



2150 Mount Vernon Rd
Hurricane, WV 25526

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF THE
MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH**

PREAMBLE

Reposing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and embracing the teaching principles and practices for which Baptists have historically stood, we subscribe to the following:

The preeminence of Jesus Christ as our divine Lord and Master.

The supreme authority of the inspired Word of God and its sufficiency as our only rule of faith and practice.

The right of private interpretation and the competency of the individual soul in direct approach to God.

The absolute separation of Church and State.

A regenerate church membership.

The beautiful, symbolic ordinance of believer's baptism in obedience to the command of Jesus Christ.

The complete independence of the local church and engagement in associated fellowship with other Baptist Churches.

The solemn obligation of majority rule, guaranteeing equal rights to all and special privilege to none.

The spiritual unity of all believers, for which the Master so earnestly prayed.

A worldwide program of missionary fervor and evangelism in obedience to the final command of Jesus.

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and the assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as on 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 fullness of spirit; 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, 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 educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of illegal drugs and intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offence, but always be 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 principles of God's word.

We therefore band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and adopt for our government, plan of worship, and service the following articles;

ARTICLE I
NAME

The name of the Church shall be Mount Vernon Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II
PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be the advancement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It shall seek to attain this end through the public worship of God, the preaching of the Gospel, consistent Christian living by its members, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor, and Christian Education.

ARTICLE III
DENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION

The Church's government is vested in the body, which composes its membership, but because its ministry is worldwide, it recognizes its obligation and privilege to cooperate with other religious bodies having the same objectives. It shall, therefore, be affiliated with the Teays Valley Baptist Association, the West Virginia Baptist Convention, and the American Baptist Churches, USA.

ARTICLE IV
MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The Members of this Church shall be:

Such persons as confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord, promise to live a Christian life, and have been baptized by immersion.

Those who present letters of dismission and recommendation from other Baptist Churches.

Those who have been received by vote of the Church on the presentation of satisfactory proof that they have been immersed members of some other Christian Church following their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Section 2. Membership Status:

The Board of Deacons shall annually determine the membership status of each member and recommend changes to the Church. At the January Business Meeting, the Board of Deacons shall provide the Clerk a report of said status.

Upon recommendations of the Board of Deacons, the Church shall place on the Inactive Membership List the names of members who for a period of one (1) year do not maintain an active relationship with the Church.

Upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons, the Church shall place on the Non-resident Membership List the names of members non-resident for a period of two (2) years who disregard their Covenant obligations in respect to the transfer of their membership upon moving and have not communicated with the Church.

Members shall be restored to the Active Membership List upon resumption of regular Church activity and relationship.

Section 3. Dismission from this Church shall be:

- A. By death.
- B. By letter. Any member in good and regular standing who desires to unite with another Baptist Church may upon request from that Church be granted a letter of dismission and recommendation upon affirmative vote by the Church. The name of the church to which membership is transferred must be indicated in the request. The letter shall then be sent to the Pastor or Clerk of that Church.
- C. By request to unite with another Christian Church other than Baptist. Upon uniting with a Christian Church other than Baptist, and upon notification from that church, the name of a member may be removed from the roll upon affirmative vote by the Church.
- D. By request for erasure of names. When a member requests that his or her name be erased from the Church Roll, the Board of Deacons shall investigate. If the Board determines that said member cannot be reclaimed, it will present to the Church a recommendation that the name be erased from the roll. The Church will immediately act upon such a recommendation with a majority vote abiding.
- E. For Cause. Should any member become an offense to the Church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct or by a consistent breach of the beliefs and practices as stated in the Church Covenant, the Church may terminate his or her membership by a majority vote of members present at a regularly scheduled business meeting. The dismissal of a church member shall occur only after the procedure given by our Lord in Matthew, Chapter 18, Verses 15 through 17 has been followed. If after exclusion from membership and repentance is demonstrated, readmission to the fellowship shall be in accordance with a request made pursuant to Article IV, Section 1 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE V
CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1. List of Officers

Senior Pastor	Board of Trustees
Associate Pastor(s)	Church Clerk
Minister of Christian Education and Youth	Assistant Church Clerk
Minister of Music	Church Treasurer
Board of Deacons	Financial Secretary / Assistant Treasurer
Board of Deaconesses	Assistant Financial Secretary

The Pastoral Staff shall consist of: (1) Senior Pastor, (2) Associate Pastor(s), (3) Minister of Christian Education and Youth and (4) Minister of Music, (5) others added to the Pastoral Staff as may be defined by the Church.

Section 2. Election

All officers and members of boards and committees, except for the pastoral staff, must have been a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church for a period of at least twelve (12) consecutive months immediately preceding election.

Except as otherwise provided, all officers shall be elected for a period of three (3) years at the Annual election held in December of each year. elected members of boards and committees will rotate after serving their elected term except as otherwise provided in this Constitution. Such person will remain out of that office for one year before becoming eligible for reelection to that board or committee. Persons filling an unexpired term are eligible for re-election. The exceptions to the re-election clause are: Pastoral Staff, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Church Clerk, and Assistant Church Clerk.

Section 3. Discipline

Officers who fail to faithfully perform the duties pertaining to their office for a period of three (3) months without showing good and sufficient cause may be removed from office upon the recommendation from the Board of Deacons and by majority vote of the membership present at any business meeting.

Section 4. Ex-officio

Ex-officio members of boards or committees will serve in an advisory capacity and will not be entitled to make motions or vote.

ARTICLE VI **QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF THE CHURCH OFFICERS**

Section 1. Senior Pastor

- A. He shall be a believer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and evidence a deep and growing personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. He shall evidence a specific call from God to the Ministry.
- C. He shall evidence a stable, Christ-honoring family situation.
- D. He shall have demonstrated communication skills, administrative skills, teaching skills, and interpersonal relational skills to deal with assigned ministry constituencies and responsibilities.
- E. He shall evidence personal initiative in accomplishing goals.
- F. He shall be ordained or be eligible for ordination to the ministry.
- G. He shall hold a graduate degree in ministry or equivalent experience and/or education.
- H. He shall have three (3) to five (5) years experience in the areas of ministry, counseling, and family issues. He shall preach the Gospel and uphold the Mount Vernon Baptist Church Constitution and basic doctrines of the West Virginia Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches USA.
- I. He shall lead unbelievers to accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and disciple new and mature believers.
- J. He shall help believers to discover and implement their spiritual gifts.
- K. He shall watch over and minister to his congregation by making pastoral calls, promote the spiritual interest of the Church and organize and develop its strength for the best possible service.
- L. He shall consult with and covet the advice of the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons will act in an advisory capacity and as spokesman for the Church.
- M. The Senior Pastor shall be accountable to the Board of Deacons.
- N. He shall be an ex-officio member of all Boards and Committees.
- O. After consultation with the Board of Deacons, he shall be responsible for supplying a substitute for the pulpit during any granted absence.
- P. He shall act as moderator unless otherwise provided by the church.

- Q. He shall preside at meetings of the Advisory Board. He shall be responsible for introducing matters of interest that should be presented at the Advisory Board Meetings and shall arrange an agenda for each meeting.
- R. He shall supervise the Church Secretary, the pastoral staff, and others as defined by the Church.

Section 2. Associate Pastor(s)

- A. He shall be a believer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and evidence a deep and growing personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. He shall evidence a specific call from God to the Ministry.
- C. He shall evidence a stable, Christ-honoring family situation.
- D. He shall have demonstrated communication skills, administrative skills, teaching skills, and interpersonal relational skills to deal with assigned ministry constituencies and responsibilities.
- E. He shall evidence personal initiative in accomplishing goals.
- F. He shall hold a graduate degree in ministry of equivalent experience and/or education.
- G. He shall have three (3) to five (5) years experience in the areas of ministry, counseling and family issues.
- H. He shall be ordained or be eligible for ordination to the ministry.
- I. He will preach the Gospel and uphold the Mount Vernon Baptist Church Constitution and basic doctrines of the West Virginia Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches USA.
- J. He shall preach and/or teach at least six (6) times per year, and/or as otherwise requested by the Senior Pastor and/or the Board of Deacons.
- K. He shall cooperate with the local organized work of the denomination and with the American Baptist Churches USA.
- L. He shall watch over and minister to his congregation by making pastoral calls, promote the spiritual interest of the Church, and organize and develop its strength for the best possible service.
- M. He shall work with the Senior Pastor to develop and comprehensive philosophy and plan for attraction of the unchurched, assimilation of visitors and new members, and the discipleship of new believers and active members.
- N. He shall lead unbelievers to accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and disciple new and mature believers.
- O. He shall help believers to discover and implement their spiritual gifts.
- P. He shall consult with and covet the advice of the Board of Deacons.
- Q. The Board of Deacons will act in an advisory capacity and as spokesman for the Church.
- R. The Associate Pastor(s) shall be accountable to the Board of Deacons.
- S. Each Associate Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of each Board relevant to his areas of responsibility except as may be otherwise defined herein.

Section 3. Minister of Christian Education and Youth, The Minister of Christian Education and Youth shall:

- A. be a believer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and evidence a deep and growing personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. evidence a specific call from God to minister.
- C. evidence a stable, Christ-honoring family situation.
- D. evidence personal initiative in accomplishing goals.
- E. have demonstrated communication skills, administrative skills, teaching skills, and interpersonal relational skills to deal with assigned ministry constituencies and responsibilities.
- F. hold an undergraduate degree in ministry or equivalent experience and/or education.
- G. be ordained or be eligible for ordination to the ministry.

- H. preach and declare the Gospel and uphold the Mount Vernon Baptist Church Constitution and basic doctrines of the West Virginia Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches USA.
- I. watch over and minister to the youth, promote their spiritual growth, and organize and develop their character for the best possible Christian service.
- J. consult with and respect the advice of the Board of Deacons.
- K. work under the supervision of the Pastor and with the Board of Deacons, and in cooperation with the Board of Christian Education, give priority to the program of Christian Education of the Church and Youth.
- L. be accountable to the Board of Deacons and the Senior Pastor.
- M. be an ex-officio member of the Board of Christian Education.
- N. consult with the Pastor on recommendations and items to be brought before the Board of Christian Education.
- O. study and evaluate the educational program of the Church and plan a program of Christian Education based on the immediate and long range needs within the established policies of the Board of Christian Education. His primary emphasis will be the youth program.
- P. be responsible for the training of the educational staff.

Section 4. Minister of Music

The Minister of Music shall:

- A. be a believer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and evidence a deep and growing personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- B. evidence a specific call from God to minister.
- C. evidence a stable, Christ-honoring family situation.
- D. evidence personal initiative in accomplishing goals.
- E. have demonstrated communication skills, administrative skills, teaching skills, and interpersonal relational skills to deal with assigned ministry constituencies and responsibilities.
- F. have three (3) to five (5) years experience in the area of music ministry.
- G. hold an undergraduate degree in music ministry or have equivalent experience and/or education.
- H. cooperate with the local organized work of the denomination and with the American Baptist Churches USA.
- I. work under the supervision of the Senior Pastor and with the Board of Deacons and give priority to the music program(s) of the Church.
- J. be accountable to the Board of Deacons and the Senior Pastor.
- K. work with the Pastoral Staff to plan the worship services.
- L. lead the congregational singing and conduct the adult choir in rehearsals and presentation for regular services and seasonal ministries except as otherwise provided by the church.
- M. encourage the congregation in music appreciation and knowledge of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
- N. declare the Gospel and uphold the basic doctrines of the West Virginia Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches USA.
- O. be an ex-officio member of the Board of Music.
- P. consult with the Pastor on recommendations and items to be brought before the Board of Music.
- Q. study and evaluate the programs of the Church and plan a program of music based on the immediate and long range needs within the established policies of the Board of Music.
- R. be responsible for the coordination and implementation of the youth age relevant music programs and/or disciple and delegate personnel to lead such choirs and programs.
- S. ensure the availability of a pianist and/or organist for all regular and special church services.
- T. conduct or disciple and delegate personnel to develop and lead instrumental music for worship services.

- U. oversee, in conjunction with the Music Board, the tuning and repair of all Church musical instruments.
- V. serve as a resource person for musicians for banquets, weddings, funerals, and other events at the Church.

Section 5. Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons shall consist of not less than twelve (12) members with one third (1/3) being elected annually for a period of three (3) years. The Deacon must have been a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church for a period of at least twelve (12) consecutive months immediately preceding election.

Should a vacancy occur other than that of the expired term, the newly elected Deacon will serve only that portion remaining of the unexpired term but may be re-nominated for a full three (3) year term of his own.

A. Authority and Responsibilities

Authority and responsibilities of the Board members shall include, but not be limited to:

1. They shall seek out members of the Church who need assistance and offer their services to aid in every way possible.
2. They shall visit the sick and absent members.
3. They shall make contact with prospective members.
4. They shall distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper.
5. They shall assist the Pastor during ordinance of Baptism.
6. They shall have the responsibility to define and prepare an active and inactive Church Roll pursuant to ARTICLE IV in conjunction with the Church Clerk.
7. They shall provide a list of constitutional positions to the Nominating Board prior to September 1st of each year.
8. They shall recommend to the Board of Finance and administer their budget as approved by the Church.
9. They shall be jointly responsible to the Church with the Pastor regarding evangelistic meetings and the program of evangelism.
10. They shall review the salaries of the Pastoral Staff and Church Secretary annually in September and make recommendations to the appropriate Board(s).
11. They shall be the final authority on any question(s) pertaining to the Constitution of the Church.
12. They shall act in an advisory capacity to the Pastoral Staff and as spokesman for the Church.
13. They shall have the authority to recommend to the Church the termination of any member of the Pastoral staff by a majority vote of the Board.
14. They shall assume responsibility for all church services in the absence of the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastors.
15. They shall be responsible to the church for all activities and ministries except as otherwise directed by the church.
16. They shall also carry out the duties of discipline contained in the provisions of ARTICLE V Section 3, regarding good and sufficient cause and report to the Church their findings.
17. In the absence of a Senior Pastor, they shall appoint a moderator.

B. Deacons Fellowship Fund

The Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall also act as the Treasurer of the Deacon's Fellowship Fund. This fund is to be used to assist any of the members of our Church family or those associated with the Church as the need arises.

1. Before this fund can be used outside of the Church membership, it must be authorized by the Board of Deacons.
2. disburse such money strictly on the basis of need and stay within its limits.
 - a) pay all disbursements by check.
 - b) present to the Church, at its annual meeting, a report in writing of disbursements from this fund.
 - c) he shall deliver immediately to the successor all the books and records pertaining to this office.

C. Honorary Deacons

Honorary Deacons may be elected at any Business Meeting of the Church upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons. A vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and qualified to vote shall be necessary. Once elected, they shall serve until further action by the Church.

The candidate for Honorary Deacon must have been a Deacon for at least three full terms (nine years) and must have rendered outstanding work for the Church over a long period of time.

He must be incapacitated by ill health, advanced age, or stress of other duties which makes it impossible for him to do justice to his position as a Deacon.

Section 6. Board of Deaconesses

The Board of Deaconesses shall consist of not less than twelve (12) members with one third (1/3) being elected annually for a period of (3) years. The Deaconesses must have been a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church for a period of at least twelve (12) consecutive months immediately preceding election.

A. Authority and Responsibilities

Authority and responsibilities of the Board members shall include, but not be limited to:

1. They shall act in an advisory capacity to the Pastoral Staff.
2. They shall visit the sick and absent members.
3. They shall make contact with prospective members.
4. They shall prepare the elements of the Lord's Supper.
5. They shall assist the Deacons in preparing an active and inactive Church Roll.
6. They shall assist the Pastor during the ordinance of Baptism.
7. They shall recommend to the Board of Finance and administer their budget as approved by the Church.
8. They shall send flowers to the member upon the death of the member's mother, father, child, parent, or parent-in-law.

B. Honorary Deaconesses

Honorary Deaconesses may be elected at any Business Meeting of the Church upon recommendation of the Board of Deaconesses. A vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and qualified to vote shall be necessary. Once elected, they shall serve until further action by the Church.

The candidate for Honorary Deaconesses must have been a Deaconess for at least three full terms (nine years) and must have rendered outstanding work for the Church over a long period of time.

She must be incapacitated by ill health, advanced age, or stress of other duties, which makes it impossible for her to do justice to her position as a Deaconess.

Section 7. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall consist of seven (7) members with one third (1/3) being elected annually for a period of three (3) years.

The Trustee must have been a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church for a period of at least twelve (12) consecutive months immediately preceding the election.

Should a vacancy occur other than that of the expired term, the newly elected Trustee will serve only that portion remaining of the unexpired term, but may be re-nominated for a full three (3) year term of his own.

The authority and responsibilities of the Board members shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. They shall hold title to all church property except that used for current expenses and benevolences.
- B. They shall be responsible for the maintenance of Church property.
- C. They shall recommend a budget to the Board of finance and administer it as approved by the Church.
- D. They shall supervise the work of the custodian and provide the necessary supplies.
- E. They shall have the authority to make purchases of equipment, repairs, and improvements, according to amounts specified in the Church budget or as otherwise provided herein. When over and above this amount, they must receive approval of the Board of Finance and the Church.

Section 8. Church Clerk

The Church Clerk shall keep an accurate and permanent record of all the business proceedings of the Church; issue letters of dismissal and letters of Christian standing as authorized by the Church; conduct all official correspondence, and preserve and properly file all important letters, reports, and documents pertaining to the office.

The Clerk shall enter upon the records of the Church current events in the life of the Church that are likely to be of historical value, thus making the Church records a continuous story of the history of the Church.

The Clerk shall be responsible for the safekeeping of the records and shall exercise the utmost diligence and care for their preservation.

The Clerk shall maintain a current list of Church officers.

The clerk shall file a Certification of election of Church Trustees with the County clerk of Putnam County whenever there is a change in Trustee(s).

The Clerk shall maintain a complete roll of members in conjunction with the Board of Deacons. This roll shall include all active, inactive, and resident members with their addresses.

The Clerk shall complete the Annual Church Report and the Annual Statistical Report to be submitted to the West Virginia Baptist Convention.

The Clerk shall write letters of transfer, dismissal, or recommendations pursuant to ARTICLE IV.

The Clerk shall deliver immediately to the successor all books and records in their possession.

Section 9. Assistant Church Clerk

The Assistant Church Clerk shall assume the responsibilities of the Church Clerk in the absence of the Church Clerk.

Section 10. Church Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be the custodian of all expense funds contributed for the general expense of the Church. All disbursements shall be authorized by the Board of finance of Church action. All disbursements from the Church treasury shall be made by check.

The Treasurer shall make monthly reports to the Board of Finance and the Church in which shall be given an itemized statement of all receipts and disbursements.

The Treasurer shall present the books to be audited at the close of the fiscal year and whenever the office of Treasurer changes personnel.

The Treasurer shall deliver immediately to the successor all books and records pertaining to this office.

Section 11. Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer shall assume the responsibilities of the Treasurer in the absence of the Treasurer.

Section 12. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for collecting and depositing all tithes and offerings as soon as possible into the designated bank account of the Church.

The Financial Secretary shall keep an account with each member showing pledges made and contributions received for each fund.

The Financial Secretary shall send a yearly summarized report to each member of their contribution to the Church.

The Financial Secretary shall act as Assistant Treasurer.

The Financial Secretary shall deliver immediately to the successor all books and records pertaining to this office.

Section 13. Assistant Financial Secretary

The Assistant Financial Secretary shall assume the responsibilities of the Financial Secretary in the absence of the Financial Secretary.

ARTICLE VII

BOARDS

Section 1. Board of Finance

The Board of Finance shall consist of seven (7) members. Five (5) members will be elected by the church. The other two (2) members will be the Treasurer and Financial Secretary. ex-officio members shall be one each from the following Boars: Deacon, Trustee, Christian Education, and Missions.

The five (5) members elected by the Church shall be elected for a period of three (3) years with one third (1/3) elected annually.

All Boards and Committees shall be permitted a single expenditure of up to twenty percent (20%) of their current budget if funds are available. Excepted from this are budget line items that are approved by the Church. The Trustees may make emergency expenditures without Church action.

Authority and responsibilities of the Board members shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. One month before the Annual Church election, the Board of Finance shall present to the Church an itemized budget for review. This budget will be presented to the Church for approval at the Annual Church Election.
- B. They shall have the authority to promote the finances to meet the Church Budget.
- C. They shall serve as the Auditing Committee with the Treasurer being an ex-officio member.
- D. They shall make and distribute an itemized monthly status report of all budgeted items to be distributed to members of the Church at the monthly business meetings.
- E. They shall meet at least quarterly or more often as necessary to review the financial status of the Church business and compliance with the Church Budget.
- F. Items not included in the budget must be referred to the Board of Finance for their review and subsequently present their recommendations for action to the Church. In order to transact business, two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board must be present.
- G. The Board of Finance will determine the need for any fiscal bonding and secure such bonding as necessary. The Board of Finance shall also have the authority to request an audit by an independent Certified Public Accountant, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, as the Board of Finance shall deem necessary.

Section 2. Board of Missions

The Board of Missions shall consist of seven (7) members as follows: Three (3) elected from American Baptist Women of Mount Vernon, three (3) elected from the American Baptist Men's Fellowship and one (1) member selected from the Youth Department by the Minister of Christian Education and Youth whose term of office shall be at the discretion of the Minister of Christian Education and Youth and the Board of Missions. The elected members shall serve for three (3) years on the three-year cycle with one third (1/3) being elected annually. Elected members may be re-elected for on (1) consecutive term. The president of the American Baptist Women of Mount Vernon shall be an ex-officio member of this Board.

The Chairperson of the Board of Missions shall serve as Chairperson of Missions and Stewardship Education on the Board of Christian Education. The Chairperson shall also serves as the Mission Advocate for the West Virginia Baptist Convention.

The Chairperson of the Board of Missions shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Finance.

The Board shall meet bi-monthly beginning in January and for special meetings called by the Chairperson.

The responsibilities of the Board of Missions shall include but not be limited to the following:

- A. Challenge the Church to carry out the primary mission of the Church given by our Lord Jesus “to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, beginning at Jerusalem”.
- B. Initiate and promote the missionary program of the Church that includes:
 1. Denominational goals and funding.
 2. The Annual Missionary Conference in cooperation with the Pastor.
 3. Special projects intended to educate the Church in missionary evangelism and methods.
 4. Enhance and raise the level of missionary awareness in the Church.
 5. Recommend to the Board of Finance a budget for the promotion of the program of Missions and shall supervise its expenditures.
 6. keep the Church informed about the goals and accomplishments of the Church and denominational missionary programs, both home and abroad.

Section 3. Board of Christian Education

The Board of Christian Education shall consist of seven (7) members elected for three (3) years, on a three (3) year cycle with one third (1/3) being elected annually. Members filling an unexpired term may be re-nominated for another full term.

The members are to be as follows: Chairperson, Secretary, Chairpersons of the following departments: Adults, Leadership Education, Youth, Children, and Missions & Stewardship Education.

- A. The Sunday School Superintendent and the Minister of Christian Education and Youth will be ex-officio members of the Board.
- B. Authority and responsibilities of the Board shall include, but not be limited to:
 1. In accordance with ARTICLE IX, Section 5, and subject to ratification by the Church, the Board shall appoint a Sunday School Superintendent and all Sunday School teachers and leaders, AWANA teachers and leaders, daily Vacation Bible School teachers and leaders, and other officers and leaders as necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the Board. All individuals recommended and/or holding positions of leadership or teaching within the Church shall be members of the Mount Vernon Baptist Church. People filling other non-leadership and non-teaching positions shall be Christians and embrace the Baptist doctrinal position of Mount Vernon Baptist Church.
 2. The Board of Christian Education shall seriously endeavor to lead all children and adults into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior and all Christians to a commitment of themselves to Christ as Lord. The Board shall supervise and promote all educational interests of the Church, including the Sunday School, Daily Vacation Bible School, Young People’s groups, and all other groups and classes operating in the field of Christian Education.
 3. The Board shall be responsible for the selection of all teaching materials used in the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Youth programs and curricula, and all educational programs of the Church. The Board shall supervise the grading of the Church Sunday School, encourage regularity of attendance, the follow-up of absentees, prompt visitation of the homes of newcomers, and recommend ways and means of spiritually edifying the schools.
 4. The Board shall recommend to the Board of Finance a budget for the promotion of the program of Christian Education and shall supervise its expenditures.
 5. The Board shall provide age appropriate educational and/or inspirational programs and services for all children and youth groups at all regularly scheduled Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening Worship services.

Section 4. Nominating Board

The Nominating Board shall consist of five (5) members. Two (2) members must be Deacons at the time of their election. New members shall be elected for a period of three (3) years with one third (1/3) elected annually.

Authority and responsibilities of the Board shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Upon receiving the list of Constitutional positions from the Board of Deacons, the Nominating Board shall prepare a list of names from the active membership of the Church Body, qualified to fill constitutional positions.
- B. Board Members shall contact each member under consideration to ascertain his or her willingness to serve.
- C. At least one month before the election, the Nominating Board shall present a report recommending to the Church one person for each office, Board, and Committee to be filled for the specified term.
- D. The final list of names will be presented to the Church Body for information and approval.
- E. The Nominating Board will not present a candidate for the Chairperson of Missions and Stewardship Education on the Board of Christian Education in accordance with ARTICLE VII Section 2.
- F. Subject to the approval of the Church Body, the officer will be installed prior to the forth coming calendar year.
- G. A list of installed officers will be distributed to the Church Body at the January Business Meeting.

Section 5. Music Board

The Music Board shall consist of seven (7) members: (1) Director of Adult Choir, (2) Director of Youth Choir, (3) one Director of any Children's Choir, (4) one Adult Choir member, (5) one Deacon (6) one member of the congregation, and (7) one member of a non-represented music group. The Minister of Music, organist, and pianist shall be ex-officio members of the Music Board.

The Music Board members qualifying under the above-referenced categories (4), (5), (6), and (7) shall be elected for three (3) years, on a three (3) year cycle with one third (1/3) being elected annually. Members filling an unexpired term may be re-nominated for another full term.

In the event that any Member of the Music Board (other than the ex-officio members Minister of Music, organist, and pianist) shall qualify in more than once capacity, then a member of the congregation shall be added as necessary so that seven members, each having one vote, shall constitutes the Music Board. When a director position is vacant it may be filled by a layperson.

Authority and responsibilities of the Music Board shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. It shall cooperate with the Pastoral Staff in the selection of the organist and pianist.
- B. It shall cooperate in arranging the musical portion of the Church services.
- C. It shall incur expenses only as authorized in the budget by the Church.
- D. The Music Board shall recommend to the Board of Finance a budget for the promotion of the music program and shall supervise its expenditures.

Section 6. Advisory Board

The Advisory Board shall be composed of the Pastoral Staff, Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, and the following chairpersons: Deacons, Deaconesses, Trustees, Finance, Missions, Christian Education, Youth

Department, Nominating Board, President of American Baptist Men's Fellowship, President of the American Baptist Women of Mount Vernon, Publicity Committee, Sunday School Superintendent, and Adult Choir Director if different from Minister of Music.

Persons representing the various Boards and Committees will be allowed to appoint another representative from that Board or committee in the event they cannot attend the Advisory Board Meeting.

The Senior Pastor shall preside at the meetings of the Advisory Board. He shall be responsible for introducing matters of interest that should be presented at the Advisory Board Meetings and shall arrange an agenda for each meeting. In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Chairman of the Board of Deacons will preside.

Meetings of the Advisory Board may be called by the Pastor or by the Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

Authority and Responsibilities of the members of the Advisory Board shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. They shall act in an advisory role to the pastoral staff, the Church, the boards committees, and the organizations of the Church.
- B. Upon the request of the Senior Pastor, the Board of Deacons, they shall study the needs of the Church and make recommendations by which programs of the Church may be carried forward.
- C. Upon the request of the Senior Pastor or the Board of Deacons, they shall make recommendations to correlate the programs of the Church into one coordinated whole.
- D. They shall have a quorum of eight (8) members present in order to make recommendations.
- E. Recommendations that overlap the authority or responsibilities of any of the boards or committees of the Church shall be referred to that board or committee for concurrence.

Nothing in the above shall be construed to supersede any authorities expressly delegated to other Boards, Officers, and Committees in the Constitution.

ARTICLE VIII

CALLING OF PASTORAL STAFF; LICENSING AND ORDAINING

Section 1. Calling of Pastoral Staff

When it is necessary to call a member of the Pastoral Staff, the Church shall elect a representative Search Committee composed of ten (10) members by secret ballot from the following boards, Committees or Memberships, as follows: (1) one member of the Board of Deacons, (2) once member of the Board of Deaconesses, (3) one member of the Board of Trustees, (4) once member of the Board of Finance, (5) one member of the Board of Christian Educations, (6) one member of the Mission Board, (7) one member of the Music Board, (8) once member of the American Baptist women of Mount Vernon, (9) one member of the American Baptist Men's Fellowship, (10) one member of the Mount Vernon Baptist Youth Group.

Each Board or Committee shall select its member representative to be presented as a nomination in the business meeting for approval by the Church. Nominations may also be made from the floor after securing permission from the person to be nominated. Nominations for the Committee will be made at a Business Meeting of the Church.

The Search Committee shall take the necessary steps to secure a member of the Pastoral Staff. After the organization of the Search Committee, it is recommended that the Area Minister, who serves the Teays Valley Baptist Association, be invited to meet with the Committee for counsel and to serve as a valuable resource person. The committee shall investigate the merits of persons under consideration in regard to their personal character, education, ministerial record, and preaching ability in determining fellowship and program. When a suitable person is found, the Committee shall recommend him or her to the congregation for their approval.

Prior to the election of the candidate, the Search Committee shall make the candidate available for discussions with any board of the Church.

A report shall be given in each business meeting as to the functioning of the Committee without necessarily revealing names or details of the work. The Committee will have the option to include or omit any content of the report.

Section 2. Election

The call for a member of the Pastoral Staff shall come before the Church at a Business Meeting; notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on two (2) successive, previous Sunday mornings.

Twenty-five (25) active members shall constitute a quorum pursuant to ARTICLE IX, Section 2.

A vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the active members present and qualified to vote shall be necessary to extend a call.

Only once candidate shall be presented to the Church at one time.

The vote shall be by secret ballot.

Section 3. Term of Call

The members of the Pastoral Staff shall be called for an indefinite period of time.

Section 4 Salary and Benefits

The Search Committee in cooperation with the Board of Deacons may fix the salary and benefits at the time of the call. The salary and benefits may be changed by vote of the Church at the Annual Business Meeting or at a special Business Meeting of the Church, if notice and purpose of the meeting have been brought to the attention of the congregation on two (2) previous successive Sundays. The Church shall provide medical and retirement coverage for the members of the Pastoral Staff as the Church directs, preferably through the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of the American Baptist Churches USA.

Other arrangements of the contract are the responsibility of the Deacons. The arrangements of the contract are to be read to the Church and its approval received before the contract is signed. The contract shall be approved at a called or regularly scheduled business meeting the date and purpose of which have been read from the pulpit on two successive, previous Sunday mornings.

Section 5. Termination of Call

A. Resignation

Any member of the Pastoral Staff shall give the Church thirty (30) days notice upon resignation.

B. Termination by Church

1. By Board of Deacons Recommendation.

The Board of Deacons may recommend termination of any member of the pastoral staff at a called or regularly scheduled meeting the date and purpose of which have been read from the pulpit on two successive, previous Sunday mornings.

2. By Petition

A petition signed by twenty-five (25) members, qualified as in ARTICLE IX, Section 2, may be represented to the Board of Deacons calling for a meeting to recommend termination of any member of the Pastoral Staff. The Board of Deacons shall call such a meeting under the conditions stated in paragraph 1 above.

A quorum of 25% of the active membership as reported to the Church Clerk by the Board of Deacons as of the last day of the preceding calendar year must be in attendance to consider termination of a member of the pastoral staff in accordance with ARTICLE VIII, Section 5B. A majority vote by secret ballot shall make a valid termination. The Clerk will provide a written notice of termination 30 days prior to the effective date of such termination.

Terminations of office by any member of the Pastoral Staff or by the Church shall be voted at a called, or regularly scheduled Business Meeting. Notice of the called meeting and its purpose shall have been read from the pulpit two (2) successive, previous Sunday mornings. A majority vote shall make a valid termination.

Section 6. Licensing

Any member who in the judgment of the Church gives evidence by the piety, zeal, and aptness to teach that he is called of God to the work of the ministry shall consult with the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons. After having preached in the hearing of the Church, he may be licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Approval must be given by three-fourths (3/4) of the members present at any Business Meeting after advance notice to that effect has been previously read from the pulpit in two successive, previous Sunday mornings. This license will be in effect for two years and renewable in accordance with the Article.

Section 7. Ordaining

If a licensed minister, who is a member of this Church, desires ordination, the Church will decide the feasibility of presenting the name of the candidate to the Teays Valley Association Ordination Committee for consideration. Notice of the called meeting and its purpose shall have been read from the pulpit two (2) successive, previous Sunday mornings. A vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting at a Business Meeting will be required to present the name.

The Church will cooperate with the Teays Valley Association ordination Committee in planning and arranging for the necessary procedural steps leading to ordination. After meeting with the candidate in a preliminary interrogation, the Association Ordination Committee will recommend the next step. If the qualifications are met for State and National recognition and the Association Ordination votes favorably, the candidate will be referred back to the Association Committee to proceed toward ordination. The Association Committee will recommend the Church call an Ordination Council to which Ministers and Deacons of churches in the Association are invited for the purpose of examining the candidate. If the Council votes favorably to proceed with the ordination, the Church will be notified and in cooperation with the candidate and Association Committee, the Church will make plans for the service of ordination.

The Church always has final authority to exercise its autonomy in all matters, including ordination, apart from any action by any other organized body.

ARTICLE IX **ELECTIONS**

Section 1. Time

The annual election of officers shall be held the second Wednesday of December.

Section 2. Quorum

Except as provided in Section 3 below, twenty-five (25) active members shall constitute quorum. A majority of active members present and voting at a Business meeting shall be sufficient to decide any question presented, unless otherwise provided by the Constitution.

Section 3. Qualification of Vote on Church Property

All matters pertaining to the purchase, sale or mortgaging of property shall be voted on at a Business Meeting only by members 18 years of age or older according to the laws of the State of West Virginia. A vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and qualified to vote shall be necessary to purchase, sell or mortgage Church property. Twenty five percent (25%) of the active membership as reported to the Church Clerk by the Board of Deacons as of the last day of the receding calendar year must be in attendance. Notice of the meeting and its purpose shall have been read from the pulpit two (2) successive, previous Sunday mornings.

Section 4 Procedure

At least one month before the election, the Nominating Board shall present a report recommending to the Church one person for each office, Board, or Committee to be filled. Upon presentation of said report, it shall be the privilege of any member present to nominate from the floor any eligible person for any office, Board, and Committee provided he or she is present and consents. The nominations shall then be closed, and the election be held in the December meeting.

Section 5. Ratification of Recommendations of Board of Christian Education

The report of the Board of Christian Education listing the positions of the educational programs and the persons filling them shall be received and ratified in the December Business Meeting.

ARTICLE X **RESIGNATIONS**

Section 1. Resignations

Any elected or appointed officer who resigns must do so in writing. The resignation shall be delivered to the Church Clerk. Resignations will be automatically accepted. Resignations are to be announced at the next regular Business Meeting. The Church Clerk will notify the appropriate Board or Committee of said action.

Section 2. Vacancies

Vacancies occurring during the year may be filled for the unexpired term at any Business Meeting. The Nominating Board and/or Board of Christian Education shall present to the Church nominees for the vacancies to be filled after consultation with the Senior Pastor and in accordance with ARTICLE IX, Sections 4 and 5.

ARTICLE XI

STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Ushering
2. Reception
3. Publicity
4. Decorating

Committees shall be appointed by the Nominating Board in cooperation with the Senior Pastor.

All standing committees shall contribute to the Annual Report of the Church published in January of each year.

A list of the standing committees' membership will be distributed to the Church at the Business meeting in January.

Any additional committees deemed necessary may be appointed after approval from the Church.

All members of committees must be members of the Church.

Each committee shall elect a chairperson and such officers as deemed necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the committee. They shall meet prior to the January Business Meeting in order to report the name of the chairperson for inclusion in the Annual Report.

Each committee shall solicit sufficient ad hoc members to fulfill the duties of the committee.

Section 1. Ushering Committee

The Ushering Committee shall consist of five (5) members.

Authority and responsibilities of the committee shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. seating of the congregation
- B. receiving of the offering
- C. distribution of bulletins
- D. attending to the needs of visitors to ensure a positive worship experience

Section 2. Reception Committee

The Reception Committee shall consist of five (5) members and will be responsible to the Senior Pastor and Deacons when reception for new members is held or any other Church function.

Section 3. Publicity Committee

This committee shall consist of five (5) members and will be responsible to the Board of Deacons and the Senior Pastor for Church publicity that pertains to the Church and its programs.

The chairperson shall be a member of the Advisory Board.

Section 4. Decorating Committee

The Decorating Committee shall be composed of five (5) members.

They shall be responsible for any decorations on special days work with the Pastor and members of the Board of Trustees in what is needed.

ARTICLE XII
MEETINGS

Section 1. Devotional Meetings

The Church will meet regularly each Sunday morning and evening for the purpose of worship and the preaching of the Gospel.

The Church shall meet for the observance of the Lord's Supper at least quarterly. Other Communion Services may be observed at the discretion of the Pastor and Board of Deacons. The Church Covenant shall also be read at least quarterly at a service where the Lord's Supper is observed.

The Church shall meet at least once a week for Prayer and Bible Study.

The Church shall meet each Sunday for Christian Instruction and at such times as the Church may decide.

Section 2. Business Meetings

The annual election of officers shall be held on the second Wednesday in December after nominations have been presented to the Church at the November Business Meeting.

Any member of the Church shall have the privilege to bring matters before the Church Business Meeting. However, the matter should first be brought before and considered by the Board of Deacons if possible.

The Business Meeting held on the second Wednesday in January shall be for the purpose of receiving the Annual Reports of individual Officers, Boards, Committees, and Organizations. A copy of these reports shall be given to the Church Secretary to be compiled into an Annual Report, which will be distributed to the membership of the Church. The transaction of other business may come before this meeting.

The regular Church Business meeting shall be held on the second Wednesday of each month.

Special Business Meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor, Board of Deacons, Clerk, Moderator or upon written request of twenty-five (25) active members of the Church. Notice of such meeting, and the object for which it is called, shall be read from the pulpit two successive previous Sunday mornings.

ARTICLE XIII
ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. The officers of all adult and youth organizations shall be elected by their respective organizations.

Section 2. The constitution of organizations shall be drawn up so as not to conflict with the Constitution of this Church.

Section 3. Meetings of organizations shall be held at such times as will not conflict with the meetings of the Church.

Section 4. They shall be under the guidance of the Senior Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE XIV
CHURCH YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on the first day of January and close on the last day of December.

ARTICLE XV
AMENDMENT OR REVISION

Section 1. This Constitution may be amended at any Business Meeting of the Church by a majority vote of those present who are qualified to vote, provided that notice of such amendment(s) stating the proposed change(s) shall have been read from the pulpit two (2) successive, previous Sunday mornings.

Section 2. When the Church approves a need for a general revision of the Constitution, a Revision Committee of seven (7) members will be elected by secret ballot by the Church. The month after the need for the revision has been approved by the Church at the Business Meeting, nomination for members of this committee will be made from the Church floor.

ARTICLE XVI
RULES OF ORDER

The rules contained in Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern the business proceedings of the Church in all cases in which they are applicable and which they are not inconsistent with the constitution.

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The Mount Vernon Baptist Church at a Business Meeting on July 09, 2003 adopted this Constitution, as amended and revised.