

Constitution
Sandy Ridge Baptist Church
3702 16th Street, NE
Hickory, North Carolina 28601

*As Adopted November 13, 2005
As Amended October 27, 2011, October 12, 2014, December 4, 2016 January 14, 2018,
October 14, 2018, May 9, 2021, September 12, 2021, April 10, 2022, & February 9, 2025*

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of preserving and making secure the principles of our faith and assuring that this body is governed in an orderly manner, consistent with the accepted tenets of the missionary Baptist churches affiliated with the Catawba Valley Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and the Southern Baptist Convention, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the church, and setting forth the relationship of this body to other bodies of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I. NAME

This body shall be known as Sandy Ridge Baptist Church of Hickory, NC, Inc., Catawba County, 3702 16th Street, NE, Hickory, North Carolina.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of Sandy Ridge Baptist Church is to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20 KJV) through evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, missions, and worship.

ARTICLE III. CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, therefore by the aid of the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body of Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to be responsible for the religious education of our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk vigilantly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from drunkenness and the use of illegal drugs; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the teaching of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this church we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE IV. POLICY AND DOCTRINE

Section 1. Policy.

The government of this church is vested in its membership. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes the wisdom and mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among churches of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Section 2. Doctrine.

The Holy Scriptures shall be this church's authority and guide in faith and practice. The doctrines of this church shall be as set forth in the most current adopted doctrinal statement of the Southern Baptist Convention, entitled "The Baptist Faith and Message. "

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Reception of Members.

The membership shall be composed of persons who profess faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior; have been baptized by immersion; have affirmed the church covenant, the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message, and the 14 Articles of the Nashville Statement; have completed the new members' class; have presented themselves for membership during a worship service; have been interviewed by an SRBC Pastor and recommended by that same Pastor; and who have been received by vote of the church. Prior to the church vote on the prospective member, the interviewing pastor shall contact a pastor of the prospective member's last church, when applicable, to review their status at that church. It will be the responsibility of the member to notify previous churches of their membership status with SRBC.

Section 2. Duties of Members.

- (1) Members are expected to affirm the Church Covenant as set forth in Article III, the BF&M (2000), and the 14 articles of the Nashville Statement.
- (2) to attend church services regularly,
- (3) to tithe regularly (*Malachi 3:10*),
- (4) to serve in elected positions (may volunteer after 1 year of membership).
- (5) to vote in transactions of the church after completion of Membership Class.

Section 3. Termination of Membership.

Membership may be terminated or transferred in the following ways:

- (1) death,
- (2) release to another Baptist church or moving membership to another church (statement of good standing must be given by action of church vote)

- (3) deletion from the membership of the church after one year without attendance (*This will not affect our shut-ins or other members who can't attend for legitimate reasons*)
- (4) exclusion by action of this church in conference; or
- (5) voluntary resignation.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

Section 1. Services.

- (1) The church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training, and fellowship. Other meetings of the church as a whole or of groups within the church shall be set according to the needs of the congregation.
- (2) Worship services shall be held on Sunday morning as well as Sunday and Wednesday evenings unless otherwise agreed upon by the church.
- (3) The Lord's Supper shall be observed no less than four times a year at times arranged by the Senior Pastor and the Deacons, preferably the fifth Sunday morning of each quarter.

Section 2. Business Meetings

- (1) The church shall hold monthly business meetings at which the spiritual and material needs of the church will be discussed and considered as needed. Called business meetings may be held as deemed necessary by the majority of the Pastors or the majority of the Deacons with one week's previous notice stating the purpose of the business session when possible.
- (2) A quorum will be satisfied by all members present at any regularly scheduled business meeting or any business meeting for which one week's previous notice has been given to the membership.

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers

The officers of this church shall be the Pastors, Deacons, Trustees, Church Clerk, and Church Treasurer. All officers shall be members of good standing, and—with the exception of paid Pastors—be members for at least one year.

A1. Pastors

(1) Call

- (a) "Pastors" includes the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), and non-paid Pastor(s), unless otherwise stated, within this Constitution.
- (b) Pastors shall be elected from among those men who have proven to meet scriptural qualifications.
- (c) All Pastors are members of the Body of Pastors and possess one vote in all matters. These "matters" are subject to the SRBC Constitution, By-Laws, and current Church Policy.
- (d) Ordination of any new Pastor, if necessary, will follow within three months of filling the office.
- (e) If a majority of the Pastors deem that another Pastor is disqualified from being a Pastor, they may call a special Business Meeting to have said Pastor removed from office (vote conducted by written ballot). A special Business Meeting, for this purpose, may also be called by a majority of the Deacons.

- (f) The title of “Pastor” is reserved for all who presently hold the office.
- (g) Pastors may feel at liberty to resign the office with 30 days written notice.

(2) Duties

- (a) Have both the spiritual and material welfare of SRBC at heart, and have the responsibility of leading the church in winning the lost and discipling the saved, and through prayer and study, share in the teaching, pastoral counseling, and discipleship of the church.
- (b) Vote within the body of the Pastors in order to share in the decision making as it applies to the office of Pastor. They shall serve as the administrative body of the church.
- (c) Interview membership candidates to validate their compliance with Article V, Section 1. After approval of the Pastors, the interviewing Pastor shall recommend member candidates to the church during Monthly Business Meeting.
- (d) Annually Elect Chairman of Pastors for the purpose of running the Pastors’ meetings. The Senior Pastor shall not be the Chairman of the Pastors.
- (e) Attend Weekly Pastors’ Meetings, or meetings as called by Senior Pastor or Chairman of Pastors.
- (f) In conjunction with the Deacons, collectively resolve issues between any Pastors and others within the church prior to any special-called Business Meetings involving potential removal.
- (g) Recommend extended absences of Pastors to the church for approval.
- (h) If the office of the Senior Pastor is vacant, or if the Senior Pastor is incapacitated and cannot arrange for pulpit supply, the Pastors will collectively approve of pulpit supply.

A2. Senior Pastor

(1) Call

- (a) A Senior Pastor shall be chosen and extended a call when a vacancy occurs. Upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, a special Search Committee shall be elected to seek out a man, in accordance with A1(1), to be a minister of the gospel whose qualifications and Christian character qualify him for the office of Senior Pastor of this church. The Search Committee shall be five in number and shall be members of good standing. Committee members shall bring to the church only one candidate at a time. His election, or call, requiring a three-fourths majority vote, shall take place at a meeting on Sunday morning for which one week’s public notice has been given to the congregation. Election shall be by written ballot. If the recommended candidate fails to get the required three-fourths majority vote, the committee will be instructed to seek another candidate, and the meeting will be adjourned.
- (b) He shall be called by the church for an indefinite period, and he shall be at liberty to resign his position with the church if he gives thirty days written notice of his intention to terminate his pastorate, unless the time is reduced by mutual agreement with the church. If controversy arises concerning his leadership, efforts shall be made by the Deacons in conference with the other Pastors to resolve the issue with no harm to the Senior Pastor. If these efforts fail, upon the recommendation from the Deacons or the other Pastors, the church shall have the right to terminate him following a vote by written ballot to terminate, requiring simple majority.

- (c) All specific financial arrangements agreed upon at the time of the call shall be in writing and approved by the church and the prospective Senior Pastor. Copies of the agreement should be signed by the Church Clerk, the Treasurer, and the prospective Senior Pastor.

(2) Duties

- (a) All day-to-day functions of the staff and offices of SRBC shall be ensured by the Senior Pastor in accordance with the Constitution, By Laws, Employee Handbook, Job Descriptions or other Church Policy (determined at Monthly Business Meetings).
- (b) He shall lead in conducting worship services on stated and special occasions, and administer the ordinances. With the other Pastors, he shall minister to the spiritual needs of the church, and also the community as time allows, and perform other duties usually pertaining to his office.
- (c) He shall have charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall arrange for a pulpit substitute in his absence or request the Pastors to arrange one for him. He shall arrange for speakers to assist in revivals and other special services.
- (d) He shall provide an effective preaching and pastoral ministry.
- (e) He shall preside at the business sessions, preserving order and decorum; he shall secure for each member without partiality the exercise of his or her privileges; he shall express his views of the policies of the church fairly and honestly; and he shall faithfully use the influence which arises from his office. In his absence or at his invitation, any Pastor or the Chairman of the Deacons may preside at business meetings.
- (f) He shall be an advisor to all committees, departments, and organizations within the church. While the Senior Pastor may not be able to attend all meetings of all the committees, departments and organizations, he shall be informed by those committees, departments and organizations of their meeting times. He shall be able to participate in any such meetings. He may delegate this duty to another staff member as needed for specific committees, departments and organizations.
- (g) The standard work week and his other duties are defined in the Employee Handbook as approved by the church.

(3) Privileges

- (a) He shall be paid a salary and other benefits as recommended by the Finance Committee and as approved by the church by simple majority.
- (b) His vacation benefits are defined in the Employee Handbook. When a supply minister is secured to cover vacation time or any other authorized absence, the church shall pay the cost of the supply minister.
- (c) His expenses shall be paid while attending the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist State Convention, and the State Evangelism Conference each year as budgeted by the church, or the funds may be used to attend other worthwhile meetings upon the approval of the Budget/Finance Committee. He shall be allowed one Sunday in transit to or from the Southern Baptist Convention when this is necessary.
- (d) He shall be privileged to be away up to two weeks each year in revivals, providing the revivals do not fall on consecutive dates.
- (e) He shall be privileged to be away up to two weeks each year on mission trips. There will be no loss of compensation.

- (f) He shall be allowed one full day off from his duties each week, in addition to Saturday. This day is to be taken at his discretion each week or allowed to accumulate so that two or three days may be taken at one time, excluding, of course, the dates of regularly scheduled services of the church.
- (g) Sick leave is defined in the Employee Handbook.

A3. Associate Pastors

(1) Call

- (a) An Associate Pastor (any hired Pastor other than the Senior Pastor) shall be chosen and extended a call when a vacancy occurs or a new position is approved by the church. Upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, a special Search Committee shall be elected to seek out a man to be a minister of the gospel whose qualifications and Christian character qualify him to be an Associate Pastor of this church. The Search Committee shall be five in number and shall be members in good standing. Committee members shall bring to the church only one candidate at a time, subject to approval by the Pastors. His election, or call, requiring a three-fourths majority vote, shall take place at a meeting on Sunday morning for which one week's public notice has been given to the congregation. Election shall be by written ballot. If the recommended person fails to get the required three-fourths majority vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another candidate, and the meeting will be adjourned.
- (b) The Associate Pastor(s) shall be called by the church for an indefinite period, and he shall be at liberty to resign his position in the church if he gives thirty days written notice of his intention to terminate, unless the time is reduced by mutual agreement by the Associate Pastor and the Church. If controversy arises concerning the performance of the Associate Pastor, efforts shall be made by the Pastors and Deacons in conference with the Associate Pastor to resolve the issue with no harm to the Associate Pastor. If these efforts fail, the church shall have the right to terminate the Associate Pastor following a vote by written ballot to terminate, requiring simple majority.
- (c) All specific financial arrangements agreed upon at the time of the call shall be in writing and approved by the church and the prospective Associate Pastor. Copies of the agreement shall be signed by the Church Clerk, the Treasurer, and the prospective Associate Pastor.

(2) Duties

- (a) The job duties of each Associate Pastor shall be outlined in an approved job description.
- (b) The standard work week and other duties of Associate Pastors are defined in the Employee Handbook as approved by the church.

(3) Privileges

- (a) The Associate Pastor shall be paid a salary and other benefits as recommended by the Budget/Finance Committee and approved by the church by simple majority.
- (b) Vacation and holiday benefits for Associate Pastors are covered in the Employee Handbook. Care shall be taken to ensure that the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor are not on vacation at the same time.
- (c) As budgeted, the expenses of an Associate Pastor will be paid when he is away at conventions or conferences.

- (d) He shall be privileged to be away up to two weeks each year on mission trips. There will be no loss of compensation.
- (e) An Associate Pastor shall be allowed two full days off from his duties each week, with the work schedule being determined by the Senior Pastor.
- (f) Sick leave is defined in the Employee Handbook.

A4. Non-paid Pastors

(1) Call

- (a) Nominations for non-paid Pastors may be submitted by the church body to the Pastors who will interview the candidate. If approved by 2/3 of the Pastors, the candidate will be voted upon by the church by written ballot (after having heard him preach at least once). His election, or call, requiring 3/4 majority vote, shall take place at a meeting on Sunday morning for which one week's public notice has been given to the congregation. If the candidate fails to get the 3/4 majority vote, the meeting will be adjourned.
- (b) Non-paid Pastors shall serve a term of three years and may serve again following the process of nomination and election as stipulated above.

(2) Duties

- (a) As defined in A1.

B. Deacons

(1) Election of Service of Deacons

There shall be as many Deacons as the needs of the church may require. The term "deacon" will be deemed a term referring to one filling the office, and there shall be no life-long identifier as "deacon". The number of Deacons needed for the church is determined by majority vote of the Deacon body. The Church may terminate the Deacon by majority vote. Also, the Deacon may be terminated from his position by majority vote of the Deacon body. The Deacon may resign his position by written notification to the Deacon body.

Men desiring the office of Deacon shall submit themselves as a nominee and nominations may be submitted by the church body to the Deacon body. The Deacon body will interview those desiring consideration and prepare nominations to be considered by the congregation. The congregation, by secret ballot, shall approve the deacon nominee(s). This election will take place two weeks after the list of nominees is made available to the congregation. In the case of a tie, it shall be resolved by ballot in a subsequent meeting. Ordination will occur when needed at the earliest convenient time.

(2) Deacon Qualifications

- (a) The Deacons shall be elected from among those men who have proven to meet scriptural qualifications. *1 Timothy 3:8-12*.
- (b) A Deacon shall be at least 21 years of age.

(3) Duties

1. Take interest in and support all phases of the church work.
2. Carry forth the Deacon Family Ministry Plan in operation by the church. All Deacons shall consider themselves as servants of the church. Each Deacon shall have an assigned group of families within the church that he ministers to on a regular basis. Deacons shall

- seek to acquaint themselves with the moral and spiritual struggles of the membership, and they shall give scriptural and spiritual help to those in need.
3. Coordinate with Pastors and Building and Grounds Committee to ensure baptism and items needed for baptism ceremonies are prepared and assist baptism candidates as the needs arise.
 4. Construct, Distribute, Collect, Count, Record, & Report all ballot votes in all Business Meetings.
 5. Collect and secure tithes and offerings during services and designate one Deacon as Head Usher.
 6. Discipline its own body.
 7. Meet once a month as a body of Deacons.
 8. If necessary, a majority of the Deacons may call for a special Business Meeting for the purpose of dismissing a Pastor.

Meeting of the Deacons may be called by any paid Pastor or the Deacon Chairman as the need arises. They may organize themselves into committees as their wisdom and needs may direct to consider all larger problems and policies of the church. There shall be a chairman elected from the Deacons, an associate chairman, a secretary, and other officers as needed. The term of a Deacon Chairman will be limited to one year out of a three-year period. This one year limit does not apply to a Deacon if fulfilling the unexpired term of a previous Chairman. The Chairman shall preside at the meetings. The associate chairman shall preside in his absence or at his request and shall see to it that arrangements are made and carried out for the observance of the Lord's Supper. The secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings during meetings. In the event the church has no Pastors, paid or non-paid, the Deacons shall arrange for supply ministers and the Church shall pay the supply ministers.

C. Trustees

There shall be three Trustees of the church. Two members shall be deacons, with 1 member being a non-deacon. In the event of a need to replace a Trustee, a replacement shall be nominated by the Deacons and approved by the church. Each trustee will serve a six-year term, with one member's term typically expiring every two years.

Duties

1. The Trustees shall represent the church in strict accordance with directives from the church in the execution of legal papers and documents.
2. The Trustees shall hold all titles, deeds, and documents in trust in a bank safe deposit box requiring two Trustees' signatures to access.
3. An inventory of contents of items in the safe deposit box will be filed in the church office.
4. The Trustees shall have no power to buy, to sell, to improve, to transfer property, or to mortgage church property without church authorization; neither shall they control the use of the church property except as directed by church vote.
5. Upon authorization by vote of the church, the Trustees shall be given the authority to buy and to sell property and to incur indebtedness acting on behalf of the church and carrying out the church's directives.

D. Church Clerk

Duties

Shall secure all church records on church property, at least one copy shall be filed in the church office. The Church Clerk shall attend or be represented in all church business meetings and shall keep an accurate record of all business transactions, and compile this information in a record book and prepare a copy for use by the moderator, keep a register of the names of members and former members with date and method of admission, date of dismissal, and a record of baptisms. Supervise the preparation of the annual report to Catawba Valley Baptist Association each year and see that it is forwarded to the proper person.

All church records are church property and at least one copy shall be filed in the church office. The Clerk shall be nominated annually by the Nominating Committee and approved by the church.

E. Church Treasurer

The Church Treasurer is to receive and disburse all funds by check, keeping an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Payment of bill shall be made promptly, and all contributions to denominational or other causes shall be remitted at least quarterly. The Church Treasurer shall make and present a monthly report indicating income, expenses, and other assets. At the end of the church year, the Church Treasurer shall prepare an annual report showing the total amount of receipts and disbursements. The finance records administered by the Church Treasurer shall be considered church property and shall be available for observation at all times. The finance records shall be audited upon request by the Pastors or the Deacons, as arranged by the Budget/Finance Committee. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office. The Church Treasurer shall be nominated annually by the Nominating Committee and approved by the church, serving no more than three (3) years in a nine (9) year period. A person may exceed three (3) years of service only if they initially serve the remainder of a church year due to the previous Treasurer not completing their one (1) year term. The Church Treasurer shall be the Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee and shall be a voting member of that committee.

ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL

Section 1. Affiliation with Association and Conventions.

SRBC realizes there is mutual helpfulness in the association of churches which are in such agreement in faith and practice as to encourage the spirit of fellowship and goodwill. It is also recognized there have been devised, through voluntary cooperation of churches of like faith and order, organizations devoted to implementing the missionary, educational and benevolent interests and obligations of the individual Christian and his church family.

Believing that the Catawba Valley Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and the Southern Baptist Convention have as their sole purpose the promotion and support of missions, education, and benevolence in keeping with the spirit of this Constitution, we therefore agree to participate in these organizations through our duly elected messengers and our support of the causes they represent.

Changes in affiliation of this church with other bodies shall be handled in the following manner:

This church may withdraw from affiliation with the Catawba Valley Baptist Association or any other affiliation in order to affiliate with another Baptist Association of like faith and order by an affirmative

vote of three-fourths of the members present at an arranged business meeting for which at least thirty days' notice has been given.

Section 2. Holding Property.

The affiliation of this church with any other group is not to carry with it any obligation or rights as to the church property or any of its physical assets. The property holdings of this church are vested in its membership and are to be held through its trustees. The property, buildings, and equipment shall be maintained so as to provide facilities for public worship and for the missionary, educational, and benevolent interests of the church. If, at any time, this church shall depart from the doctrines and beliefs set forth in this Constitution, if the decision is by less than unanimous vote of those present and voting in a regular or called business session for which thirty days' notice has been given, the rights and usage of the property shall be held by that part of the congregation which shall agree to continue its use for the purposes for which it has been maintained until that time.

Section 3. License.

When a member announces to the church that he feels the call of God to the gospel ministry and shows evidence of pursuing this call as his life's work, the church, by a three-fourths majority vote, may license him as an acknowledgement of his call and encouragement to prepare for it. The Clerk of the church may furnish the member with a certificate of license as his credential.

Section 4. Ordination.

If the church is requested to ordain a member who has been called as a minister of a Baptist church, the procedure shall be as follows: the ordained ministers and deacons of the church will constitute the ordination council and shall examine the candidate on his fitness for the ministry. If the report is favorable, the ordination council would then recommend to the church that we ordain the candidate. The church shall express its approval by a vote of three-fourths of the members present at a business meeting of the church. Upon approval, the church shall set a date and proceed with the ordination.

ARTICLE IX. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Adoption.

This Constitution shall be submitted to the Deacons for consideration and brought to the church business session as a joint recommendation from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and the Deacons. It shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present at the business session in which the action is taken shall vote in favor of its adoption. The adoption of this Constitution shall affect a repeal of all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith.

Section 2. Amendments or Alterations.

This Constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at any regular or "called" business session of the church, provided that such amendment(s), alteration(s), or repeal has been presented to the church in writing as a joint recommendation from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and the Deacons at least two weeks prior to the time the vote is to be taken.

Should a church member desire to propose amendment(s) to this Constitution, such proposed amendment(s) must be presented at a church business meeting in writing. Following that written presentation, the church shall not vote on the proposed change for at least eight weeks to provide time for the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and Deacons to review the proposed amendment(s) and provide their recommendations or suggested alternatives. The Pastors collectively are also permitted, but not required, to provide their own recommendations or alternative text.

Section 3. Maintenance.

A copy of this Constitution shall be kept by the Clerk, at all times, among his/her records and available for reference as needed. Another copy shall be kept on file in the church office or other safe place. In addition, an electronic copy shall be kept in the church office or other safe place. All amendments to or revisions thereof shall, after passage by the church, be attached to these copies and made available to the congregation upon request.