

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

(Adopted Oct 6, 2015 at annual meeting)

## CONSTITUTION

**Article 1. CORPORATION NAME/LEADERSHIP.** The name of the Corporation shall be TREASURE COAST BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED. Corporation leadership will be made up of those within the Administrative Team with the moderator serving as corporation president. The DOM cannot serve on the corporation board.

**Article 2. PURPOSE.** The purpose of this association is to connect the association's churches through the cross of Christ by:

- **C**onnecting churches of the Treasure Coast to do ministry and give witness to their community,
- **R**esourcing churches to enable them to better achieve their goals and objectives,
- **O**pening new vistas of service by bringing about awareness of needs/people/groups, etc.,
- **S**trengthening existing work by strengthening pastors/church staff/leaders, and
- **S**upporting churches as they begin new works in the associational area.

**Article 3. DOCTRINAL STATEMENT.** The association will hold to and be guided by the doctrines stated in the latest version of the Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M), along with all additions, explanations and resolutions passed by the Florida Baptist Convention or the Southern Baptist Convention, when considering or taking action for the entirety of the association, either by the Administrative Team, the Annual Meeting, any specially called meetings, or actions of the DOM.

To make explicit certain beliefs held in common by the churches of the association, the association can add to/modify doctrines at scheduled associational meetings. Such additions/modifications will become part of this article.

A. Added to 2000 BF&M Article 18 "The Family." Marriage. We believe that the only biblically acceptable marriage is that between one naturally born man and one naturally born woman. This is the only union that is compatible with biblical teachings, the Baptist Faith and Message, the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. Churches which promote or condone any other unions or allow their facilities for such activities are not in cooperation with the association and action will be taken to disassociate such churches in accordance with the bylaws of this document.

B. Added to 2000 BF&M Article 6 "The Church." Senior or Lead Pastor. We believe that the role of the senior/lead pastor is restricted to naturally born men alone in accordance with scripture, the Baptist Faith and Message, the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. Churches that call a woman as pastor are not in cooperation with the association and action will be taken to disassociate such churches in accordance with the bylaws of this document.

**Article 4. CHURCH TYPES AND MEMBERSHIP.** The association is made up of three types of churches: full member, watchcare and partner churches. (All churches of the association are voluntary members that can remove themselves at any time they desire.)

A. Full Member Churches. Full member churches are those churches that are members of the association in good standing, meaning that they regularly (at least annually) give financially to the association and hold to the affiliation requirements of the association (see Article 5 below). Associational leadership comes from full member churches only. The privilege of voting at any associational meeting is limited to full member churches only.

B. Watchcare Churches. Watchcare churches are those churches that either:

1. Have applied to be member churches but have not been voted in at an annual meeting. Watchcare churches are voted on by the association at the next annual meeting following being placed on watchcare status. To become a full member church the approval vote must be three-fourths majority or greater. This type of watchcare church cannot vote on associational issues nor can it have members on associational teams or committees.

2. Are being considered for removal from the association. A motion for the removal will be made at the next annual meeting unless the Membership Team brings a different recommendation to the Administrative Team. To remove a church from membership requires a simple majority vote. This type of watchcare church cannot vote on associational issues nor can it have members on associational teams or committees.

C. Partner Churches. Partner churches are those churches that are not a part of the Southern Baptist Convention or the Florida Baptist Convention (and cannot be as far as they are concerned) but want to be a part of the ministries of the association. Partner churches cannot vote on associational issues nor can they have members on associational teams or committees. Partner churches will join the association in the same manner as Southern Baptist churches and will be held to the same standards.

**Article 5. AFFILIATION REQUIREMENTS.** The conditions for membership in this Association shall be: (1) the subscription to a statement of faith reflecting our historical Southern Baptist beliefs, such as the current Baptist Faith and Message; (2) a willingness to cooperate with the principles, policies and programs of the Association, the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention; (3) agreement with the association's vision, mission, constitution and bylaws, and (4) participation in the Association with regular (at least annual) financial giving and attendance as often as possible at associational meetings.

**Article 6. CHURCH AUTONOMY.** The Association shall recognize the autonomy of every associational member church and shall have neither right nor authority to legislate for nor in any way interfere with its internal affairs. If invited by an individual church, the Association and its agents shall act only in an advisory capacity. However, the Director of Missions, when he deems necessary for the support and encouragement of a church or mission, may on behalf of the Association offer assistance. (While reference might be made in conversation and written correspondence to "the association's churches," "my church," or similar words, at no time does the association office, the Administrative Team, the DOM, or any other organization or individual of the association exercise authority or control over any church in any way. Each church is solely responsible for its own ministries and leadership.) Church autonomy does not preclude the association from taking action to disassociate a church in accordance with this constitution and bylaws.

# BYLAWS

## **Section 1. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.**

A. Affiliation Process. Churches desiring representation and fellowship in the Association shall present a requesting letter to the Director of Missions. This letter must state the church's name and address, the pastor's name and contact information, the doctrines of the church (which must be either the current Baptist Faith and Message or similar list of beliefs), a copy of the church's constitution and bylaws, and a willingness to abide by the affiliation requirements stated in Article 5 of the constitution. The Membership Team, or representatives thereof, will meet with the petitioning church to ascertain whether the requesting church meets the conditions for membership. If the requesting church meets the affiliation requirements, the Membership Team will recommend membership to the association at its next Annual Meeting. The requesting church is accepted into membership by a simple majority vote at the Annual Meeting.

1. A mission church whose lead sponsoring church is a member in good standing in the association will be considered a member church of the association automatically upon moving from mission status to church status.

2. Between the time a requesting church is approved by the Membership Team and the date of the Annual Meeting, the requesting church is considered to be under the watchcare of the association, having all privileges of membership except voting at any associational meeting (see Constitution, Article 4B).

B. Requested Removal from Membership Process. A church desiring to be removed from membership in the association will send a notification letter or email to the association. The letter/email will be given to the Membership Team. The team will attempt to contact the church to learn more about the request to determine the reason for the request and if any actions can be taken to retain the church. If the church cannot be contacted or issues cannot be remedied, the Membership Team will report that to the Administrative Team. The church will be removed by action of the Administrative Team and notification will be made to the Florida Baptist Convention and to the association for their information.

C. Disassociation. This Association reserves the right to deny seats to messengers and the right to withdraw fellowship from any church who is out of fellowship with the Association in its doctrines, principles, practices, policies and programs, as listed in Article 5 of the constitution above. The procedure to remove a church from membership is:

1. An investigation into the reasons for removing membership from the church will be done by the Membership Team to determine the validity of any issues. The investigation will be done in a manner determined by the Membership Team.

2. The Membership Team will inform the Director of Missions and the Administrative Team of the results of the investigation and its recommendation(s).

3. The Director of Missions and the Administrative Team will determine what recommendations to follow.

a. If the recommendation is to remove the church from membership, the action will be taken at the next Annual Meeting of the association. A simple majority vote is needed to remove membership. Removal is official with the vote. A report of the action will be made to the Florida Baptist Convention and the association for their information.

b. If the recommendation is to work with the church toward a resolution, then the Membership Team will have responsibility for doing that, giving monthly updates and/or further recommendations to the Administrative Team.

## **Section 2. ASSOCIATIONAL STRUCTURE.**

A. The Director of Missions. The DOM is an employee of the association with leadership responsibilities for the association.

1. The Director of Missions (DOM) shall be responsible to the Administrative Team of the Association and shall be an ex-officio member of all councils, fellowships, teams, and other organizations of the association.

2. Employee Supervision. The DOM (or other staff person delegated by him) will have the responsibility for day-to-day supervision of associational employees.

3. Calling. The DOM shall be consensually recommended to a special called Associational wide meeting and shall be elected by no less than a 75% vote.

4. Responsibilities. The DOM has day-to-day oversight of association activities. He, or the treasurer, can enter into contracts concerning the administrative functions of the associational office. He will coordinate with the Florida Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, and other organizations (both Christian and secular) that could impact the work of the association. He will assist pastors, staffs, and churches as requested.

5. Other. A more complete description of this position is available in the Administrative Notebook.

### **B. The Administrative Team.**

1. Description. The team is made up of pastors and/or lay-people from the association churches. There is no numerical requirement but an effort shall be made to have representation from each area (north, central, south) if possible. Where there are fellowships of churches other than English-speaking, the leader of the fellowship shall be a member of the team. The DOM is an ex-officio member of the team. Any interested church member, pastor or layperson, can attend a meeting but will have no voting authority. Team members serve as long as they are active members of associational churches or until church or personal responsibilities require that they remove themselves from the team. (A resigning member can be replaced by another person from anywhere in the association, not necessarily the same area.)

2. Responsibilities. The Administrative Team assists the DOM in the work and ministry of the association. The team assists the DOM with the personnel issues involved in having a paid staff for the association. The team has responsibility for regularly reviewing and monitoring the associational finances and budget with the DOM. The team approves entering into contracts that go beyond the administrative work of the association. The team is responsible for the maintenance of the associational property (land, building(s), and equipment) with the DOM. The team meets regularly to discuss the work of the association, ministries, church starts, and other similar issues. The team recommends, with advice from the DOM, individuals for leadership positions in all committees and teams of the association. The Team takes leadership of the association when there is no DOM, doing all necessary tasks to keep the association functioning, and forming an ad hoc DOM search team. The team carries out other duties as outlines in the constitution and bylaws.

3. Selection of the Team. Team members will be selected through the coordinated effort of the DOM and the Administrative Team. A pastor or layperson can ask to be on the team but final approval rests with the DOM and the Administrative Team. Team members can be added at any time during the year. (Those individuals who lead the fellowships of associational non-English speaking churches are automatically members of the Administrative Team and join upon their election within their fellowship.)

4. Team Meetings. The Administrative Team meets regularly (usually monthly) to review the financial condition of the association, to work with the DOM in associational matters, to discuss and pray about the ministries and missions of the association. The meeting is led by the Moderator and the DOM and will use Robert's Rules of Order as needed to maintain order when required by the situation. The DOM or the moderator has the authority to suspend a meeting if either feels a discussion is becoming too contentious. Meetings can be cancelled with the approval of the DOM and moderator.

#### C. Other Associational Positions.

1. Moderator/Vice-Moderator. The moderator has responsibility for overseeing the Administrative Team meetings in coordination with the DOM. The moderator also will oversee any votes taken at the association annual meeting. The moderator will work closely with the DOM to ensure the proper functioning of the association. The moderator is the legal representative of the association and as such, has the authority to sign all legal documents of the association as authorized by the Administrative Team (including deeds, contracts other than administrative type, etc.). The moderator is automatically the corporation president. The moderator, with advice from the DOM, can recommend to the Administrative Team an individual for Vice-Moderator, who then has moderator responsibilities when the moderator is absent. The moderator will hold the position for a maximum of two years. After being out of the position for at least a year, a person can serve as moderator again. The vice-moderator can serve for a maximum of two years. After being out of the position for at least a year, the individual can serve as vice-moderator again. If there is a vice-moderator, he/she serves as vice-president of the corporation as well. The moderator is elected by the association at the annual associational meeting and assumes the responsibilities immediately upon election. If there is no moderator or vice-moderator, the Administrative Team can elect individuals to either or both positions. However the action of the team is only valid until the next annual associational meeting.

2. Treasurer. The treasurer is elected by the Administrative Team upon advice from the DOM. The treasurer has the responsibility for receiving and deposits all checks and other monies that come into the associational office for the work of the association. The treasurer is responsible for paying bills, maintaining financial records and producing reports as requested by the DOM, the administrative team, or a member of an associational church. He/she will be responsible for corporation and other similar legal requirements of the association. The treasurer is also the corporation treasurer. The treasurer must be a member in good standing of an associational church that regularly (at least annually) gives financially to the association. The treasurer serves as long as he or she desires or until asked to step down from the position by the DOM or the Administrative Team.

3. Clerk. The clerk is elected by the Administrative Team upon advice from the DOM. The clerk is responsible for maintaining the minutes of the Administrative Team meetings and the associational annual meeting. The clerk is also the corporation secretary. Other clerk duties can be assigned by the DOM. The clerk must be a member in good standing of an associational church that regularly (at least annually) gives financially to the association. If no clerk is available, the DOM can appoint a clerk for a particular meeting. (If there is no elected clerk, then the corporation secretary position remains vacant.)

4. Other Associational Positions. The Administrative Team has the authority to appoint, or recommend, individuals to other positions as those ministries require. Along with this authority, the team will also describe the position (including all requirements and work of the position). Examples of these types of positions are women's ministry leader and State Board of Missions representatives.

#### D. Other Associational Teams.

1. Membership Team. The Membership Team has responsibility for determining the acceptability of churches desiring to become members, studying any issues with associational churches and making recommendations to the Administrative Team concerning whether a church should remain a part of the association or be disassociated. (See Section 1C above.) This team can be a subset of the Administrative Team or a different group. This team must be two or more individuals, and can be pastors, ministry staff, laypeople or any combination thereof. Individuals must be members of associational churches that regularly (at least annually) give financially to the association. The team will be appointed by the Administrative Team in coordination with the DOM, or by an ad hoc team formed for that purpose.

2. Ad Hoc Teams. The Administrative Team can appoint ad hoc teams to carry out any specific ministry need they determine. Ad hoc teams will be made up of two or more individuals, and can be pastors, staff ministers, laypeople or any combination thereof. Ad hoc teams will report their work at least monthly to the Administrative Team or to the DOM. Once the ad hoc team has fulfilled its responsibilities it will dissolve without any further action needed by the Administrative Team or the DOM.

E. Illegal Immigrant Involvement. At no time will illegal immigrants be allowed to hold any associational positions on any team or committee. Questions about immigration status of an individual will be directed to the individual or to the church he or she is a member of.

**Section 3. ANNUAL ASSOCIATIONAL MEETING.** The association will meet at least annually for the purpose of hearing reports, voting on the associational budget and other issues, and to accomplish other tasks as determined by the Administrative Team and the DOM. This meeting will take place in October, November or December. The location and date of the meeting will be determined by the Administrative Team. A worship time and a time for fellowship and sharing a meal in conjunction with the “business” part of the meeting is encouraged. However, even if this is not done, there will be time given for prayer.

A. Messengers/Quorum. Each associational church is allowed a minimum of five voting messengers, with an additional messenger for each 50 resident members above 100 to a maximum of ten messengers for a church. (For example a church of 200 resident members would have up to 7 voting messengers.) Since the association has no way of knowing the membership of each associational church, churches are assumed to register the correct number of messengers and no check will be done unless a question is asked during the meeting concerning a church’s messengers. Messengers are selected by the church in a manner determined by each church. A quorum for the annual meeting will be those voting messengers present.

#### B. Meeting Procedures.

1. The meeting will follow Robert’s Rules of Order with the moderator overseeing the meeting. However the association will not be a “slave” to Robert’s Rules but will employ godly common sense to preserve order and accomplish the work of the annual meeting.

2. Motions from associational teams will be discussed and voted on prior to motions from the floor. All motions will be approved with a simple majority vote unless other requirements are given in the constitution and bylaws.

3. The moderator, in coordination with the Administrative Team and the DOM, will determine which motions from the floor will be discussed and voted on at the meeting, which motions will be given to associational teams for action, and which motions are not in order and will not be allowed.

4. Duly recognized messengers of the Association, upon recognition by the moderator, shall have the privilege of speaking and voting, but no one shall be allowed to speak more than twice on the same motion without the consent of the Association.

5. All comments for or against a motion will be made consistent with a Christian attitude reflecting who messengers are in Christ and that they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Comments deemed by the moderator to be inconsistent with this will not be allowed. The speaker will be considered to be “out of order,” and the speaker will be asked to stop speaking. If the speaker will not stop, he/she will be asked to leave the meeting. If the speaker does not leave, the meeting will be suspended until order can be restored.

6. Should it become necessary in the opinion of the moderator or the DOM, a meeting can be suspended by the moderator without any further action required. The suspended meeting must be brought back to order not more than one month later with the meeting time and place to be determined by the Administrative Team. If the suspension was caused by individuals being uncooperative with the moderator, those individuals will not be allowed to be a part of the later meeting.

#### C. Motion to Add/Disassociate a Church.

1. Motion to add a church. A motion to add a church to the association will be handled ahead of all other motions and reports so that the church can have a part in the majority of the annual meeting. The motion will be accompanied by information about the church. No discussion will be allowed. A three-fourths majority is needed to bring the church into the association.

2. A motion to disassociate a church. A motion to disassociate an associational church will be handled immediately after motions to add churches and ahead of all other motions and reports. The motion will be accompanied by information about the reason for the action. No discussion will be allowed. A simple majority is needed to remove the church from membership in the association.

D. Meeting Reports. If reports are available to the messengers on paper, then those reports will not be read aloud as a part of the meeting. Exception to this is if discussion or motions require reading a report for clarification in the opinion of the moderator, or at the request of the messengers.

**Section 4. SPECIAL CALLED MEETINGS.** Circumstances may arise that require the association to meet in a special called meeting outside the annual association meeting. Such meetings should be managed carefully and have a specific purpose. This type of meeting is called through the Administrative Team, and requires notification to associational churches at least one month prior to the meeting date. The notification will at a minimum state location, date and time, reason for the meeting and any special requirements for the meeting. The moderator will be in charge of the special called meeting. Messenger requirements, quorum requirements, and other applicable rules will be the same as for the annual associational meeting.

**Section 5. CONSTITUTION/BYLAWS CHANGES.** The associational constitution and bylaws can be changed in part or totally by the action of the association at an annual meeting, or a special called meeting if necessary. The proposed changes must be sent to each pastor at least one month prior to the meeting. A simple majority is required for the changes to take place. Motions from the floor to change the constitution and bylaws will be tabled and sent to the Administrative Team for review. Results of the review will be sent to the associational churches and to the individual making the motion (if his/her address is known.)

**Section 6. DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION.** Should the churches of the association believe that it is necessary to dissolve the association, the following actions will be taken:

A. A special called meeting will be convened for the sole purpose of voting on the dissolution. See Section 4 above. A simple majority is required.

B. If the association is to be replaced by another association, then all property will be passed to the other association. If the association dissolves with no replacement organization then all property will go to the Florida Baptist Convention for disposition.

**Section 7. OTHER.** Notification Requirements. Where the constitution and bylaws directs churches, organizations or individuals to be notified concerning an issue or to have information sent to him, this can be done by mail, electronic mail, telephone or any other means that is suitable for the distribution of information.