faith may be received by letter of recommendation and/or dismissal from their respective church.
- Section 4.** Persons having been members of a church of like faith and order, having no regular letter of dismissal, may be received on a statement of faith.
- Section 5:** Persons who have been removed from the membership roll of this (or any other) church as a result of disciplinary action (in accordance with Section 9, Paragraph D below) shall be accepted back into the membership of this church upon proof of repentance and desired reconciliation, and upon a majority vote of the membership.

**Section 6.** All candidates for membership shall appear before the Pastor and/or Deacons for advice and instructions before their name is presented to the church body for membership.

**Section 7.** It is the duty of the members to contribute to the support of the gospel and the maintenance of the church on the first day of the week in proportion as the Lord has prospered them. It is also the duty of the members to attend regular meetings of the church, whether called for worship or for the transaction of business.

**Section 8.** Definition of Member Status:

**Voting Member:** A member of at least 16 years of age who has not been placed into an inactive status. Only voting members have the privilege of voting on church business matters.

**Juvenile Member:** An active member of the church under 16 years of age.

**Inactive Member:** A member of the church who has not attended any regularly scheduled meetings of the church for a period of 12 weeks, and has not contributed to the support of the church during that time period.

**Non-Resident Member:** A member of the church who is no longer residing in the vicinity of the church, but who has not transferred their membership to another church. This category includes members who are away at college, serving in the military, or working at a remote job location for a specific period of time.

**Section 9.** It is the duty of members of this church, upon moving away from the vicinity of this church, to locate a new church to attend, and to transfer their membership to that new church, as soon as is practicable. This shall not preclude those persons who are away at college, serving in the military, or working at a remote job location for a specific period of time, from maintaining their membership at this church.

**Section 10.** A member may be removed from the membership roll of this church under any of the following conditions:

- A. Upon transfer of membership to another Christian church, either locally or in another location.
- B. Upon request to be removed from the membership roll. This request must be made in writing.
- C. Upon the death of the member.
- D. Upon a majority vote for removal from the membership roll, as the result of a church disciplinary action. Said action may only be initiated due to a clear and unequivocal departure from Biblical guidelines of conduct.

The action must have been conducted in accordance with the Scriptural guidelines specified in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians Chapter 5. (It shall be remembered that the primary goal of Church Discipline is the restoration of the member in their relationship with the church and with the Lord).

A member removed from the membership roll for disciplinary reasons shall be allowed (and encouraged) to continue attending the worship services of the church, for purposes of eventual restoration, but they shall not be allowed to fill any office of the church, nor shall they be allowed to participate in any voting matters of the church, until such time as they have been restored to the membership roll.

E. Upon a vote for purging from the membership roll.

At each annual business meeting of the church, the church roll shall be scrutinized. Those members who have been deemed inactive and have not attended any meetings of the church for greater than 16 weeks, and have not supported the church with their tithes and offerings during that time period, shall be purged from the membership roll of the church, upon majority vote of the church body. (This section shall not apply to those members away at college, serving in the military, working at a remote job location, or who have an acceptable explanation for their extended absence from the church).

### **ARTICLE III – Officers of the Church**

**Section 1.** It is the belief of this church that there are two ordained offices of the church – Pastor (Elder) and Deacon.

A. The church shall not be considered a democracy, but is rather a theocracy, under the authority of the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. In accordance with the biblical mandate, the pastors (elders), as under-shepherds serving the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be deemed to have the oversight responsibility of the church. However, also in accordance with the biblical mandate, this oversight shall not be conducted under compulsion, but rather in the will of God, and with love and compassion for the membership. In light of such, the pastors (elders) of the church are responsible and accountable to the membership of the church.

C. Also in accordance with the biblical mandate, the deacons are to be servants of the church. It is their job to assist the pastors in providing spiritual oversight of the body; handle the benevolence needs of the church; and take care of the needs of the physical plant.

D. In order to comply with the laws of the State of Wyoming, it is necessary to have members of the church designated and elected as “trustees,” with the power to conduct business for the church. The deacons of the church shall be deemed to be the trustees of the church.

E. In order to effectively and efficiently accomplish the business and operational needs of the church, other officers of the church shall be selected. They shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Church Clerk
2. Church Treasurer/Financial Secretary
3. Missions, ministry, and/or program leaders, as determined necessary by the church body.

The specific officers needed by the Church, and the duties of each of these officers shall be spelled out in the Policies and Procedures of the church.

**Section 2.** Election of Officers.

A. All pastors/elders of the church must be elected by a 75% affirmative vote of the church body. The term of office of all pastors shall be indefinite.

B. Deacons shall be elected by a majority vote of the church body. Their continuing service as active deacons must be reaffirmed on an annual basis.

C. All other officers of the church shall serve for a period of one calendar year.

D. Election of officers shall occur at the annual church business meeting. The term of office shall commence on January 1<sup>st</sup> for the calendar year.

E. The pastors and/or the Church Council shall have the authority to appoint a replacement for any elected officer of the church (except pastors/elders) who cannot fulfill their office due to death, disability, removal for cause, or resignation from active church membership.

**Section 3.** Method of Operation.

A. This church shall utilize a Church Council form of government. The Church Council shall consist of all pastoral staff, the chairman of the deacons, and all elected officers of the church.

B. The Church Council shall serve as the church budget committee, finance committee, and nominating committee.

C. Other committees shall be established on an as-needed basis by the church.

**ARTICLE IV – Meetings of the Church**

**Section 1.** The church shall regularly meet every Lord's Day for worship and teaching, at the times and location determined by the pastor(s) and the church body.

**Section 2.** The Ordinances recognized by this church (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) shall be celebrated at such regularly scheduled services of the church as is deemed appropriate by the pastor(s) and the church body.

- Section 3.** The church council shall meet as designated within the written policies of the church. Church Council meetings shall not be private, but shall be open (including discussion and/or making suggestions) to any and all members/attendees of the church.
- Section 4.** The entire church body shall meet periodically to discuss the business affairs of the church, as designated within the written policies of the church. These meetings shall be open (including discussion and/or making suggestions) to any and all attendees of the church.
- Section 5.** Special business meetings of the Church Council or of the church body may be called as deemed necessary by the pastor(s) and/or deacons. Notice of said meetings must be announced at least two weeks in advance.
- Section 6.** At any meeting of the church, whether for worship, teaching, or business, if any person in attendance becomes unruly and disruptive, the pastor shall request the deacons (or other godly men in attendance) to remove the offending party from the meeting. When necessary, law enforcement assistance shall be called.

#### **ARTICLE V – The Manner of Conducting Business**

- Section 1.** As Scripture describes the local church as a “family,” rather than as an organization, all business meetings shall be conducted in an informal, orderly and loving fashion. Guidelines used by secular organizations (such as Roberts Rules of Order) shall not be deemed necessary for these meetings.
- Section 2.** All business meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.
- Section 3.** The Senior Pastor shall lead and direct the business meetings. In his absence, the associate pastors (if any) and/or deacons (in designated order of chain of command) shall lead and direct the meeting.
- Section 4.** Voting:
- A. Most items discussed at business meetings shall not be deemed subject to a necessary vote, but rather will be examined for general consensus among the membership present.
  - B. Some items shall always be subject to a formal vote. These include:
    - 1. Calling pastoral staff members.
    - 2. Calling deacons.
    - 3. Hiring non-ministerial staff.
    - 4. Financial expenditures in excess of \$300.00.
    - 5. Changes to the church constitution or policies and procedures.
  - C. Only voting members of the church may vote. Vote will be by showing of hands or by secret ballot, as determined appropriate by the meeting leader and/or the voting body. Any voting member may request a secret ballot on any issue.

- D. On issues other than those specified in Paragraph B above, a lack of clear consensus may dictate the need for an informal vote. The leader and/or any member/attendee in attendance at the meeting may request a vote on any such issue.
- E. Except for where otherwise specified (the calling of ministerial staff, as outlined in Article III, Section 2, Paragraph A, and amending/revising this constitution, Article VI), a simple majority vote shall be required for passage of any issue.

**Section 5.** If at any time the conduct in any business meeting of this church becomes other than loving and edifying in nature, the leader of the meeting shall either table further discussion on that particular issue, or he shall terminate the meeting. No business in this church shall be conducted in an unloving, spiteful, or unharmonious manner.

**Section 6.** A quorum of 20% of the voting membership shall be necessary to conduct business in meetings of the church body. For Church Council meetings, a quorum of 50% of Council membership will be necessary in order to conduct business.

#### **ARTICLE VI – Amendments and Revisions**

This constitution may be amended or revised by a 2/3 majority vote of voting members present. Notice of intent to amend or revise this document must have been given from the pulpit at the regularly scheduled worship service of the church at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled meeting.

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*This Constitution was accepted and adopted by this church body on August 13, 2006.*

*(Original Signed)*

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**Dr. Michael C. Spencer, Pastor**

*(Original Signed)*

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**Tracey Schuessler, Church Clerk**