

# CONSTITUTION

## Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

## Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement at Sligo Baptist Church is based upon Matthew 22:34-40 and Matthew 28:16-20 (The Great Commission).

Our Mission as a body of believers clearly and concisely stated is this: "Love God, Love Others. Sharing Good News; Face-to-Face; Confident in Christ."

We believe that in being obedient to God by carrying out His commands which we find in Scripture; we, as a church, will be living in a way that pleases Him. He will, as promised in His word, grow His kingdom and our church as a direct result of our obedience and trust.

## I. Name

This body shall be known as the **SLIGO BAPTIST CHURCH** of Sligo, located at Pendleton, Kentucky.

## II. Objectives

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshipping fellowship experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.

To be a church which ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and the world in Jesus' name.

To be a church whose purpose is to be like Christ in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

### **III. Statement of Basic Beliefs**

We affirm the Protestant Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.

### **IV. Church Covenant**

Having been, we trust, brought by divine grace to receive the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves wholly to Him, we do now solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other to walk together in Him with brotherly love to His glory as our common Lord.

We do, therefore, in His strength engage that we will exercise a mutual care as members of one another to promote the growth of the whole body in Christian knowledge, holiness and strength to the end that we may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

That to promote and secure this object we will uphold the public worship of God and the ordinances of His house and hold constant communion with each other therein.

That we will cheerfully contribute of our property for the support of good works and for the maintenance of a faithful ministry of the gospel among us.

That we will not omit private devotions nor allow ourselves in the too common neglect of the great duty of biblically training up our children and those under our care with a view to the service of Christ and eternal reward.

That we will walk carefully and uprightly in the world that we may win their souls remembering that God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of sound mind.

That we are the light of the world, the salt of the earth, and that a city set on a hill cannot be hid.

That we will love one another as Christ loved us, giving of ourselves to one another as God in Christ Jesus commands us to do.

That we will frequently exhort, and, if occasion shall require, admonish one another according to Matthew 18 in the spirit of meekness considering ourselves lest we also be tempted and

that as in baptism we have been buried with Christ and raised again so there is on us a special obligation, henceforth, to walk in newness of life.

And may God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make us perfect in every good work to do His will working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever. Amen.

## **V. Policy and Relationships**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by the church action.

This church 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, and supports the association, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **I. Church Membership**

#### **Section 1. General**

This is a sovereign and congregational Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

#### **Section 2. Candidacy**

Any person may offer himself/herself as a candidate for membership in this church. Candidates must have a consultation with a pastor. All such candidates may then be presented to the church for membership in any of the following ways:

(1) By profession of faith in Jesus Christ and for baptism according to the scriptural example found in Matthew chapter 3,

(2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church of like faith and order,

(3) By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism from another church of like faith and order “Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in the newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord’s Supper.” The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, Article 7.

### Section 3. New Member Orientation

New member candidates of this church shall complete the church’s new member orientation. The new member orientation will be offered as needed.

### Section 4. Rights of members

(1) Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present.

(2) Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as an elected officer of the church after one year’s membership unless otherwise specified.

(3) Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

### Section 5. Termination of membership

Memberships may be terminated in the following ways:

(1) Death of the member,

(2) Transfer to another church,

(3) Exclusion by action of this church,

(4) Erasure upon request or proof of membership in another congregation,

(5) Release from membership due to non-attendance.

### Section 6. Discipline

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a 75% vote of the members present, and voting is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church.

All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded upon request of the excluded person and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

## **II. Church Officers and Committees**

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church committees shall be members of this church.

### **Section 1. Church Officers**

The officers of this church shall be the pastor(s), the deacon(s), a moderator, a clerk, a treasurer, trustee(s) and others deemed necessary.

(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 to perform their tasks and may serve as an ex-officio member of any committee.

The pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the church. He works with the deacons and church staff to (1) lead the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

The pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

The pastor search committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. Any church member has the privilege of making other nominations to the pastor search committee according to the policy established by the church. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot with an affirmative vote of eighty-five percent (85%) of those present and voting being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church at the time of resignation. He shall preside at meetings of this church and, if so designated, may serve as moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized in these by-laws.

The pastor will serve one year to receive one-week paid vacation. After five years, there will be three weeks' vacation, and after ten years there will be four weeks' vacation for the pastor. Previous cumulative ordained pastoral service with other Southern Baptist churches will apply toward the years of service calculation. While the pastor is on vacation and in case of pastor's illness, the church will pay for pulpit supply.

The pastor will be allowed to preach two revivals in a calendar year.

The church may declare the office of pastor(s) to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least one week's public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the personnel committee and the deacons or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident members. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and he shall be someone other than the pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of 75% of the members present will be necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor so excluded from office, the church will compensate the pastor with not less than one twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate, and the compensation shall be rendered in no more than thirty days.

(2) The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices. The personnel committee shall provide a written service description when the need for a staff member is determined. Those staff members of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be recommended to the church by the pastor search committee or personnel committee after consultation with the pastor(s). At the time of resignation, at least two weeks' notice shall be given to the church. The church may

vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the personnel committee. Such termination shall be immediate, and the compensation conditions will be the same as for the pastor except that the amount will relate to the individual's compensation.

This Church and its pastors and staff will not participate in same sex unions or same sex marriages, nor shall its property or resources be used for such purposes, to include receptions for same sex couples. We believe the term marriage has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The church personnel committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the church.

(3) Deacon nominations shall be brought before the church for election by the deacon selection committee made up of the pastor, a deacon representative, and the church moderator. The church members shall have the right to present names for consideration to this committee who will conduct an interview with each candidate to establish his qualifications according to biblical standards. Nominees shall have been members of this church for no less than 12 months.

There shall be no obligation to constitute as an assigned deacon one who has been a deacon in this or another church; but in such instances as one might be chosen by this church for assignment as a deacon, his previous ordination by this or another church of like faith and order shall suffice for this church.

In accordance with the meaning of the Word and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministry tasks of (1) serving the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) caring for the church's members and other persons in the community. (4) In the event the pulpit is vacated, it shall be the duty of the deacons to see that the pulpit is supplied an interim pastor. Honorarium for interim pastor is to be recommended to the church by the deacons.

(4) The church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

(5) The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church and preserve on file notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these by-laws.

The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary who will assist the elected clerk. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when one is maintained.

(5b) The church shall elect annually an assistant clerk to fulfill the duties prescribed in Article 5 in the absence of the clerk and to assist in maintaining all records.

(6) The church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to preserve and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers, approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the church. Keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements, it shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent record of the church.

(6b) The church shall elect annually an assistant treasurer. The assistant shall be responsible for the weekly deposits and helping the treasurer with all reports, bills, and duties described in Article 6. The assistant treasurer shall also be responsible for preparing tax year accounting of gifts given to Sligo Baptist Church, of keeping proper records of giving in accordance with IRS regulations as well as maintaining proper confidentiality regarding the origin of receipts given to this church.

(7) The church shall elect three or more trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, purchase, mortgage or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

It shall be the responsibility of the trustees to assist the church in matters related to properties administration. Their work includes such areas as maintaining all church properties for ready use, recommending policies regarding use of properties, consulting with the personnel committee and the church staff regarding the needs for and the employment of maintenance personnel, and regarding the assignment of supervisory responsibility to appropriate personnel.

## Section 2. Church Committees

The standing committees of this church shall be a nominating committee, a personnel committee, a stewardship committee, a cemetery committee, and such other regular and special committees as the church shall authorize.

All church committee members shall be recommended by the church nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these By-Laws.

(1) The moderator shall appoint the Nominating Committee in the March business meeting to give them the opportunity to complete their list of election by the June meeting to begin service September 1<sup>st</sup>, the beginning of the new church year. The Nominating Committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions filled by volunteer workers unless otherwise specified herein. Persons considered for any such positions shall first be approved by the Nominating Committee before they are approached for recruitment. The Nominating Committee shall present to the church for election all who accept the invitation to serve.

(2) The Personnel Committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration including those called by church action. Their work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, other compensation, policies, job descriptions, and personnel services.

(3) The Stewardship Committee develops and recommends an overall stewardship development plan, a unified church budget, and budget subscription plans. It advises and recommends in the administration of gifts of church members and others, using sound principles of financial management. The committee works with the treasurer in the preparation and presentation to the church of required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church.

(4) The Cemetery Committee shall consist of the trustees. Their duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- a. The trustees have full charge of the cemetery, and their employees will be compensated on salary recommended by the church trustees.
- b. A Burial Right Certificate will be issued by a trustee upon the full payment for a lot.
- c. The money received from the sale of a lot shall be placed in a Cemetery Fund for perpetual care; all money shall be used exclusively for the cemetery. The church will not be responsible for financial support of the cemetery. The trustees will invest monies in bonds or certificates at the highest possible interest. The trustees will be in charge of the care and upkeep. The trustees will make available to the church an annual report of lots available, price for lots and any desired regulations they wish to make for proper upkeep.

### **III. Church Program Organizations**

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching, church member training, church leader training, new member orientations; mission education, action, and support; and music education, training, and performance. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control with all officers being elected by the church and reporting regular to the church. All program activities are subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriated advancement of these programs.

(1) The Sunday School shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching program. Its tasks shall be to teach biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, perform the functions of the church within its constituency, and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denominations. All regular teachers shall be members of Sligo Baptist Church and teach in accordance with Section 3 of the church's Constitution.

The Sunday School shall be organized by departments and/or classes, as appropriate for all ages, and shall be conducted under the direction of the Sunday School director elected by the church.

(2) Women on Mission shall be the mission education, mission action, and mission support organization of the church for women, young women, girls and preschool children. Its tasks shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through praying and giving, and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Women on Mission shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

## **IV. Church Ordinances**

### **Section 1. Baptism**

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by repentance and personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

(1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water.

(2) The pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer Baptism. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for and the observance of baptism.

(3) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.

### **Section 2. Lord's Supper**

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper as scheduled by the church. The pastor(s) and deacon(s) shall administer the Lord's Supper. The deacons will be responsible for the physical preparation as well as the procurement of additional servers as needed.

## **V. Church Meetings**

### **Section 1. Worship Services**

The church shall meet regularly as supported by the will of its members for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. A pastor or designated leader will direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

### **Section 2. Special Services**

Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar.

### **Section 3. Regular Business Meetings**

The church shall hold regular business meeting four times a year. The meetings will be held: On the second Sunday in September and the first Sundays in December, March, and June. Financial reports will be provided.

### **Section 4. Special Business Meetings**

The church may conduct called business meeting to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-week notice must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, and the time and place; and it must be given during the regular Sunday morning worship meeting.

#### Section 5. Quorum

The quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called. However, it will take a 75% vote of those present to vote the church into debt.

#### Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

### **VI. Church Finances**

#### Section 1. Budget

The Stewardship Committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for members' use. It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts.

#### Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer, or assistant treasurer, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Stewardship Committee.

#### Section 3. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall run concurrently with the church year which begins on September 1st and ends on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **VII. Amendments**

Changes in the Constitution and By-laws may be made at the annual September business meeting of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at the March business meeting. Copies of the proposed changes will be made available to the members for review two-weeks prior to the June business meeting. After discussion at the June meeting, adopted proposals will be brought forward for a vote at the September meeting.

Amendments to the Constitution shall be by 75% vote of church members present. Amendments to the By-laws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

#### VIII. Church Policy Manual

Sligo Baptist Church will keep a Church Policy Manual in which operational policies will be documented and followed for the daily functioning of the church.

Included in the first edition of the Church Policy Manual will be:

- 1) The documentation of policies that align our practices with insurance requirement, i.e.: Sexual harassment and background checks for children's workers.
- 2) As required, other policies will be adopted.

Any proposed revisions, or additions, to the Church Policy Manual should be submitted to the Moderator for review. The Moderator will refer the proposed changes to the appropriate committee for action. That committee will, in turn, submit any changes to the Church Policy Manual for approval by the church at any of the four scheduled Business Meetings.

