



IRONBRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH  
ironbridge.org

“...inspiring the world to experience life with God...”

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# ***Constitution and Bylaws***

*Revision: March 15, 2016*

# Constitution

## PREAMBLE

The Bible demands that a Christian church conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice ([Psalm 119:105](#), [Galatians 1:6-8](#)). [1 Corinthians 14:40](#) says that all things should be done in an orderly way. Therefore we, the members of Ironbridge Baptist Church, set forth this Constitution and Bylaws to govern all our Church's affairs.

## 1. NAME

- 1.1. The legal name of this Church shall be Ironbridge Baptist Church. We are also known as "The Bridge" or "Ironbridge Church."

## 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. To exalt Christ by inspiring the world to experience life with God.
- 2.2. To grow disciples by helping people enjoy an active, fruitful relationship with Jesus.
- 2.3. To be a safe place that welcomes and accepts all people who seek God.

## 3. CONFESSION OF FAITH

- 3.1. This Church accepts "The Baptist Faith and Message" as most recently adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention as an affirmation of our basic Christian beliefs and as a general statement of our faith. Additionally, we put forth the following confessions of our faith:
- 3.2. We believe...the Bible (Scriptures of the Old and New Testament) to be inspired by God, inerrant, infallible, totally trustworthy, and of supreme and final authority in matters of faith, doctrine, and Christian living. ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#); [Titus 1:9](#); [Psalm 19:7-10](#))
- 3.3. We believe...that God eternally exists in Three Persons- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. ([Matthew 28:19-20](#))
- 3.4. We believe...in the Eternal Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the Word manifested in the flesh. We believe that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and that He is true God and true Man. ([John 1:1-2](#), [14](#), [18](#); [3:16](#))
- 3.5. We believe that the Lord Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. We believe that our Lord rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven. ([1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#))
- 3.6. We believe...that the Holy Spirit, being the Third Person of the God-head, convicts individuals of sin, regenerates, indwells, baptizes, seals and sets believers apart to live a holy life. We believe that He is the Teacher of the Word of God, and our Guide for daily life. ([John 16:7-14](#))

- 3.7.** We believe...that all who, by faith, receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who confess Him before others, are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. We believe in eternal security and everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the eternal conscious punishment of the lost. ([Romans 10:9-10](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:9](#); [John 14:6](#))
- 3.8.** We believe...that the Church of Jesus Christ is composed solely of those who have been redeemed, regenerated and sealed by the Holy Spirit. We believe that we are called together to worship and serve Christ until He returns. The two offices of the Church are: Pastors and Deacons. The two ordinances of the Church are Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to be observed until He comes. ([Matthew 28:19-20](#); [1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#); [Acts 6:3-6](#); [Acts 20:28](#))
- 3.9.** We believe...in our Lord's personal, imminent and premillennial return for His redeemed ones followed by His coming in glory to judge the rebellious and to establish His millennial reign on earth. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. ([John 14:1-6](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#))
- 3.10.** We believe...that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. ([Acts 3:19-21](#); [Romans 10:9-10](#); [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#))
- 3.11.** We believe...that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. ([Psalm 139:13-16](#); [James 1:27](#); [James 2:8](#))
- 3.12.** We believe...that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. ([Genesis 1:26-27](#))
- 3.13.** We believe...that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. Accordingly, this Church, its pastors, and staff will not participate in same sex unions or same sex marriages, nor shall its property or resources be used for such purposes. ([Genesis 2:18-25](#); [Mark 10: 6-9](#))
- 3.14.** We believe... that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. ([1 Corinthians 6:18](#); [7:2-5](#); [Hebrews 13:4](#)) 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 or unlawful sexual acts (including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. ([Matthew 15:18-20](#); [1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#))

- 3.15.** 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 Ironbridge Baptist Church. The Church should support its leaders, and leaders should be accountable to the Church. ([Mark 12:28-31](#); [Luke 6:31](#)); [Hebrews 13:17](#) )
- 3.16.** We believe...that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Ironbridge Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to our members and the community, it is imperative that all Pastors, Staff (paid and un-paid), members, and volunteers agree to and abide by this **CONFESSION OF FAITH**. ([Matthew 5:16](#); [Philippians 2:14-16](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:22](#))
- 3.17.** This **CONFESSION OF FAITH** does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of our Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Senior Pastor is the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

#### **4. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION**

- 4.1.** Nationally, we are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.
- 4.2.** In Virginia, we are affiliated with both the Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.
- 4.3.** Locally, we are affiliated with the Middle District Baptist Association.

#### **5. MEMBERSHIP**

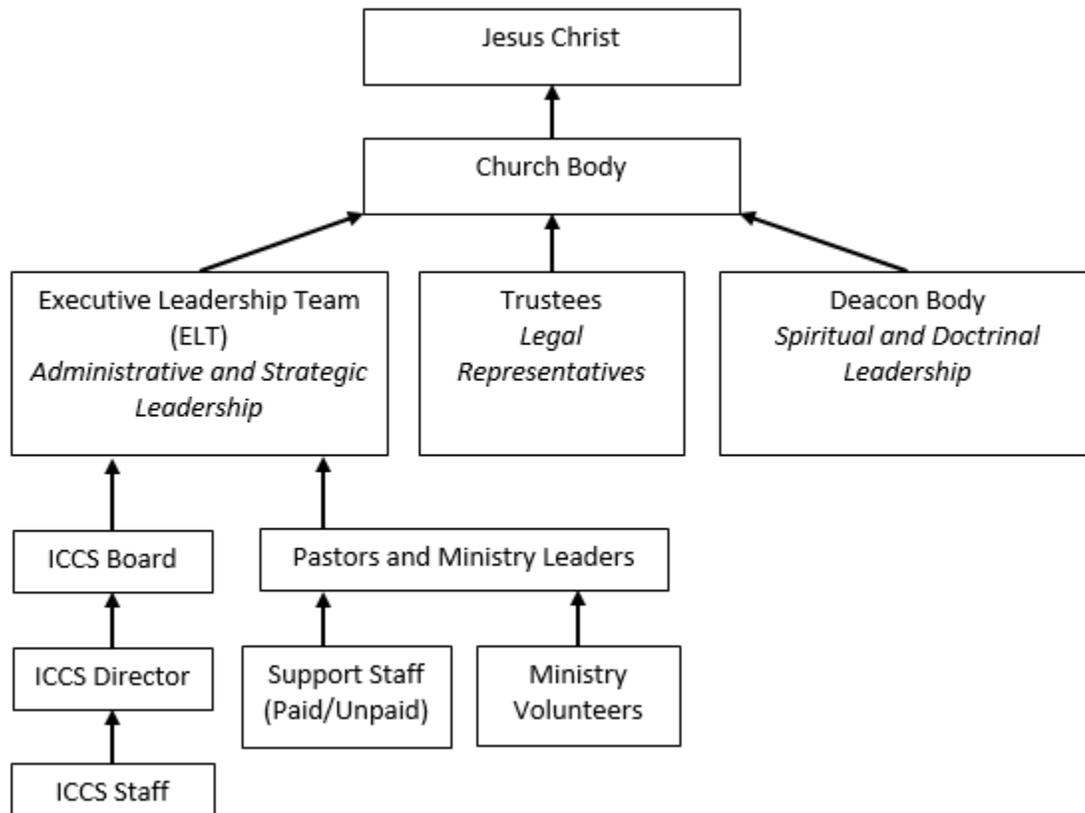
- 5.1.** The membership of this Church includes Members and Voting Members as defined in the bylaws.

#### **6. ORGANIZATION**

##### **6.1. Purpose**

- 6.1.1.** To create a governing structure that promotes effectiveness in furthering the vision and mission of The Bridge, fosters excellence in service to Christ's Kingdom, and provides transparency and accountability at all levels within the Church.

## 6.2. Organizational Chart



## 6.3. Structure

**6.3.1. Jesus Christ** is the Head of the Church ([Colossians 1:18](#); [Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:15](#)).

**6.3.2. The Church Body**, consisting of all Voting Members present at any properly-called ministry conference, shall have final authority in managing its internal and external affairs.

**6.3.3. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT)** shall be the governing body of the Church and is responsible to administer all the Church’s affairs except the following matters for action only by the Church:

- 6.3.3.1.** Electing members of the Executive Leadership Team, Trustees, and Deacon Body.
- 6.3.3.2.** Calling or removing the Senior Pastor.
- 6.3.3.3.** Approving the annual Ministry Plan (including a summary budget).
- 6.3.3.4.** Approving any spending that would be in excess of the total annual budget by 2% or more.
- 6.3.3.5.** Approving the purchase or sale of real property (land or facilities).
- 6.3.3.6.** Approving any new instrument of debt in excess of 5% of the current annual budget.

**6.3.4.** The **Trustees** function as the Church's legal representatives, holding in trust the property of the Church. The trustees are empowered to transact business on behalf of the Church as directed by the Church.

**6.3.5.** The **Deacon Body** serves in spiritual leadership and service. They provide guidance and oversight in doctrinal matters; they hold our pastors accountable in this area. In conjunction with the Senior Pastor, the Deacon Body provides leadership in the Church's provision of spiritual and practical care. The Senior Pastor and Deacon Body also administer Church discipline. Deacons (and those who assist them) support the pastors in the administration of the Church's two ordinances- Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

## **7. PROPERTY RIGHTS**

**7.1.** If, at any time, a separation takes place within this Church, all property and all benefits connected shall remain with the majority (see section 9).

## **8. BYLAWS**

**8.1.** The Church may adopt such bylaws as the accomplishment of the purpose of the Church may demand.

## **9. DECISIONS**

**9.1.** All Church matters shall be decided by a simple majority of the voting members present at a properly-called ministry conference (as defined in the bylaws), except as otherwise provided in this Constitution and Bylaws. Procedural questions will be decided by following the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

## **10. AMENDMENTS**

**10.1.** This Constitution may be amended by a three-quarters majority of the voting members present at a properly-called ministry conference. Any proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be made available to the Church at least 4 Sundays prior to the ministry conference.

# Bylaws

## 1. MEMBERSHIP

### 1.1. Qualifications for all Candidates

- 1.1.1. Profess publicly their faith in Jesus Christ, and
- 1.1.2. Experience believer's baptism by immersion.

### 1.2. Additional Qualifications for Candidates aged 16 and older

- 1.2.1. Participate in new member orientation,
- 1.2.2. Affirm and abide by the Church's Confession of Faith (Constitution, Article 3),
- 1.2.3. Interview with one of the pastors, and
- 1.2.4. Sign a covenant with the Church upon becoming a member.

1.3. The criteria for a public profession and baptism may be met at Ironbridge Baptist Church, through a request to transfer their membership from another church of similar faith and practice, or by a personal statement of faith of having been baptized.

1.4. For those becoming members prior to age 16, the qualifications listed in section 1.2 must be completed prior to the member turning 17 years of age.

1.5. Voting - Voting Members are members who are aged 16 and older and are not involved in any stage of the Church's discipline process.

1.6. Removal- Individuals may be removed from the membership in one of the following ways: 1) Personal written request by the member, 2) Transfer of membership to another church, 3) Death, or 4) As an outcome of the Church's disciplinary process.

### 1.7. Church Discipline

1.7.1. The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church ([1 Corinthians 5:6](#)), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity ([1 Timothy 5:20](#)), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct ([Galatians 6:1](#)).

1.7.2. The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Senior Pastor and Deacon Body and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in [Matthew 18:15-20](#); [1 Corinthians 5](#); [2 Corinthians 2:7-8](#); [Galatians 6:1](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:6](#); [Titus 3:10-11](#); and [2 John 7-11](#). Any member of this Church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Senior Pastor and Deacon Body, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this Church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.

**1.7.3.** Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the Church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this Church. An individual may be disciplined by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Body short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this Church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry). The Senior Pastor and Deacon Body, as required by Scripture, may report to the Church the names of those who have lost membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in [Matthew 18:15-20](#).

## **2. MINISTRY CONFERENCES**

- 2.1.** Ministry Conferences shall be held annually at least 2 Sundays before start of the Church's fiscal year. The specific day and time shall be set by the ELT. The ELT shall publicize the annual ministry conference at least 4 Sundays prior to the meeting date.
- 2.2.** The Chair of the ELT shall either serve as the Moderator or appoint a member to serve in that role.
- 2.3.** Special ministry conferences may be called by the ELT as needed. Notice of special ministry conferences shall be publicized at least 2 Sundays prior to the meeting date. Only the advertised business can be transacted at special ministry conferences.
- 2.4.** A quorum of 40 voting members must be present to conduct the business of the ministry conference. At least 5 of the 9 ELT members must be part of the quorum.

## **3. ELECTED LEADERS**

- 3.1.** The elected leaders of the Church are the Senior Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, and Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
- 3.2.** The general qualifications for leaders (overseers) can be summarized in [Titus 1:7-9](#):  
*"Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."*
- 3.3.** The general mandate for leaders (overseers) can be summarized in [Acts 20:28](#): *"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."*
- 3.4.** A three-quarters majority of the voting members present at a properly-called ministry conference shall be required to elect a Senior Pastor, Deacon, Trustee, or ELT member.

- 3.5. A three-quarters majority of the voting members present at a properly-called ministry conference shall be required to remove a Senior Pastor, Deacon, Trustee, or ELT member.
- 3.6. Specific qualifications for these elected leaders shall be maintained in position job descriptions.

#### **4. SENIOR PASTOR**

##### **4.1. Recruitment and Calling**

- 4.1.1. The ELT shall coordinate the recruiting process for Senior Pastor, calling upon members and outside professionals as needed. This may also include establishing a Pastor Search team.
- 4.1.2. The ELT shall submit the names of candidate(s) to the Church and arrange for appropriate opportunities to meet the candidate(s).
- 4.1.3. The ELT shall call a special ministry conference for the purpose of issuing a call to the candidate of choice.

##### **4.2. Supervision and Accountability**

- 4.2.1. The Senior Pastor is supervised by and accountable to the ELT.
- 4.2.2. The ELT shall provide feedback to the Senior Pastor on a regular basis.

##### **4.3. Removal**

- 4.3.1. The ELT, in conjunction with the Deacon Body, shall recommend removal of the Senior Pastor to the Church.
- 4.3.2. The ELT shall call a special ministry conference for the purpose of removing the Senior Pastor.

#### **5. TRUSTEES**

- 5.1. The Church shall have 3 trustees.
- 5.2. Trustees shall have operating guidelines and are nominated by the ELT.
- 5.3. Trustees serve until they resign, are unable to fulfill the qualifications for trustees, or are removed from service.

#### **6. DEACON BODY**

- 6.1. The Church shall have an active Deacon Body.
- 6.2. The Deacon Body shall have operating guidelines and shall nominate individuals for service as a deacon and coordinate with the ELT to have the nominations presented at a ministry conference.
- 6.3. Deacons serve until they resign, are unable to fulfill the qualifications for deacons, or are removed from service.
- 6.4. The Deacon Body shall recommend deacons for removal and work with the ELT to schedule a ministry conference for the purpose of removal.

## 7. EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM (ELT)

7.1. The Church shall have an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) that consists of 9 voting members. At least one ELT member must be a Deacon.

7.2. After a careful recruiting process, the ELT shall nominate candidates for service.

7.3. An ELT member may be recommended for removal by a majority of the other ELT members.

### 7.4. Term of Service

7.4.1. ELT members serve a 3-year term.

7.4.2. Individuals are eligible for another term of service after a period of 1 year has elapsed following the end of their previous term.

7.4.3. ELT member terms are staggered such that one third of the ELT shall be elected each year.

### 7.5. Officers

7.5.1. At the first meeting of each Church year, the Senior Pastor shall bring a recommendation for Chair to the ELT for consideration and approval.

7.5.2. At the second meeting of each Church year, the Chair shall bring a recommendation for Vice-Chair to the ELT for consideration and approval.

### 7.6. Meetings

7.6.1. The ELT shall normally meet each month on a day and time agreed upon by the ELT and the Chair. The Chair may decide to amend, add, or remove ELT meetings as needed.

7.6.2. At least 6 ELT members must be present to transact business.

7.6.3. 5 votes are required to pass motions (a majority of the 9 ELT members).

7.7. Emergency Members - In the unlikely event that the ELT is reduced to 6 or less active members, the Deacon Chair shall appoint deacons to serve as “emergency members” for a period not to exceed 120 days to allow time for the recruitment, nomination, and election of new ELT members. Emergency members have the same authority as elected members.

7.8. Powers - The ELT shall have the power to develop policies as required to execute their goals approved by the Church. Written polices shall be available upon request. The ELT shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them by the constitution, these bylaws, or by the Church.

### **7.9. Duties**

- 7.9.1.** The ELT, as the governing body for the Church, shall act in all matters pertaining to the legal and general welfare of the Church, except those reserved for the Church in Article 6 of the constitution.
- 7.9.2.** The ELT shall see to it that all activities of the Church reflect the purpose and faith of the Church.
- 7.9.3.** The ELT shall concern itself with establishing all policies governing activities of the Church and with the implementation of the mission, vision, budget, and plans adopted by the Church.
- 7.9.4.** The ELT shall oversee the treasury function. The ELT may either appoint a voting member to serve as treasurer or engage an outside entity to perform the function.
- 7.9.5.** The ELT shall appoint any entity needed to help it accomplish its purposes.
- 7.9.6.** With the exception of the Deacon Body, the ELT shall oversee and have the authority over all other entities of the Church, including the Ironbridge Community Christian School (ICCS).

## **8. AMENDMENTS**

- 8.1.** These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at a properly-called ministry conference. The proposed amendments to these bylaws shall be made available to the Church at least 4 Sundays prior to the ministry conference.