

Mount Hermon Baptist Church

Constitution and By-Laws

PREAMBLE

We, the members of **Mount Hermon Baptist Church**, do adopt this **Constitution and By-Laws** in order to do all things “decently and in order” (I Cor. 14:40), to protect the rights of our members, to safeguard our fellowship and to declare our relationship to other Baptists of like faith.

Article I. Name

The name of this organization shall be **Mount Hermon Baptist Church**, of the Yates Baptist Association, located in Orange County, North Carolina.

Article II. Purpose

This body is organized to provide regular opportunities for worship, the reading and study of the Bible; to sustain the ordinances, teachings, and practices set forth in the New Testament as interpreted as a missionary Baptist church; to teach and train its members; to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to support with its offerings all phases of the Lord’s work. All services are open to all who come to worship.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have offered themselves for membership upon a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have been received into membership by vote of the church.

1a) Any person desiring to profess his faith in Christ and to become a member of this church, and who, because of physical incapacity can neither present himself for membership nor be baptized by immersion, shall make their desire known to the pastor and deacons.

Section 2. A member of another church who has been immersed may be received by vote of the church upon promise of a letter. If, because of peculiar circumstances one is not able to get a letter of transfer, they may be received into the fellowship of this church by statement and a vote of the church.

Section 3. A letter of transfer to unite with another church may be issued upon request to the church which the member is planning to join. All such applications must be passed upon by the church in conference.

Section 4. Watchcare: Any person who professes the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and whose residence in our community is to be only a short term may choose to align himself in spirit and fellowship with the purpose of this church, as outlined in the **Constitution**, by presenting himself under the “watchcare” of this church. This does not entitle the person to vote or to hold office as a regular church member.

Section 5. Membership in the church shall be terminated by death, or transfer of membership to another church. The church, after due notice and opportunity for hearing, and every possible kindly effort to make such action unnecessary, may upon majority vote, terminate the membership of a person in this body or place their name on an inactive roll for reasons it considers sufficient to warrant such action.

Article IV. Meetings

Section 1. This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training, and fellowship.

Section 2. This church shall hold monthly conferences to hear reports from its various organizations, committees and to consider other matters essential to the spiritual welfare and prosperity of the congregation.

Section 3. The church may conduct called business meetings 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 time and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting. This meeting will be called by the pastor or deacon chairman.

Section 4. Other meetings of the church as a whole or of authorized groups within the church may be held according to the needs of the congregation.

Section 5. a) Only church members are eligible to vote. b) Any church member may vote by absentee ballot at any called business meeting using the following procedure:

1. Secure special ballot and envelope from church office during office hours.
2. Unsigned ballot is placed in signed envelope and returned to the church office by the time of the vote.

Article V. Officers

The officers of this church shall be a pastor, deacons, trustees, clerk, and treasurer; and such other officers as shall be required to do the work of the church in any of its departments or organizations. All of these shall be elected by the church, and shall be members in good standing at the time of election.

Article VI. Election and Duties of Church Officers

A. Pastor

Section 1. Call: Whenever a vacancy occurs, a pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the pastor or the church. At least thirty days notice shall be given by the church, and thirty days notice by the pastor, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon. The call of the pastor shall take place at a meeting especially set for that purpose. At least one week's notice by mail shall be given the membership. The election shall be upon the recommendation of a pulpit committee.

Nominations for the pulpit committee shall be presented by the deacons to the church for approval. The congregation shall have the privilege of presenting additional nominations. A committee of five shall be elected. Any agreement between the committee and the pastoral candidate, should be presented to the church prior to his being voted upon.

Only one name at a time shall be presented by the Pulpit Committee to the church for consideration and vote. Election shall be by ballot with an affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present and voting necessary for a call. Should a minister receive less than a two-thirds affirmative vote, the committee will be instructed to notify the minister under consideration that no call is being extended, and to seek out another minister. The meeting shall then be adjourned without debate. Should the minister receive a two-thirds affirmative vote, but decline the call, the committee will also be instructed to seek out another minister.

Section 2. Duties. The pastor shall have in charge the welfare and oversight of the church; he shall be ex-officio member of all organizations, departments, and committees; he may call a special meeting of the deacons or any committee according to procedures which may be set forth in the **By-Laws**, he shall conduct religious services on stated and special occasions, administer the ordinances, minister to members of the church and community, and perform other duties that usually pertain to that office; he shall have special charge of the Pulpit Ministry of the church and shall, in cooperation with the deacons, provide supply when he is absent and arrange for workers to assist in revival meetings and other special services. The pastor shall preside at all meetings of the church except as otherwise provided in the **By-Laws**. He shall be the administrative head of the church and shall arrange for and approve all absences and vacations of all church employees.

Section 3. Dismissal: The church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's membership 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 church 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 two-thirds of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant. In the instances of gross misconduct by the pastor so excluded from office, his pastoral duties will terminate immediately and the parsonage must be vacated within 30 days.

B. Deacons

There shall be three deacons for each 100 members of the church or fraction thereof. The deacons shall be elected from among those members, male or female, who have proven themselves to have Scriptural qualifications according to I Timothy 3, and Titus 1 (this does not exclude divorced persons), and shall have been members of this church for at least one year, and a Christian for two years.

Deacons retiring from active participation by rotation shall retain their title of deacon and may be called upon for service by the church at any time, but shall be ineligible for re-election to the active group until at least one year has elapsed following their retirement from this service.

Deacon election shall be by secret ballot, for a term of 3 years, with one-third of the number elected each year. If the required number of people do not receive a majority of votes in the first election, the remaining number needed shall be sought in order of the number of votes received, until the required number is achieved. These persons shall then be presented to the church for affirmation and election.

In accordance with the meaning of the work 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 ministries task of (1) leading 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. The pastor, or the chairman of the deacons, may call the deacons into special session whenever a need for such arises.

C. Trustees

Their terms of office shall be for three years with one elected each year among the deacons by the deacons. At all times there shall be three trustees who are to hold title to all church property for the benefit of the membership. The trustees shall execute all deeds, mortgages, insurance, and other documents when authorized to do so by the church in conference.

D. Clerk

The clerk shall be elected annually. The clerk will be eligible for re-election. It shall be the clerk's responsibility to attend or be represented at all church business meetings, to keep an accurate record of all business transactions, to prepare the Annual Association Letter and to see that it is properly transmitted to the associational clerk. The clerk shall keep a fair and intelligent record of all meetings and duly inscribe them in a permanent record book. This record book shall be compiled and bound every four years. A copy of the **Constitution, By-Laws** and additional rules shall at all times be kept with the records of the clerk. Any amendments to, or revisions thereof shall, after passage, be prepared in typewritten form by the clerk. They shall be certified by the clerk and added to the copies of the manual so kept. This shall also apply to any resolutions passed for the permanent or temporary government of the church.

E. Treasurer

The church shall elect a treasurer annually. The treasurer will be eligible for re-election. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to keep in a bank, and disburse by check upon proper authority all money. The treasurer shall keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and give a financial statement regularly to the church to be preserved by the church clerk. The treasurer's books shall be audited only in the event of a change in treasurer, or if some irregularity should warrant an audit. All books, records and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be the property of the church. The auditing service should not be solicited or performed by any church member.

Article VII. Church Government

Section 1. The government of this church shall be congregational in nature and shall be vested in the membership.

Section 2. Moderator: The pastor of the church shall preside as moderator; in his absence the chairman of the deacons as vice-moderator shall preside; in the absence of the moderator and the vice-moderator the church shall designate some other member in good standing.

Section 3. Quorum: A quorum shall consist of the church members present unless otherwise indicated.

Section 4. Minutes: The church clerk shall record Minutes of each business meeting.

Article VIII. Affiliation

Section 1. This church is an independent body under God, free of any outside control, or power, with authority to determine for itself all church policies, and the use of its property.

Section 2. Affiliation: The adoption of this **Constitution** will confirm affiliation with the **Yates Baptist Association, North Carolina Baptist State Convention, Southern Baptist Convention and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.**

Section 3. Discontinuance of Affiliation and/or Cooperation: The calling of a church conference for the purpose of voting on withdrawal from the affiliation with the **Yates Baptist Association** and/or discontinuance of cooperation with the **Baptist State Convention, Southern Baptist Convention** and/or **Cooperative Baptist Fellowship** will require that one week's notice be sent to each resident member of the church, stating the purpose and time of said conference. Action to withdraw to be valid must be carried by vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

Article IX. Adoption and Amendments

Section 1. This **Constitution** shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect upon a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regularly scheduled business meeting. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty days after formal presentation of the **Constitution** to the church, and at least one week's notice of such a meeting shall be given by mail.

Section 2. This **Constitution** may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular business meeting of the church; provided that such amendment, alteration or repeal shall have been given to the clerk in writing, and the proposed change shall have been presented to the church in writing at least one month prior to the time the vote is taken.

By-Laws

Article I. Meetings

The church shall hold regular services of worship on Sundays and Wednesday evenings unless otherwise agreed upon by the church.

Article II. Other Church Officers and Duties

Section 1. Church officers except the pastor and other paid personnel are subject to annual election and shall be elected at the regular business meeting in August. All officers of the church and its organizations, unless otherwise specified, shall be elected for a term of one year, and upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee. At the time of election, members of the church may of course offer substitute nominations.

Section 2. Discipleship Director: The Discipleship Director shall oversee the Discipleship Team in leading the church in growing in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Director shall give a report of the Discipleship Team in regular business meetings. The chairman of the deacons cannot serve as Discipleship Director.

Section 3. Outreach Director: The Outreach Director shall oversee the Outreach Team in leading the church in missions both locally and abroad. The Director shall give a report of the Outreach Team in regular business meetings. The chairman of the deacons cannot serve as Outreach Director.

Section 4. Children/Youth Director: The Children/Youth Director shall oversee the Children/Youth Team in leading the church in raising the children and youth of the church to become disciples of Jesus Christ. The Director shall give a report of the Children/Youth Team in regular business meetings. The chairman of the deacons cannot serve as Children/Youth Director.

Section 5. Pianist: The Pianist(s) shall play for all public services and shall assist the Music Director in suitable music for the church.

Section 6. Organist: The Organist(s) shall play for all public services and shall assist the Music Director in suitable music for the church.

Section 7. Financial Secretary: The Financial Secretary will keep a record of all contributions in strictest confidence and shall make these records available to the individual members once a year.

Section 8. Sunday School teachers must be members of the church.

Article III. Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees: The church upon recommendation by the Nominating Committee shall elect such standing committees as may be deemed necessary to carry out the various phases of the program of the church efficiently and effectively. The church shall have the following committees: Nominating, Personnel, Properties, Special Events, Sanctuary, Stewardship, and any additional committees deemed necessary. All the above should be rotating committees, serving 3 years. Individuals must rotate off for one year following a 3-year service on any committee. Any person completing the unexpired term of another person is eligible for re-election to the same committee not to exceed three years total. All members of committees must be members of Mount Hermon Baptist Church.

Section 2. Temporary Committees: The church upon recommendation by the Nominating Committee may elect at any time committees to perform temporary functions. (Example: Constitution or Sanctuary Planning Committee).

Section 3. No member shall concurrently be a member of more than one standing committee.

Article IV. Ministry Teams

Section 1. Ministry Teams shall serve for the wellbeing of the church and shall lead the church in The Great Commission. The church shall have the following teams: Discipleship, Outreach, Children/Youth, and Music. The church shall elect the directors of each team except for the Music Team. All directors and members of ministry teams must be members of Mount Hermon Baptist Church.

Section 2: The Discipleship Team members shall consist of the Discipleship Director, Brotherhood Representative, WMU Representative, and one representative from each Adult Sunday School Class. Its mission is to lead the church in growing in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 3. The Outreach Team members shall consist of the Outreach Director, Brotherhood Representative, WMU Representative, and one representative from each Adult Sunday School Class. Its mission is to lead the church in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ both locally and abroad.

Section 4. The Children/Youth Team members shall consist of the Children/Youth Director, all Children and Youth Sunday School teachers, and the leaders of any other children and youth ministries. Its mission is to lead the church in raising the children and youth of the church to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Section 5. The Music Team members shall consist of the Music Minister, Organist, Pianist, and one at large member of the church to be invited annually by the Music Team. The Music Team shall be led by the Music Minister. Its mission is to lead the church in music that glorifies God and reconciles humanity.

Article V. Church Council

The Church Council shall be a permanent committee consisting of the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Music Minister, Youth Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons, Church Clerk, Treasurer, Discipleship Director, Outreach Director, and Children/Youth Director, and shall meet regularly (at least quarterly) to discuss and coordinate the church program. The pastor shall be responsible for arranging the meeting times and shall act as chairman of this committee.

Article VI. Ordinances

Section 1. The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby baptized believers through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming. The Lord's Supper shall be observed quarterly, preferably the first Sunday of each yearly quarter, or as otherwise scheduled in advance.

Section 2. Baptism. This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.

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

C. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.

Article VII. Adoption and Amendments

Section 1. These **By-Laws** shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect upon a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regularly scheduled business meeting. This vote shall be taken one month after formal presentation of the **By-Laws** to the church.

Section 2. These **By-Laws** may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular business meeting of the church, provided however, that notice and proposal of such amendment, alteration or repeal was given in writing at the preceding regular meeting of the church.

Article VIII. Rules of Order

The church shall use Robert's Rules of Order as guides for conducting business meetings.

Article IX. Effective

Section 1. The adoption by the church of this **Constitution** and **By-Laws** shall repeal all those previously adopted.

Section 2. A copy of this **Constitution** and **By-Laws** shall be kept by the clerk at all times among his (or her) records and another copy shall be kept in the church and all amendments to or revisions thereof shall be prepared by the clerk and attached to copies of the **Constitution** and **By-Laws** and made available to the church members generally upon request.

Article X. Articles of Faith

Upon adoption of this **Constitution** and **By-Laws**, **The Baptist Faith and Message**, as adopted by the 1963 session of the Southern Baptist Convention will also be adopted by the Mount Hermon Baptist Church of Orange County.