

August 1981

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION TO BE
ATTACHED TO COPIES OF CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

This copy of the Constitution and By-Laws was originally prepared as a working copy for use by the Committee in 1977. Using the old Constitution and By-Laws (white book-revised September 11, 1957) as a basis, modifications were made to reflect amendments in effect at the time of preparation. On October 9, 1979 it was updated to include more recent amendments.

The Constitution and By-Laws are now under review with plans being made for extensive amendments. After processing the amendments, a new document will be prepared.

Meanwhile, this is the most comprehensive copy available for distribution. You will find some obvious inconsistencies. There may be errors and/or omissions when compared to original, authentic documents. For this reason it should be considered unofficial. We are striving to eliminate the irregularities. We will advise you if we discover errors and/or omissions that seem consequential. We will appreciate it if you would return the favor.

If there is a need to confirm a particular section, please refer the matter to the Committee.

An amendment creating the Board of Missions in January is attached.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Cheryl Ankrom
William Mathews
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VIENNA BAPTIST CHURCH
CONSTITUTION
AND BY-LAWS

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this Church shall be the Vienna Baptist Church of Vienna, West Virginia.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

Section 1

The purpose of this church shall be the advancement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It shall seek to attain this end through public worship of God, the preaching of the Gospel, consistent Christian living by its members, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor at home and abroad, Christian education and Christian stewardship.

Section 2

To aid in the achievement of this purpose this Church shall cooperate with the Parkersburg Baptist Association, the West Virginia Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Church shall consist of persons who have accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and who have obeyed Him in the Scriptural Ordinance of Baptism. The standard of Faith and Practice shall be as set forth in the New Testament, and incorporated in the Church covenant and By-Laws as adopted by this Church.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

Meetings for the Worship of God and for the furtherance of His Kingdom and for the transaction of business shall be held as provided for in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE V - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any Quarterly Business Meeting of the Church by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the members present and voting provided that the proposed amendment(s) has been read at the preceding Quarterly Business Meeting, and announcement of the proposed amendment(s) made at regular morning worship services of the Church on the two consecutive Sundays immediately prior to action on the proposed amendment(s). Any proposed amendment shall be processed in accordance with the provisions of Article IV - Section 8 of the By-Laws.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Admissions

Persons shall be admitted to membership upon vote of the Church under the following conditions:

A. By Baptism. Persons professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change of heart, and accepting the views of faith and practice as adopted by this Church, may upon baptism by immersion, be received into membership of the Church.

B. By Letter. Persons who upon profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and having been previously baptized by immersion, may be received into membership by letters of dismissal from other Churches.

C. By Experience. Persons who are not members of other Churches but who have been baptized by immersion upon profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and having accepted the views of faith and practice as adopted by this Church, may be received into membership by virtue of their experience.

D. By Restoration. Persons who have been excluded from membership "for cause" and who give evidence of repentance, may by the regular code of procedure be restored to their former membership.

Section 2 - Mode of Procedure

Admissions to membership shall be voted upon by the Church upon recommendations of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

Section 3 - Duties of Members

Members of this Church shall endeavor to understand and familiarize themselves with the principles and teachings of Baptists and the Church Covenant; to endeavor with all earnestness to practice them; to attend habitually the services of the Church; to give of their time and talents to the Church programs; and to contribute consistently and generously in support of the work including local expenses and missionary efforts.

When members change their residence so as to render worship at this Church impracticably, they should request letters of dismissal for the purpose of uniting with Churches in their new communities, but until then such members shall communicate with the Pastor or the Clerk of this Church at least once every six months. Failure to do so, or if otherwise persistently negligent of Church obligations for a period of two years shall be sufficient cause for the transfer of their names from the Active to the Inactive membership list following notification of the Church.

Section 4 - Dismissions

A. Proper letters of dismissal shall be issued for members desiring to unite with other Churches upon the vote of the Church.

B. Erasure of a member's name from the Church roll upon request of the member shall be granted only after the Board of Deacons has put forth every effort for reclamation.

C. Whenever a member becomes unchristian in conduct, or promotes discord, injuring the unity and effectiveness of the Church, such member shall be subject to exclusion from the Church roll. The action of the Church in such a case shall be at the recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

Section 5 - Discipline

The eighteenth chapter of Matthew shall serve to govern in the case of any necessary discipline of a member.

ARTICLE II - OFFICERS

Section 1 - Name of Officers

The name of officers of this Church shall be Pastor, Minister of Christian Education, Board of Deacons, a Board of Deaconess, a Board of Trustees, a Board of Finance, a Board of Christian Education, a Treasurer, a Financial Secretary, a Clerk, and a Church School Superintendent; all of whom shall be members in good standing of this Church.

Section 2 - Pastor

The Pastor of this Church shall be a regularly ordained Baptist Minister of good standing in the Baptist denomination. (See Article IV, Section V.) The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite time, the salary being fixed at the time of the call and which may be changed by recommendation of the Board of Finance and the vote of the Church. The Pastor shall be entitled to an annual vacation with full salary, the length thereof determined by the Church upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons. The termination of the pastorate may be brought about upon sixty days notice by the Pastor or the Church, or upon shorter notice subject to mutual agreement.

The Pastor shall administer the ordinances, conduct worship services and other meetings of the Church, and act as leader of the Church in community and world-wide effort. He shall be ex-officio member of all committees and shall have the power to call special meetings of all boards and committees. (Repeated under Article V, Section 2.)

ARTICLE II- OFFICERS -

Section 3 - Additional Ministerial Staff

The Church may employ additional ministerial staff members who shall work under the direction and supervision of the Pastor. To accomplish this, the Church shall form a Search Committee, as provided in Article IV - Section 9 - which shall present a candidate for consideration.

The Church may establish the duties of the position and the terms of employment or may request that the Search Committee present recommendations for Church consideration and approval. In any event, such duties and terms of employment are subject to subsequent review and renegotiation by the Church and the Staff member(s) concerned.

Section 4 - Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected annually for a term of one year or until another successor shall be duly elected.

The Treasurer shall maintain an accurate record of all funds entrusted to his custody. He shall keep separate accounts for the local expenses and benevolences. Disbursements shall be made by check and only as authorized by the Church or as authorized with the approval of the Board of Finance. A statement shall be presented at each regular meeting of the board required by the Church or the Advisory Board. At the Annual Meeting of the Church, the Treasurer shall submit a complete detailed report for the fiscal year. The books and records of his office shall be presented for audit at the close of the year and at such other times as may be requested by the Church.

The Finance Board shall have the authority to declare the Treasurer absent or the office of Treasurer vacant. In such an event his duties will be assumed temporarily by the Financial Secretary.

Section 5 - Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be elected annually for a term of one year or until a successor shall have been duly elected.

He shall maintain accurate records of offerings and keep confidential records of envelope contributions as to source and designated purposes. It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to distribute the contribution envelopes. All records of the office shall be turned over immediately to a duly elected successor.

Section 6 - Clerk

The Church Clerk shall be elected annually for a term of one year or until a successor shall have been duly elected.

He shall keep accurate and complete minutes of all business proceedings of the Church. An accurate and up-to-date record of Church membership shall be maintained including all admissions and dismissions. It shall be necessary to have an up-to-date record of the addresses of the membership. The Clerk shall issue all letters of dismission; and conduct all of the official correspondence of the Church, maintaining copies thereof. The Clerk shall assist in preparing all denominational reports and such other reports as may be required or not otherwise provided for in this Constitution. He shall issue all official notices relating to Church meetings. It shall be the further duty of the Clerk to preserve all data and items of historical value to the Church. He shall deliver all files and records to any duly elected successor to the office. At the meetings of the Advisory Board the Clerk shall act in the capacity of Recording Secretary.

Section 7 - General Church School Superintendent

The General Church School Superintendent shall be a member of the Church in good standing. He shall be elected by the Church to serve a term of one year. He shall be responsible for administering the Church School under the policies established by the Board of Christian Education of which he is an ex-officio member.

ARTICLE III - BOARDS

Section 1 - Deacon

All Deacons shall be prayerfully selected with foremost regard for spiritual fitness, as outlined in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3: 8-13. Candidates shall be interviewed by the Deacon representative on the Nominating Committee together with the Pastor.

The Board shall consist of three or more members in good standing as the size of the congregation permits. Each Deacon shall be elected for a term of three years or for the remainder of a vacated term. He shall not be eligible for re-election for 1 year following a three year term. Approximately one-third of the board shall be elected annually. As soon as possible following the annual election, the board shall elect its chairman.

It shall be the duties of the Deacons to assist the Pastor in the oversight of spiritual matters, including visitation of persons, and the administration of Church ordinances. It shall be their duty to interview and counsel candidates for Church membership. The board shall hold its meetings regularly each month and at such other times as may warranted. The board shall have the custody of and administer the use of the Fellowship offerings, seeking out any any financially distressed persons. At the regular business meetings of the Church and on such other occasions as may be required, the Board of Deacons shall report its activities.

Section 2 - Deaconesses

All Deaconesses shall be prayerfully selected with foremost regard for spiritual fitness. The board shall consist of three or more members in good standing as the size of the congregation permits. Each Deaconess shall be elected for a term of three years or for the remainder of a vacated term. She shall not be eligible for re-election for 1 year following a 3 year term. Approximately one-third of the board shall be elected annually. As soon as possible following the annual elections, the board shall elect its chairman.

The Deaconesses shall assist the Pastor in the oversight of spiritual matters including the visitation of members. A duty of the Deaconesses shall be the preparation of the table for the Lord's Supper. They shall assist the Pastor and Deacons as required during the ordinance of baptism. The board shall hold meetings monthly and at such other times as may be required. A report of its activities shall be made to the Church at the regular business meetings.

Section 3 - Trustees

All Trustees shall be selected with due regard for their ability and responsibility in executing the business and financial matters entrusted to them by the Church. There shall be three or more Trustees, depending upon the size of the congregation but not more than fifteen. Each Trustee shall be elected for a term of three years or for the remainder of a vacated term, but he shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one year following the expiration of a three year term. Approximately one-third of the board shall be elected annually. Immediately following the annual elections the Board of Trustees shall elect its Chairman and Secretary.

The duties of the Board of Trustees shall include the oversight, upkeep, and protection of the Church property. This board shall, as required, employ personnel necessary for proper cleanliness of Church property and be responsible for the supervision of their duties. The Chairman of the Board shall have custody of deeds, mortgage papers, insurance policies and incorporation documents in fireproof safety, and he shall maintain a suitable record thereof for any required reference from time to time. The business of the board may be transacted at any regular or special business meeting at which a majority of the board membership is in attendance. A report of its activities shall be submitted to the Church at a regular business meeting or at such other times as the Church may direct.

Section 4 - Finance

The Finance Board shall consist of one (1) Deacon, one (1) Trustee, and one (1) member of the Board of Christian Education (to be selected at the first meeting of the newly elected board), Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and six (6) members at large, one-third of which shall be elected annually. An elected member of the board shall not be eligible for re-election for one (1) year following a three (3) year term.

The Finance Board will be responsible for the complete oversight of the finances of the Church. It shall have the authority to approve the payment of bills for the regularly recurring expenses of the Church. Expenditures for non-recurring items including expenses of additions, alternations, etc. shall require prior authorization of the Church before any commitment shall have been made therefor. A report of its activities shall be submitted to the Church at the regular business meetings or at such other times as the Church may direct.

Section 5 - Christian Education

The Board of Christian Education shall be composed of six members in good standing, elected by the Church. One-third of the board shall be elected each year for a term of three years and no person serving a full term shall be eligible for re-election for a period of one year following expiration of term of office. Ex-officio members of this board in addition to the Pastor, shall be the Minister of Christian Education, and the General Church School Superintendent.

The board shall be responsible for:

- a. The organization, administration, and supervision of the educational program of the Church;
- b. Discovering, enlisting, training, and appointing of all Church educational workers, being sure that each teacher and officer of the Sunday Church School is a member of the Church and attends worship services;
- c. Evaluating, determining, and supervising the curriculum of the educational program;
- d. Developing and interpreting to the constituency of the Church, the educational objectives and goals;
- e. Formulation and administration of the budget for Christian Education.

Section 6 - Advisory Board

An Advisory Board shall be composed of all elected Church Officers, Chairmen of regular committees and boards, and presidents of adult auxiliary organizations, and a youth representative of the Youth Council, named by the Youth Council. All of the above shall be members of the Church. Its duties shall be advisory and seek to interrelate the organizations and departments of the Church. It shall have the oversight in such matters as may not be specifically provided for in this constitution and have the power to appoint special committees. In general, matters of importance to the Church may be discussed and considered by the Board with the view of making recommendations to the Church for action. The regularly scheduled meetings of the Advisory Board shall be held in advance of each quarterly business meeting of the Church, as designated by the Pastor or by a majority of the Board. The Pastor, or the Clerk upon request of a majority of the Board may call a special meeting of this board. The Pastor shall preside at meetings of the board except when a moderator shall be appointed.

ARTICLE IV - COMMITTEES

Section 1 - Ushers

At least twelve (12) suitable and qualified members of the Church shall be elected to serve one year. It shall be the responsibility of the Head Usher, as soon as selected by the Committee with counsel of the Pastor and Deacons, to organize and train a Corps of Ushers for seating of the congregation and the receiving of offerings, except as may otherwise be provided. The Head Usher will be expected to appoint an Assistant to perform his duties in case of absence.

Section 2 - Music

The Music Committee shall consist of six members, one-third of which shall be elected annually for a three year term. Members shall not be eligible for re-election for one year following the completion of the term. The committee, in cooperation with the Pastor, shall be in charge of the musical program.

Section 3 - Floral

The Floral Committee, composed of three members, shall be elected for a one year term. This committee shall be responsible for arranging of flowers in the Sanctuary and for sending floral messages to families of the Church membership in which immediate loved ones have been lost by death.

Section 4 - Auditing

The Auditing Committee, consisting of three persons, shall be elected for a one year term. Its duties shall be the auditing of records of the financial officers as directed by the Church and as provided by the constitution.

Section 5 - Pulpit Committee

As the occasion requires, the Pulpit Committee shall be composed of one (1) Deacon, one (1) Trustee, one (1) Member of the Board of Christian Education, one (1) Member of Finance Board, each of whom shall be selected by their respective Boards, together with three (3) Members at large selected by the Church, all of whom shall be members in good standing.

This Committee shall take the necessary steps to secure a Pastor in full consultation with the Executive Minister or Area Minister of the West Virginia Baptist Convention. It shall investigate the merits of each man under consideration in regard to his personal character, education, experience record and ability in determining his fitness for this pastorate. When a suitable man is found the committee shall make recommendations to the Church for consideration. Notice of appearance of a candidate shall be mailed to all members of this Church and be announced at least one Sunday prior. The call shall come before the Church at a specially called business meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on the Sunday prior to the meeting. The vote shall be taken by Secret Ballot. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting shall be necessary to extend a call.

Section 6 - Hostess Committee

The Hostess Committee shall consist of seven members elected by the Church for a one year term. Immediately following the annual elections, the committee shall elect its chairman, who shall become an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees. This committee shall be responsible for the Church's social functions and for establishing policies and guidelines for the use of the kitchen.

The Hostess Committee shall work together with the Trustees in the maintenance and upkeep of the kitchen and its equipment.

Section 7 - Auxiliary Organization

All auxiliary organizations of the Church shall be considered a part of the Church organization and shall be responsible to the Church and subject to control by action of the Church body. Auxiliary Organizations' activities shall be carried on according to Baptist policy, and subject to the spiritual code of the Church.

Section 8 - Constitution and By Laws Review

The Constitution and By Laws Review Committee shall consist of at least three members, appointed annually by the Advisory Board. The committee members may be re-appointed to succeed themselves, and any vacancies on the committee will be filled by the Advisory Board.

Recommendations from the Church for revisions to the Constitution and By Laws will be received by the Advisory Board which will, in turn, pass them on to this committee for their review and recommendations.

Section 9 - Search Committee for Ministerial Staff

As the occasion requires, a search committee for Ministerial Staff, other than Pastor shall be composed of one (1) Deacon, one (1) Trustee, one (1) Member Board of Christian Education, one (1) Member Finance Board, each of whom shall be selected by their respective boards together with three (3) members at large elected by the Church, all of whom shall be members in good standing.

This committee shall work in consultation with the Pastor. It shall investigate the merits of each person under consideration in regard to personal character, education, experience record and ability. When a suitable person is found, the committee shall make recommendation to the Church for consideration. Notice of appearance of a candidate shall be mailed to all members of this Church and be announced at least one Sunday prior. The call shall come before the Church at a specially called business meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit on the Sunday prior to the meeting. The vote shall be taken by secret ballot. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting shall be necessary to extend a call.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

Section 1 - Worship Services

Public worship services shall be held on each Lord's Day, and the youth fellowships and the Church School shall hold weekly meetings at a time fixed by the Advisory Board and approved by the Church.

The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at least once a month.

Section 2 - Business

The Quarterly Business Meeting shall be held on the third Wednesday of January, April, July, and October. At these meetings the business of the Church shall be transacted including the receiving of reports of the various officers, boards, committees and organizations. Except when a moderator shall have been appointed for the occasion the Pastor shall preside.

Special Business Meetings may be called by the Pastor, any one of the Church Boards, or the Clerk upon request of ten members of the Church. In any such case, due notice of the time, place and matters of business to be discussed shall be announced at the regular morning worship service of the Church on the Sunday preceding the date set for such special meeting, and shall be published in a newsletter issued the week prior to the meeting and in the Church bulletin on the Sunday prior to the meeting. Special meetings for the express purpose of considering admission or dismissal of members may be called by the Pastor without previous notice.

Section 3 - Quorum

Twenty-five members who are qualified to vote upon the question before the Church, shall constitute a Quorum. A majority thereof, and voting, shall suffice to decide a question, except as may be otherwise required by the Constitution or By Laws. Parliamentary difference shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.

Section 4 - Voting

Except as hereinafter specified, all members shall be eligible to vote at business meetings and elections. When the question before the Church relates to the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of the property (real estate) only members in good standing who are of legal age and constituting the majority present at the meeting shall be entitled to vote.

ARTICLE VI - NOMINATION AND ELECTION

Section 1 - Nominations

A committee composed of one Deacon, one Deaconess, one Trustee, and one member of the Board of Christian Education, as designated by the respective boards, and three members at large shall seek out suitable and qualified candidates for election at the October business meeting of the Church. In selecting nominees for the various offices this committee shall give prayerful consideration to the end that the unity and effectiveness of the Church shall be maintained. The Pastor shall be consulted in-so-far as practicable before approaching any prospective candidate for the acceptance of the nomination. Approval of the nomination shall be given by the person being nominated. The committee shall submit its slate of nominations to the Church and also prepare the necessary ballots for voting. In-so-far as possible, no person shall be nominated for more than one elective office at the same time.

The Nominating Committee will be responsible for filling vacancies that may occur in the offices of the Church during the Church year, subject to confirmation of the Church body.

Section 2 - Elections

The Church shall conduct the regular annual election of officers, Committee members, and Board members at the quarterly business meeting in October of the current year and said officers shall begin their term of office on January 1 of the next calendar year.

ARTICLE VII - CHURCH YEAR

The fiscal year of this Church shall begin the first day of January each year and conclude with the succeeding last day of December. Wherever the word year is mentioned in this Constitution or By-Laws it shall refer to the fiscal year.

ARTICLE VIII - EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Ex-officio members shall have voting privileges.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended at any Quarterly Business Meeting of the Church by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the members present and voting, provided that the proposed amendment(s) has been read at the preceding Quarterly Business Meeting, and announcement of the proposed amendment(s) made at regular morning worship services of the Church on the two consecutive Sundays immediately prior to action on the proposed amendment(s). Any proposed amendment shall be processed in accordance with the provisions of Article IV - Section 8.

BY-LAW AMENDMENT

PROPOSED NEW SECTION:

ARTICLE III, SECTION 7 BOARD OF MISSIONS

The Board of Missions shall consist of at least six members, approximately one-third of which shall be elected annually for a three year term. Members shall not be eligible for re-election for one year following the completion of the term. The Board of Missions shall be responsible for coordinating and promoting the home and foreign mission program of the church.

To amend ARTICLE III, SECTION 4 - FINANCE BOARD, first sentence of the first paragraph:

Present wording:

The Finance Board shall consist of one (1) Deacon, one (1) Trustee, and one (1) member of the Board of Christian Education (to be selected at the first meeting of the newly elected Boards), Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and six (6) members at large, one-third of which shall be elected annually.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

The Finance Board shall consist of one (1) Deacon, one (1) Trustee, one (1) member of the Board of Christian Education, one (1) member of the Board of Missions (to be selected at the first meeting of the newly elected Boards), Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and six (6) members at large, one-third of which shall be elected annually.