

## **EAU CLAIRE BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

### PREAMBLE

To assure the preservation and security of the principles of our faith and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relationship to other churches, we do declare and establish this constitution.

### ARTICLE I - NAME

This church shall be known as the Eau Claire Baptist Church, Columbia, South Carolina.

### ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The Eau Claire Baptist Church is organized for the purpose of promoting the worship of God through the reading and study of the Holy Bible as the written Word of God; the teaching and preaching of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; conducting regular services of worship for the spiritual training, development and benefit of each member and for the winning of people to Jesus Christ. This church shall be missionary in spirit, extending the Gospel through our organized religious channels to the entire world. It shall promote and maintain the Christian teachings and doctrines of the Baptist denomination and identify with the historical beliefs of Baptists as follows:

#### ***Baptist Principles on Freedom***

*The Centrality of the Scripture* or Bible Freedom focuses on the Lordship of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and is the Baptist understanding of religious authority. The criterion by which the Bible is interpreted is Jesus Christ.

*Soul Competency* or Soul Freedom focuses on the primacy of the individual and reflects the Baptist approach to salvation, with implications for other areas as well. Empowered by HOLY SPIRIT, every believer is competent to study and understand God's Word.

*Autonomy of the Local Church* or Church Freedom highlights the prominence of the believing community and the Baptist way of being and doing church. Each Church family has the autonomy to cooperate with any other Church, denomination or organization to do Kingdom work.

*Religious freedom* is the Baptist approach to religious liberty and focuses on the relationship of religion to the state. The state does not control religion and religion does not control the state.

Eau Claire Baptist Church shall exist to provide regular opportunities for public worship, to sustain the ordinances, doctrines, and ethics set forth in the New Testament, for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to channel its offerings to the support of the objects of the Kingdom of God. In order to effectively carry forward the objects and purposes set forth above, the Church will have full power and authority to purchase, lease and acquire by gift, devise or bequest and to hold, mortgage, convey and dispose of all kinds of property, both real and personal, provided that the title to all property shall be vested in the church trustees as hereinafter set forth.

### ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION I - The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration by the spirit of God; who have been baptized, and who have been received into membership by vote of the church. Those applying for membership shall present themselves anytime the church has assembled for worship and an invitation is extended by the minister in charge. They shall be presented to the church as candidates for membership and shall later be presented for a vote of the congregation for membership at a regular church conference (business meeting). In the admission of members, it is desirable that the vote shall be unanimous, but if in any instance objection is made, the case shall be referred without discussion to the Pastor and the Deacons for investigation. A report shall be made at the next church conference. Methods of admission shall be as follows:

- A. Baptism - Upon satisfactory evidence of repentance toward God and a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior, an applicant may be received as a candidate for believer's baptism. After the administration of baptism and upon favorable vote by the membership of the church, he/she shall enjoy the full fellowship of the church.
- B. Transfer of Membership - Members of another New Testament church may present themselves for membership by transfer of membership by means of a letter of recommendation. When one presents by letter, he/she is a candidate for membership until the letter of recommendation is received and a vote is then taken at a regular church conference. Upon receipt of letter and a favorable vote, one becomes a member of the church.

C. Testimony - If a letter of recommendation cannot be secured, the church shall then consider receiving such a person on a statement of experience.

Prospective members will be baptized unless they have had a **believer's baptism** (as opposed to infant baptism or christening) in the past. Eau Claire Baptist Church prefers the method of believer's baptism as immersion. However, the method can be decided between the pastor and the candidate.

SECTION II - Names shall be removed from the church roll in the following manner:

A. Transfer of Membership - If a member desires to unite with another New Testament church, he/she shall present themselves to that church, which will request a letter of transfer. If the records of the church show such person to be a member of the church and in good standing, the application of transfer will be presented to the church conference for approval.

B. Erasure - When a member unites with some other church and no letter of transfer is requested, Eau Claire Baptist, upon receipt of notification from the individual or church involved, shall terminate his/her membership, and authorize the clerk to erase the name from the roll.

SECTION III - Inactive members - Should a member fail to attend or support the church for a period of one year, the church, after investigation as to the reason, and after every effort to enlist them to become active, may transfer his/her membership to an inactive status.

SECTION IV - Disciplinary Procedure - All matters of discipline shall be referred to the Deacons for investigation and recommendation, and no disciplinary action shall be taken until referred to and reported on by the Deacons. In dealing with all such cases, the Deacons and the church shall be guided by the New Testament.

#### ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

SECTION I - This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training and fellowship.

SECTION II - This church shall hold regular church conferences (business meetings) for the disposition of all matters of business not otherwise provided for, to hear reports from the various organizations and to consider other matters essential to the spiritual welfare and prosperity of the congregation.

SECTION III - Other meetings of the church as a whole or of authorized groups within the church may be set according to the needs of the congregation.

## ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall be a pastor and other ministers and staff as needed, deacons, trustees, clerk, treasurer, and such other officers as shall be required to do the work of the church in any of its departments or organizations. All of these officers shall be elected by the church. All ministers and salaried employees of the church will be supervised by the Staff Support Committee.

## ARTICLE VI - ELECTION AND DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICIALS

### A. PASTOR

SECTION I - CALL - A pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the pastor or the church. In either case, at least thirty (30) days notice shall be given of termination of the relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon, with both the pastor and church seeking to follow the will of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The call of the Pastor shall take place at a meeting especially set for that purpose of which at least one week's notice has been given the membership. The election shall be upon the recommendation of a special committee nominated by the deacons and approved by the church to seek out and nominate as pastor, a minister of the Gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit him/her for the office. Any church member can bring a candidate to the attention of the committee for consideration. The committee shall bring only one name at a time for the consideration of the church, and no nominations shall be made except by the committee.

Upon presentation to the church, the nominated person will be required to preach at least one sermon to the church. Election shall be by standing vote or by ballot at the discretion of the congregation with an affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present and voting necessary for an extension of a call. Should the minister recommended by the committee fail to receive a two-thirds vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another minister, and the meeting at which the vote was taken shall be adjourned without debate.

SECTION II - DUTIES - The Pastor shall have in charge the welfare and oversight of the church. The pastor shall be ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees, may call a special meeting of the Deacons or of any committee according to procedures which are set forth in the by-laws; shall conduct religious services on stated and on special occasions, administer the ordinances, minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the church and community and shall perform other duties that usually pertain to the office. The Pastor shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall, in cooperation with the Deacons, provide for pulpit supply when he/she is absent, and shall arrange, with the concurrence of the Deacons, for ministers

to assist in revival meetings and workers to assist in other special services as required by the church. It shall be the pastor's special responsibility to share Christ with the Unchurched, to minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the congregation, and through prayer and study to render effective preaching and pastoral ministries.

## B. DEACONS

**SECTION I - NUMBER OF DEACONS** - The appropriate number of Deacons will be determined by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Deacons and the church body.

**SECTION II - TERM OF OFFICE** - Deacons shall serve for a period of three (3) years. No member who has served a full term shall be eligible to succeed himself/herself until after the expiration of one year. When a Deacon is lost by death, removal or resignation, the church shall elect at a regular business meeting, as soon as possible, a person to serve the unexpired portion of the term of said Deacon.

**SECTION III - QUALIFICATIONS** - The Deacons shall be elected from among those members who have proven themselves to have scriptural qualifications according to I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. No person shall be elected Deacon who is not a member of this church in good standing.

**SECTION IV - ELECTION** - The nominating committee will present the names of persons nominated to fill upcoming vacancies of Deacons at an appropriate church conference. Any church member can bring a candidate to the attention of the committee for consideration. Nominations may also be made from the floor, provided that prior consent has been received from the nominee and a discussion has taken place indicating the time and effort commitment. Deacons retiring from active participation by rotation shall retain their title of Deacon and may be called upon for service by the church at any time.

**SECTION IV - DUTIES** - In accordance with the scripture references in the New Testament, Deacons are to be the servants of the Church. They shall:

1. Serve with the pastor and staff in performing pastoral ministries, administrative duties, proclaiming the Gospel to believers and unbelievers, caring for the church members and other persons in this community, leading the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry and application, and leading the church in fulfilling its purposes. In the absence of the Pastor, the Deacon Body will be responsible for the filling of the pulpit for Sunday Services.
2. Organize themselves so as to keep a constant and vital contact with the membership of the church with a view of holding and strengthening its loyalty to Christ and the church.

3. The Deacons shall inform themselves as to the needs, both physical, emotional, and spiritual, of the entire membership to the end that they make the church serve its own people effectively by ministering to those who may be in need of employment or the necessities of life.
4. Have oversight of the discipline of the church and be guided by the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5:9-13 and I Thessalonians 5:12-14.
5. Assist the Pastor and serve the church in administering the Lord's Supper.
6. In addition, each Deacon shall:
  - a. Be ever mindful of requirements of Deacons as listed in I Timothy 3:1-13.
  - b. Habitually attend the Deacons' meetings unless hindered by sickness or work.
  - c. Strive to lead a worthy Christian life and will, with the gifts God has given him/her strive to lead others to accept Christ as personal Savior.
  - d. Follow the Bible plan of Christian stewardship in regard to time, talents and material possessions.
  - e. Cooperate with the Pastor, other Deacons, and the church in supporting the entire church program.

At any time, after having been ordained, a Deacon feels that he/she cannot follow the aforementioned requirements; he/she shall request the church to place him/her on the inactive Deacon list.

Additional duty of the Deacons include the make-up of the Staff Support Committee. The Staff Support Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and the immediate Past Chairperson, all of the Deacon Body. This committee will have oversight of all church staff to include pastors, and all support staff. This committee will do annual evaluations and supervisory activities to challenge, support and encourage all members of the staff.

SECTION V - ORDINATION OF DEACONS - After election by the church as Deacon, any person who has not previously been ordained shall be ordained in some public service to be arranged by the pastor and Deacons, at which time there shall be prayer and the laying on of hands by the members of the congregation.

### C. MINISTER OF MUSIC

SECTION I - CALL - The Minister of Music shall be called in the same manner as the Pastor. When the prospective person is presented, the person should be prepared and present to the congregation a piece of music on Sunday morning representative of the style and genre that would be used if the person was called.

SECTION II - DUTIES - The principal function of the Minister of Music is the responsibility to the church for planning, conducting, and evaluating the church music program. Those responsibilities should include but not be limited by the following:

1. Direct the planning, coordination, operation, and evaluation of a comprehensive music program based on program tasks.
2. Coordinate the church music program with the calendar and emphasis of the church.
3. Assist the pastor in planning the congregational services of the church; be responsible for the selection of the music.
4. Direct music groups and congregational singing. Plan and direct rehearsals for the Adult and other choirs. Preview and select new music for each choir and plan units of work for each.
5. Be aware of weddings and funerals to be held in the church; be available for counsel and assistance as requested.
6. Supervise the work of all music leaders and the music program.
7. Supervise maintenance of music materials, supplies, musical instruments, and other musical equipment of the church.
8. Keep informed on current music methods, materials, promotion, and administration, utilizing them when appropriate.
9. Write music publicity articles for the church newsletter.
10. Fulfill personal responsibilities to witness and counsel in music related opportunities; be sympathetic and supportive of the total church.

#### D. MINISTRY ASSISTANT -

SECTION I - CALL - The ministry assistant will be called by the church to handle the daily operations of the church. Therefore, the calling of the ministry assistant must be presented to the congregation by the Staff Support Committee for approval during a church conference. The ministry assistant must meet the qualifications for the position and must be of good character, with abilities of meeting with the public, holding information in confidence and sympathetic to the needs of the congregation.

SECTION II - DUTIES - The duties of the Ministry Assistant are as follows:

1. Be present and hold regular office hours for the church.
2. Be knowledgeable and responsible to help officers and members of the church in their needs to do the work of the church.
3. Handle correspondence for the church.
4. Help in ministering to the congregation by visiting, calling or attending to members.
5. Assisting the Pastor with preparation for the Sunday Service by typing bulletins, newsletters, sermons or other clerical work as needed.
6. Other duties as listed in the job description.

## E. OTHER MINISTERS

SECTION I - When the church desires to call any other types of ministers, the call procedure will be the same as that of the pastors.

## F. OTHER SALARIED EMPLOYEES

Employees of the church shall be employed by the Staff Support Committee, with the approval of the church. A job description and salary will be agreed on by the person being employed and the Staff Support Committee. These will also be voted on by the church. The Chairperson of the Finance Committee will serve in an advisory position to the Staff Support Committee concerning salaries at the time of employment. The Pastor will serve as an ex-officio member of the committee when a person is being considered for employment. The Pastor and Minister of Music will serve as ex-officio members of the committee when a person is being considered as Organist and Pianist.

Other staff members will be called as determined by the church and their duties defined in keeping with the identified needs of the church.

## G. TRUSTEES

The trustees shall consist of the Chairperson of Deacons, Chairperson of Finance Committee, Treasurer, and the Church Clerk. The trustees shall represent the church in its legal and property matters.

## H. CLERK

The Clerk will be responsible for recording all business transacted in regular and special church conferences. It shall be the clerk's responsibility to attend all church conferences (business meetings of the church), or be represented, and it shall be his/her responsibility to work with the Ministry Assistant in preparing the Annual Church Profile letter. It shall be the Clerk's responsibility to work with the Ministry Assistant in the matter of keeping accurate records, maintaining an up-to-date church roll of members and preserving valuable records and letters that belong to the church.

## I. TREASURER

The treasurer or the approved designee shall be in charge of receiving and counting all monies for the church. It shall be his/her responsibility to deposit all monies received and to work with the Ministry Assistant in keeping an accurate record of all receipts and expenditures. It shall also be the treasurer's responsibility or the approved designee to co-sign all checks.



## ARTICLE VII CHURCH GOVERNMENT

### SECTION I

The government of this church shall be congregational in nature and shall be vested in the membership.

### SECTION II

Church Conference is the monthly business session of the church and shall be held on Sunday. These church conferences may be rescheduled as necessary, and in addition, a conference of the church may be called at any time by the pastor and the deacons with at least one week's notice. In certain situations where immediate action is required, a church conference may be called without the week's prior notice pending approval by a majority of the Deacons and notification of the church members.

### SECTION III

The pastor shall preside over the church conference as the moderator. In the Pastor's absence the chairperson of the Deacons shall preside and in his/her absence, the Vice Chairperson of Deacons shall preside or shall name some other member of the church in good standing to preside.

### SECTION IV

A quorum shall consist of those members of the church present and voting being no less than 10% of the church membership. In a dire emergency the Trustees and the Chairman of the affected committee can make a decision that will be later confirmed by the church at a church conference.

### SECTION V

The Church Clerk shall keep minutes of each church conference (business meeting) and what actions were taken by the church.

### SECTION VI

The Church Council is a planning, problem solving and recommending council made up of all organizational leaders, chairpersons of committees and church officers. The council meets regularly and at least once each quarter and the meetings are publicized in the newsletter. All church members are invited and encouraged to attend. The Pastor shall serve as Chairperson with a designated facilitator.

The primary function of the Church Council shall be to recommend objectives and goals to the church; to review and coordinate programs and plans which are recommended by Church Officers, organizations, and committees, to recommend to the Church the use of leadership, calendar time and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

All matters agreed upon by the Church Council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the Church for approval or disapproval.

### ARTICLE VIII - VISITORS

Believing that we should extend to anyone the privilege of worshipping our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we do welcome to our services any visitor. It is the responsibility of all members to extend the hand of fellowship to any and all visitors.

### ARTICLE IX - CHURCH COMMITTEES

#### SECTION I

The Nominating Committee shall be composed of six (6) members, and the term of this committee shall be three years, with two members rotating off each year. Nominations will be made by the congregation being sure that nominees have knowledge of the responsibilities and duties of the committee, have given prior consent and are willing to serve if presented for a vote. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for nominating and working to secure workers for all organizations, committees and Deacons of the church each year. The Nominating Committee shall be aware of the time commitment needed to serve in the church and will strive to recruit as many people as possible to spread the work of the church. The Pastor, and Minister of Music will serve as ex-officio members of this committee. The nominees for all offices will be published at least one week in advance of any church vote. Any church member can nominate a candidate from the floor being sure that nominees have knowledge of the responsibilities and duties of the committee, have given prior consent and are willing to serve if presented for a vote.

#### SECTION II

The term of office for all committees, with the exception of the Finance Committee, and the Nominating Committee will be for one year. Members rotating off the Finance Committee, and the Nominating Committee will wait one year before serving on that committee again. A member rotating off of either of these two committees can be elected to serve on the other committees without waiting one year.

At the end of each year, members of other committees can be re-admitted for another one year term, unless otherwise specified by church action.

The term of office for the Finance Committee, composed of six members, shall be three years, with two members rotating off each year. On the year that the two members rotate off, the two members do not rotate off until December 31st of the year. This provides for continuity during the organizing and passing of the next year's budget.

### SECTION III

The duties of each of the committees will be determined in cooperation with the Pastor. A written copy of these duties will be submitted for the church approval and will be kept with the church documents to be updated and changed when the need arises. Each member of the committees will be given a copy of the duties of their committee when they have been nominated for office. At the first meeting, the Chairperson of the committee will go over the duties of the committee with all of the members.

### ARTICLE X - AFFILIATION

This church is a free, autonomous, independent body, congregational in nature with authority to determine for itself in the manner set forth in this constitution. It is free of any outside control, authority or power, whether governmental or otherwise, for the use of its property and all church policies.

The church will be affiliated with organizations that promote the beliefs and work of this church. Duly elected messengers will participate in their deliberative assemblies, and the Church shall support the missionary, benevolent and educational programs of each of the affiliated organizations.

### ARTICLE XI - CHURCH DISSOLUTION

In the event that this church, with a vote of two thirds of its members present and voting at a publicized church conference (business meeting), decides to close its doors and no longer exist, all properties, both real and personal, will be sold and all assets will be liquidated and monies will be distributed to organizations as decided by the members. These responsibilities will fall under the purview of the church trustees with input from church members.

### ARTICLE XII - ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

#### SECTION I

This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present and voting at the Church Conference (business meeting)

at which vote is taken shall vote in favor of same. This vote shall be taken after formal presentation of the Constitution to the church, and notice of such meeting in which the vote is to be taken shall be given at least one week in advance.

## SECTION II

This constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church; provided, however, that such amendment, alteration or repeal shall have been given to the clerk in writing; and the proposed change shall have been presented to the church at a regular church conference (business meeting) at least thirty days prior to the time the vote is taken.

### ARTICLE XIII - OFFICIAL SEAL OF THE CHURCH

The official seal of the church shall consist of the charter name of the church,  
namely: EAU CLAIRE BAPTIST CHURCH OF COLUMBIA, SOUTH  
CAROLINA

Printed upon the circle of the seal and across the face shall be stamped the phrase  
ORGANIZED IN 1921, thus.

### ARTICLE XIV - DATE OF THIS CONSTITUTION

Be it known that this constitution was written and approved by the church of EAU

CLAIRE BAPTIST on \_\_\_\_\_