

Ashton Baptist Church

Constitution and By-Laws

Revised: April 14, 2019

Article 1 Name And Purpose

- Section 1. The name of this body shall be Ashton Baptist Church, located in Colleton County, South Carolina and established in 1910.
- Section 2. The purpose of Ashton Baptist Church shall be to foster and maintain the worship of Jesus Christ, to carry out the Great Commission, to promote Christian fellowship and growth among its members, and to conduct itself in worship as well as ordinances as prescribed according to the Bible, God's Holy Word.

Article II Character

- Section 1. The membership of Ashton Baptist Church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration, have been baptized by immersion and received by a vote of the church. Person or Persons desiring membership will be placed on watch care by church vote until ordnance of Baptism by immersion is fulfilled.
- Section 2. Members may be received upon a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, by transfer of membership from another church of like faith or by statement.
- Section 3. All un-immersed persons seeking membership of Ashton Baptist Church must be received for baptism by immersion upon their profession of faith in Jesus Christ. After baptism by immersion, they become members in full fellowship. The only exception to this article is if a person is physically unable to be baptized by immersion, he/she can become a full member by vote of the church.
- Section 4. Ashton Baptist Church shall dismiss from its membership and record those who are removed by death, those who unite with churches of another faith (those to which Baptist do not grant letters), and those who are found guilty of unchristian conduct (but only after due process as in hereafter provided).

- Section 5. Members shall be expected to be faithful in all the duties of the Christian life. To be regular in attendance to the services of the church and to give regularly to support Christ's Kingdom, this church, and adhere to the Church Covenant.
- Section 6. Classification of Membership: The membership of this church shall be divided into two groups: ACTIVE and INACTIVE. Active members are those who endeavor to fulfill their duties set forth in the Church Covenant. Inactive members are those who do not attend services for a period of six months. Inactive members have no voting rights. When an inactive member begins to attend on a consistent basis, then they are placed back on active membership. The Fellowship of Deacons shall have the duty of reviewing the church roll yearly to see that this section is carried out. *This does not apply to sickness nor to those in the military, servicemen/women on active duty.*

Article III Ordinances

- Section 1. The ordinances of Ashton Baptist Church shall be Baptism, and The Lord's Supper.
- Section 2. Baptism: Acceptance, repentance, and confession in Jesus Christ shall precede baptism. Baptism shall be by Immersion and administered by the authority of this church.
- Section 3. Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper shall be observed as prescribed in the Scriptures.

Article IV Officers and Duties

- Section 1. The primary officers of Ashton Baptist Church shall be Pastors and Deacons. Their duties shall be those common to the office they hold and in accordance with the Holy Scriptures.
- Section 2. Ashton Baptist Church shall have other such officers and committees as wisdom and The Holy Spirit directs, to carry out the purpose of this church. The duties of such officers and committees shall be according to the instruction of Ashton Baptist Church.
- Section 3. Election of Officers: All officers except Pastors shall be elected by 80% vote of the church in the business session and shall serve for one year unless they resign their position or shall be dismissed by vote of the church.
- Section 4. Trustees: A Board of Trustees shall consist of three members and shall be nominated by the Deacons to serve for a period of five years or until such time as they ask to be relieved or death, or they move out of the community or become

an inactive member. Trustees shall be at least twenty-one years of age. It shall be the function of the Trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging and purchase or rental of property, and other legal documents or contracts which require signatures, upon the authority of Ashton Baptist Church. The Trustees shall act only as directed by a majority of Ashton Baptist Church in a regular business session except otherwise as provided. The Board of Trustees shall hold in trust all property belonging to Ashton Baptist Church and shall take all necessary measures for its protection. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall be in charge of all deeds and legal papers pertaining to Ashton Baptist Church and they shall be deposited in a safety-deposit box with chairman or Board of Trustees in charge of the key.

- Section 5. Pastors: The pastors shall be called by 90% vote of the church in business session. Election shall be by secret ballot. In regard to pastoral termination, circumstances shall be evaluated according to scripture and termination terms concluded by the Deacon Board as circumstances warrant. Upon Pastoral resignation, minister is to notify the Deacon Board three weeks prior to resignation.
- Section 6. Duties of the Pastors: Pastors shall serve by leadership of The Holy Spirit and directed by scripture. He shall conduct the services of public worship. He shall act as moderator of all business meetings and shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees. In the event of a tie vote the pastor will then cast the deciding vote.
- Section 7. Pastoral Sick leave and Vacation: Terms are under the desecration of the Fellowship of Deacons.
- Section 8. Fellowship of Deacons: Ashton Baptist Church can rotate its deacons after three active years providing circumstances warrant. There shall be a minimum of one deacon serving at any one time and shall serve for a period of three years or longer if replacements are not available. Upon approval of the church, the new deacons shall take office upon completion of Deacon Mentor Program and church vote.
- Section 9. Deacon Mentoring Program

This program provides the necessary requirements for developing qualified candidates for a Deacon at Ashton Baptist Church.

1. Deacon Mentoring Program candidates may be nominated by the following processes:
 - Self-nominate by expressing to an existing Deacon or Pastor the desire to serve the Church.
 - Be nominated by the Fellowship of Deacons.
 - Be nominated by the Church membership.
2. Once nominated, Deacon candidates will undergo approval through the following processes:
 - Candidates' names will be presented to Church membership for a vote.
 - The church membership will cast votes for nominees by secret ballot
 - Ballots will be collected and jointly counted by the existing Fellowship of Deacons.
 - A 75% approval of the voting membership present is required for acceptance into the program.
 - Results will be presented to the Church membership by the Chairmen of the Fellowship of Deacons.
3. Deacon Mentoring Program participants will participate in the program of mentoring for one (1) year per the following:
 - Will have no voting privileges in Deacon meetings.
 - Will otherwise serve the Church in the same capacity as the Fellowship of Deacons.
 - Will serve the Church under the guidance of the Fellowship of Deacons.
4. Upon successful completion of the Deacon Mentoring Program, participants may be considered for nomination as a Deacon of Ashton Baptist Church.

Section 10. Duties of the Deacons: It shall be the duty of the Fellowship of Deacons to cooperate with the pastors in the oversight of the work of the church, to be zealous for the growth and spiritual development of its members to revise the church roll, to distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper, and to elect its own chairman.

The chairmen of the Fellowship of the Deacon's shall act as Moderator of business sessions in the absence of the Pastors or when matters are being heard that concern the Pastors. The chairman shall also present to the church for action, such matters that have been approved by the Fellowship of Deacons and the Pastor.

Section 11. Nominating Committee: The Pastor and Deacons shall recommend three persons in the June business meeting to serve as the nominating committee. These three shall in turn nominate to the church the Sunday School Director by July business meeting. Upon their approval by the church, these four will form the nominating committee. They shall nominate for the church's approval other officers and teachers as needs require by Ashton Baptist Church to begin the new church year September 1st.

Section 12. Building and Grounds: The Nominating Committee shall elect the Building and Grounds committee. It shall consist of a minimum of four persons one being a deacon. This committee is responsible for the church facility, its care, upkeep, and physical construction modifications.

Section 13. Finance Committee: This committee shall consist of the Treasurer, Sunday School Director, Chairmen of the Fellowship of Deacons, and one member nominated by the nominating committee and approved by the church. It shall be their duties to study the financial affairs of the church and to recommend a budget to the church for its approval by January 1st.

Section 14. Music Director: The Music Director shall be elected annually and shall be in charge of the music program of the church. All music shall be approved by the music director and Pastor for congregational worship services.

Section 15. Sunday School Teachers: They shall be elected annually and shall be responsible for their respective classes. If out of necessity they be absent, it is their duty to inform their assistant. If they are unable to contact their assistant, it is their duty to contact the Sunday School Director.

Section 16. Sunday School Director: He/She shall be elected annually and shall be in charge of the Sunday School and all of its activities.

Section 17. Church Clerk: This officer shall be elected annually. The Clerk shall keep correct minutes of every business meeting of the church. The Clerk shall also keep a correct roll of the membership of the church. The Clerk shall grant letters to members joining other churches of like faith, upon approval of the church.

Section 18. Treasurer: This officer shall be elected annually and shall be the custodian of all general finances associated with the operation of Ashton Baptist Church. The Treasurer shall keep a correct record of all receipts and expenditures. The Treasurer shall give a report to the church at the monthly business meetings.

Article V Meetings

Section 1. Monthly Meetings: A monthly business meeting shall be held once a month; for the hearing of reports and the transaction of such other business as necessary.

Section 2. Special Business Meetings: Special meetings of the church may be called at any time to consider matters which require immediate attention. These meetings may be called by the Pastor or the Chairmen of the Fellowship of Deacons in the absence of the Pastor.

Article VI Discipline and Exclusion

Section 1. Its Meaning and Spirit: Any member having cause of complaint against another must first seek to remove this complaint as directed in scripture (Matthew 18:15-17), if this is not sufficient, the complaint shall be brought in writing, three handwritten copies, to Pastor and Deacons. The Pastor and Deacons shall in turn report their findings to the church and recommend such action as they deem wise and proper. All discipline shall be carried out in the spirit of love and meekness and godly fear lest any fall by the way.

Section 2. Upon recommendation of the Fellowship of Deacons and the Pastor, and by vote of the church, members of unchristian like conduct may be excluded. The member/members being considered must be given reasonable notice that action is being considered. No member shall be excluded from the church membership without the privilege of a hearing and the right to face his/her accuser.

Article VII General

- Section 1. Fiscal Year: The fiscal year shall be from September 1 through August 31st of the following year.
- Section 2. Finance Year: The finance year shall be from January 1 through December 31.
- Section 3. Reading of the Church Covenant: The Church Covenant shall be read as often as the Pastors deems it necessary and wise.

Article VIII Amendments

- Section 1. This constitution and by-laws may be amended, altered, or replaced by a 75% vote of the membership present at the business meeting of Ashton Baptist Church, provided that such amendments be given to the Fellowship of the Deacons at least thirty days prior to the time the vote is taken. After two readings and unchallenged upon second reading, changes and amendments will be present for vote.
- Section 2. Copies of this constitution and the Church Covenant shall be available from the Pastor. A copy shall be kept with the church records. This constitution shall be available to all members of this church.

Article IX Disposition of Property in Event of Dissolution

- Section 1. In the event of ASHTON BAPTIST CHURCH should cease to exist as a church, the real estate, personal property, and all assets shall be irrevocably donated to the Colleton Baptist Association to be used as a Southern Baptist Church.

The Fellowship of Deacons certifies that this Constitution and Bylaws of Ashton Baptist Church was voted on and adopted on the 14th day of April in the year of 2019 during a scheduled business meeting.

First Reading: March 17, 2019

Final reading: April 14, 2019