

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

FOREST HILLS BAPTIST
CHURCH
Nashville, Tennessee 37215

CONSTITUTION
ARTICLES OF GUIDANCE
FOREST HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH

Nashville, Tennessee 37215

PREAMBLE

Articles of Guidance shall consist of the Constitution, By-laws, and such standing resolutions as may from time to time be adopted by the Church.

ARTICLE I -- NAME AND ADDRESS

The name and address of this Church shall be Forest Hills Baptist Church, located at 2101 Old Hickory Blvd., Nashville, Tennessee 37215.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Evangelism and Missions---The process of sharing the Gospel with lost sinners with the intent of bringing the lost to salvation through Jesus Christ.

Worship---God's people expressing their love for Him by magnifying Him and exalting His name through proclamation and music.

Fellowship---The identification with, and life-changing involvement in the body of Christ.

Discipleship---The lifelong journey of equipping people to become like Christ in their thoughts, feelings and actions.

Ministry & Caring---Demonstrating God's love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus Christ.

Lordship---To emphasize in our daily living total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

ARTICLE III -- STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the "Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized

believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the Good News of salvation to lost mankind.

ARTICLE IV -- RELATIONSHIP

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist Churches. Insofar as is practical, this Church will affiliate with and support the Nashville Baptist Association and cooperate with and support the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE V – COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior,

And on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

We do now, in the presence of God's angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Jesus 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 comfort through the use of God's giftedness to each one;

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, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain personal and family devotions; to spiritually educate our children; to seek the 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 be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in steadfast love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech;

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To be slow to take offense, but always 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 the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE VI – ORDINANCES

Section 1. BAPTISM

A person who accepts Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who confesses Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the church shall authorize.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship in any of the worship services.
4. A person professing Jesus Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor, staff, or deacons. If negative interest is ascertained, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2. LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

1. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly or as otherwise scheduled.
2. The Lord's Supper shall be observed in the morning or evening worship service or other appropriate times.
3. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who have made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, who are in sympathy with the faith and practices of this Church, and who present themselves for membership in one of the following manners:

1. By public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, followed by New Testament baptism by immersion

2. By statement of prior experience of faith and obedience to Jesus Christ through New Testament baptism by immersion.

Section 2. Membership in this Church shall be terminated as follows:

1. A letter terminating membership shall be granted by the Church to any other church upon request, provided that said request shall be in writing and is sufficient to identify the member concerned.

2. A member of this Church shall be removed from the roll upon the member's death or by satisfactory evidence of affiliation with another church or by written resignation of membership by the member.

3. In circumstances of allegations of conduct which would tend to bring great discredit to the Church and its ministries, charges shall be considered by a panel consisting of the Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons, and Vice-Chairman of the Deacons, which will be empowered to give written notice to and accept any response from the affected member and, by the affirmative vote of at least two of said panel members, refer to the membership of the Church a recommendation that membership for the individual be withdrawn. The affected member may request the opportunity to address the Church assembled at a regularly scheduled business meeting, following which an anonymous vote will be taken. A three-fourths majority of those present and voting shall be necessary to withdraw membership.

4. Where financial, attendance or other records reveal the continued absence of a member for a period exceeding 24 months, the Church, at any regular, special or continued business meeting may, by a three-fourths majority vote, terminate the membership of such member. Such action will not be taken until such time as the Church forwards a notice to the affected member at his or her last known address advising of the proposed intent to terminate membership and allowing a response. Should the mail be returned undeliverable or should no response be received within a period of 30 days from the date of mailing, the Church may act pursuant to the terms of this Section.

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Section 3. In the case of allegations of misconduct against a member of the ministerial, administrative or clerical staff of the Church, such charges shall be initially referred to the Personnel Committee who will then refer the charges to the Pastor or Chairman of the Deacons, as appropriate, in accordance with Section 2(3) above.

ARTICLE II -- CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1. PASTOR

1. The pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the Church staff in performing their tasks. He shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees, teams, and taskforces.

2. The presiding officer (moderator) shall be the pastor, who shall preside at all meetings of the Church unless otherwise provided. In his absence, the Chairman of the Deacons, or someone else designated by the Church, shall preside.

3. The term of office of the pastor shall be such time as may be mutually agreeable to himself and the Church. The election to call a pastor shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose. Notice of this called meeting shall be given to the Church at least one week prior to the meeting.

4. The search for a new pastor shall be by a committee known as the Pastor Search Taskforce which shall consist of seven members to be selected as follows: the Deacons shall select fourteen nominees. Insofar as may be practicable, nominees shall include representation from the entire Church membership, giving due consideration to various age groups and gender. The names shall be sent to Church members by mail and members will have a period not to exceed two weeks to prayerfully consider the nominees and to vote for seven. Returned ballots will be counted by a tabulating panel consisting of Deacon officers who will certify the results to the Church. The seven nominees receiving the highest numbers of votes will comprise the Pastor Search Taskforce. The Taskforce will be responsible for recommending to the Church a candidate to the Church for approval.

Section 2. CHURCH STAFF

The pastor and such staff members as may be required to carry out the stated purpose and ministry of the Church shall be employed. Their duties and responsibilities shall be outlined in an appendix to the "Personnel Policies Handbook" which shall be considered part of these By-Laws as Exhibit A. The vocational ministers will also be chosen by a search Taskforce.

A search Taskforce of seven members shall be recommended by the Personnel Committee, in consultation with the ministerial staff, to the Deacon Council which will consider and make a recommendation for approval by the Deacon Body and the Church. The Taskforce will be responsible for recommending to the Church a candidate to the Church for approval

Section 3. DEACONS

1. The Deacon Body shall consist of no more than forty-five deacons. The number of Deacons deemed necessary to carry out the duties of the Body may be reviewed at any time by the Deacons, provided that any changes in number must be approved by the Church.

2. The office of deacon shall be for a three-year term, after which he will be ineligible to be nominated by the Church for a period of one year. As nearly as possible, the terms of one-third of the deacons shall expire each year.

3. Minimum Qualifications. To be installed as a deacon, a man must be seeking to meet all New Testament standards for deaconship as set forth in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Evidence of being qualified will include support of the total Church programs, being a New Testament steward (a tither), being willing to participate in the Deacon Family Ministry Plan, and being willing to actively participate in Deacons' meetings and special training sessions or retreats. Also to be elected as a deacon, he must have been a member of Forest Hills Baptist Church for at least one year, and be at least 25 years of age on the first day of January during the year of nomination.

4. Eligibility, Nominations, and Tabulating Committee. The Eligibility, Nominations, and Tabulating Committee (ENTC) shall consist of the current Chairman of the Deacons and all deacons whose terms of service are ending that year. The chairman will assign responsibilities to members of the ENTC. The ENTC is responsible for the deacon and deacon officer selection processes.

5. Sufficiently in advance of the time for the nomination of deacons, the Church will provide the membership with the following: (1) a copy of the "Minimum Qualifications of Deacons," (2) a list of the names of active deacons who are ineligible for election, and (3) a nomination ballot containing in alphabetical order the names of all male church members who have been a member of Forest Hills Baptist Church for one year and who are at least 25 years old (except for any who request that they not be listed). Church members will be requested to give the nomination of deacons prayerful consideration. They will have a period of at least two Sundays in which to mark their ballots for up to the number of positions to be filled (or any lesser number) and return them to the church. The Eligibility, Nominations, and Tabulating Committee of the deacons shall tabulate the nominations and begin the screening process, starting with the man receiving the highest number of nominations and proceeding with the list in numerical order until the required number of men who are qualified is secured. A nominated church member will be removed from consideration for deacon if (a) the nominee requests such removal; or (b) if a concern is raised by a deacon that a nominated church member does not meet the Minimum Qualifications and a majority of the deacons present for the meeting in which such matters are considered agrees that the nominated church member does not meet the Minimum Qualifications.

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During a subsequent Sunday morning worship service, church members will be given a ballot listing the names of men who have been nominated as deacon in accordance with Paragraph 5. The nominees who receive a 75% vote of affirmation (meaning 75% of all votes for a particular candidate are of affirmation) will be thereby elected to serve as deacon, provided that the nominees receive a simple majority of affirmative votes (meaning that each elected candidate must receive an affirmative vote of 50% plus one of the number of those persons present and voting.)

6. Deacons shall assume office each year on January 1st.

7. Unfilled and/or unexpired terms may be filled by nominees selected by the Deacon Body, provided that nominees are subject to the same qualification requirements specified for all deacons in Paragraph 3, above. The qualifications will be affirmed by the same process described in Paragraph 5 by the Eligibility, Nominations, and Tabulating Committee. The Church will be asked to confirm the selection of the nominees to unexpired terms by a 75% affirmative vote. Nominees filling unexpired terms will serve until expiration of that term and will be ineligible to serve again for a period of one year.

8. Deacons shall be responsible for seeking the salvation of the lost. They shall be responsible for assisting the Pastor in visiting the membership of the Church. They shall be responsible for the observance of the ordinances of the Church. They shall at all times faithfully discharge their duties of keeping the membership active in the full program of the Church and of promoting peace, harmony, and the spirit of good will and cooperation among the members of the Church. They shall be diligent in their attendance at the services of the Church and shall manifest at all times full cooperation with the Church leadership and the entire program of the Church.

9. The Deacons shall select their own officers and teams to carry out their responsibilities and duties. The ENTC will nominate officers for the following year and will be elected by a majority vote of the deacons. The term of office for officers and teams shall be one year, provided that by approval by the vote of a majority of Deacons present and voting at a regularly scheduled meeting an officer or officers may be continued for a period of one additional year.

10. Deacons shall meet monthly or at such times and places as they may from time to time determine. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the deacons.

11. The Chairman of Deacons shall serve as an ex-officio member of search teams for ministerial positions.

12. Deacon Council. The Deacon Council will serve as the primary deliberating group for the Deacon Body. The Deacon Council will have the following responsibilities: (a) Serve as an advisory group for ideas/suggestions presented by the Pastor. (b) Serve as an accountability group for the Pastor. (c) Evaluate recommendations and policy from ministry teams, committees, and church staff and make recommendations to the deacon body. (d) Develop long range plans for the Church and bring recommendations to the deacon body. (e) Discuss with the Pastor

suggestions that come from members of the Church. (f) Keep in confidence all discussions that occur in Deacon Council meetings.

The Deacon Council will consist of no more than nine members. Seven members will be elected from the body of actively serving deacons. Each year new members will be elected to replace those rotating off. Active deacons will submit up to five names of actively serving deacons. The deacons receiving the most votes will be asked to serve, replacing those members rotating off of the deacon body and the Deacon Council. The currently serving Chairman of the Deacons and Pastor will be the other members of the Deacon Council. The currently serving Chairman of the Deacons will also serve as the chairman of the Deacon Council.

Section 4. CHURCH SECRETARY/TREASURER

1. The Church secretary/treasurer shall exercise general oversight of disbursements as an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee; receive and count offerings along with other selected Church members; be included as one of the designated signatories on checks disbursing funds; and attest to signatures on documents as may be required.

2. The candidate for this position shall be nominated by the ministerial staff to the Deacon Council. The Deacon Council shall nominate the candidate to the Deacon body and then to the Church for approval.

3. In the event of the death, disability, or resignation of the secretary/treasurer, the chairman of the Finance Committee shall act as secretary/treasurer until such time as a new secretary/treasurer is elected by the Church.

4. There shall be four authorized signatures for the purpose of signing checks for the regular checking account and any other account and safe deposit boxes. The four authorized signatures shall be the president of the Corporation, the Finance Committee chairperson, the secretary/treasurer, and the Director of Financial Operations. Any two of the above signatures shall be required on any checks, and any one of the above signatures shall be required to enter safe deposit boxes.

Section 5. CHURCH CLERK

The Church Clerk shall be nominated by the ministerial staff to the Deacon Council for approval by the Deacon Body and the Church. The Church Clerk shall keep a complete record of all proceedings of the Church. The Church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to other clerical help. All Church records are Church property and are to be filed in the Church office.

Section 6. CORPORATION OFFICERS

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1. All deacons, as elected by the membership from time to time and during their term of service, shall automatically be the directors of the corporation.

2. The officers of the corporation shall consist of president and secretary/treasurer. The president shall automatically be the person who serves as Chairman of Deacons. The secretary/treasurer shall be elected by the church.

3. The deacons and officers shall perform such duties as appropriate and as authorized by law unless expressly limited by the membership.

Section 7. OTHER CHURCH OFFICERS

The Church shall from time to time have such other officers as may be duly authorized. These officers, such as the Sunday School Director, shall be nominated by the ministerial staff to the Deacon Council. The Deacon Council shall nominate new church officers to the Deacon body and if approved by the Deacon body, will be submitted to the church for approval.

ARTICLE III -- MEETINGS

Section 1. The regular meetings for worship or business shall be at such times and places as the Church may direct.

Section 2. Special business meetings may be called by the pastor or the deacon body. At such meetings, no business shall be transacted except as described in the notice calling the meeting, which notice must have been given at the Sunday service preceding.

Section 3. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the standard of parliamentary law in all meetings of deliberation.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBER MINISTRY GROUPS

Member Ministry Groups include Committees, Teams, and Taskforces whose responsibilities are to carry out the mission of the Church and help accomplish the vision of the Church. These Groups will be accountable to the Church and to each other for the work they perform on behalf of the Church. The term of service for committees and teams shall be January 1 through December 31.

Section 1. Committee: A committee is a group of member ministers (church members) assigned specific responsibilities by the Church to manage the resources of the Church and make decisions on behalf of the Church. They act on matters of polity in keeping with the by-laws and constitution of the Church. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Property Committee, and Benevolence Committee. Committee members are Church members who shall be elected by the Church to serve a three-year term, with such terms being staggered so that one-third of the committee is replaced each year. The Associate Pastor of Administration and the outgoing Chairperson of each Committee shall recommend both

new members and a new chairperson for each committee annually to the Deacon Council. The deacon Council shall nominate new members and chairpersons for each committee to the deacon body and the church for approval. Church members can serve as a voting member of only one committee at a time, in addition to teaching and deacon teams. The new Committee members and the chairperson must then be approved for service by a majority vote of those present in the Church business meeting.

- FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. The Finance Committee shall consist of nine members at large, plus the president of the Corporation (ex officio), church secretary/treasurer (ex officio), Director of Financial Operations (ex officio), and the Associate Pastor of Administration (ex officio).
2. The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit the annual budget to the Deacon body for a recommendation to the Church, and will be presented to the Church, with the recommendation regarding approval by the Deacon body, on or before the November business meeting for approval.
3. Disbursements from the Contingency Fund shall be made only with the approval of the Finance Committee.
4. The Finance Committee shall follow the Financial and Accounting Policies of the Church in conducting its work

- PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

1. The Personnel Committee shall consist of nine members at large. Except for the pastor and vocational ministers, all employees of the Church shall be employed by the Committee on behalf of the Church. However, employees of Mother's Day Out and Preschool shall be employed on behalf of the Church by the Mother's Day Out Team.
2. At least once each year the Committee shall review the salaries of all employees and recommend to the Finance Committee such changes as it may deem appropriate. All salaries and benefits of new employees shall be recommended and submitted to the Finance Committee for approval.
3. The Personnel Committee in consultation with the Associate Pastor of Administration shall make sure that the Personnel Policy Handbook is kept current and is administered properly.

- PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The Property Committee shall consist of six members at large. This committee shall assist the Church in matters related to buildings and grounds. Its work includes such areas as maintaining all Church buildings and grounds for ready use and recommending policies regarding use of buildings.

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- **BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE**

The Benevolence Committee shall consist of six members at large who function in a confidential manner. It shall study the benevolence needs of Church members and families and other community members and design a plan for responding to those needs and administer the plan.

Section 2. Ministry Team: A ministry team consists of a group of member ministers who share a common calling of God to serve Him according to their complementing gifts, passions, and skills. They are committed to each other to carry out assigned tasks to which they have been called by God. These groups include teaching teams in Sunday School, class leaders, coaching teams in Upward Basketball and Soccer, ushers, choirs, library, Lord's Supper, and other groups. Appropriate teams may have non-members of the Church such as the choirs, library, and some of the class leaders. Teachers must be members of the Church. Team members are to make one-year commitments with an annual invitation to continue with the team. Ideally, they can serve on only one committee or ministry team in addition to teaching and deacon teams. When the work of a ministry team is accomplished, it is disbanded.

Section 3. Taskforce: A taskforce is a group of member ministers and/or vocational ministers given a specific task or responsibility for a set amount of time. When the work of a taskforce is accomplished, it is disbanded.

Section 4. System Facilitator: A System is interacting parts that come together to carry out a function or purpose. The following Systems are organized around the five purposes of church: Worship, Evangelism/Missions, Fellowship, Discipleship and Ministry/Caring. Within each System are System Facilitators and Ministry Teams designed to carry out the purpose of the System. The Deacon Council, in consultation with the Associate Pastor of Administration, shall nominate to the Deacon body annually, a System Facilitator for each of the five Systems to be approved by the Deacon body and the church, with sufficient time for the System Facilitators to begin to serve at the beginning of the calendar year. The System Facilitator shall be responsible for enlisting the leader and members of Ministry Teams within his or her System and presenting them to the Deacon Council for nomination. The Deacon Council shall nominate Ministry Team leaders and members to the Deacon body and the Church for approval. The System Facilitator, in cooperation with the Associate Pastor of Administration, will coordinate the work of the various member ministry groups within each particular System.

Section 5. Ministry Coordination Team: The purpose of the MCT is to enhance interaction and communication among the various Systems of the church. The Associate Pastor of Administration shall facilitate a meeting no less than quarterly among the members of the Ministry Coordination Team. The MCT shall be made up of the Systems Facilitators, ministerial staff, Committee Chairpersons, Chairman of Deacons, the Sunday School Director and the Communications Team Leader.

ARTICLE V – EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. The Church education organizational year shall extend from August 1 through July 31 of each year.

Section 2. Leaders for Sunday School, DiscipleLife, Royal Ambassadors, and Girls in Action shall be recommended by the Associate Pastor of Education to the Deacon Council. The Deacon Council shall recommend the names to the Deacon body which will recommend the names to the Church for approval.

Leaders for graded choirs shall be recommended by the Associate Pastor of Music and Worship to the Deacon Council. The Deacon Council shall recommend the names to the Deacon body which will recommend the names to the Church for approval.

ARTICLE VI – GENERAL

Section 1. The fiscal year of the Church and its budget shall extend from January 1st through December 31st of each year.

Section 2. The Church education organizational year shall extend from August 1 through July 31 of each year.

Section 3. Nothing in this Constitution and By-laws shall in any way limit, or in any way prevent, any member of the Church, upon his own responsibility, from presenting or bringing any matter directly to this Church in any regular business meeting. However, any action taken on such matter by the Church shall be in accordance with the procedures and other requirements of these Articles of Guidance.

Section 4. A majority vote of the members of this Church present and voting shall govern, unless specifically provided to the contrary by these Articles of Guidance.

Section 5. In the event any uncertainty as to the meaning, effect, or interpretation of these Articles of Guidance arises, the determination of the Moderator shall be final and binding on all members.

ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENT

Section 1. Any amendment to this Constitution and By-Laws shall be proposed in writing at a regular business meeting of the Church and shall not be voted upon earlier than the following regular business meeting. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting at the business meeting shall be required to amend this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2. During the period between the presentation of the amendment and the vote upon it, the proposed amendment shall be available to Church members in the Church office during regularly scheduled hours and on the Church website.

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Section 3. Upon adoption of this Constitution and By-Laws, all previously adopted policies and procedures in conflict with it are repealed.