

Fort Caroline Baptist Church Bylaws A Florida Non Profit Corporation

I. Name

This body shall be known as the Fort Caroline Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida, Inc.

II. 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. A copy shall be made available as part of the membership process. 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. The ordinances of the Church are Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper.

III. Purpose

The purpose of the Church is to glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

1. **EVANGELISM/MISSIONS** – “To share the good news of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible in our community and throughout the world.”
(Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, 2 Peter 3:9).

2. **DISCIPLESHIP/EDUCATION** – “To help members develop toward full Christian maturity and train them for effective ministry. To promote personal spiritual growth and discipleship through Bible teaching.” (Ephesians 4:11-13, Matthew 18:20, Timothy 2:2)

3. **WORSHIP** – “To participate in public worship services together and to maintain personal daily devotions.” (John 4:24)

4. **MINISTRY/SERVICE** – “To serve unselfishly, in Jesus' name, meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in our Church, community and in the world.”
(1 Peter 4:10-11, Matthew 25:34-40, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Galatians 5:13)

5. **FELLOWSHIP** – “To encourage, support and pray for each other as members of the family of God. To share our lives together.”
(1 John 1:7, Acts 2:44-47, Hebrews 10:23-25, Romans 15:5, 7, John 13:34-35)

This Church seeks to benefit the people of Northeast Florida by providing opportunities for spiritual, physical, intellectual, social and cultural development. (Luke 2:52). Our mission is to love God, love others and serve the world.

IV. Character

Section 1 – Affiliation

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. The Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in world missions, this Church voluntarily affiliates with the Jacksonville Baptist Association, the Florida Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention in its international, state and local expressions.

Section 2 – Doctrine

This Church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of other Southern Baptist Churches.

V. Membership

Section 1 – General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This membership retains unto itself the right to exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church, subject to any specific recommendation from the Pastor, followed by action by the Board of Trustees. 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 be presented as a candidate for membership of this Church by communicating their intent to present themselves as a prospective candidate and attending the New Member Class.

Ways to join include:

- (a) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of the Church.
- (b) By promise of a letter from another Baptist Church of like faith and order.
- (c) By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion when no letter is obtainable.
- (d) By statement of prior conversion with expressed intent to be baptized by immersion. Membership indicates the individual's doctrinal affirmation of Fort Caroline Baptist Church.

Section 3 – Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (a) Death
- (b) Dismissal to another Baptist Church
- (c) Exclusion by action of this church. Should a member become an offense to the Church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of their covenant vows, the Church may terminate their membership by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a duly called meeting and constituting at least a quorum, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.
- (d) Affiliation with a church of another faith or denomination

Section 4 – Active and Inactive Membership

Any person can be placed on inactive status as a member of this Church after six months of absence, provided they are not hindered through illness or professional duties. The Pastor and/or Deacons should make at least two attempts to reclaim these inactive members. Inactive members shall not be eligible to vote in the business meetings of this Church until they have attended a minimum of four regular services during a three month period of time.

VI. Corporate Officers

All organizations of the Church shall be under Church control, all officers being elected by the Church and reporting to the Church. It is understood that the Pastor and Associate Pastor are ex-officio officers of all the organizations named and their leadership is to be recognized in them.

There shall be a Board of Trustees consisting of at least three members. The Trustees shall be elected by the Church upon the recommendation of the Pastor, Associate Pastor and Chairman of the Deacons. The term of office of a Trustee shall be for one year. Trustees shall be eligible for re-election. The Trustees shall manage the legal affairs of the Church. They shall have power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer Church property (so long as such action is in the ordinary course of doing business) by a specific vote of the Church authorizing each action. The President shall preside as chairman of the Trustees, execute all legal papers by order of the Church, and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Church. The Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President and the Secretary shall preside in the absence of the President and Vice-President. The Secretary shall keep a true and legal record of the minutes of the meetings of Trustees, attest and affix the Corporation Seal to all legal papers by order of the Church, report to the Church and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Church.

VII. Church Officers

All Church officers must be members of the Church. The officers of this Church shall be as follows:

Section 1 – Pastor

A. Election

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least two weeks' public notice shall be given.

A Pulpit Team consisting of the Associate Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons and Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall be formed to seek out a suitable pastor. Recommendation by the Pulpit Team constitutes nomination of a pastor. Any member has the privilege of submitting other nominations for a pastor to the Pulpit Team. The Pulpit Team shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one man at a time. Election shall be an affirmative vote of two-thirds, a quorum being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the Church's request.

B. Duties

The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church in functioning as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and will direct the Church staff in performing their tasks. The Pastor is the leader of worship, proclamation, administration and education. Additionally, he shall be responsible for the performance of pastoral ministries and responsible for the direction and supervision of the Church personnel and Church properties.

C. Termination

If either party shall desire to dissolve this relationship, subject to any conflicting provisions in a valid employment agreement between the Church and the Pastor, thirty (30) days' notice shall be given or special arrangements may be made agreeable to both parties.

Section 2 – Associate Pastor

It shall be the duty of the Associate Pastor to supplement the work of the Pastor.

Section 3 – Chairman of the Deacons

It shall be the duty of the Chairman of the Deacons to lead the Deacon Fellowship in serving with the Pastor in performing pastoral ministries, congregational care and in aiding the Pastor in every way in performing his work when requested. He shall be elected by a majority vote of the Deacons.

Section 4 – Moderator

The Church Moderator may be the Pastor or a lay leader elected to this position. The Moderator shall preside at all regular and called business meetings of the Church. In the absence of the Moderator, the Associate Pastor or Chairman of the Deacons shall preside over the regular and called business meetings of the Church. In the absence of the Associate Pastor and Chairman of the Deacons, the Church Clerk shall call the Church to order and an acting Moderator will be elected.

Section 5 – Church Clerk

The Church Clerk shall be elected and be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all business meeting transactions of the Church, including meetings of the Deacons, and preparing the annual report to the association. The Church Clerk does not attend the Deacons' meetings but is responsible for receiving and retaining minutes of such meetings. The Church Clerk shall attend ordaining councils and other meetings as needed to keep accurate Church records. The Church Clerk shall keep a register of the names and addresses of the Church members with dates of admission, dismissal, and deaths of the members of the Church family. The Church Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal and write letters of transfer of membership (as approved by the Pastor), prepare written reports of the Church and keep an accurate history of the Church. An assistant clerk may be elected or the clerk's responsibilities may be delegated to a paid Church ministry assistant.

VIII. Personnel

Section 1 – Church Staff

This Church shall call or employ such staff members as the Church shall need. A job description shall be written by the Pastor and Personnel Team when the need for staff members is determined. Written employment agreements may be utilized when deemed appropriate by the Personnel Team. The staff is defined to include all administrative personnel, clerical personnel, and service personnel.

The Personnel Team shall work closely with the Pastor in the selection, employment, and changes of staff members and other Church personnel after the inclusion in the budget by the Church or as approved by the Finance Team. The Pastor has hiring authority for all administrative and custodial personnel upon approval from the Personnel Team to fill the position and the Finance Team to fund the position.

IX. Active Deacons

A. Election

Deacons shall be elected at a Business Meeting of the Church by a majority of the members present and voting.

Deacons shall be elected for three years or longer terms of service as voted on by the Church. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the Church may elect to fill the unexpired term. An election shall be held to fill any vacancies. Deacon candidates shall be nominated by the Pastor and Deacon Body and presented to the Church for election. All candidates will be interviewed thoroughly before being presented to the Church for election. Deacon candidates may also be recommended to the Deacon Body by any Church member in good standing. Those elected shall be persons meeting the requirements as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 specifically in the New Testament.

B. Duties

It shall be the duty of the Deacons to lead in a program to visit, and as far as is expedient, to care for the sick; to assist the administration of the ordinances (Baptism and Lord's Supper), and in every way to aid the Pastor in his work as requested. In the event the Church is without an employed Pastor or Associate Pastor, the Chairman of Deacons shall work with the Personnel Team to provide rotating ministers for the pulpit during this time. The Deacons, in conjunction with the Pastor and Associate Pastor, shall be ex-officio members of the Fellowship and shall constitute the spiritual advisory of the Church.

X. Ministry Teams

Section 1 – General

All Church team members are reviewed, consulted and nominated and elected annually by the Church Body. Team members shall serve a term of one to three years. They may be selected for additional one to three year terms.

Section 2 – Church Council

The primary function of the Council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and Church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by the Church officers, organizations, and teams; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of Church goals and objectives. The Council, unless otherwise determined by majority vote of the Church, shall have as regular members the Pastor, Ministerial Staff, Support Staff, and each ministry team leader and such other persons invited from time to time by the Council. All matters agreed upon by the Council, calling for actions not already authorized, shall be referred to the Church for approval or disapproval.

Section 3 – Standing Ministry Teams

The following teams are designated as standing teams. The Church may from time to time, by a majority vote, designate additional teams as standing teams.

A. Personnel Team

The Personnel Team assists the Pastor and the Church in matters related to employed personnel. Its responsibilities include assisting the Pastor in such general areas as staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, personnel service, and job descriptions. Specifically, the team is charged with assisting the Pastor with making periodic evaluations of all staff members and for approving the Pastor's recommendations to the Finance Team relative to salaries of all employed Church staff and personnel.

The team shall assist the Pastor in preparing job descriptions for all staff, personnel and service positions. The team shall make itself available on an impartial basis to hear and consider all matters of concern to any staff member or employed personnel after proper Matthew chapter eighteen principles have been employed.

B. Building and Grounds Team

This team assists the Church in matters related to building and grounds administration. Its work includes such areas as maintaining all Church buildings for ready use, recommending policies regarding use of buildings, recommending employment of maintenance personnel to the Pastor and the Personnel Team and assigning responsibility to appropriate personnel for supervision.

The Church staff and other appropriate leadership shall oversee implementation of a church policy regarding the use of church facilities, assets and all other resources. Such policy will ensure that all facilities, assets and resources of the Church are used in a manner which is consistent with the Holy Scriptures and *The Baptist Faith & Message, 2000*. The policy shall be drafted to ensure that any use of all or part of the church grounds or facilities (whether by members or by outside interests or entities) will be done in a manner consistent with our beliefs as a Church. Moreover, any and all use of church property shall be sufficiently documented and memorialized so as to protect the church from unnecessary exposure to liability.

C. Finance Team

The Finance Team works with the Pastor and Associate Pastor to develop and recommend an overall stewardship information plan and administer the gifts/donations of Church members using sound principles of financial management. Any matters affecting Church finances must be submitted through the Associate Pastor and the Finance Team for review and recommendations by said Team, other than structured budget. The Finance Team, in consultation with the Church Council, shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive budget indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and worldwide expenses. The Finance Team shall be responsible for verifying, to the extent possible, that Church funds allocated for ministry work are used in a manner consistent with the intent expressed to the Finance Team when requests for funding are received.

The Finance Team shall be provided with a full financial report from the Financial Ministry Assistant. The Finance Team is charged with making a full report in connection therewith to the Church body during the regular business meeting.

An annual audit by a Certified Public Accountant engaged by the Finance Team will be conducted. A report of such audit shall be made to the Church immediately following said audit.

Section 4 – Service Ministry Teams

The following teams are designated as service teams. The Church may from time to time, by a majority vote, designate additional teams as service teams. The Church Clerk shall maintain a current list of all duly elected ministry teams. This list will include the description and purpose of the said ministry teams.

A. Baptism Team

This team is responsible for preparing the candidates and the baptistery for the ordinance.

B. Benevolence Team

This team is to minister to the physical, social and mental needs of the people, first with a keen interest in the needs of the Church family, and then also to the community at large. This shall be done in the name of Christ and His Church.

C. Lord's Supper Team

This team prepares the elements and the equipment for the observance of the Lord's Supper. The team does the preparatory and maintenance work needed to observe the memorial service. The team will prepare the elements on a schedule approved by the Pastor or the Church.

XI. Church Meetings

Section 1 – Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and at other times deemed appropriate. Unless otherwise indicated, these meetings will be open for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor.

Section 2 – Business Meetings

There shall be such business meetings as may be required by the Church and shall be held as follows:

A. Annual Business Meetings

An annual business meeting shall be held each year for the purposes of adopting an annual budget and election of church officers and such other business as deemed appropriate by the Pastors.

B. Special Business Meetings

In addition to the annual business meeting, there shall be such special business meetings as may be required due to any unusual business or matter of unusual interest necessary for consideration by the Church before the next annual business meeting. Such special business meetings may be called by the Moderator, the Board of Trustees, Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Chairman of the Deacons provided that the call for such a meeting shall be publicly announced at all worship services one week preceding the special meeting, and provided further that such meeting shall have been set for a specific time and only for the purpose called.

Section 3 – Quorum

Members totaling 10% of LifeGroup average attendance of the previous quarter present in person at a duly-called or regular meeting shall be deemed to constitute a legal quorum.

Section 4 – Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church, except that in cases of conflict, the Church Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, as amended, shall take precedence.

XII. Licensing and Ordaining

A. Licensing

Any member of the Church who has shown by his life and has felt the call to the gospel ministry may by recommendation of the Pastor and vote of the membership at a regular or called meeting be licensed by the Church to the gospel ministry.

B. Ordination

When a church of like faith and order shall have a member of this Church who possesses scriptural qualifications and has demonstrated by his skills and training for ordination to the work of the gospel ministry and shall request in writing that he be ordained, a special team headed by the Pastor shall be elected to conduct the process of his ordination. The Church shall consider such request and by a vote of majority in an annual or special called meeting approve such a request. The Pastor shall assemble an ordaining council for the ordination of qualified and recommended candidates.

XIII. Discipline

- (a) Should any differences arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.
- (b) Should any case of gross breach of covenant, or public scandal occur, the Pastoral staff and Deacons shall endeavor to resolve the conflict in person and by letter; and, if this effort fails, shall report the case to the Church.
- (c) All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the Church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the Church.
- (d) Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by majority vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation; or, if on account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

XIV. Marriage

We believe that 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.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

XV. Effective Date and Amendments

These bylaws are hereby adopted in lieu of and supersede and take the place of any previously existing bylaws or any conflicting minutes of the Church. They are duly adopted October 29, 2017.

Changes in these Bylaws may be made at the annual meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose, provided such proposed amendments shall have been presented in writing and made available to the congregation at least one week prior to such meeting. Amendments shall be by a 2/3 vote of a quorum of the Church members eligible to vote.