

CONSTITUTION of the GOOD HOPE AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this association shall be the Good Hope American Baptist Association.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this association shall be to create opportunity for fellowship among the churches to the end that they may edify one another, help provide a suitable ministry in all of the churches, maintain peace and unity among the churches and work together to see that the gospel is preached to every creature in this association and to the uttermost parts of the world.

ARTICLE III – OFFICERS

Section 1. Names-

The elected officers of the association shall be Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk-Treasurer, Assistant Clerk-Treasurer, State Executive Board Member, Chairperson of Ordination, Chairperson of Christian Education, Chairperson of Evangelism, Chairperson of Missions, and Chairperson of Youth, who shall be elected bi-annually, with the exception of the State Executive Board Member who shall be elected every three years.

Section 2. Mode of Election-

Upon nomination by the nominating committee, the officers shall be elected by a majority vote. Should further nominations be made from the floor, the election shall be conducted by secret ballot.

Officers of the association will be elected for a two-year term, which will begin the with the date of the annual meeting at which they are elected and continuing until the annual meeting two years hence. This is a minimum term of office and does not prohibit an officer

from serving additional terms with his/her consent and the will of the voting delegates from member churches.

In the event of a vacancy arising in an office or committee during the course of the two-year term, the vacancy will be filled for the remaining portion of the term by the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Duties of the Officers-

- (a) The Moderator shall preside over all meetings of the Association, shall chair the Executive Committee and shall appoint such temporary committees as may be found necessary to carry on the work of the Association (see Section 5). The Moderator shall give leadership to the entire Association in their cooperative world-wide witness for Christ.
- (b) The Vice-Moderator shall assume duties of the Moderator in case of the Moderator's absence, and shall assist the Moderator in the performance of his/her duties. He/she shall be particularly responsible for publicizing the annual meeting.
- (c) The Clerk-Treasurer shall keep the minutes of all associational proceedings and shall see to their annual publication and distribution. The clerk shall also serve as the secretary of the Executive Committee. The clerk shall also serve as Treasurer for the association and keep an accurate record of all financial transactions. The records and assets of the association shall be in his/her safe keeping until a successor is chosen, to whom he/she will deliver all things for which he/she has been responsible.
- (d) The Assistant Clerk-Treasurer shall assume the duties of the Clerk-Treasurer in his/her absence or inability to serve.
- (e) The State Executive Board Member shall represent the associational concerns at all meetings of the Executive Board of the West Virginia Baptist Convention. He/She shall be responsible to interpret and promote within the association the program of the West Virginia Baptist Convention as approved by the Executive Board.

Section 4. Duties of the Standing Committees-

- (a) The Chairperson of the Ordination Committee shall, under the direction of the Executive Committee, select two other members to serve on his/her committee to assist him/her in advising individuals and churches as to the proper procedures for licensing and ordaining candidates to the gospel ministry. For their procedures see Appendix I.

- (b) The Chairperson of Christian Education shall be responsible for aiding the churches of the association in building a sound Christian education program. He/she is to chair the committee made up of the chairpersons of children's work, youth work, adult work, missionary and stewardship education, and leadership education.
- (c) The Chairperson of Evangelism should be a person who has special interest in church outreach. This person is encouraged to develop a separate committee made up of volunteers from member churches for the purpose of sharing ideas. The Chairperson of Evangelism will represent those ideals of evangelistic ministry with the Executive Committee for the purpose of building up evangelistic outreach within the Good Hope American Baptist Association of churches.
- (d) The Chairperson of Missions should be a person with special interest in missions. This person shall be encouraged to develop a committee made up of volunteers from member churches to develop ideas for the advancement of missions both locally and abroad. The chairperson will bring recommendations from the committee to the Executive Committee for the purpose of promoting mission outreach within the Good Hope American Baptist Association.
- (e) The Chairperson of Youth should be a person with special interest in reaching the youth. This person shall be encouraged to develop a committee of volunteers from member churches to develop ideas for programs and activities designed to benefit outreach to the youth. The chairperson will bring the recommendations from the committee to the Executive Committee for the purpose of promoting youth outreach within the Good Hope American Baptist Association of churches.
- (f) Executive Committee: The above elected officers, along with the presidents of the Ministers' Council, and Men's Council, the American Baptist and the Baptist Youth Fellowship, as regularly elected by their constituent bodies, shall make up the Executive Committee. They shall have power to transact any necessary business of the association ad interim and have the oversight of all associational activities, and shall make necessary arrangements for the annual meeting of the association.

Section 5. Temporary Committees-

- (a) The Nominating Committee shall present to the Annual Meeting of the Association a slate of candidates to be elected as officers and chairpersons of the Standing Committees as listed in Section 1. This list should be prepared sufficiently in advance so that the committee may be able to confer with the candidates as to their willingness to serve.

- (b) The Resolutions Committee shall present to the messengers at the association meeting such issues of moral and spiritual import as may demand their attention; these issues to be recommended to the churches of the association by majority vote of the messengers at the association meeting.
- (c) The Time, Place and Preacher Committee shall recommend to the Annual Meeting concerning the date, length of sessions, entertaining church and the preacher of the annual sermon. If for any reason such arrangements agreed upon prove unsatisfactory, the Executive Committee shall make suitable arrangements and notify the churches of the same.
- (d) The Moderator shall be given the power to appoint the following:
 - (1) A parliamentarian for the given year.
 - (2) A Student Relations Chairperson whose duty it is to keep a list of names of college students and submit names to the pastors of campus churches where students are in attendance.
 - (3) A West Virginia Baptist Subscription chairperson responsible for taking subscriptions to our state magazine during the association meeting.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Members-

The membership of this association shall consist of Baptist churches which are affiliated with the West Virginia Baptist Convention and voluntarily may be affiliated with the American Baptist Churches, USA if so desired.

Section 2. Representation-

Member churches shall be entitled to representation by their pastor, their Sunday School Superintendent, and two delegates for the first 100 members or fraction thereof, and one additional delegate for each additional 100 members or fraction thereof. Also, members who were once active pastors in the bounds of the association and are still residents of the association but have retired temporarily or permanently on the account of ill health or age shall, at their option, be considered voting members. Visiting ministers of our denomination may be invited to participate in business but shall have no power to vote. The area minister for this area shall be an ex-officio member.

Section 3. Meeting Time-

The association shall meet annually at the time and place appointed at the preceding annual meeting.

Section 4. Quorum-

Messengers from one-fourth of the actively participating churches shall constitute a quorum for business.

Section 5. Statistics-

It shall be the duty of each church in this association to send to the annual meeting a letter containing the names of its messengers, the number baptized, the number received by letter or experience, dismissed by letter, excluded, deceased and non-resident members. Also, an account of the spiritual condition of the church and the amount of funds contributed to support the gospel through the West Virginia Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches, USA, shall be reported. The fiscal year shall end June 30, and the letter shall be sent to the clerk of the association at least one week before the association meeting.

Section 6. Annual Contribution-

Each church is expected to contribute annually to the association annual meeting an amount not less than 10 cents, per member, plus an offering received at the annual meeting in order to care for the association's expense.

Section 7. Admission and Dismissal-

Any church applying for membership in this association must make application through messengers and a letter at an annual meeting, expressing its desire to unite with the association. This application shall be examined to determine the church's relationship to the West Virginia Baptist Convention. Any church applying for transfer of membership from another association of the West Virginia Baptist Convention shall be voted upon at the next business meeting of this association. If the applying church is not at that time a member in good standing of another West Virginia Baptist Convention association, then that application shall be held pending for one fiscal year, during which time, under direction of the Executive Committee, the Constitution of the association shall be circulated to the members of the applying church.

After careful examination, the church shall officially subscribe to the constitution by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting.

At the next annual meeting of the association, the applying church shall send its messengers with a letter such as complies with the requirements and wishes to complete its admission to the association.

If, upon a vote, the majority of the associational delegates present and voting are in favor of admitting the church, the right hand of fellowship shall be given to one of the messengers by the Moderator.

If any church in the association becomes heterodox in New Testament faith or practice, it shall be the duty of the association to appoint a committee to visit such church for the purpose of reclaiming it, which committee shall report to the next session of the association the result of their labor, whereupon the association shall determine its future relationship to such church.

Any church connected with the association that fails to be represented and provide a church letter for two annual meetings shall be visited by a committee appointed to ascertain the cause of the absence and which shall report the results of its visit at the next meeting. Churches which do not respond after such a visit may be dropped from the roll by a majority of the delegates present and voting.

ARTICLE V – DECORUM

As to further rules and regulations not set forth in this constitution, Robert's Rules of Order shall be accepted as the standard of authority.

ARTICLE VI – AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be altered or amended at an annual meeting of the association by a vote of two-thirds of the members present, provided that notice of changes proposed shall be given in writing to all member churches at least one month prior to annual meeting at which time the vote shall be taken.

Amended August 17, 2025