

CONSTITUTION
Of
***Rolling Hills Baptist Church,
Fairfield, Ohio.***

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and so that this body may be governed in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches of the same faith.

ARTICLE I
NAME

This body shall be known as the Rolling Hills Baptist Church, Incorporated, located in the City of Fairfield, Butler County, State of Ohio.

ARTICLE 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 June 14, 2000. We band ourselves together a body of believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE III
THE CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, and on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

ARTICLE IV **CHARACTER**

Section 1 **Polity**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It 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.

Section 2 **Incorporation**

This church shall be incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Ohio governing religious bodies, and the handling of property shall be in accordance with such laws.

Section 3 **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.

ARTICLE V **MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1 **General**

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive 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
Candidates for Membership

A person shall be received as a candidate for membership in one of the following ways:

- A. By profession of Faith and Baptism - Upon receiving Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, following Him in believer's baptism by immersion, and yielding to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- B. By Letter from another Southern Baptist Church - Upon reaffirmation of faith in and commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- C. By statement of previous Southern Baptist Church membership – Upon reaffirmation of faith in and commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, if church records are not available.
- D. By statement from a non-Southern Baptist Church - Upon satisfying all of the following:
 - 1. Affirmation of a previous personal salvation experience,
 - 2. Followed by baptism by immersion, not required for salvation, but symbolizing the salvation experience,
 - 3. Submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ,
 - 4. Agreement with the basic beliefs of our church as stated in *The Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in session, June 14, 2000.
- E. By Baptism - If you were not baptized by immersion, or your baptism was a necessary condition for salvation, upon satisfying all of the following:
 - 1. Affirmation of a previous personal salvation experience
 - 2. Submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ
 - 3. Agreement with the basic beliefs of our church as stated in *The Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in session, June 14, 2000.
 - 4. Followed by baptism by immersion, not required for salvation, but symbolizing the salvation experience.

Such candidates will become members after they have fulfilled one of the candidacy requirements aforementioned. All new members are encouraged to attend a Baptist Beliefs class covering *The Baptist Faith and Message*, the church covenant, and the church constitution.

Section 3 Voting Rights of Members

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 . If any church member requests a secret ballot vote for the election of any issue, the request shall be granted.

Section 4 Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following way:

- A. Death,**
- B. Dismission to another Baptist church,**
- C. Exclusion by action of this church (refer to Section 5),**
- D. Erasure upon becoming affiliated with a church of another faith or denomination,**
- E. Dismission with stated purpose of organizing a new Baptist church,**
- F. Removal for remaining in a non-resident status for over one year, with restoration to be the guideline.**

Section 5 Discipline

- A. It shall be the basic purpose 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. Restoration rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another.**
- B. Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem. All such proceeding shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the welfare of the church will best be served by exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the meeting called for this purpose, and the church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.**
- C. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition**

which as made it necessary for the church to exclude him may upon request be restored to membership by a three-fourths vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation.

ARTICLE VI
CHURCH OFFICERS

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

Section 1
Pastor

The pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff in performing their tasks. A major concern of the pastor is to perform pastoral responsibilities. The pastor is the leader of worship, proclamation, education, and pastoral ministry.

A. The Calling of the Pastor - 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 one week's notice shall be given. The Nominating Committee shall present ten candidates for the church to elect by highest vote five members of the pulpit committee with the next two highest votes as alternate members. A Pulpit Committee of five members and two alternates shall seek out a suitable Southern Baptist ordained minister as pastor. Their recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, with affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. He shall preside at meetings of the church.

B. Privileges and Duties of the Pastor:

1. The pastor shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the church, and shall be to it a true shepherd.
2. He shall minister unto the church at all regular and appointed times of worship and service, and to the individual members whenever possible.
3. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the church. The pastor will abstain on issues relating to himself.
4. The church shall send the pastor to the Southern Baptist Convention, the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, and Pastor's Evangelistic Conference each year, provided the church so votes.

5. The matters of housing, salary, expenses, vacations and other matters deemed relevant shall be included in the terms of the pastor's call.
 6. He shall be limited to four weeks of revivals per year, unless the church votes otherwise.
 7. He shall have full supervision of the church staff, with exception of the custodian who will be supervised by the trustees.
- C. When the church is without a pastor, the deacons shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the church. The Pulpit Committee may not consider an extended pulpit supply or an interim pastor a candidate for pastor.

Section 2 Ministerial and Support Church Staff

- A. This church shall call or employ such ministerial staff members (e.g. pastor, associate pastor, youth minister, music director, etc.) as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for ministerial staff members is determined. Ministerial staff members other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by the pastor and a designated committee of five members and two alternates assembled by the Nominating Committee. The five regular members of the search committee shall have voting rights within the committee; the alternates may participate in the selection process, but will not have voting rights. The committee shall bring to the church one candidate for a position at a business meeting and the election shall be by secret ballot, with affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for employment.
- B. Termination of the pastor or ministerial staff:
1. The pastor's or a ministerial staff member's service may be terminated upon acceptance of his own resignation or by action initiated by the church in business session. When the pastor's or a ministerial staff member's service is terminated by his own resignation, a minimum of fifteen (15) days notice will be required. This time may be extended or decreased by mutual consent of both church and pastor or ministerial staff member.
 2. When action is initiated by the church, written charges signed by at least two faithful witnesses must be presented to the pastor or ministerial staff member. When such action is sought by

members of the church, a special business meeting shall be called. The purpose of the meeting shall be announced at a regular Sunday services at least one week prior to the meeting. Immediately, written notification of said charges and time for a vote shall be mailed to each church family. If the termination procedure involves the pastor, he shall relinquish his position as moderator as soon as the motion has been made for dismissal. The pastor or ministerial staff member who is being considered for termination shall vacate the meeting room while the vote is being taken. The dismissal vote shall be by secret ballot, with a simple majority (over 50%) of those voting members present being required for approval. When action is initiated by the church, the pastor's or ministerial staff member's service will end immediately upon approval of such a motion. However, he will be entitled to severance pay equal to four (4) weeks salary at his current rate.

- C. This church shall also employ full or part-time support staff members (administrative assistant, secretary, bookkeeper, custodian, etc.), as the church needs. When the need for a support staff member is determined by vote of the church, a job description for the required position shall be written by the personnel committee. Upon approval by the church of the position, the personnel committee shall employ as well as terminate staff members with respect to these positions. Primary evaluation criteria shall be based on character and demonstrated competence in the support staff position. Hiring preference shall not be given based on Church membership. Additional affirmation of two-thirds of the eligible voting members at a regularly called business meeting shall be required before the personnel committee employs a standing Church member in a support position. The trustees are responsible for supervision of the custodial staff.

Section 3 Deacons

- A. There shall initially be six openings. As a guidance beyond this, there shall be one deacon for every fifteen church families. In selecting deacons, qualifications shall be the primary consideration. A committee shall be selected for presenting the qualifications for the office of Deacon according to the New Testament teachings, and for asking candidates if they are scriptural qualified. Deacons shall be nominated one month prior to election by secret ballot. The deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year the term of office of one-third of the number of deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill the vacancies. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term. After serving a term of three years, no deacon shall be eligible for selection until the lapse of at least one year. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the church from another church where he has served as a deacon.

- B. In accordance with the meaning of the work and practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing pastoral ministry tasks; proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, care for church members and other persons in the community, lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application, and lead the church in performing its tasks. The Chairman of Deacons shall be responsible for pulpit supplies during anticipated absences of the pastor.**
- C. The deacons shall elect their officers and shall be organized to assist the pastor, and for the consideration of responsibilities related to their work. They may organize themselves into four committees to serve the church in the specific areas of baptism, Lord's Supper, benevolence and pastor review.**
- 1. The Baptism Committee is elected to assist the pastor in preparing for the ordinance of baptism. The Baptism Committee is responsible for preparing candidates and the baptistery for the ordinance.**
 - 2. The Lord's Supper committee prepares the elements and the equipment for the observance of the Lord's Supper. The committee does the preparatory and maintenance work needed to observe the memorial service. The committee will prepare the elements on a schedule approved by the church.**
 - 3. The Benevolence Committee shall be a committee of three active deacons. The committee will be responsible for the administration and distribution of all designated benevolence funds.**
 - 4. A committee of three deacons shall conduct the annual review of the pastor with the assistance of the personnel committee, as defined in the personnel committee section.**
 - 5. Special committees may be added for special assignments and projects.**

Section 4 Moderator

The moderator shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

Section 5 Clerk

The clerk shall be elected by the church and shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk is responsible for

keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office when one is maintained.

Section 6 Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, 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. The treasurer and secretary/bookkeeper will sign all checks for disbursement except in cases where this is temporarily impractical. In such cases, the financial secretary or a deacon, authorized by the church, may provide the second signature. 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 for the preceding month. The treasurer's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or a public accountant.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and upon 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 records of the church.

Section 7 Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall be elected by the church. The financial secretary shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons selected by the church to serve in turn, and from these shall give donors individual credit. The financial secretary shall fill out the sheet for the monthly balance, which will indicate receipts from envelopes, plate or loose, and miscellaneous or special offerings. The financial secretary shall also be responsible for preparing and mailing quarterly or semiannual record of contributions to all contributing members.

Section 8 Trustees

The church shall elect three members to serve as Trustees. The term of office shall be three years, one of the number being selected annually to fill the vacancy of the one whose term of office shall expire. After serving as trustee for a full term, a member shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has passed. The Trustees shall, as provided by law and the action of the church, represent the church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase and disposal of church property. They shall execute all legal papers relating to the church and to the community as the church may direct. They shall

have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, negotiate for sale or purchase of property, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action.

The Trustees shall supervise, in cooperation with the pastor, all custodial help.

ARTICLE VII **COMMITTEES**

Section 1 **General**

All church committee members shall be recommended by the nominating committee and elected by the church. Committees shall be formed as the needs arise in the church on the basis of the nominating committee's recommendations.

Section 2 **Nominating Committee**

A committee on nominations, consisting of a chairman and two members recommended by the pastor and elected in March to serve staggered three year terms, shall bring to the church in the April business meeting nominations for director of the various program organizations which will exist during the following church year. Upon election by the church, the program organization directors shall be added to the nominating committee, and shall serve for one year. The committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions that are filled by volunteers. The nominating committee recommends persons for all volunteer positions to be elected by the church.

Section 3 **Finance Committee**

The finance committee shall be responsible for maintaining the fiscal integrity of the church, to include stewardship, budget development, and investment policies.

- A. Membership shall be the treasurer, financial secretary, one member of the teller committee, one trustee, one deacon, and three at large members elected by the church to serve staggered three year terms. One at large member will be recommended by the nominating committee and elected annually to fill the vacancy of the at large member whose term of office expires. After serving a full three year term, an at large member shall not be eligible to serve again until one year has passed.
- B. Responsibilities of the committee shall be as follows:
 - 1. Develop and actively promote the stewardship program for the church.

- 2. Through consultation with the pastor and program organization directors, prepare and submit to the church for approval an annual budget. The budget is to be submitted to the church at the September business meeting prior to the beginning of the church fiscal year which will begin October 1st and end September 30th of the following calendar year.**
- 3. Develop guidelines and policies concerning investment of church funds for approval by the church.**
- 4. Consider all budget revision requests and make recommendations to the church.**
- 5. Review income and expenses quarterly. In the event of a decline in church income, prepare a payment priority list to be submitted to the church for approval.**
- 6. Insure the church books are audited once each year and make a report to the church concerning the condition of the church's finances following the audit.**

Section 4 Tellers Committee

The tellers committee shall be responsible for the collection, counting, recording and depositing of all receipts. At least two members of the tellers committee shall function together when counting or recording funds.

Section 5 Personnel Committee

Upon recommendation of the nominating committee, the church shall elect three members to serve as a personnel committee. The committee shall assist the church in matters related to employed personnel administration. The term of office shall be three years, one of the number being elected annually to fill the vacancy of the one whose term of office shall expire. After serving on this committee for a full term, a member shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has passed.

The personnel committee shall prepare and maintain an organizational manual relating to the church's employed personnel, including updated position descriptions for all employed personnel. In accordance with these position descriptions, the personnel committee shall annually review the work of each employee with the exception of the custodial staff, whose work is reviewed by the trustees. The personnel committee shall work with the finance committee to recommend any salary adjustments.

With respect to the pastor, the personnel committee will work jointly with a committee of

three deacons to conduct the annual review. The personnel committee will gather appropriate congregational feedback. With the aid of this information the deacon committee and the personnel committee will conduct the pastor's annual review. The results of this review will be provided by the personnel committee and to the finance committee so that an appropriate salary adjustment can be recommended to the church.

The personnel committee shall be available as needed for recruiting, interviewing, and recommending to the church candidates for ministerial staff, other than the pastor. The committee will also define support staff positions, salaries, and job descriptions as voted on by the church. With respect to these defined support staff positions, the personnel committee shall have the authority to recruit, interview and hire candidates for the positions, as well as the authority to terminate the services of support staff personnel.

Section 6 Church Ministry Team

The Church Ministry Team shall serve the church by leading in setting goals, strategies, and measures for the ministries and programs of the church and its organization in accord with the Great Commission, Matthew 28:19-20. Members of the team shall be all Church Ministerial Staff, Sunday School Director, WMU Director, Brotherhood Director, Deacon Member, and three at large members recommended by the nominating committee and approved by the church to serve staggered three year terms.

Duties of the team shall be as follows:

- A. Review the church's objectives and goals at regular intervals in accord with the Great Commission.
- A. Recommend to the church suggested goals.
- C. Recommend a strategy for accomplishing the goals and implement the strategy by reviewing and coordinating ministry and program plans recommended by church officers, organizations and committees. The strategy will include recommendations to the church on the use of leadership, calendar time and other resources based upon the church's purpose and goals.
- D. Recommend measures of success to the church and evaluate achievements of the church in terms of these measures. All matters agreed upon by the team, which call for action not already approved, shall be referred to the church for approval.

ARTICLE VIII
PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1
General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

Section 2
Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of a Sunday School Director for the study of God's Word. The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to reach persons for Christ and church membership; teach the biblical revelation; perform the functions of the church within its constituency; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 3
Church Training

There shall be a Church Training, divided into departments for all ages and conducted under the direction of a general director. The Church Training shall serve as the training organization of the church. The tasks of the Church Training shall be to orient new church members; train church members to perform the functions of the church; train church leaders; teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, and church policy and organization; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 4
Missions Organizations

The church is to provide for a missions program with such officers and organizations as needed. The tasks of the missions program shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through praying and giving; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 5
Church Music Program

There shall be a Church Music program under the direction of the music director. Such officers and / or organizations shall be included as needed. The music tasks shall be to teach music, train persons to lead, sing, and play music, provide music in the church and community, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

ARTICLE IX
ORDINANCES

Section 1
Baptism

A person who receives 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, shall be received for baptism.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- B. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the church shall authorize. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and observance of baptism.
- C. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during worship service.

Section 2
The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate his second coming.

- A. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly, preferably the first Sunday of the quarter, or as otherwise scheduled.
- B. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- C. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE X
CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1
Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God and on Wednesday evening for prayer and Bible study. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

Section 2 Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held at a minimum of once each quarter. The time and/or service in which the meeting will be held shall be announced at least two weeks prior. Should there be any unusual business or matter of unusual interest to be brought before such regular meeting, notice shall be given the membership one week prior to the meeting.

The pastor or acting moderator shall decide which issues are unusual.

Section 3 Special Business Meetings

A specially called business meeting may be held to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week's notice must be given for the specially called business meeting.

Section 4 Notice of Called Meetings

Notice of all specially called business meetings of the church shall be given by announcement one week prior to the meeting, with the purpose included in the announcement. The pastor or chairman of deacons shall be authorized to call a special business meeting.

Section 5 Quorum

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6 Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, the latest revised edition, is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church, the deacons, and the committees. If any conflict should arise between these by-laws and Robert's Rules of Order, the latest revised edition, the by-laws will then govern.

ARTICLE XI
AMENDMENTS

Changes in this constitution and by-laws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided such amendments shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the constitution and bylaws shall be by two-thirds vote of all members of the church present and entitled to vote.

Revision approved in business session 10- 08 - 97.
Revision approved in business session 11- 08 - 00.
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Revision approved in business session 4- 19 – 09.

THE

CONSTITUTION

OF

ROLLING HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH,

FAIRFIELD, OHIO.