

Bylaws of the Piedmont Okefenokee Baptist Association

Adopted: January 19, 2023

**Piedmont
Okefenokee
Baptist
Association**



Making a Difference Through Christ

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Preamble

The Piedmont Okefenokee Baptist Association, Inc. exists to glorify God. As a cooperating partnership of Southern Baptist churches, we mutually equip, engage, and expand disciple-makers of Jesus Christ.

Article I: Statement of faith and doctrine

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, is the statement of faith and doctrine for the association.

Article II: Members

Section 1: Member Churches

The membership of this association shall be Baptist churches that are in harmony and agreement with the statement of faith and doctrine of the association.

Section 2: Messengers

Each member church, having financially contributed undesignated gifts to the association for the work of associational causes during the previous calendar year and submitted a completed Annual Church Profile, shall be entitled to (3) three messengers. A church shall be entitled to (1) one additional messenger for every \$1000 contribution to the association after the first \$1000. Or a church shall be entitled to (1) one additional messenger for every (1) one percent of the church's undesignated receipts contributed to the association after the first (2) two percent. In no case shall any church be entitled to more than (10) ten messengers.

Sub-section 1: Executive committee members

Each church shall submit to the association, with their Annual Church Profile, the name of their pastor, and (2) two additional church members whom the church has elected to serve as executive committee members. Executive committee members shall be counted as part of the total number of messengers entitled to a church but beyond duties specific to the executive committee shall have no special privileges or powers not otherwise afforded to messengers. Churches may amend their elected executive committee members at any time by written notice to the association.

Section 3: Church admission

Churches desiring membership in the association shall submit a letter of request to the associational missions strategist or moderator. Upon receipt of the letter, the moderator will appoint a credentials committee at the next regular meeting. The chairman of the credentials committee will provide to the church documents related to the governance and mission of the association. The credentials committee will review the church's doctrinal and missional statements and governing documents. After reviewing these documents, the credentials committee will meet with the church pastor and other church leadership to determine if the church is in agreement with the

faith, doctrine, and practice of the association. The credentials committee shall report at the association's annual meeting, provided the time of the review process has not been less than (8) eight months, a recommendation as to whether the church should be received in the association for a (1) one year period of watch care. Receiving a church into watch care requires a two-thirds vote of the messengers.

During the period of watch care, a church should demonstrate financial support of associational work and evidence of being in friendly cooperation. Following the period of watch care, the credentials committee shall report to the association at the annual meeting their recommendation concerning receiving the church as a member church. Receiving a church into membership requires a two-thirds vote of the messengers.

Section 4: Church expectations

Member churches are expected to:

1. Submit an Annual Church Profile each September
2. Contribute financially to the work of the association
3. Elect members in good standing with the church to be messengers to the association's meetings
4. Participate in the work of the association

Section 5: Church removal

A church may be removed from membership in the association in the following ways:

1. A church sends a letter to the associational missions strategist or moderator stating their desire to withdraw from the association.
2. A church disbands or dissolves
3. A church is found to conflict with the faith, doctrine, or practice of the association. When such a situation arises, the moderator shall task the administrative committee or appoint a credentials committee to consider the matter. The committee will make a determination and report their findings and recommendations at the next regular meeting. In matters where severity necessitates urgency, the moderator may call a special meeting to consider the matter. Removal of a church requires a two-thirds vote of the messengers.

Article III: Officers

Section 1: Associational Missions Strategist

The associational missions strategist shall provide executive leadership to the operation of the association's office and staff and to the work and mission of the association.

Sub-section 1: Calling an Associational Missions Strategist

When a vacancy occurs in the office of associational missions strategist, the executive committee shall be responsible for the nomination of an associational missions strategist search committee. The moderator of the association shall be the chairman of the search committee. The committee shall include (4) four representatives from the association who are not members of the administrative committee in addition to the following ex officio members:

- Moderator
- Vice-Moderator
- Treasurer

The executive committee shall present their nominations at the next regular meeting of the association or, if needed, at a called special meeting. The search committee shall not be under any time restraint. However, the chairman or his designee must report on the committee's progress at each regular meeting until the committee nominates a candidate.

Any candidate the associational missions strategist search committee considers must meet the following qualifications:

- Give evidence and testimony of being a born-again believer and follower of Jesus Christ
- Meet the biblical qualifications of a gospel minister as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9
- A minister licensed and/or ordained by a Southern Baptist congregation
- An active member of a Southern Baptist congregation
- Affirm *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*
- Have the needed education and experience qualifications to effectively fulfill the duties of associational missions strategist

The search committee may develop their own candidate review process provided they perform the following:

- Receive resumes for no less than (45) forty-five days
- No candidate shall be considered who has not submitted a resume
- Promptly inform candidates when they are no longer being considered
- Select the top (3) three candidates for further consideration
- Request that the top (3) three candidates submit written responses to a questionnaire developed by the search committee. At any

regular meeting, the messengers may vote to direct the search committee to include specific questions in the questionnaire, provided the committee has not already sent a questionnaire to candidates.

- Perform appropriate background and reference checks before presenting a recommended candidate to the association

Only the associational missions strategist search committee may recommend a candidate for the association to consider.

When the associational missions strategist search committee has selected a candidate to recommend to the association, the moderator shall call a special meeting or schedule time at the next regular meeting to present the recommended candidate to the association. No less than a (10) ten-day notice of the committee's intention to recommend a candidate shall be given to the churches. Prior to voting on the recommended candidate, time for the messengers to ask questions of the candidate shall be provided. A candidate must receive a three-fourths vote of the messengers to extend the call.

Sub-section 2: Dismissal of an Associational Missions Strategist

The associational missions strategist shall serve until the relationship is terminated by resignation or dismissal.

a) Resignation

If, at any time, the associational missions strategist desires to terminate his employment, he shall submit his resignation to the moderator with no less than a (30) thirty-day notice.

b) Dismissal

If the administrative committee finds cause to dismiss the associational missions strategist by a three-fourths vote, the moderator shall present their recommendation of dismissal at the next regular meeting or at a called special meeting, provided that a (10) ten-day notice has been given to the churches.

The administrative committee may immediately suspend the associational missions strategist with paid leave if circumstances are considered detrimental to the reputation, function, or ministry of the association.

On the recommendation of the administrative committee, dismissal shall require a three-fourth vote of the messengers. If terminated, the associational missions strategist shall be immediately relieved of all duties, and the administrative committee shall be empowered to determine an appropriate severance package.

Section 2: Administrative officers

Sub-section 1: Officers

The administrative officers shall be moderator, vice-moderator, treasurer, assistant treasurer, and clerk. Administrative officers shall be elected at the annual meeting. Elected officers shall hold their offices until their successors are elected. The officers shall assume office at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

No person shall serve as moderator for more than (2) two years and thereafter shall not be eligible for re-election to that office for the period of (1) one year. No person shall be nominated and elected as an officer who is not a registered messenger of the association at the time of the nomination.

The vice-moderator shall be the moderator-elect and shall become the moderator at the end of their (2) two-year term or in the event the office of moderator becomes vacant.

Sub-section 2: Vacancies

If a vacancy occurs in the office of the moderator, then the vice-moderator shall become the moderator. Likewise, if a vacancy occurs in the office of the treasurer, then the assistant treasurer shall become the treasurer. If a vacancy occurs in the office of clerk, the administrative committee may appoint a clerk pro tem who will serve until a clerk is elected at the next regular meeting. If concurrent vacancies occur in both the office of moderator and vice-moderator, the administrative committee shall appoint a moderator pro tem who will serve until a moderator is elected at the next regular meeting. The same shall be true for the treasurer and assistant treasurer.

Sub-section 3: Ex Officio Membership

The moderator shall serve as an ex officio member of all standing and special committees of the association.

The associational missions strategist shall serve as an ex officio member of all standing and special committees of the association except any such committee created to recommend his successor.

Section 3: Qualifications for officers and leadership

Associational officers, committee leaders, and committee members must be in agreement with the association's statement of faith and agree to support and abide by the associational governing documents.

If the administrative committee finds cause to dismiss an associational officer, committee leader, or committee member by a three-fourths vote, the moderator shall present their recommendation of dismissal at the next regular meeting or at a called special meeting, provided that a (10) ten-day notice has been given to the churches.

Associational officers, committee leaders, and committee members must be a member in good standing of a church that is a member church of the Piedmont Okefenokee Baptist Association. If an officer, committee leader, or committee member ceases to be a member of a cooperating church or their church withdraws from cooperation with the association, their office is vacated.

The officer, committee leader, or committee member must notify the moderator or associational missions strategist if they become ineligible to serve. If such ineligibility occurs without notification, the administrative committee shall investigate the matter and make a ruling regarding the eligibility of the officer, committee leader, or committee member. A report shall be made at the following regular meeting when a position has been vacated.

Article IV: Committees

The association shall have such committees as necessary for doing the work of the association.

The association shall have the following standing committees:

- Executive committee
- Administrative committee

The association may create other committees as needed to carry out the work and mission of the association.

Section 1: Executive committee

The association will have an executive committee, which will carry on the work of the association between annual meetings. The duties of the executive committee shall be to administer the affairs of the association between its annual meetings, annually prepare and recommend a budget to the association, and make a written report at the annual meeting.

The executive committee shall be composed of the associational officers, the pastor of each member church, and (2) two members from each member church in the association. Each member church shall report to the association the name of their elected members. The officers of the association shall be the officers of the executive committee.

The regular meetings of the executive committee shall be held on the third Thursday following the first Sunday in January and August. The moderator shall set the time and place of meetings and may change the date provided the meetings are held within (10) ten days of their original date, and that written notice is made to committee members.

A special meeting of the executive committee may be called by the moderator and shall be called upon the written request of members representing (10) ten cooperating churches of the association. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call, which shall be sent to all members in writing at least (10) ten days before the meeting.

A majority of the elected church executive committee members who have registered as attending the meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2: Administrative committee

The administrative committee shall be composed of the moderator, vice moderator, treasurer, assistant treasurer, associational missions strategist, and (1) one representative from each of the following (4) four regions:

- Region 1 - Ware County
- Region 2 - Brantley County

- Region 3 - Charlton and Camden counties
- Region 4 - Bacon and Pierce counties

The four regional members of the administrative committee will be elected by the messengers at the annual meeting. Members shall serve staggered (2) two-year terms, with members from regions one and three elected in odd-numbered years and members from regions two and four elected in even-numbered years. Any vacancy occurring in a regional representative position on the administrative committee shall be filled by the association at its next annual meeting. No person shall serve as a regional representative for more than (1) one term and thereafter shall not be eligible for re-election to that office for the period of (1) one year.

Under the direction of the executive committee, the administrative committee shall execute the work, business, and affairs of the association.

Section 3: Committee meetings held electronically

Committee meetings may be conducted by telephone or internet when the chairman determines that circumstances necessitate such a meeting. Telephone or internet committee meetings shall be subject to all rules adopted by the committee, or by the association, to govern such meetings, which may include any reasonable limitations on, and requirements for, committee members' participation. Any such rules adopted by the committee shall supersede any conflicting rules in the parliamentary authority, but may not otherwise conflict with or alter any rule or decision of the association.

Article V: Meetings

Section 1: Regular meetings

The regular meetings of the association shall be held the third Thursday following the first Sunday in April and October unless otherwise ordered by the association.

Section 2: Annual Meeting

The regular meeting on the third Thursday following the first Sunday in October shall be known as the annual meeting. It shall be for the purpose of electing officers, approval of the annual budget, receiving reports of officers and committees, and for any other business that may arise.

Section 3: Special meetings

A special meeting may be called by the moderator or by the administrative committee and shall be called upon the written request of (10) ten cooperating churches of the association. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call, which shall be sent to all cooperating churches in writing at least (10) ten days before the meeting.

Section 4: Quorum

A majority of the number of church messengers who have registered as attending the meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Article VI: Parliamentary authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the association may adopt.

Article VII: Amendment of bylaws

These bylaws may be amended at the annual meeting of the association by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.