

MUDDY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
POWHATAN, VIRGINIA
BYLAWS
2018

**Article I
Name**

The name of this corporation is **Muddy Creek Baptist Church of Powhatan, Virginia**. Hereinafter in these Bylaws, this corporation shall be referred to as the “church.”

**Article II
Principal Office**

The principal office of the church is fixed and located at 3470 Trenholm Road, County of Powhatan, the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**Article III
Statement Of Purpose And Faith**

Muddy Creek Baptist Church is a Family of Faith, whose mission is to know Christ and to make Him known through worship, witness, discipleship, fellowship, and service.

The church affirms the Holy Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God and as the basis of all our beliefs and practices. No other document shall take precedence over the Holy Bible in the life, decisions, and government of this church.

The members of the church voluntarily band themselves together as a local fellowship of baptized believers in Jesus Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit to personally commit to sharing the Good News of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ with mankind.

The members will comprise the church body whose purpose is to be Christian-like in daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

This church fellowship believes in one God, who reveals Himself to us in three persons: 1) God, the Father, the Creator and Governor of the universe; 2) Christ, the Son who was born of a virgin, lived the perfect life showed us who God is, died on the cross for the sins of the world, and resurrected to defeat sin and death; 3) The Holy Spirit, who comforts, guides, and protects us.

We believe in the divinely inspired word of God, the Holy Bible, which is the written record of God’s revelation of Himself to us, and a treasure of instruction for the Christian life.

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God, sinned and fell from grace, and may be redeemed to eternal life by the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

We believe that the church is the fellowship of all who have been redeemed by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

The ordinances of the church are Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Article IV Polity And Relationships

Except as otherwise set forth in these Bylaws, the activities and affairs of the church shall be conducted by the Active Members of the church and all corporate powers shall be exercised by the Active Members who are qualified according to Section VI of these Bylaws.

This church 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 Southern Baptist churches.

Article V Membership

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership reserves unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of the church.

Candidacy to membership:

- A. Any person may request membership in the church at any public worship service of the church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church for membership in one of the following ways:
 - (1) By profession of faith and seeking baptism according to the policies of this church.
 - (2) By promise of letter of transfer from another church of like faith and order.
 - (3) By statement of faith when a letter of transfer from a church of like faith and order is not obtainable for some good reason. Such a statement shall satisfy the church concerning the candidate's prior conversion, baptism, and church relationship. No person having been excluded by a sister church shall be accepted for church membership until an attempt at reconciliation has been made toward the offended church.
- B. Membership by profession of faith shall be conditioned upon being baptized by immersion in a way that is acceptable to this church.

- C. An individual seeking membership of the church will make a public statement of affirmation agreeing with the doctrinal statement of the church, the By-Laws of the Church, and the requirements set forth as a member.
- D. Election to membership shall be by a majority vote of the active members present and voting.

Classes of membership: There shall be two classes of members: Active Members and Inactive Members.

- A. Active members shall meet the following provisions:
 - (1) They shall have fulfilled the requirements for candidacy to membership as stated in these Bylaws and shall have been properly elected to membership.
 - (2) They shall not have been declared by the church in regular or special business meeting to be “out of fellowship with the church.” According to Section V of these Bylaws.
 - (3) They shall have attended at least twelve (12) regular worship services of the church during the previous twelve (12) month period, not counting any period before the individual was properly elected to membership in the church. Exceptions due to illness or other unavoidable absence shall require the approval of the Elders upon application by the member.
- B. Inactive Members shall be subject to the following:
 - (1) They are defined as those members who fail to satisfy any of the requirements for Active Members.
 - (2) They may not vote so long as they shall remain inactive.
 - (3) They shall be restored to active membership upon satisfaction of the lacking requirement or requirements for active membership.

Discipline

- A. The practice of this church shall be to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The senior pastor, other members of the church staff, and the deacons and elders are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.
- B. Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the cause of Christ or to the welfare of the church, the senior pastor, elders, and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20. If the member should fail to correct the problem despite the counsel of the senior pastor, elders, and deacons, the church may, by vote of 2/3 of membership or by eldership, in regular or special business meeting declare the member to be “out of fellowship with the church,” and the member shall be removed (excluded) from membership in the church.

C. The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded upon request of the excluded person, and, by a majority vote upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

Termination of Membership: Membership shall be terminated in any of the following ways:

- A. Death.
- B. Transfer of membership to another church.
- C. Exclusion by action of this church, according to the provisions of Section V of these Bylaws.
- D. Written request by a member that his/her membership be terminated.

Membership qualification for selected positions:

- A. Only Active members may qualify for election to the following church positions: Eldership, Deaconship, Administrative Coordinator, Director/Team Leader of a Church Ministry, and Church Treasurer.
- B. The senior pastor or other ministerial staff members shall be recognized as Active Members of the church immediately following their election to their respective positions.
- C. Should the individual filling any of the aforementioned positions become an Inactive Member or have his membership terminated, he shall forfeit that position.

Article VI Church Meetings

Church meetings shall be held at the principle place of worship of the church, unless otherwise designated.

There shall be two general categories of church meetings: WORSHIP services, and BUSINESS meetings.

The following meetings shall be classified as worship services of the church:

- A. Regular worship services shall be held publicly with the intent of worship and ministry.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at least quarterly as determined by the pastor and the elders.
- C. Special worship services may be set from time to time as approved by the church.

The following meetings shall be classified as business meetings of the church.

- A. REGULAR business meetings shall be held at the principal office of the church at least once per year within the month prior to the beginning of a new fiscal year. The fiscal year of the church begins October 1 of each year. The adoption of a budget shall take place at this annual meeting.
- (1) Only those persons who are Active Members of the church and who are at least eighteen (18) years of age shall be qualified to vote on matters considered during a regular annual business meeting. Twenty Active Members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at an annual business meeting.
 - (2) If the quorum is not met at the initial scheduled annual business meeting, the meeting shall be rescheduled and made public for two weeks. The Active Members of this rescheduled meeting will constitute a quorum.
- B. SPECIAL business meetings may be held at any time to consider special matters of significant or urgent nature, subject to the following provisions:
- (1) A special business meeting may be called by anyone of the following: the pastor, an elder, or, in their absence or disability, and the chairman of the deacons.
 - (2) Notice of all special business meetings shall be given in such a way that the general nature of the business to be transacted is clearly described, along with a statement of the time, date, and place of the meeting (if not at the principal office of the church). Notice of the special business meeting may be given by any of the following methods:
 - a. Distribution of written matter (as stated above) to the congregation in attendance at two regular worship services at least seventy-two (72) hours apart; or
 - b. Oral announcement of the matter to the congregation in attendance at two regular worship services at least seventy-two (72) hours apart.
 - (3) A quorum shall consist of the Active Members who are present in the worship service.
- C. The calling of a senior pastor requires a special meeting. A quorum for this meeting shall consist of one third of Active Members of this church.

The following general provisions shall apply to all business meetings of the church:

- A. Parliamentary procedure shall be governed by the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, except as these Bylaws may otherwise provide.
- B. Each member who is qualified to vote is entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the church.

- C. No votes by proxy.
- D. Absentee ballots shall be permitted only by the prior approval of the church acting in regular or special business meetings. When absentee ballots are permitted, those members casting absentee ballots shall be counted in the quorum.
- E. The moderator shall preside at the business meeting. The church will elect a moderator each year at the annual business meeting with the option of re-election for the following year on a continuing basis. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of the deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the moderator and the chairman of the deacons, the Administrative Coordinator shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

Article VII Governing Board

The governing board consist of three separate and distinct offices with separate and distinct leadership responsibilities and levels of authority over and within the church. The authority of each leadership office is contained within that leadership office solely.

- A. The official governing board shall consist of the Corporate Officers, the Elder(s), and members of the Board of Deacons. The Senior Pastor shall act as chairman. If the Senior Pastor is unable to officiate as the Chairman, another Elder will officiate.
- B. Members of the governing board must affirm agreement with the Articles of Faith and Bylaws of this church. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this known to the church.
- C. The governing of the church and the conducting of its business, the management and control of its property; real, personal and electronic, and the general supervision of its work shall be vested in the governing board.
- D. The purpose of the governing board shall be the following:
 - (1) To assist the Elders in the spiritual leadership of the church.
 - (2) Assisting the Senior Pastor and other officers and leaders within the church with godly counsel.
 - (3) Assist in giving accountability oversight to the Elders, Deacons and Corporate Officers of the church in matters of moral, ethical and legal behavior that affects the church in areas of spiritual life and in corporate affairs.
- E. The governing board shall meet at a minimum of once per fiscal year.
 - (1) Additional meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor, or a Corporate Officer, or the Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

- (2) The time and location of each meeting shall be agreed upon by 2/3 members of the governing board.
- (3) Members of the governing board who are unable to attend a meeting in person may participate by phone.
- (4) A governing board meeting must include at a minimum the attendance of all Elders, the Chairman of the Deacon Board, a majority of the Board of Deacons and at least one Corporation Officer-who will represent the Corporation officers.

Article VIII

Governing Board Membership

Senior Pastor

- A. The senior pastor, by virtue of his office, shall serve as the spiritual head of the leadership and authority over the governing board and church body.
- B. The senior pastor shall be an ex-officio member, with advisory powers only, on all boards, committees and organizations of the church, with the exception of the Governing Board.
- C. The senior pastor shall be the overseer of the work of the church. As such, he shall be the chief administrative officer of the church in all instances except those matters which are legally the concern of the Corporation Officers. The senior pastor shall be guided by the instructions of the church in his capacity as Chief Administrative Officer.
- D. A senior pastor shall be chosen and elected by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a special business meeting, according to Article VI.
- E. When the office of senior pastor is vacant, a pastor search committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable senior pastor, and its recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot at a special meeting called for this purpose. See Section VI.
- F. The senior pastor's term of office shall be for an indefinite period. He shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his resignation or by the church's request.
- G. The senior pastor may relinquish the office of senior pastor by giving at least one month's notice at the time of his resignation.
- H. The senior pastor may be dismissed in a SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING. Except in instance of gross misconduct by the dismissed senior pastor, the church will compensate the senior pastor with a sum equal to at least three (3) months compensation of his usual compensation. The termination shall be immediate, and the

compensation shall be rendered in one sum paid, not more than thirty (30)-days from the day of termination.

- I. A quorum of one third of Active Membership is necessary for a vote. The vote shall be by ballot.

Corporation Officers

- A. There shall be a minimum of three (3) Corporation Directors.
- B. These Corporate Directors are hereby designated as the directors of the corporation as that term is defined and used in the Commonwealth of Virginia, provided, however, that the activities and affairs of this church shall be conducted and its powers shall be exercised as allocated in these Bylaws, and the designation herein of the Corporate Directors shall not grant to them any power which is not expressly or impliedly granted by these Bylaws, or by custom and usage, to the members of the church or to the Governing Board.
- C. The church will elect the corporate directors at its annual meeting with the option of re-election for the following year on a continuing basis.
- D. The responsibilities of these corporate directors is as follows:
 - (1) Oversight of adherence to the Church Bylaws.
 - (2) Submission of corporation reports in accordance to the responsibilities of a corporation to government authorities and laws.
 - (3) Participation in the church's governing board.
- E. A unanimous vote of the corporate directors shall be required for any legal decisions and recommendations to the church membership related to the church.
- F. Decisions and recommendation that will affect or alter the church bylaws shall be presented to the membership at a business meeting as described in Article VI.

Elders

- A. Elders are established in the church to exercise oversight of the church in all its ministries and functions. The Senior Pastor is the Senior Elder.
- B. Elders are ordained for a life-time unless the individual chooses to step down from the office, or the church body dismisses him from office.
- C. The number, method of nomination and term of office shall be determined by the church in its policies and procedures manual. Should these matters not be addressed in such a manual, the church may make this determination by vote in the annual or special business meeting.

- D. Elders lead and manage the local church based on their knowledge and study of the scriptures and doctrine (I Timothy 5:17). Elders must meet the Biblical qualifications as found in the Scriptures (Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3; Titus 1).
- E. Elders are responsible for the spiritual ministrations of the church including but not limited to the implementation of church discipline as well as teaching.
- F. Elders are subject to one another, the governing board, and to the church body.
- G. The Elders are the church's sole authoritative interpreter of Scripture. This will allow the governing body to issue an interpretation of Scripture whenever a dispute arises that cannot be questioned by courts. This will also allow unity within the church body on theological matters.

Deacons

- A. The church shall elect deacons by ballot at the annual or special business meetings of the church. Qualifications for deacons are set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13.
- B. The number, method of nomination and term of office shall be determined by the church in its policies and procedures manual. Should these matters not be addressed in such a manual, the church may make this determination by vote in the annual or special business meeting.
- C. Deacons are ordained for a life-time unless the individual chooses to step down from the office or the church body dismisses the individual from office.
- D. Deacons should always consider themselves in active duty and available to assist the church body while holding this office.
- E. In accordance with the meaning of the word "deacon" and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.
- F. Deacons may assist Elders in spiritual matters and in the exercise of church discipline. Their duties also include assisting the Elders in the oversight of the spiritual welfare of the members of the church.
- G. Deacons act as a mediator between the congregation and the Elders, as needed.
- H. Deacons shall serve as counsel to both the senior pastor and to the church. However, deacons shall exercise no authority that is not vested in them by the church or by these Bylaws.
- I. Active serving deacons shall constitute the Board of Deacons. Ordained deacons who are not actively serving on the board of deacons may assist in duties and responsibilities of the deacons at the request of the Chairman of the deacons or an Elder. The board of deacons, along with the senior pastor, shall elect a chairman of the board of deacons from among the active, serving deacons.

- J. Deacon meetings shall remain closed to members of the church who are not officers of the governing board except by invitation by a member of the board of deacons. This is due to sensitive or private subject matter that may be under discussion.

Article IX Church Staff

The church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall determine it needs.

Paid staff is defined as an individual who receives financial compensation on a regular basis (i.e., weekly, monthly) for performing duties for the church. This does not include payments made for sub-contract services (i.e., cleaning services, lawn services; and etc.).

Employment of paid staff shall be governed by the following provisions:

- A. Individuals shall be active members and in good standing of the church.
- B. Individual's employment must be agreed upon by the governing board.
- C. Individuals shall be submitted and voted upon by members of the church in a business or special meeting.

Termination of paid staff shall be governed as follows:

- A. Individuals requesting release from their paid position shall submit their request to the senior pastor. The pastor will bring the request to the governing board and to the membership of the church.

- (1) At the time of resignation, at least two weeks' notice shall be given to the church.

- B. The church members and governing board may vote to dismiss a paid staff member based on errant behavior or holding views contrary to beliefs of the church.

- (1) Based on the severity of the matter, termination may be effective immediately.

Church staff or volunteers who work with children shall be required to attend special training for working with children.

- A. Paid staff members who work directly with children will have a criminal background check conducted. This will be done by the Administrative Coordinator.
- B. Volunteers who work directly with children on an on-going basis, or at the request of the Governing Board or the children's ministry leader, shall be required to have a background check conducted.

Article X Administrative Coordinator

The church shall elect an administrative coordinator to keep a suitable record of the actions of the church.

The administrative coordinator shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, termination of membership, a record of baptisms, and shall certify the class of members (Section V).

The administrative coordinator shall issue letters of transfer voted by the church, preserve on file all official communications and written reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these Bylaws.

The administrative coordinator shall assist the senior pastor in requested administrative duties (such as weekly bulletin preparation).

Article XI Treasurer

The chairman of the finance committee shall serve as Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer for the church. In the absence of the Chairman, the Assistant Treasurer shall fulfill the duties of the Church Treasurer.

The treasurer shall receive, preserve and pay out all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping, at all times, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Expenditures shall be authorized in the budget as adopted by the church, or by specific action of the church and shall conform to such system of authorization as the church may employ, whether by voucher or otherwise.

Any disbursement outside the designated and approved budget above \$250, shall have the approval of the finance committee prior to disbursement.

The treasurer shall render to the church at each business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding period since the last business meeting.

The treasurer shall render a report, when requested, to the governing board or church council.

Article XII Committees

The church shall elect such standing committees as shall be necessary to fulfill the requirements of these Bylaws, or as the church shall otherwise deem necessary.

Standing committees will be identified and described in the church policy and procedure manual.

Members of committees will be selected by the church council, based on their interest(s) and willingness to serve.

The senior pastor may appoint special committees to undertake tasks of a temporary nature. In the absence or disability of the senior pastor, such appointment may be made by the chairman of the deacons. Such special committees will dissolve following the completion of their task, or at the direction of the senior pastor or the church.

Article XIII

Church Council

The church council shall plan, coordinate, and evaluate the activities of the church. In so doing, the church council shall keep an up-to-date calendar of church activities.

The members of the Church Council shall be the church ministerial leadership.

The Church Council shall meet to discuss at least but not limited to the following:

- A. Ministry activities and events of the church;
- B. Plan events and participation of the events that are supported by the church;
- C. Offer assistance of ministry to the various ministries and spiritual life of the church.
- D. Offer wisdom and leadership counsel to one another and to the governing board on matters of ministry and life within the church; and
- E. Pray, minister to, encourage, and give loving support to one another in both their individual ministries and one another's Christian walk and life.

Meetings shall be held as needed and directed by the senior pastor. The meetings shall be facilitated by the senior pastor, or, at the request of the senior pastor, a member of the Church Council.

Article XIV

Church Ministries

The church shall maintain ministries such as Bible teaching, church member training, music, and mission education as shall be deemed by the church to be helpful in fulfilling its purpose.

Ministries and ministry leaders shall be approved by the senior pastor along with a majority approval of the Eldership and Board of Deacons.

All organizations related to the church ministries which use the name of the church shall be under church control, with the approval of the Eldership and Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

All church ministry activities shall be subject to church coordination and approval. Church ministry activities shall be recommended for approval by the church council before being placed in the calendar of activities.

Article X

Statement Of Religious Belief Regarding Marriage

This Church believes in the sanctity of the marital union as described in Scripture:

- A. God created the first marriage as a sacred covenant relationship between one man and one woman for the purposes of procreation, companionship, and dominion over creation, in keeping with the covenant relationship God himself established with his own creation (Genesis 2:15-24; Romans 1:16-32); and
- B. Jesus blessed a marriage celebration between a man and a woman with his presence and his first public miracle, thereby affirming the traditional definition of marriage as a cornerstone of every culture and community (John 2:1-11); and further that he advised those who are for congenital or psychological reasons unable to enter into marriage (i.e. between a man and a woman) to remain single and therefore celibate (Matthew 19:4-12); and
- C. Society historically has embraced this traditional definition of marriage, eschewing all other unions as unnatural, inappropriate, and anti-social, and has advocated the family unit of husband and wife and their children as the chief building block of society (Leviticus 18:22-30; Psalm 127:3-5; Romans 1:16-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-2; Hebrews 13:4).

This Church adheres to the doctrinal statements on Marriage and Family by our denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, as stated in the most recent version of the Baptist Faith and Message, that marriage is defined biblically and theologically in God's own terms rather than man-made terms; and further that this church intentionally adheres to the highest standards for marriage, namely biblical standards, and that other legal definitions and court actions are secondary to biblical mandate.

This Church affirms that all marriage ceremonies performed in the name of this church and any related celebrations or activities allowed in its facilities shall be for unions that meet the standards named in this church constitution, and further, that church ministers and staff engage only in marriage ceremonies in keeping with this church's adopted biblical and theological definition of marriage.

Article XVI Amendments

Changes to these Bylaws may be made at called meeting of the church according to the provisions of Article VI of these Bylaws.

Changes to the Bylaws shall require at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Members present at a qualified meeting.

Changes to the Bylaws shall take effect immediately upon approval unless provided otherwise at the time of the church vote.