

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF SAPPONY BAPTIST CHURCH

Approved June 12, 2016

CONSTITUTION

I – NAME

This Church shall be known as Sappony Baptist Church, affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, and the Petersburg Baptist Association.

II –CHARACTER

Section A – Polity

Its government is invested in the body of believers who compose its membership. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist Churches.

Section B – Doctrine

The Bible as the Word of God shall be its authority and guide in matters of faith and practice. It accepts the articles of faith adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention June 14, 2000 as an expression of its beliefs.

Section C – Practice

It subscribes to the principles of Christian conduct set forth in the historic Church Covenant commonly used in Baptist Churches.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section A – Membership

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who have made a profession of their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord and who, having experienced New Testament baptism, are in sympathy with the faith and practice of this Church.

1. All members shall seek to live according to the teachings of the Scripture regarding personal devotion to Christ, family relationships, Church responsibilities, stewardship of resources, vocational integrity, lifestyle evangelism, civics, morality, and ethical issues.

2. We encourage that each new member attends our New Members' course that is offered. Each new member will be supplied with a copy of the Constitution and By-laws during the New Members' class.

Section B – Admission

Membership in this Church may be attained upon the vote of the Church as follows:

1. By profession of faith in Christ and baptism
2. By letter from a Church of like faith and order
3. By restoration. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the Church, upon evidence of his repentance and reformation.
4. By statement of previous baptismal experience in accordance with the statement in "The Baptist Faith and Message, " Article VII.

The Pastor or Deacons will meet with new members in council regarding the nature and duties of the Christian life and the responsibilities of membership in this Church.

Section C – Rights

Such members as are in full and regular standing may act and vote in the business transaction of the Church. All members upon the floor of the body have equal rights, and are entitled to equal privileges and consideration from all officers and other members.

Section D – Termination

Membership in this Church shall be terminated:

1. By letter of dismissal to a Church of like faith and order. Letters shall not be granted to the individual.

2. By dropping from the roll, when persons join orders of other beliefs and practices.

3. By exclusion.

a. The Church may, after due notice and hearing and kindly effort to make such action unnecessary, retire to a non-resident or inactive roll the membership of persons who are non-resident for one year, and who, for the same space of time, do not worship with the Church.

b. Should a member become an offense to the Church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his (or her) covenant vows, the Church may terminate membership, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.

ARTICLE II – OFFICERS

The officers of this Church shall be the Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, Clerk, Treasurer, Sunday School Director, Sunday School Junior Director, Music Director, Women’s Missionary Union Director, , and any others the Church may choose to elect from time to time to carry out its New Testament program of work. All officers shall be members of this Church.

Section A – Pastor

1. The Pastor shall be given an indefinite call.

2. A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for the purpose, of which at least one week’s public notice shall be given. The pulpit committee shall seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendation will constitute a nomination, though any member has the privilege of making other nominations. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one man at a time. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present and voting being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the resignation of the pastor, or by a three-fourth dismissal vote of those present at the meeting called for that purpose. The pastor shall have in his charge the welfare and oversight of the Church.

Section B – Deacons

1. There may be four active deacons.

It shall be pertinent for the Church to promote the honorary life membership of any deacon who by reason of infirmity shall, only after honorable service, be no longer able to render active service.

2. The rotation plan shall be followed with one fourth of the deacons being changed annually. Terms shall be for four years, except when filling an unexpired term. No deacon shall succeed himself for a period of one year after completing a full four-year term.

3. The active deacons to present the names of two male members to the Church. The one with the highest votes of the two will be elected.

4. Ordination:

The deacons thus elected shall be ordained by the Church except when already ordained by a Church of like faith.

5. 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 guard the unity of the spirit within the Church in the bonds of peace.

B. The deacon shall cooperate in his Church's programs of evangelism, missions, and stewardship.

C. The deacon shall seek to be an example to others in religious matters, especially in attendance in Sunday Services.

D. 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 of God.

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

F. In counsel with the pastor, and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct in accordance with the New Testament teaching, they are to have oversight of the discipline of the Church, in administering which they are to be guided always by the principles set forth in

Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14. The deacons shall be free to call upon any member of the Church to aid in disciplinary action. 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 handled in private.

G. The deacons shall serve as a pulpit supply committee. In case of absence or inability of the pastor, subject to advice from and conference with him, they will provide for pulpit supplies. In any period when the Church is without a pastor, unless the Church shall otherwise provide, the deacons will arrange the temporary ministry.

H. The deacon shall consider it his personal responsibility to resign as an active deacon at such time as he may find himself out of harmony with the spirit of the Constitution.

I. The deacons shall have at least one business meeting each quarter.

Section C – Trustees

There shall be two trustees whose duty it shall be to have charge of all Church property and equipment. They shall be the legal representatives of the Church. They shall be elected by the Church for an indefinite period, as vacancies arise.

ARTICLE III – MEETINGS

The meetings of the Church shall be as follows:

A. Worship services shall be held at least once each Lord's Day. Other meetings may be held as the Church feels necessary.

B. The Church year shall begin September 1, and end August 31. The fiscal year shall be the same.

C. There shall be a regular quarterly business meeting of the Church on the second Sunday of each quarter following the morning Worship Service.

D. Special business meetings may be called by the pastor or by the deacons. The time and place of any such special business meeting, matters to be considered, shall be stated in the call, and public announcement made at the Sunday morning service preceding the special business meeting.

E. At all business meetings the chairman of deacons or the pastor shall preside as moderator. In the absence of both a temporary moderator may be elected by the Church.

F. Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure shall be used in the conducting of all business.

ARTICLE IV – ORDINANCES

The ordinances of this Church shall be baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism shall be by immersion, and administered by the authority of the Church. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once per quarter. The deacons shall assist the pastor in its administration.

ARTICLE V – COMMITTEES

This Church at any properly assembled business meeting may elect any committee or council and define and limit the duties, power, life, and authority to be exercised by any such committee or council, in any matter whatsoever pertaining to the interests and activities of this Church.

Each committee or council must confine its activities to the purpose of its creation or when called for by the Church. Full reports shall be made in regular business meetings, or when called for by the Church. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

Section A – Church Council

1. Composition

The council shall comprise the Pastor, Chairman of Deacons, Sunday School Superintendent, , Woman's Missionary Union Director, Music Director, and any other member the committee deems expedient to appoint.

2. Duties:

A. The council shall seek to correlate and coordinate the activities and organizations of the Church with advisory powers only.

B. The council shall present not later than the September business meeting of the Church a calendar of Church activities for the new calendar year.

C. The pastor shall be the chairman and a secretary shall be chosen by the council.

D. This council shall also serve as the "Evangelism Church Committee" to plan the year-round program of evangelism.

3. Meetings

The council shall have quarterly meetings or convene at any time at the request of the chairman.

Section B – Finance Committee

1. Composition

The Finance Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and three members-at-large. The at-large members shall serve on a rotation system, each serving three years, with one rotating off each year.

2. Duties

A. The Finance Committee shall recommend the annual budget of the Church in time for action at the September business meeting.

B. The Financial Secretary of the Church shall be the chairman.

Section C – Nominating Committee

1. Composition

The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the Sunday School Director, Children's Division Director, and three members-at-large. The at-large members shall serve on a rotation system, each serving three years, with one rotating off each year. The member having served for two years shall be the chairman.

2. Election

The nominating committee shall be elected at the same time all other officers and teachers are elected for the year.

3. The nominating committee shall serve for one year, being responsible for nominations of officers which may arise.

4. Duties

The committee shall present to the Church all officers, teachers, and committee members no later than the middle of August.

Section D – Pulpit Committee

This committee shall be nominated by the deacons and elected by the Church when it is necessary to choose a new pastor for the Church, and will finish its duties when the new pastor is elected.

Section E – Other Standing Committees

The other standing committees shall be the Baptismal Committee, Usher Committee, Flower Committee, Kitchen Committee, History Committee, Recreation Committee, Use of Church Property Committee, Parsonage and Properties Committee, and any other committee authorized by the Church.

ARTICLE VI – AMENDMENTS

The Constitution and By-Laws of this Church may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting at a regular business meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at a previous regular business meeting.

ARTICLE VII – WEDDING AND MARRIAGE POLICY

Section A – Sexual Immorality

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance (Gen. 2:24; Gen 19:5-13; Gen 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thes. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).

2. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman (Gen. 2:24; Rom 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23).

Section B – Scriptural Marriage

1. Those entering marriage should recognize its sacredness and permanency; and, therefore, make adequate spiritual preparation.

2. According to the Scripture, no Christian is to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever in the bond of marriage (2 Cor. 6:14).

3. Marriage is between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman according to Genesis 2:24. Marriages will only be performed on this basis.

4. As a Church, we should diligently teach and observe the covenant of the Christian Gospel with respect to the home and marriage.

Section C – Wedding Policy

1. The Pastor (or other ordained member) acts as a representative of Sappony Baptist Church and not independently in performing wedding ceremonies. Therefore he must only perform wedding ceremonies in accordance with the stated beliefs of Sappony Baptist Church.

2. Both parties must be regenerated and practicing Christians. If either is not a Christian, the Pastor will endeavor to win him/her to Christ.

3. Both parties, under the leadership of the Pastor, will enter a program of spiritual preparation and marriage education. Appointments may be made by contacting the Pastor.

4. Absolutely no alcoholic beverages are allowed on Church property. Also, no alcohol is to be served in any social function which the Pastor is expected to attend. No foul or abusive language is allowed in the Church or on Church property.

ARTICLE VIII – FACILITY USE POLICY

Sappony Baptist Church exists for the purpose of worshipping and bringing glory to God. It is necessary therefore that the Church and grounds only be used for purposes which bring Him honor and glory. In order to ensure that the use of Church facilities is in keeping with the mission, values, and witness of the Church, the following applies.

1. Only active members of Sappony Baptist Church in good standing are eligible to sponsor use of the Church building and property. Non-members or inactive members are not eligible.

2. The Church may only be used for approved purposes and within the confines of our stated beliefs. The Church may not be used for any purpose, or by any group, to advance any activity or belief that contradicts Scripture or our stated beliefs.

3. All Church facility use must be coordinated through the Use of Church Property Committee. In any case where this committee questions whether or not an individual or group's requested use is appropriate, the Pastor, in counsel with the Deaconate will make a final decision.