

# CONSTITUTION

## ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this body is the New River Baptist Association, Incorporated cooperating with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Southern Baptist Convention.

## ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The New River Baptist Association is a family of churches whose purposes are to model Christian fellowship; to bear witness to the Biblical doctrine and principles of the Baptist faith; to assist local congregations in their tasks of worship, preaching and evangelism, teaching training, and ministries; to cooperatively engage in missions, evangelism and ministry in the Association; to cooperate with the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention in a world missions program in magnifying the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in extending His Kingdom upon the earth.

## OUR VISION STATEMENT

We envision the churches of the New River Baptist Association connected to infuse the Gospel of Jesus Christ into every aspect of our geographical region and beyond.

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the New River Baptist Association is to connect Great Commission churches to change the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## OUR CORE VALUES

1. **Biblical Faithfulness** – *trusting* the faithfulness of Scripture, its truth and authority for faith, practice and life.
2. **Connecting Churches** – *communicating* with churches and *mobilizing* them for missions and ministry.
3. **Impacting Military** – *engaging* military and their families for Christ.
4. **Equipping for Discipleship** – *assisting* churches in making disciples.
5. **Strengthening Families** – *empowering* churches to build God-honoring home lives.
6. **Evangelizing the Lost** – *proclaiming* the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

## ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

**SECTION A.** This body shall be composed of affiliated churches and missions and messengers from the churches and missions affiliated with the New River Baptist Association plus the associational officers, Executive Committee Chairperson, Team Leaders and the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions.

Each church and mission shall be entitled to four (4) messengers, which shall include the pastor. Additionally, each church and mission shall be entitled to two (2) messengers for each fifty (50) resident members or fraction thereof, provided that no church or mission shall have more than ten (10) elected messengers.

Messengers shall be certified annually via church profiles which are to be presented to the Associational Clerk at least two weeks prior to the October meeting, and shall be permitted to serve as messengers at all Associational meetings.

**SECTION B.** Churches or missions from another association of Southern Baptist churches, or newly organized Southern Baptist churches and missions may petition by letter for membership in this association. The letter of petition shall be submitted to the Executive Committee not later than thirty (30) days preceding any meeting of the Association. Upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, the church or mission may be received by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the messengers present; provided the membership for the first year shall be under the watchcare of the Association with voting rights; after which time, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the church or mission will be granted full membership in the Association.

**SECTION C.** Any church or mission may be granted a letter of dismissal from the New River Baptist Association by presenting a written request of same to the Clerk of the Association thirty (30) days prior to any meeting of the Association, to be voted on at the next meeting of the Association. If any church or mission decides to leave this Association and wishes to renew their membership in the future, they may be accepted back into the membership of the Association through the procedures specified in Section B above. If any church or mission fails to cooperate by not presenting an annual church profile and/or by not sending messengers to the meetings or fails to show participation in the program of this Association, leaders in the Association will seek to encourage and facilitate increased participation of that church or mission in the program and activities of this Association. Every effort possible shall be made to restore such church or mission into the fellowship of the Association through the Executive Committee.

Any church or mission that is deemed to be out of fellowship, or which adopts doctrinal positions or practices outside the faith and practices of the New River Baptist Association shall be counseled by a special committee of the Executive Committee which shall be appointed by the Moderator at any meeting of the Executive Committee. If such church or mission does not agree to mend its way within three (3) months after the appointment of the special committee, the Association, with a vote of two-thirds (2/3) majority present and voting, may withdraw fellowship from said church or mission.

## **ARTICLE IV. AUTHORITY**

The Association is an autonomous body and therefore reserves the right to determine its own policies and direct its own business. This body shall not interfere with the autonomy of any church or mission affiliated with it; but the Association will stand ready to lend any assistance or counsel to any church or mission requesting such.

## **ARTICLE V. OFFICERS AND THEIR ELECTIONS**

### **SECTION A. ASSOCIATIONAL OFFICERS.**

The officers of the Association shall be Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer. These officers shall be elected at the October meeting and shall take office at the close of that meeting. They shall serve through the associational year. The Moderator and Vice Moderator shall be limited to not more than two successive years of service.

The officers shall also serve as officers of the New River Baptist Association, Incorporated. They shall have duties and responsibilities attendant to officers. In the exercise of their duties and responsibilities, however, they are subject to the Charter, Constitution and Bylaws of the Association.

### **SECTION B. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS.**

1. The Moderator shall call to order and preside over the meetings of the Association, and direct the affairs of the Association in an orderly manner and Christian spirit.

2. The Vice Moderator shall preside over meetings in the absence of, or at the direction of, the Moderator and shall assist the Moderator in such ways as directed. In the event the Moderator does not serve the full term of office, the Vice Moderator shall automatically fill the unexpired term.

3. The Clerk shall keep a full and accurate record of all the proceedings of the Association. The Clerk shall superintend the compilation, printing, and distributing of the minutes and keep on file the printed minutes and other important papers of the Association. The function of the office of the Clerk shall be the responsibility of the Associational Office.

4. The Treasurer shall receive all funds of and for the Association, and shall disburse by check all funds in accordance with the adopted associational budget or according to the specific instructions of the Association, upon receipt of a bill or voucher properly authorized. The Treasurer shall keep records of all monies received, with sources and designations of same and shall make reports at the regular meetings, of the Association for approval. The Treasurer shall be bonded and the records audited according to the policy of the Association. The functions of the Office of the Treasurer shall be the responsibility of the Associational Office.

5. All officers shall be members in good standing of churches affiliated with the New River Baptist Association.

## **ARTICLE VI. STANDING COMMITTEES AND TEAMS**

In order to facilitate its work, the Association shall have the committees so listed in this section. Additional committees, either standing or special, may be added at any meetings of the Association by a majority vote. The duties of the committees shall be understood to be consistent with the goals set forth in the promotional literature for their respective areas of responsibility as produced or approved by the denomination, and set forth in this constitution. Additional to any other reports, all committees shall make an annual written report to the Association. The report shall be submitted to the Clerk no later than the last day of September. All committee members shall be members in good standing of the churches affiliated with the New River Baptist Association.

### **SECTION A. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**

The Executive Committee shall consist of no fewer than fifteen (15) members and no more than twenty-one (21) members and shall include the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, team leader from each Ministry Action Team, plus seven (7) to eleven (11) members at large. Members should be chosen for their broad understanding of associational work including financial and personnel management.

The Committee shall:

1. be responsible for strategic and annual planning and shall present proposed annual ministries (to include the program of events) to the Association at the July quarterly meeting.

2. in January of each year, appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the team leader from each team and one at-large member not currently serving on the Executive Committee. At the October Associational meeting, this committee shall nominate the following:

Officers of the Association

Members of all standing committees and teams

These individuals shall take office at the close of that meeting.

3. initiate and recommend policies and procedures not otherwise stated.

4. correlate the ministries, activities and emphases of the Teams of the Association.

5. in cooperation with the appropriate committee or, and with the concurrence of the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions, shall be empowered to employ all staff not here-to-fore mentioned or as authorized by the Association. Furthermore, the Committee, in cooperation with the appropriate committee or

team, and with the concurrence of the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions, shall be empowered to terminate the employment of any staff member employed by the committee.

6. shall have subcommittees comprised of members from its own rank for the following needs: Finance, Personnel, Facilities,, and Programs.

7. submit an annual budget prepared by the Finance Subcommittee to the Association at the July meeting. The budget shall be adopted at the annual meeting of the Association and become effective January 1 of the upcoming year.

8. relate to the Conventions on behalf of the Association regarding special interests.

9. serve in the capacity of the Board of Directors of the New River Baptist Association, Incorporated. They shall have the duties and responsibilities attendant to Directors, subject however, to the Charter, Constitution and Bylaws. They shall have no power except as expressly authorized by the Association to purchase, lease, sell or encumber any real or personal property, to install or remove officers or staff, to amend the Constitution, Bylaws or Charter or to bind the Corporation to any contract. Consistent with Biblical principles and Baptist polity, the Association retains the authority to govern its spiritual and temporal affairs.

## **SECTION B. STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE.**

The Association shall have a Strategic Planning Committee composed of seven (7) members of the Association and the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions. Members should be chosen for their broad understanding of associational work including structure, staffing, facilities, and budgeting.

The purpose of the Strategic Planning Committee is to recommend goals and objectives to the Association. Concurrent with these actions, the Strategic Planning Committee will review and evaluate existing goals and objectives and make strategic recommendations concerning Associational goals, structure, staffing, facilities, and budgeting.

## **SECTION C. ORDINATION COMMITTEE.**

The Association shall have an Ordination Committee composed of five ordained ministers of the Association. The committee shall act in an advisory capacity for churches and ministerial candidates seeking assistance. The committee shall assist any Southern Baptist church that has taken formal action requesting the committee's services in examination of a candidate for the Christian ministry, provided that: at the time of such a request the church requesting the examination shall furnish the committee information concerning the experience, background, training experience and character of the candidate.

A date for the examination should be set by the committee and the candidate as soon as possible after the Association's receipt of the request. At the time the date is set, the committee will offer to the candidate a "preparation guide" describing the nature and content of the examination.

A date or time for the ordination service should not be set by the church requesting the examination until it has received a recommendation from the Ordination Committee of the New River Baptist Association. Upon completion of the examination, the committee shall make its recommendation to the church regarding the fitness of the candidate for ordination.

The committee will be available to give guidance to the church in planning and carrying out the ordination service.

## **SECTION D. MINISTRY ACTION TEAMS**

In order to facilitate the ministries of the Association, Ministry Action Teams shall be organized as needed. They are to be formed to help facilitate the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Association.

Upon the recommendation of the Strategic Planning Committee of a new goal, the Executive Committee shall appoint a Ministry Action Team to pursue that goal. Additionally, the Moderator, Executive Committee, or

the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions may appoint special teams to undertake tasks of a temporary nature. Such *ad hoc* groups shall be dissolved following the completion of their tasks. Each Ministry Action Team shall have a Team Leader. Teams shall meet at least quarterly and as needed. Teams shall be guided by the Administrative Manual and are evaluated by the Executive Committee in conjunction with the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions.

## **ARTICLE VII. STAFF MEMBERS**

### **SECTION A. GENERAL**

The Association shall assume the responsibility of providing for the financial welfare of its employees within the framework of the budget or that which is agreed upon by the Association.

Annually, the Executive Committee shall review the salaries and benefits of the employees of the Association and make adequate provisions for same in the proposed budget. Moreover, the committee shall maintain current position descriptions for each staff position and shall establish the policies under which the employees shall work.

### **SECTION B. ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONARY/DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS.**

1. Calling: When the office of Associational Missionary/Director of Missions is vacated, the Nominating Committee shall recommend a search committee to the Executive Committee that shall be charged with the responsibility of finding a person to fill the vacancy. This committee shall be comprised of five persons, and shall recommend only one name at a time to the Executive Committee for consideration. Upon approval of the Executive Committee, the individual recommended for the position of Associational Missionary/Director of Missions shall be referred to the Association for approval at any regular or called meeting, provided that written notice is given to the Associational messengers at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting. In this particular matter there must be two-thirds (2/3) of the member churches represented in order to constitute a quorum. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those persons present shall be necessary for an extension of a call. Should the nominee fail to receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote, the committee shall seek another nominee for the position.

2. Termination of Relationship: The relationship of the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions to the Association may be dissolved at the request of either himself or the Association. The Associational Missionary/Director of Missions may terminate his relationship with the Association by submitting a letter of resignation to the Executive Committee, but shall normally provide at least thirty (30) days notice before the termination of his services. Such written resignation shall be final and binding when delivered to the members of the Executive Committee.

The Associational Missionary/Director of Missions may be removed by a three-quarters (3/4) vote of the Association's messengers present at a special called meeting for which notice has been mailed to all Associational messengers of the pending action, and the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions is provided an opportunity to be heard. Such a vote may be initiated by the recommendation of the Executive Committee or by other motion adopted by the Association to call for such a meeting and vote.

The members of the Executive Committee and Messengers shall make every effort to follow biblical principles including the process set forth in Matthew 18 in dealing with conflicts regarding Associational staff. Every effort should be extended to permit reconciliation of conflicts in a manner consistent with our Christian faith and doctrine.

Removal shall be effective immediately upon the adoption of a motion terminating the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions, but salary and benefits shall continue for not less than thirty (30) days. Any resolution to dismiss may also contain recommendations concerning other financial aspects of the termination including severance pay.

3. Duties: The Associational Missionary/Director of Missions shall be responsible to the Association through the Executive Committee, and shall execute his duties in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and his job description.

### **SECTION C. OTHER EMPLOYED STAFF**

The Executive Committee in cooperation with the appropriate subcommittees, and with the concurrence of the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions shall be empowered to employ all staff other than that Associational Missionary/Director of Missions as authorized by the Association. Furthermore, the Executive Committee in cooperation with the appropriate subcommittee, and with the concurrence of the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions, shall be empowered to terminate the employment of staff, other than the Associational Missionary/Director of Missions as stipulated in the respective position description.

## **ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS**

The Association shall meet in January, April, July and October. The October meeting shall be designated as the annual meeting and shall consist of one afternoon and night session. The January, April and July meetings shall consist of a night session. The dates and places shall be included in the calendar of activities. Special meetings may be called by the Moderator, Executive Committee or Associational Missionary/Director of Missions provided that written notice and the purpose of the meeting have been given to the messengers at least one (1) week prior to the meeting.

## **ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended by presenting the proposed change(s) in writing at one associational meeting and voting on them at the next regular meeting or by mailing the proposed changes to the messengers at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the messengers present and voting is required.

The Administrative Manual may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee members present at an Executive Committee meeting provided that written notice shall have been given to all members of the Executive Committee at least fourteen (14) days prior to the Executive Committee meeting.

## BYLAWS

**ARTICLE I.** In parliamentary procedure, the body shall be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

**ARTICLE II.** The fiscal year for the Association shall be the calendar year. Annual reports should cover the associational year which is from October 1st to September 30th inclusive.

**ARTICLE III.** All elected and appointed personnel of the Association must be members of churches or missions within the Association, in good standing, and recognized for their knowledge of and loyalty to Southern Baptist doctrines and programs.

**ARTICLE IV.** Additional to regular reports to the Association, all committees, and teams shall submit annual, written reports at the annual meeting of the Association. The Association shall exercise final and ultimate authority in determining that all committees, teams and consultants functioning in its behalf do so in compliance with the constitution of this Association.

**ARTICLE V.** A place shall be made on the agenda for miscellaneous business at each meeting of the Association.

**ARTICLE VI.** On the agenda at each of the Associational meetings there shall be a balance of emphases on evangelism, missions, and Christian/Baptist doctrine.

**ARTICLE VII.** The Bylaws may be amended at any regular Associational meeting by a majority of the messengers present and voting, provided such amendment has been mailed to the messengers at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.