

Constitution of the Black Creek Baptist Association

Preamble

Whereas we believe it to be of great advantage for churches of the same faith and practice to be associated together for mutual support and assistance, the Black Creek Baptist Association, is organized for the purpose of creating such a union to facilitate the cooperation of associating churches in carrying out our Lord's Great Commission. This association is recognized as the basis of practical cooperation between the churches and shall not be vested with any ecclesiastical power.

Article I – Name and What We Are

This body shall be known as the “Black Creek Baptist Association, Inc.” The association shall consist of those Southern Baptist churches of like faith and order who freely enter into covenant relationship with one another under the Lordship of Christ. The process by which such churches covenant together and by which such association can be terminated is set forth in more detail in the Black Creek Baptist Association Bylaws.

Being led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit, to enter into covenant as an association of churches, we join ourselves together through this larger fellowship:

- To watch over one another in love and to nurture the spiritual welfare and fellowship of all churches in the association.
- To provide a forum for the consideration of our Christian faith and the evaluation of those points of doctrine and policy which affect our life together.
- To assist the churches in planning, conducting, evaluating, and improving their programs of work designed to reach their objectives.
- To carry out the Great Commission of our Lord (Matthew 28:18-20) within and beyond the bounds of the association through biblical principles of personal and corporate evangelism and discipleship.
- To facilitate the exchange of information and assistance between associated churches, the Florida Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention, their agencies, and other Christian bodies.

Article II - Statement of Faith

The Black Creek Baptist Association statement of faith is The Baptist Faith and Message (2000) of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article III – Purpose and Objective

1. The purpose of the Black Creek Baptist Association (BCBA) shall be to promote unity and Christian love among Southern Baptist churches within the area of the BCBA.

Approved on 9/01/22

The BCBA shall be composed of churches which may be included by the consent of the churches and the BCBA. It shall cooperate with other associations, the Florida Baptist Convention (FBC) and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) to encourage support of the Great Commission through the Cooperative Program.

2. The objective of the BCBA shall be to support, promote, and participate in evangelism, discipleship, missions, Christian education, and fellowship.

Article IV – Membership

A. The membership shall consist of churches composing the Black Creek Baptist Association.

B. Criteria for membership in the Black Creek Baptist Association:

1. Membership in the association is open to Southern Baptist Churches in the Clay County area (including those communities surrounding Clay County). Participation in the association shall be voluntary.
2. The Holy Scripture is the authority for the faith and practices of the association. The churches which associate with the association shall adhere to, maintain, and propagate the doctrines, purpose, objective, faith, and practices of Southern Baptist churches which cooperate with the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. A non-exclusive list of such beliefs and tenants is set forth in the doctrinal statement known as *The Baptist Faith and Message* drafted and adopted by Southern Baptists in the year 2000. Member churches may choose to use any other declaration of faith which is consistent with the tenets of our historic Baptist faith, as the theological framework.
3. Any church seeking admission into the association must present its application in writing to the Bylaws/Constitution/Credentials Committee at least 60 days before the association Executive Committee meeting prior to the annual meeting of the association. Upon approval of the Executive Committee, the Bylaws/Constitution/Credentials Committee shall present the recommendation to any business meeting of the Association.
4. The Association maintains no oversight, authority, or control over any associated church. When it appears that the behavior or doctrine of any member church is inconsistent with the criteria listed in **Article IV, Section 5** of the Constitution, the Association, or its Executive Committee may authorize the Moderator to request the Leadership Team to investigate and counsel with the church. The Leadership Team will report its findings and recommendations to the Executive Committee. If such a church is found to be inconsistent with the criteria for membership in the association as stated in **Article IV – Membership, number 2**, and no hope of reclamation is imminent, the Association, at its next annual meeting or a special called meeting, may withdraw from it with a majority vote of its messengers.
5. Should the Association become aware that any member church has:
 1. Ceased adhering to one or more of the doctrine, faiths or practices set forth in *The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)*, or any other declaration of faith which is consistent with the tenets of our historic Baptist faith, as the theological framework.

2. Engaged in a practice—or pattern of practices—that is inconsistent with the doctrine, tenets of traditional Southern Baptist beliefs of *The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)*; or any other declaration of faith which is consistent with the tenets of our historic Baptist faith, as the theological framework.
 3. Refuse to fulfill the financial contribution requirement of at least \$250.00 annually, for one (1) year.
 4. Failed to cooperate by sending messengers to the last associational annual meeting.
6. The Moderator shall request the Leadership Team to confer with the church. If it is found that there is no evidence that the church is trying to comply with Article IV of the constitution, the Leadership Team shall bring its findings to the Executive Committee. Then the Association, with a majority vote of its messengers may terminate its membership.

Article V – Meetings

1. The Black Creek Baptist Association shall hold an annual meeting each year. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for working with the Association staff to set the agenda for the annual meeting. The Leadership Team shall have much flexibility and discretion when setting the agenda and order. The following items of business shall be conducted at each annual meeting:
 1. **Reports from committees to Association Membership.**
 2. **Election of Officers and other Leaders.**
 3. **Approval of Budget.**
 4. **Messenger Input.**
 1. Unlike Special Meetings, the annual meeting shall have a time set aside for messenger comment or questions.
 2. Any messenger may take up to three (3) minutes to bring a question or make a comment on any issue or topic pertinent to the Association and its operation.
 3. The Moderator may choose to respond to such comment or question (or seek a response from any interested person or team), or he may choose to simply take such comment or question under advisement.
 5. An “inspirational” message will be delivered to encourage and charge participants to continue doing kingdom advancement work and ministry.
2. All member churches shall choose their messengers for voting capacity at the annual meeting of the association. Each church constituting the association shall be entitled to four (4) messengers, and an additional messenger for every fifty (50) members thereafter up to ten (10) total messengers.
3. Each messenger shall register his or her attendance upon arrival at any Association meeting wherein business will be conducted, and a vote taken. Such registration will require the messenger to provide his or her name and address to the Clerk. The first time a messenger is sent by a particular member church, the messenger must also provide the Clerk with a letter from such church confirming the person’s status as a duly elected/nominated messenger. The Association retains the sole discretion to refuse to recognize any messenger who is unable or unwilling to register as set forth herein.

4. Other meetings of pastors, staff, volunteers, and associational staff will meet regularly as needed.
5. In case of emergency or other need, as determined by the Lead Mission Strategist and/or Leadership Team, the Moderator shall call a special meeting. Notice of such special session shall be provided to associated churches as set forth in the Bylaws.

Article VI – Officers of the Corporation

Trustees: The Moderator, the Vice Moderator, Clerk/Treasurer, and the chairman of the Finance Committee, will be Trustees of the Association, who shall have the authority to sign and execute all legal documents authorized by the Association. They shall meet as necessary to fulfill their respective obligations.

A. The Black Creek Baptist Association shall elect four (4) Officers:

1. The Moderator
2. The Vice Moderator
3. The Clerk
4. The Treasurer

B. Terms of Office

1. Except for the Clerk, Officers, members of the Leadership Team, and members of the Finance Committee shall serve one (1) year terms and shall hold their respective offices until they resign, or their successors are elected. Members of the Nominating Committee serve staggered three (3) year terms. Subject to approval by the members at the Annual Meeting, all Officers and members of the Leadership Team shall be eligible to succeed themselves, except the Moderator, who shall only be eligible to succeed himself once. Members of the Nominating Committee must allow one (1) three (3) year term to transpire after rotating off, before being eligible for re-election.
2. Any office or other position of leadership which becomes vacant during the year (e.g., by resignation, removal, death, or any other reason) may be replaced during that year by vote of the Leadership Team. Such replacement officer or leader shall serve the remainder of that year only. The Nominating Committee shall nominate candidates to fill such position thereafter to finish the term.
3. Any term limits set forth herein may be suspended (for a finite duration) if such suspension is approved by a three-quarters (3/4) of the messengers present at the Annual Meeting or any meeting called for that purpose.

Article VII – Money Matters

1. The Black Creek Baptist Association shall have authority to receive funds by voluntary contributions for carrying out its purposes. The Treasurer shall be ultimately responsible to oversee all contributions to, and expenses of the Association, and shall issue a report regarding such income and expenses to the member churches of the Association at the

Annual Meeting. The duty to oversee use of the Association funds and other resources is delegated to the Lead Mission Strategist, Leadership Team, and Association Office Staff.

Article VIII – Revision or Amendment of this Constitution

1. The Constitution may be altered or amended by consent of three-quarters (3/4) of the messengers present at any meeting called for that purpose. Prior notice of the proposed changes to this Constitution (such notice to include the specific verbiage to be voted upon) shall be given to all churches of the Association, no less than sixty (60) days prior to any vote on such alteration or amendment.

Article XI – Parliamentary Law

1. The Black Creek Baptist Association shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order*.

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