

*The Constitution  
of Abner Creek Baptist Church  
Approved December 6, 2020  
Updated August 10, 2025*

**Preamble**

Since it pleased almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in 1832 under the name Abner Creek Baptist Church, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and since He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; we adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the Statement of Faith and the Covenant of this church.

**Article 1 – Name**

The name of this church is: Abner Creek Baptist Church. The primary meeting location is: 2461 Abner Creek Rd., Greer, SC 29651.

**Article 2 – Purpose**

Abner Creek Baptist Church exists to glorify God by proclaiming the excellencies of Jesus Christ in order to make disciples of all nations. We seek to be a church committed to:

- A. Believing Biblical inerrancy
- B. Magnifying the glory and sovereignty of God
- C. Preaching primarily expositional sermons
- D. Keeping the gospel clear and central in all we do
- E. Teaching Biblical doctrine
- F. Praying in all things both individually and corporately
- G. Exercising personal evangelism
- H. Practicing meaningful church membership
- I. Caring for the physical and spiritual needs of one another
- J. Engaging in generous hospitality
- K. Participating in domestic and international missions
- L. Exercising healthy church leadership
- M. Promoting personal disciple making, and
- N. Pursuing personal godliness.

**Article 3 – Membership**

**Section 1 – Qualifications**

- A. To be affirmed for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration,
- B. who has been baptized by immersion following his or her regeneration in obedience to Christ,

- C. who holds without mental reservation the doctrines of our church as expressed in the Statement of Faith, and
- D. who promises to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

### **Section 2 – Admission of Members**

An applicant shall be received as a member of the church upon recommendation of the elders and the subsequent affirmation of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

### **Section 3 – Duties and Privileges**

- A. In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.
- B. Only members of this congregation shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church. However, non-members may serve on a temporary basis with the approval of elders.
- C. Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members, as guided by the leadership of elders. Therefore, it is a privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on necessary matters as directed in Article 4, Section 2 of this constitution.
- D. While all members are eligible to vote, because of the sensitive nature of some membership matters, parents may choose to dismiss their child before certain discussions or votes.

### **Section 4 – Termination of Membership**

- A. The church will normally recognize the termination of a person's membership after he or she has joined with another church or following his or her death.
- B. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.
- C. The elders shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation of membership for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline if necessary.

### **Section 5 – Church Discipline**

- A. The church shall have authority to exercise discipline over its members, which may involve excluding from its membership any member consistently neglectful of the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, any member who affirms a serious doctrinal error which is opposed to the Word of God and/or the Statement of Faith, or guilty of scandalous conduct by which the reputation of Christ or his church is dishonored.
- B. Any such action shall be led by the elders and done in accordance with the instructions of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 and 2 Corinthians 2:6-11.
- C. Church discipline should be done in a spirit of love and care with the hope of bringing about repentance and restoration for the good of the individual. Such action should only be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

## Article 4 – Meetings

### Section 1 – Worship Meetings

The church shall meet together for public worship each Lord's Day, and at other times throughout the week as the elders may determine.

### Section 2 – Members' Meetings

- A. In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. An outside moderator may be used if the elders deem necessary.
- C. There shall be a minimum of three members' meetings per year, which shall not be held in place of or during the regular worship gathering.
- D. Each November, the elders shall call a members' meeting for the purpose of presenting a budget as well as any nominees for the positions of elder, deacon, clerk, or treasurer for the following year. The church will then vote on these items at the next members' meeting to be held in December. The approved budget and officers will commence on January 1st of the new year.
- E. No members' meeting shall be held until the date, time, and place of such meeting shall be announced at every worship gathering of the church for one week immediately prior to the members' meeting in question.
- F. Members' meetings shall proceed according to a reasonable order, and the members present shall constitute a quorum to do business. Motions shall be adopted by agreement of a majority of members present after discussion on the issue, except on matters otherwise provided for in this constitution.
  - a. The voting for officers shall be by paper ballot.
  - b. The vote to affirm the proposed budget shall be by a show of hands.
- G. Within a members' meeting, the church shall be responsible to:
  - a. Elect officers;
  - b. Vote on the approval of new pastoral staff;
  - c. Receive new church members;
  - d. Recognize termination of membership due to death or transfer of membership;
  - e. Exercise church discipline;
  - f. Approve annual budgets of the Church, approve any inter-year expenditures that create an overall increase in the Church budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property. Unbudgeted expenditures that do not increase the total budget can be approved by the Treasurer and Elders;
  - g. Adopt proposed amendments to the Church Constitution, Statement of Faith, or the Church Covenant;
  - h. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the church by the elders;
  - i. Take any other action the elders deem necessary or desirable.
- H. Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all regular services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting.
- I. Special members' meetings may also be called at the written request submitted to the elders, by a minimum of thirty percent of the membership. In the event of a written request

from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

## **Article 5 – Officers**

### **Section 1 – Summary**

- A. The Biblical offices in the church shall be elders and deacons, but the final earthly authority is vested in the assembled congregation.
- B. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

### **Section 2 – Elders**

- A. Oversight of the ministry, resources, and facilities of the church shall be vested in the elders, which shall be comprised of a minimum of two men who satisfy the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- B. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure as elder.
- C. Normally, a majority of the active eldership shall be laymen, that is, men who serve without financial support from the church.

### **Section 3 – Elder Selection**

Elders shall be selected as follows:

- A. After privately receiving recommendations from the congregation for the office of elder, and after due consideration of those recommendations, the elders shall at any regular members' meeting present to the church a nominee or list of nominees to the office of elder.
- B. For a period of at least one month, the church shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that member shall privately express such concern to the elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove names from the list of nominees. No name shall be added to the list of nominees which was not included on the initial list.
- C. When a period of one month has elapsed, the elders shall at the next regular members' meeting present a final list of nominees to the church, who shall vote yea or nay on each of the nominees in turn by means of paper ballot.
- D. The moderator and/or his delegates shall count the votes, and any nominee having the approval of at least three-quarters of the members present and voting on his nomination shall be an elder, which men shall be set apart by the church and recognized as men gifted and willing to serve in this calling.

### **Section 4 – Elder Reaffirmation**

- A. With the exceptions of the lead pastor and staff elders, elders shall be reaffirmed by vote of the church after three years of service.
- B. Normally, after a lay elder has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be reaffirmed to the office of elder after at least one intermittent year.
- C. Staff elders shall not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limit.

### **Section 5 – Elder Responsibilities**

- A. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, 20:28, and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging

sound doctrine), and shepherding God's church. In particular, the elders shall take responsibility to:

- a. Give themselves to diligent study and ministry of the word;
  - b. Fervently pray for the membership;
  - c. Provide discipleship for the membership;
  - d. Examine and instruct prospective members;
  - e. Examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions;
  - f. Hire, oversee, evaluate the performance of, and when necessary terminate paid non-pastoral church staff;
  - g. Oversee the work of the deacons and all ministries of the church;
  - h. Oversee worship services (planning may be delegated to pastoral staff);
  - i. Administer the ordinances of baptism and communion;
  - j. Equip the membership for the work of the ministry;
  - k. Ensure spiritual care is given to the sick, hurting, elderly, and widowed (James 5:14).
  - l. Encourage and guard sound doctrine and practice;
  - m. Admonish and correct doctrinal error;
  - n. Oversee the process of church discipline;
  - o. Coordinate and promote the ministries of the church;
  - p. Mobilize the church for world missions;
  - q. Ensure that all who minister the word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions; and
  - r. To take any other action which shall be necessary and proper for faithfully overseeing and shepherding the church.
  - s. All legal transactions entered into on behalf of the church, once approved by the church, must be signed by a minimum of at least two elders.
- B. Each year at the November members' meeting referenced in Article 4, Section 2-D, the elders, after consultation with the treasurer, deacons, and other ministry leaders, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at the regular November members' meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting in December. The church's fiscal year is January 1 through December 31.
- C. The elders may establish ministry positions within the church and/or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

### **Section 6 – Elder Termination**

- A. An elder's office may be terminated by resignation or dismissal.
- B. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should first confidentially express such concern to that particular elder, then if need be, to the other elders.
- C. An elder shall be removed from office upon the vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.
- D. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21.

### **Section 7 – Lead Pastor**

- A. A lead pastor shall meet all the qualifications and hold all the duties and responsibilities of a member of the church.
- B. The lead pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Article 5, Section 5, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. He shall oversee the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- C. In terms of formal authority, there shall be no distinction between an elder and an elder who is the lead pastor.
- D. He shall be the primary elder responsible for the development of new elders, the encouragement of ministry skills in current elders, and the theological development of the elder team.
- E. The lead pastor shall be accountable to the non-staff elders who shall advise, assist, encourage, and evaluate him in his work.
- F. In consultation with the other non-staff elders, the lead pastor shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members, including other staff elders.
- G. The lead pastor shall serve as the president of the organization (for the purposes of South Carolina non-profit regulations). In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated.

#### **Section 8 – Calling of the Lead Pastor**

- A. In the event that a new lead pastor is to be called, the elders may appoint an interim pastor who shall serve until a new lead pastor is called if they deem necessary.
- B. The elders shall lead the search for the lead pastor and may invite other members to officially work with them in the search process.
- C. A lead pastor shall be selected as follows:
  - a. After a thorough search and interview process, the elders shall at any regular members' meeting present to the church the name of one nominee to the position of lead pastor.
  - b. The elders shall give the church full assurance that there is no doubt as to the nominee's wholehearted support of the Statement of Faith and the Church Covenant.
  - c. For a period of at least one week, the church shall consider the nominee's gifts in preaching and teaching, and his commitment to minister personally to the members of this church.
  - d. If any member believes the nominee to be unqualified, that member shall express such concern privately to the elders.
  - e. After one week, the elders shall at the next members' meeting present the nominee for lead pastor to the church, who shall vote by ballot on his selection.
  - f. The moderator and/or his delegates shall count the votes. An affirmative vote of 75% of those members present and voting shall be necessary for election.

#### **Section 9 – Associate Pastors**

- A. An associate pastor may be hired by the church in order to help fulfill the pastoral responsibilities of the church, and once hired, he shall be considered as an elder.

- B. An associate pastor may be selected by following the same process in place for selecting a lead pastor (Article 5, Section 8-C).
- C. Associate pastors report directly to the lead pastor.

### **Section 10 – Deacons**

- A. The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7.
- B. The church shall recognize men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. The number of deacons shall vary as the church has need.
- C. Under the oversight of the elders, the deacons shall take responsibility to
  - a. Care for the physical needs of members;
  - b. Attend to the accommodations for public worship and church events;
  - c. Care for the normal care and maintenance of church properties; and to
  - d. Oversee and disburse a fund for benevolence and to report periodically on the use of such funds to the elders and the church.
- D. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, deacons shall not exercise a ministry of spiritual authority, but shall support the elders' ministry of the Word, work to maintain the unity of the church, and care for the physical needs of the church.
- E. Deacons shall be selected as follows:
  - a. After privately receiving recommendations from the congregation for the office of deacon, and after due consideration of those recommendations, the elders shall at any regular members' meeting present to the church a nominee or list of nominees to the office of deacon.
  - b. For a period of at least one month, the church shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that member shall privately express such concern to the elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove names from the list of nominees. No name shall be added to the list of nominees which was not included on the initial list.
  - c. When a period of one month has elapsed, the elders shall at the next regular members' meeting present a final list of nominees to the church, who shall vote on the group of nominees as a whole.
  - d. Nominees shall be elected to the office of deacon upon receiving a majority vote from members present and voting.
- F. After a deacon has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of deacon after at least one intermittent year.
- G. Deacons shall be reaffirmed by vote of the church triennially, at the beginning of that year.
- H. A deacon may be removed from office by a decision of the elders, or upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

## **Article 6 – Administration**

### **Section 1 – Clerk**

- A. It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church and to render reports as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church.
- B. The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation. There is no limit to the number of terms a clerk may serve, as long as he/she is qualified, reaffirmed by the elders each year, and is able to continue serving in good conscience.
- C. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.
- D. The clerk may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any member's meeting.

### **Section 2 – Treasurer**

- A. The treasurer, who shall not be a paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate.
- B. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at members' meetings, when deemed necessary by the elders.
- C. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. This includes following the appropriate financial policies as established by the elders and treasurer.
- D. The treasurer shall render to the elders, whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.
- E. The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation. There is no limit to the number of terms the treasurer may serve, as long as he/she is qualified, reaffirmed by the elders each year, and is able to continue serving in good conscience.
- F. The treasurer may enlist the assistance of other church members, once approved by the elders, to help fulfill his/her responsibilities as treasurer.
- G. The treasurer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any member's meeting.

### **Section 3 – Non-Pastoral Staff**

- A. Support staff may be hired by the elders to help fulfill administrative and other responsibilities of the church.
- B. Any open support staff position that has already been approved in the budget by the congregation should be filled by the elders after a thorough search process.
- C. If a new support staff position is needed, the elders shall make a recommendation to the congregation. The congregation will then vote on the recommendation at the next

member's meeting. The position is approved with a majority vote of the members present and voting. Once approved, the elders shall perform the search and hiring process.

- D. Among other general responsibilities outlined in a job description, a member of the support staff shall preserve an accurate roll of the membership and shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.
- E. All support staff report directly to the lead pastor.
- F. Non-pastoral support staff may be removed from their position by the elders.

#### **Article 7 – Amendments**

- A. The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of three-quarters of the members voting at any members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at any previous regular members' meeting, and shall have been announced at every public meeting of the church for two weeks immediately prior to final consideration.
- B. The Constitution shall be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members voting at any members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at any previous regular members' meeting, and shall have been announced at every public meeting of the church for two weeks immediately prior to final consideration.

#### **Article 8 – Indemnification**

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith as authorized by the ministry, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, (d) having no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful, and (e) in accordance with biblical revelation. The church will purchase and maintain liability insurance for this purpose.

#### **Article 9 – Conflict of Interest**

Church members, elders, deacons, officers and staff of Abner Creek Baptist Church are expected to put the Church's interest ahead of their own personal interest as they carry out their responsibilities on behalf of the church. In addition, they have a duty to recognize, disclose, and avoid conflicts of interest. They are prohibited from using their position with the church for any type of private gain or to obtain benefits for themselves, members of their family or any other individual or entity.

#### **Article 10 – IRS Guidelines**

As a tax-exempt organization, the Church will not participate directly or indirectly in any political campaign on behalf (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. The church will not make contributions to political campaign funds or make public statements of position (verbal

or written) on behalf of the church in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office or judicial appointment.

#### **Article 11– Dissolution**

- A. In the event that the elders of the church determine that there is reasonable cause to dissolve Abner Creek Baptist Church as a corporate entity, the elders shall recommend a plan of dissolution to the membership after calling for a special members' meeting.
- B. Notice of the meeting shall be given to the membership no less than sixty days prior to the meeting. At least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposed plan of dissolution.
- C. This proposal of dissolution shall cover all the assets of the church exclusive of the Abner Creek Baptist Church Cemetery and the Abner Creek Baptist Church Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund. The Abner Creek Baptist Church Cemetery is made up of land with improvements owned by the church and located on the South side of Abner Creek Rd. The improvements include the log house that is believed to have been used for the first meetings of Abner Creek Baptist Church.
- D. If the plan of dissolution of the church is approved, the Abner Creek Baptist Church Cemetery and the Abner Creek Baptist Church Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund shall then become a separate independent legal entity licensed and governed by the South Carolina Perpetual Care Cemetery Board and managed under the Abner Creek Baptist Church Cemetery Perpetual Care Policy and Guidelines. No cost or expenses of dissolution shall be paid from the Abner Creek Baptist Church Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund. However, once dissolution is complete and the cemetery is its own entity, the Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund shall be responsible for all cemetery expenses as outlined in the ACBC Cemetery Perpetual Care Policy and Guidelines.
- E. In this proposed plan of dissolution and subsequent sale, all of the church's assets excluding the assets referenced in item C of Article 11 shall be handled in the following order:
  - a. All debts and obligations of the church shall be paid in full.
  - b. All cost and expenses of dissolution shall be satisfied.
  - c. If funds are available, upon the advice of the Elders, the church may choose to make a monetary contribution to the Abner Creek Baptist Church Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund.
  - d. At that point, all tangible property of the church, exclusive of property referenced in Article 11 Item D, shall be sold, and all remaining assets of the church, both liquid and tangible shall be distributed to such organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes, who agree with the churches Statement of Faith and shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or any regulations succeeding said section.
- D. If this proposed plan of dissolution is approved, the Elders will then present to the members, at the special member's meeting referenced in item A of Article 11, the organization(s) selected to receive the remaining assets of the church. At least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposed distribution of assets. None of the assets of this church shall be distributed to any member, elder, deacon, officer, or staff of this church or any other individual.