

CONSTITUTION
OF
UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE

We hereby establish this constitution in order to govern ourselves in an orderly manner as we seek to fulfill the mission of the Church under the leadership of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE I
NAME

This congregation shall be called University Baptist Church, Charlottesville, Virginia.

ARTICLE II
MISSION AND MINISTRIES

University Baptist Church is called into being by God, and created for the mission of proclaiming and living according to the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses of Jesus Christ in the University of Virginia community, in the City of Charlottesville, the County of Albemarle, and throughout the world.

The following ministries are means by which University Baptist Church seeks to fulfill its missionary mandate and achieve the will of God:

1. Worship

We gather to celebrate God's mystery and mighty work of redemption, to acknowledge and declare His absolute sovereignty over the world, and to present ourselves as living sacrifices.

2. Fellowship

We share with one another the new life which has come to us in Christ, thereby forming a distinct community that cares for one another and strives to live by the truth and moral demands of the gospel.

3. Education

We transmit and evoke the knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills of Christian living, to the end that individual believers grow in faith and conform to the model of Christ, and the Church grows and prospers.

4. Proclamation/Evangelism

We express and explain the Christian gospel to all persons, especially those outside the Church, calling them to commitment to Christ, believer's baptism, church membership, and initiation into the Kingdom of God.

5. Service

We bear concrete witness to the love and power of Christ by attending to the needs of individuals and to the social structures and systems in which they live.

ARTICLE III CONFESSION OF FAITH

We believe in the one true and living God, who made heaven and earth, and who alone is worthy of our praise and obedience.

We believe in Jesus Christ as the supreme, definitive revelation of God and the mediator through whom sinful humanity is reconciled to God.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who inspires persons to accept the truth of the Gospel of Christ Crucified and Risen and to be regenerated by grace through repentance and faith, and who acts in the lives of believers as their source of peace and strength.

We believe in the Church as a community of those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who are baptized, associated by covenant in the fellowship and mission of the Gospel, and governed by the Holy Scriptures. Church members manifest their relationship with Christ and one another by worshiping and celebrating the Lord's Supper together, exercising the gifts, rights, and responsibilities of Christian ministry, caring for one another, and exemplifying obedience in the total stewardship of daily living.

We believe in the Kingdom of God begun in Christ, witnessed to by the Church, and expected at the end of history, when God's vision for creation will be realized, and every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father forever.

ARTICLE IV CONSTITUENCY

1. General

This congregation shall consist of all persons who participate in and support its life, worship, and work. Represented are all age groups, differing theological perspectives, and various levels of Christian maturity and church commitment.

While most will have entered into a covenant relationship as members or associate members, some constituents will be involved such as children growing up in the nurture of their parents and church family; and still others as regular attenders and anonymous seekers. Such diversity finds its unity in the common desire to live in communion with God, be obedient to Christ and build with one another a Baptist community of faith.

2. Members

As shall be more fully set forth in the by-laws, the membership of this church shall consist of persons who have:

- a. Made a public profession of their experience of and faith in Jesus Christ.
- b. Been baptized;
- c. Expressed a sincere desire to participate in the life and work of this church;
and
- d. Presented publicly in a worship service to enter the covenant of membership.

All members shall be entitled to vote on matters of church business, and shall be eligible to hold positions of church leadership and service.

3. Associate Members

A person who wishes to retain membership in his or her home church or who expects to reside in the Charlottesville area for a limited time may become an associate member by presenting himself or herself at any worship service, stating a profession of faith in Christ and a commitment to this congregation.

Associate members shall be entitled to vote on matters of church business, and shall be eligible to hold positions of church leadership and service, other than church officer, deacon, committee/council chair, organizational director, and church council member.

ARTICLE V

POLITY

1. By-Laws

The By-Laws of University Baptist Church are established for the purpose of providing the procedures for implementing the matters set forth in the Constitution. The By-Laws provide the framework for church organization and leadership.

2. Governance and Operation

The governance of University Baptist Church is vested in the congregation, which seeks to the best of its ability to live under the direction of Jesus Christ and to understand and carry out the will of God.

Members and associate members in proper church conference have the authority to act on behalf of the congregation, and, while seeking consensus and honoring the rich diversity of its membership, operate by majority rule, guaranteeing equal rights of participation to all.

Leadership and operation of the church rests with its clergy, employees, committees, councils, and boards, all deriving their authority from the congregation.

3. Denominational/Ecumenical Relations

While completely autonomous in its governance, and completely independent of any other ecclesiastical body, University Baptist Church recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation with Baptist groups at local, state, national, and international levels, and with other Christian bodies, as the church may give consent.

ARTICLE VI AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution shall be made at a church conference. Notice of the conference, its purpose, and the proposed changes shall be given through the regular church newsletter and other distribution methods as appropriate, at least thirty (30) days prior to the conference. Approval of amendments to the Constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of those present and entitled to vote.

Revised and approved, May, 2015