

# CONSTITUTION OF THE FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED

## PREAMBLE

Friendship Baptist Association, a family of Southern Baptist Churches declares and establishes its Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our common faith, govern this body in an orderly manner, and preserve the autonomy of member churches and this Association.

## Article 1—NAME

The name of this body shall be the Friendship Baptist Association, Incorporated, hereafter referred to in this document as the Association.

## Article 2—MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Association is to exalt Jesus Christ by serving our churches, helping them to fulfill the Great Commission by becoming more effective in missions, evangelism and discipleship.

## Article 3—AUTHORITY

**Section 1:** The Bible is the authority for all faith and practices of the Association. The doctrinal statement, known as the Baptist Faith and Message, as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000, reflects the doctrinal beliefs of this body.

**Section 2:** The Association recognizes and affirms the autonomy of the local church and shall have no right or authority to legislate for its member churches.

## Article 4—MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1: General.** The Association shall consist of churches of like faith and order which choose to share fellowship and work, cooperatively, in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. “Like faith and order” is defined as recognition of the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice and adherence to the principles of the *2000 Baptist Faith and Message*. Each member church shall support the ministries of the Association through service, prayer, participation and regular financial contributions. Each member church shall present their Annual Church Profile document to the Association in a timely manner before the fall Annual Meeting each year.

**Section 2: Petition for Membership.** A church seeking membership in the Association shall make its request known by presenting through their pastor or duly chosen representative, a signed letter of petition accompanied by their credentials (articles of faith, constitution and by-laws, church covenant, etc.) to the association office at least three months prior to the fall Annual Meeting. The Acts 1:8 Mission Council will then be asked to investigate any petitioning church’s credentials as to doctrinal

soundness and its willingness to support the mission of the Association and to assure that the government and practices of the church comply with Baptist polity. Only after careful diligence should the Mission Council make a recommendation for membership.

**A. Transferring Southern Baptist Church or Member Sponsored Mission.** Upon recommendation by the Acts 1:8 Mission Council, any Southern Baptist Church transferring from another Southern Baptist Association, or any mission sponsored by a member church, may be accepted by a two-thirds majority vote at any Executive Committee Meeting or during the fall Annual Meeting.

**B. Independent or Newly Organized Southern Baptist Church.** Upon recommendation by the Acts 1:8 Mission Council, any independent Baptist church or newly organized Southern Baptist church requesting membership in the Association may be accepted by a two-thirds majority vote during the fall Annual Meeting.

**Section 3: Withdrawal by Church.** The Association acknowledges the right of any member church to withdraw by official written notification. No stated reason is required.

**Section 4: Withdrawal by Association.** The Association reserves the right to withdraw fellowship from any member church which fails to maintain and affirm the Biblical doctrines as expressed in the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, encourages or condones gross immorality within its membership, or fails in its obligation to support the ministries of the Association through service, prayer, and financial contributions for a period of more than twenty-four calendar months. The process for the withdrawing of fellowship is delineated in the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Association.

## **Article 5—GOVERNANCE**

**Section 1: General.** The Association is governed by the majority vote of the messengers present at its annual Fall Meeting and by action of the Executive Committee, ad interim. The mission, ministry, business, programming and activities of the Association shall be accomplished through its officers, staff, councils, committees and teams.

**Section 2: Fiscal and Physical Year.** The fiscal and physical year shall be January 1 through December 31.

**Section 3: Meetings.** The Association shall meet annually in the fall of each year at a time and place approved by the Association. The Executive Committee of the Association shall have the authority to make adjustments in the time and place of the annual meeting as may best serve the interest of the Association.

**A. Messengers.** Each church shall be entitled to five messengers and one additional messenger for each fifty members or major fraction thereof, in excess of 200 members. Messengers are to be selected from the membership of the respective church, and not to exceed ten messengers from any one church. Each messenger present shall have one vote.

**B. Parliamentary Process.** The Association's meetings shall be governed by the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order.

**C. Quorum.** A quorum shall consist of those members who attend a stated or properly called meeting.

**Section 4: Officers.** The officers of the Association shall be the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. All officers shall be baptized members of cooperating churches of the Association. They shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected at the fall Annual Meeting. Officers shall assume office on January 1 of the year following election. Terms of service, duties and responsibilities, and other prescribed functions or stipulations are delineated in the By-Laws and the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Association.

**Section 5: Executive Committee.** The function of the Executive Committee shall be to serve, ad interim, to conduct such business as is necessary between the fall Annual Meetings of the Association. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Pastors of cooperating churches, plus one other person from each cooperating church who has been chosen and certified to the Association by the church as a resident and active member. Additionally, the elected officers of the Association shall be members of the Executive Committee. Each member shall be entitled to one vote. The Associational Missionary shall serve ex-officio.

**Section 6: Board of Trustees.** A three-member Board of Trustees shall be elected by the Association. The authority to execute all instruments, contracts and legal documents as authorized during the annual meeting or by the Executive Committee of the Association shall be vested in this Board of Trustees. Members shall be elected to terms of three years. No member shall be eligible for reelection until he or she has been off the Board for one year. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to fill any unexpired term on the Board of Trustees.

## **Article 6—COUNCILS, COMMITTEES AND TEAMS**

**Section 1: General.** In addition to its officers, the work of the Association is accomplished by Councils, Committees and Teams nominated and elected from within the membership of its churches. The Standing Councils, Committees and Teams listed below are essential components to the work of the Association. The Policy and Procedures Manual provides for the establishment of additional Committees and Teams, as required, to accomplish the work of the Association.

**Section 2: Councils.** The standing Councils of the Association shall be Friendship Council, Acts 1:8 Mission Council, and Ephesians 4:12 Leadership Development Council.

**Section 3: Committees.** The Standing Committees of the Association shall be Nominating, Personnel, Camp Development, Baptist Men on Mission and Women on Mission (WMU).

**Section 4: Teams.** The Standing Teams of the Association shall be: Associational Camps.

## **Article 7—AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended at any fall Annual Meeting of the Association provided the proposed amendment shall be submitted in written form at least two months prior to the meeting. This may be done by letters to all churches and/or by publishing the proposed amendment in the Word and Way. A two-thirds majority vote shall be required for amending.

Adopted Bylaw Change 2021.10.24; Adopted Bylaw Change 2024.01.23;

# **BY-LAWS OF THE FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED**

The following By-Laws have been developed to give guidance to the various officers, councils, committees and teams as they carry out the work of the Association.

## **Article 1—DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

**Section 1: General.** All Officers shall serve as members of the Executive Committee and the Friendship Council.

**Section 2: Moderator.** The Moderator shall preside at the Annual Meeting of the Association and serve as the chairman of the Executive Committee. He may appoint task-oriented teams and committees as necessary to effectively carry out the work of the Association. He shall serve as ex-officio member of all other councils, committees and teams. He shall sign all official documents required for the operation of the Association.

**Section 3: Vice-Moderator.** The Vice-Moderator shall perform all duties of the Moderator in the absence of or at the request of the Moderator.

**Section 4: Clerk.** The Clerk shall be responsible for recording and preserving the records of the Annual Meeting, Executive Committee and Friendship Council meetings of the Association. He or she shall be responsible for the distribution, collection, and compilation of the Annual Church Profile and associational minute books.

**Section 5: Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall have charge of all general and designated funds of the Association and shall distribute the same according to the budget of the Association. He or she shall make a report to the Association at the fall Annual Meeting and at all Executive Committee meetings of the Association and submit all records and books for Audit when requested. He or she shall deliver all Treasurers' records and books entrusted to his care to any successor to his office. He or she is to assist with the planning of an annual budget to provide for the program of work in the Association. He or she is to be an authorized signer on all checking accounts.

**Section 6: Assistant Treasurer.** The Assistant Treasurer shall perform all duties of the Treasurer in the absence of or at the request of the Treasurer. He or she is to assist with the planning of the annual budget to provide for the program of work in the Association. He or she is to be an authorized signer on all checking accounts.

## **Article 2—EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Section 1: Meetings.** The Executive Committee shall meet two times during the year with the date, time and place determined by the Executive Committee. A special session of the Executive Committee may also be called by a majority of the Association's Officers providing that a seven-day notice is given.

**Section 2: Vacancies.** If a vacancy occurs on the Executive Committee, the Clerk shall notify the church involved and request that a new member be elected to fill the unexpired term and that the name be furnished to the Association.

### Article 3—COUNCILS

#### Section 1: Friendship Council.

**A. Composition.** The Friendship Council shall be comprised of the elected Officers of the Association, plus other ministry leaders as nominated and elected by the Association. The Associational Missionary shall provide leadership for this Council but serve as an ex-officio member.

**B. Purpose.** The Friendship Council shall serve as the planning and coordinating body of the Association and to assist and advise the Associational Missionary in the organizational and administrative work of the Association. It shall also assist the Budget Leader and Treasurer in the preparation of an annual budget to be presented to the Association at the fall Annual Meeting each year. It shall periodically review any purpose or mission statements of the Association and evaluate the work being accomplished and make any recommendations needed to the Executive Committee or to the Association at the fall Annual Meeting.

**C. Meetings.** This Council shall meet three times during the year at least one week prior to any Executive Committee or Annual Meetings of the Association. It may also meet at other times as needed to accomplish its purpose.

**D. Teams.** This Council shall have the authority to appoint and dissolve teams as needed to accomplish its purpose

#### Section 2: Acts 1:8 Mission Council.

**A. Composition.** The Mission Council shall be comprised of at least 5 members plus the associational elected leaders for Women on Mission (WMU) and Baptist Men on Mission (Brotherhood). The Chairperson for this Council will be responsible to give a report to the Friendship Council for the purposes of budgeting and calendaring. This report may be submitted in person or printed. The Associational Missionary shall serve ex-officio.

**B. Purpose.** This Council exists to empower our churches to be on mission corporately and cooperatively in the local associational area, the state, North America, and internationally. The primary task of this Council is to mobilize the churches to Pray, Give, Know, and Go in response to the Great Commission.

**C. Meetings.** This Council shall meet three times during the year, preferably before the Friendship Council Meetings. It may also meet at other times as needed to accomplish its purpose.

**D. Teams.** This Council shall have the authority to appoint and dissolve teams as needed to accomplish its purpose.

### **Section 3: Ephesians 4:12 Leadership Development Council.**

**A. Composition.** The Ephesians 4:12 Leadership Development Council shall be comprised of at least 5 members, who shall be nominated and elected by the Association. The Chairperson for this Council will be responsible to give a report to the Friendship Council for the purposes of budgeting and calendaring. This report may be submitted in person or printed. The Associational Missionary shall serve ex-officio.

**B. Purpose.** This Council shall exist for the purpose of discovering and encouraging leaders that God is calling out to serve Him in both lay and professional roles with a special focus on the leadership needs of the local church. This Council shall have as a primary focus the training and equipping of these leaders in the local church setting, as well as, on the associational level. The goal of this Council will be to see a day when the churches of Friendship Baptist Association and the surrounding Baptist Associations will have all the leaders necessary to minister effectively in their setting while also fulfilling, God's purpose for His church as found in Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8.

**C. Meetings.** This Council shall meet three times during the year, preferably before the Friendship Council Meetings. It may also meet at other times as needed to accomplish its purpose.

**D. Teams.** This Council shall have the authority to appoint and dissolve teams as needed to accomplish its purpose.

## **Article 4—COMMITTEES**

**Section 1: Nominating Committee.** The purpose of this committee is to nominate from among the membership of cooperating churches, persons qualified and willing to serve as officers and leaders of the Association, as well as members of its various councils, committees and teams. The Committee shall be comprised of three to five members with the Associational Missionary serving ex-officio. The procedure for nominating and electing the members of this Committee and other prescribed functions are delineated in the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Association.

**Section 2: Personnel Committee.** The purpose of this committee is to act as a liaison between all paid employees and the Association and Executive Committee on all personnel matters. It shall establish leave policies for all paid full-time employees and work with the Budget Leader/Friendship Council on establishing salary packages and annual merit/cost of living increases/decreases of all paid employees of the Association. It shall work with the Associational Missionary in hiring and dismissal of all paid employees. This committee shall be comprised of three to five members.

**Section 3: Camp Development Committee.** The purpose of this committee is to develop and periodically evaluate progress on a master plan for developing and maintaining the Associational Camp to its fullest potential. It shall be responsible for establishing goals and providing ways and means to achieve these goals. This committee shall be comprised of at least five members and shall have the authority to appoint and dissolve teams as needed to accomplish its purpose.

**Section 4: Men's Ministry.** The purpose of this committee is to assist the churches in the empowering of men and boys for Kingdom service through education and personal involvement in missions and ministry.

**Section 5: WMU (Women on Mission).** The purpose of this committee is to equip individuals to identify, embrace, and live their call to missions. WMU will assist church members to develop toward a missions lifestyle, to engage in mission action through personal witnessing, to support missions, including three special missions offerings, and to participate in the work of the churches and the association. It will assist churches in forming and sustaining WMU organizations with the sole purpose of promoting missions involvement.

#### **Article 5—TEAMS**

**Section 1: Associational Camps Team.** The purpose of this team is the planning and scheduling of the Associational Church Camps. It is to enlist and train all workers needed to conduct safe and appealing camps to evangelize boys, girls and youth for Christ. It shall be responsible for effectively promoting these camps to all of the Associational Churches.

#### **Article 6—EXECUTIVE AND GENERAL STAFF**

**Section 1: General.** The Association shall employ an Associational Missionary and shall secure other employed, or volunteer ministerial and lay staff as may be needed to fulfill the mission and purpose of the Association. Procedures for employment, terms of employment, duties and responsibilities, lines of accountability and other prescribed functions are delineated in the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Association.

#### **Article 7—AMENDMENTS**

These By-Laws may be amended at any fall Annual Meeting or Executive Committee Meeting of the Association provided the proposed amendment shall be submitted in written form at least one month prior to the meeting. This may be done by letters to all churches and/or by publishing the proposed amendment in the Word and Way. A two-thirds majority vote shall be required for amending.