

# **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ORANGE, TEXAS CONSTITUTION**

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of First Baptist Church of Orange, Texas, do hereby declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner, to maintain the autonomy of this church in freedom of action in relation to all other churches and organizations

## **ARTICLE 1 – NAME**

1.1 This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Orange, located at 7637 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Orange, Texas 77632.

1.2 This Church is duly incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas under the corporate name of the First Baptist Church of Orange.

## **ARTICLE 2 – PURPOSE**

2.1 First Baptist Church of Orange exists to bring glory to God by fulfilling the Great Commandments and the Great Commission through both word and deed.

2.2 First Baptist Church of Orange exists to fulfill its Biblical purpose through worship, discipleship, fellowship, service, and evangelism.

## **ARTICLE 3 – PRINCIPLES OF FAITH AND PRACTICE**

First Baptist Church of Orange affirms the Holy Bible as expressed in the following statements as our foundational beliefs and guide for our practice. The church further affirms that the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) as a comprehensive statement of our beliefs. Any exceptions to the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) as written are stated here and supersede that document.

### **3.1 The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ. (1963)

*Reference: Ex. 24:4; Deut. 4:1-2; 17:19; Josh. 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isa. 34:16; 40:8; Jer. 15:16; 36; Matt. 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke*

21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Rom. 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

### 3.2 God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

*Reference: Gen. 1:1; 2:7; Ex. 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Lev. 22:2; Deut. 6:4; 32:6; ; Ps. 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Is. 7:14; 53; John 1:1-18; 21; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thes. 4:14-18; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 3:16; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18.*

### 3.3 Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.

*Reference: Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.*

### 3.4 Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

*Reference: Matt. 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Lk. 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Rom. 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Cor. 5:17-20; Gal. 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 2 Tim. 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14*

### 3.5 God's Purpose of Grace

The Scriptures affirm that Grace is God's temporal and eternal favor toward and purpose for fallen man. It is expressed in His willingness to freely forgive, regenerate, justify, sanctify, and glorify redeemed man. His Grace is freely extended to all mankind but is only beneficial to those who accept Jesus Christ by faith to receive His gift of salvation.

The Scriptures affirm Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. The Scriptures affirm the Free agency and responsibility of man and Scripture comprehends all the means God uses to achieve His sovereign end.

Election is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes human boasting and promotes humility. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, who have confessed Jesus Christ as Lord, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.

*Reference: Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5-8; 1 Sam. 8:4-7,19-22; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 31:31ff.; Matt. 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Cor. 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephes. 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Col. 1:12-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:12; 2:10,19; Heb. 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

### 3.6 The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ—Scriptural baptism and the Lord's Supper, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. There are two Scriptural officers—Pastors (also called elders, bishops, and shepherds in Scripture) and Deacons.

*Reference: Matt. 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephes. 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:1-15; 4:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Rev. 2-3; 21:2-3.*

### 3.7 The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

The Scriptures affirm that Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His *Church*. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. *As Christians submit themselves to one another in fear of the Lord*, the wife is to submit herself graciously to her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents *as modeled in the Old Testament law and New Testament teaching*.

*Reference: Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25; 3:1-20; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Josh. 24:15; 1 Sam. 1:26-28; Ps. 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Prov. 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Eccl. 4:9-12; 9:9; Mal. 2:14-16; Matt. 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Tim. 5:8,14; 2 Tim. 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7.*

### 3.8 Consistency of Belief and Practice

The use of church property and facilities will not be permitted to groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the Church's doctrine or moral teachings. Nor may church property and/or facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the Church's doctrine or moral teachings. The pastor, or his official designee, is the final decision-maker concerning use of church facilities.

## **ARTICLE 4 – GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH**

4.1 The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who comprise it, owing allegiance to its Head and Founder, the Lord Jesus Christ and mutual respect toward each other.

4.2 The officers of the church shall be the Pastor, Moderator, Church Clerk, Treasurer, Trustees, and Deacons.

4.3 All employees, all internal or external groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action under the authority of this constitution.

## **ARTICLE 5 -- RELATIONSHIPS**

5.1 This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support its local association, state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

### **ARTICLE 6 – AUTHORITY**

6.1 This Constitution shall be and is, hereby established as the sole “Constitution” for First Baptist Church of Orange.

6.2 There shall not be any meeting or activity of this church conducted that is in conflict with this constitution. The church shall not conduct any business transaction that is in conflict with this Constitution.

6.3 All employees of First Baptist Church, either full time or part time, must abide by, teach, and model the principles and practices of this constitution.

6.4 All bylaws, policies, rules, and operating practices, if any, previously approved by the Church, that are in conflict with this Constitution, shall hereby be repealed, set aside, and superseded by the approval of this Constitution.

### **ARTICLE 7 - DISSOLUTION**

7.1 Right to Dissolve.

The Members of the Church, by the required affirmative vote, may dissolve the Church.

7.2 Disposition of Property upon Dissolution.

7.2.a. Disposition to the Golden Triangle Baptist Network or its successors

If the Church dissolves or ceases to function as a Church, then, after the satisfaction of all obligations, debts, and liabilities of the Church, all of the assets of the Church, including its personal and real property, appurtenances, and effects, shall inure to the benefit of, and become the property of, the Golden Triangle Baptist Network (Association) or its successors if the Golden Triangle Baptist Network or successors, at that time, exists and is willing and able to accept the assets of the Church under the conditions of § 501(c)(3) of the Code.

7.2.b. Disposition to the Southern Baptist Convention

If the Church dissolves or ceases to function as a Church, and if the Golden Triangle Baptist Network or its successors has dissolved or is unwilling or unable to accept the assets of the Church under the conditions of § 501(c)(3) of the Code, then, after the satisfaction of all obligations, debts, and liabilities of the Church, all of the assets of the Church,

including its personal and real property, appurtenances, and effects, shall inure to the benefit of, and become the property of, the Southern Baptist Convention, if the Southern Baptist Convention, at that time, exists and is willing and able to accept the assets of the Church under the conditions of § 501(c)(3) of the Code.

#### **ARTICLE 8 – AMENDMENTSTO/REPEAL OF CONSTITUTION**

8.1 This Constitution may be amended or modified under the following circumstances: **1-**The proposal shall be considered at two, appropriately publicized, separate called business meetings no less than 21 days apart. **2-**In the first called meeting, the proposal shall be read and discussed, then an approval by 2/3 (two-thirds) of members present and voting affirmative. **3-**In the second called meeting, the proposal shall be read and discussed, then the proposal must be approved by two-thirds of the members present and voting affirmative.

8.2 This Constitution may be repealed under the following circumstances: **1-**The proposal shall be considered at two, appropriately publicized, separate called business meetings no less than 21 days apart. **2-**In the first called meeting, the proposal shall be read and discussed, then an approval by 2/3 (two-thirds) of members present and voting affirmative. **3-**In the second called meeting, the proposal shall be read and discussed, then the proposal must be approved by two-thirds of the members present and voting affirmative.

**ARTICLE 9 – RATIFICATION**

9.1 This Constitution is hereby ordained and established for First Baptist Church of Orange, TX by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the membership present and voting affirmative on (date) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

Approved by First Baptist Church of Orange, Texas meeting in conference on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

Vote Attested by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor/Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Trustee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Trustee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Trustee

# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ORANGE, TEXAS BY-LAWS

## ARTICLE ONE: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

### **1.1 General**

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

### **1.2 Candidacy**

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this church by one of the following ways:

1. By public confession/profession of personal faith in Christ and baptism according to the policies of this church.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church.
3. By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtained.
4. Persons can present themselves for membership at any worship service or by interview with the pastor, ministerial staff member, or authorized leader.
5. As a condition of membership, all candidates for Membership shall agree in principle\* to the doctrines and member practices of First Baptist Church as established in the constitution and by-laws.
6. Candidates for Membership will be presented for formal vote of the church during a regularly scheduled worship service or at a regularly scheduled business meeting.
7. Should there be dissent concerning any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to a membership committee comprised of the pastor, ministerial staff, and deacon officers for investigation and recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

### **1.3 New Member Orientation**

New members of this church are expected to participate in the church's new member orientation. New Member Orientation information is found in the current edition of the Operations Manual for First Baptist Church.

### **1.4 Member Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **1.4.a. Rights of Members**

1. Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all church business conferences provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

2. Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church.
3. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.
4. Only Members are eligible to become church officers, primary leaders and Bible instructors in permanent small groups or in short-term study groups.
5. Every member can expect this church to provide spiritual ministry toward him/herself by Scriptural teaching/mentoring, spiritual counsel, personal encouragement, pastoral ministry, and family care.

#### 1.4.b. Responsibilities (Expectations) of Members

1. Every member is expected to publicly express their faith in and commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and to be Scripturally baptized.
2. Every member is expected, by both priority and behavior, to fulfill the mission of First Baptist Church.
3. Every member is expected to regularly attend worship.
4. Every member is expected to be a member of and regularly attend a small group.
5. Every member is expected to engage in service to God and this church.
6. Every member is expected to live a lifestyle that connects people with Christ and this church.
7. Every member is expected to demonstrate support for this church by Scriptural stewardship.

### 1.5 Termination of Membership

At a regular or called business meeting, membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death of the member.
2. Transfer by letter of recommendation to another Baptist church.
3. Exclusion by action of this church.
4. Erasure upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

### 1.6 Discipline

#### 1.6.a. Right of Discipline

The church has Scriptural and organizational authority to exercise discipline of its members based on doctrinal or behavioral issues. It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, ministerial staff, and deacons will be available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of both leaders and members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption and restoration rather than punishment.

#### 1.6.b. Causality

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare and harmony of the church, the pastor, ministerial staff, and the deacons will take prayerful and reasonable measures to resolve the problem following the principles found in Matthew 18:15-17. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting affirmative in a regular or called business meeting is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to no longer be in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be bathed in prayer and exhibit a spirit of Christian kindness and patience.

#### 1.6.c. Restoration

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded upon request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and doctrinal or life style change.

#### 1.6.d. Mediation

Should there be a conflict within the church that involves issues between pastor, ministerial staff, deacons, and the church membership that could destroy or hinder the work of the church, all efforts shall be made by the church, acting as a body, to resolve the issue. If the issue continues to be unresolved, then the church Personnel Committee will call for an outside mediator to work with the parties involved to make every reasonable attempt to resolve the conflict. The church should request a mediator before the problem escalates to the point it causes a break in the unity, harmony and fellowship of the congregation.

## **ARTICLE TWO: CHURCH OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church standing committees shall be members in good standing of the First Baptist Church.

### **2.1 Church Officers**

The officers of this church shall be the pastor, deacons, moderator, clerk, treasurer, and trustees as elected by the church.

#### 2.1.a. Lead (or Senior) Pastor

1. The lead pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor has the responsibility to lead the congregation, establish and maintain the organizations, and to supervise the church (ministerial and support) staff to perform their tasks. The pastor will be expected to delegate appropriate responsibilities to others to insure the work of the church is done in an efficient and productive manner.

2. The pastor is the leader of the ministries and missions of the church. As such he works with the ministerial staff, deacons, and church leadership to: (1) lead the church to carry out its mission and purpose, (2) the discipleship of members, (3) the proclamation of the gospel both inside and outside the church, and (4) to provide appropriate care for both church members and persons in the community.
3. Whenever a vacancy occurs, it is the church's responsibility, acting as a body, to choose and call a pastor.
  - a. A pastor search committee shall be elected by the church and will have the responsibility for developing an updated job description and seeking the person that will fulfill the pastor's role for the congregation. The committee shall be composed of no less than seven members who shall be members of spiritual maturity and discernment and a demographic cross-section of the general church membership.
  - b. After prayerful review of candidates, the committee shall bring for the consideration of the church only one name at a time. The election of the pastor shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose. At least one week's public notice shall be given before a candidate for pastor shall be presented for consideration. Election shall be by ballot. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of members present and voting (unless previous arrangements are made for absentee balloting) is required to call (elect) the new pastor.
  - c. The individual called to fill the pastor's role shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The pastor shall preside at meetings of the church unless another staff member or church member has been designated to fill that role.
4. If so designated, the pastor may serve as Moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized in these bylaws.
5. The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church at the time of resignation.
6. Due to doctrinal error, moral failure, or leadership failure, the church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant:
  - a. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose with at least one week's public notice given.
  - b. Such meeting should take place only after the church has followed the Matthew 18:15-17 principles and, if appropriate, the church has sought help through mediation.
  - c. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a three-fourth's majority of both the personnel committee and deacons or by written petition signed by not less than one fourth of the resident church members. The moderator for this meeting shall be someone other than the pastor. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present and elected by majority vote (ideally, a church leader who is not a member of First Baptist Church of Orange). The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by ballot;

an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant.

- d. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor (so excluded from office), the church will compensate the pastor with not less than one twelfth of the pastor's annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be paid in not more than thirty days. The Personnel Committee and Deacon Officers may recommend additional compensation where appropriate.

2.1.b. Deacons (Reference also the current *Deacon Handbook*)

1. Deacons are one of the two Scriptural officers of the church (along with Pastors). Their tasks are, (along with and in support of the pastor) to Care for the Members, Lead the Church, and Proclaim the Gospel message. They provide practical leadership, spiritual leadership, and pastoral ministry to the church body.
2. The process of selecting new Deacons can be triggered by several factors, primarily, when the ratio of active Deacons to resident members falls below 1:25, the process for Deacon selection can begin. The call for new Deacons can be given by the Deacon body, the pastor, or by the church body, acting in business session.
3. On the day of nomination, each member of the church shall be given a nomination form, appropriately identified with the Scriptural and local-church qualifications required, the number of Deacon candidates sought, and a place for signature (to verify membership). Each participating member shall nominate men for consideration (no more than the number of Deacons sought in that particular election, in order to fulfill the member:deacon ratio.
4. The nomination forms shall be collected and turned over to the church clerk and then to the Deacon Screening Committee for tally and processing.
5. Upon church nomination, each deacon candidate will be vetted by a Deacon Nominee Screening Committee, followed by a probationary period and training classes, then, recommendation by the Deacon Body, and by final approval and ordination authorized by the church. The church shall consider the calling and ordination of the deacon as perpetual.
6. The deacon may resign from active deacon ministry by selecting an inactive status, but this does not revoke his ordination.
7. Due to doctrinal error, moral failure, or leadership failure, the church may remove a deacon from office. Such removal shall be brought about by the recommendation of the deacon officers, the pastor and ministerial staff, and a three fourth majority of the deacon body. The church shall have a two thirds majority for removing a deacon from office. If the deacon is removed by the church, his ordination shall also be revoked, provided that First Baptist Church of Orange was the ordaining church.

#### 2.1.c. Moderator

1. The church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer. The pastor is considered the *de facto* moderator but is subject to annual election to that office.
2. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.
3. Due to doctrinal error, moral failure, or leadership failure, the church may remove the moderator from office during the term of service. Such removal shall be brought about by the recommendation of the deacon officers, the pastor and ministerial staff, and a three fourth majority of the deacon body. The church shall have a two thirds majority for removing a moderator from office.

#### 2.1.d. Church Clerk

1. The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer.
2. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise provided in these by-laws. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissals, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms.
3. The clerk shall provide issues of dismissal approved by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these by-laws. The Clerk will also provide electronic backups of all records.
4. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association, state and national conventions. The church may elect a church secretary as church clerk or may delegate some or all of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary who will assist the elected clerk.
5. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained.
6. Due to doctrinal error, moral failure, or leadership failure, the church may remove the church clerk from office during the term of service. Such removal shall be brought about by the recommendation of the deacon officers, the pastor and ministerial staff, and a three fourth majority of the deacon body. The church shall have a two thirds majority for removing a church clerk from office.

#### 2.1.e. Treasurer

1. The church shall elect annually a church treasurer(s) as its Financial Officer(s). The church may elect the lead pastor or a ministerial staff member to be the Administrator, managing the day to day financial affairs of the church.
2. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to oversee, on behalf of the church, the receipt, preservation, and disbursement of all funds. The church may elect

a church secretary to assist the Administrator and Treasurer in the receipt, documentation, and disbursement of all funds.

3. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to provide to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements during the period between business meetings. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by an internal church audit committee or, as deemed necessary, a public accountant.
4. Due to doctrinal error, moral failure, or leadership failure, the church may remove the treasurer from office during the term of service. Such removal shall be brought about by the recommendation of the deacon officers, the pastor and ministerial staff, and a three fourth majority of the deacon body. The church shall have a two thirds majority for removing a treasurer from office.

#### 2.1.f. Trustees

1. The church shall annually elect three members in good standing to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. There is no limitation to the term of service for a trustee.
2. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any church property. When the signatures of the trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents related to the above items only upon the approval and at the direction of the church body in business meeting.

## 2.2 Standing Church Committees

1. The church body shall determine the number and types of committees that are needed to fulfill the mission of the church.
2. Standing committees shall be elected annually upon the recommendation of the nominating committee or committee on committees. All committee members shall be elected by the church unless otherwise specified in these by-laws. Unless otherwise specified by committee policies, All Committee members must be church members in good standing and shall serve on a three-year rotation basis with one-third elected each year.
3. All standing committees and leaders are subject to church authority and report regularly to the ministerial staff and church. All committees' activities shall be subject to church coordination and approval.
4. Standing Committees of the church may include but are not limited to: Nominating Committee, Finance (or Stewardship) Committee, First Baptist Church Foundation Board, Memorials Committee, Missions Committee, Personnel Committee, Property Committee and Benevolence Committee, and any other regular and special committees as the church shall authorize.

#### 2.2.a. Nominating Committee

The Nominating committee coordinates the staffing of all church committees. The nominating committee consists of four members shall serve for a four-year term, with one member rotating off each year.

#### 2.2.b. Finance Committee

The Finance (or Stewardship) committee develops and recommends an overall stewardship development plan, a unified church budget, and regularly oversees the financial affairs of the church. It advises and recommends in the administration of the gifts of church members and others, using sound principles of financial management. It works with the treasurer in the preparation and presentation to the church the required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church.

#### 2.2.c. First Baptist Church Foundation

The First Baptist Church Foundation (FBCF) Board is charged by the church to establish the historic dollar value of the FBCF, manage the investments of the foundation, harvest gains by the foundation, and solicit recommendations from church entities for expenditure of funds. It also recommends to the church appropriate expenditures of FBCF gains.

#### 2.2.d. Memorials Committee

The Memorials committee manages the expenditure of funds received through memorial contributions as per the policies for the Memorials committee.

#### 2.2.e. Personnel Committee

The Personnel committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration, including those called by church actions. This committee shall assist in determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, other compensation, policies, job descriptions, and personnel services.

#### 2.2.f. Benevolence Committee

The Benevolence committee leads the church in caring for the personal and family needs of the membership and community. Its work includes assisting people with in crisis, psychological and counseling needs, financial needs, pastoral needs, and other urgent practical matters.

### **ARTICLE THREE: MINISTRY TEAMS/TASK FORCE**

#### **3.1 Ministry Teams**

##### **3.1.a. Scope of Team Ministry**

All ministries not managed by standing committees are coordinated by Ministry Teams. A ministry team, by its nature and organization, seeks to maximize ministry with a minimum of bureaucracy.

### **3.1.b. Composition/Operation of Ministry Teams**

Ministry teams are composed with church members and likeminded people of similar interest and passion for a particular ministry. Ministry teams recruit members by attraction/invitation rather than through the church nomination process (as with standing committees). Ministry team membership does not require church approval. Such teams elect their own leaders, determine their own programming, and manage their own budget.

### **3.1.c. Jurisdiction of Ministry Teams**

All ministry teams and leaders are subject to church authority and report regularly to the ministerial staff and church. All ministry team activities shall be subject to church coordination and approval.

## **3.2. Task Force**

### **3.2.a. Scope of a Task Force**

A Task Force is a short-term, special-focus group of members that are either elected or appointed to research, design, implement, oversee, and evaluate a special task. (Example: Strategic Planning Team, Transition Team, etc.)

### **3.2.b. Composition/Operation of a Task Force**

A Task Force is composed of church members who have interest in the particular focus assigned. The Task Force shall elect its own leadership team, recruit its own members, make discoveries and recommendations to the church body.

### **3.2.c. Jurisdiction of a Task Force**

The Task Force is subject to the authority and oversight of the church. The Task Force reports to the ministerial staff and the church. The Task Force has implementation authority only as is authorized and approved by the church.

## **ARTICLE FOUR: CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS**

### **4.1 Scope of Ministry for Program Organizations**

As needed or beneficial, the church shall maintain programs of age-graded Bible teaching, discipleship training, church leader development, new member orientation, missions' education, action and support, and music education, training, and performance.

### **4.2 Jurisdiction of Program Organizations**

All organization related to the church programs shall be guided by the pastor, ministerial staff, and, ultimately, the church body. All leadership shall be subject to church authority and report regularly to the ministerial staff and church. All program activities shall be subject to church

coordination and approval. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for these programs.

#### **4.3 Coordination of Program Organizations**

As required, the pastor, ministerial staff, deacon officers, and program ministry leaders shall meet at least annually to plan, budget, and coordinate all ministry programs of the church.

### **ARTICLE FIVE: CHURCH ORDINANCES**

#### **5.1 Two Ordinances**

This church recognizes two Scriptural Ordinances to be observed in perpetuity—Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. These Ordinances shall be coordinated by the Deacon Body and an Ordinance Ministry Team.

#### **5.2 Baptism**

1. This church shall receive for baptism any person who has publicly professed faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.
2. Baptism shall be by immersion in water
3. The pastor, or any one so designated by the pastor or ministerial staff shall administer baptism
4. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship or special baptismal service of the church
5. A person who professes Christ and is not baptized within a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff or deacons. If the individual indicates that they are reluctant to follow the Lord in baptism his/her name shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism
6. Provision for Private Baptism In cases of special need, baptism can be administered in a private setting apart from a worship service of the church. It must be administered by a ministerial staff member and reported to the church for proper registration by the church clerk

#### **5.3 The Lord’s Supper**

1. The church shall observe the Lord’s Supper no less that once per quarter, usually on every fifth Sunday.
2. Special observations shall be directed by the pastor and ministerial staff.
3. The pastor, ministerial staff, and deacons shall be responsible to administer the Lord’s Supper; the deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations.

### **ARTICLE SIX: CHURCH MEETINGS**

#### **6.1 Worship Services**

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday for worship. The pastor, and those he designates, shall direct the services.

## **6.2 Special Services**

Bible conferences, revival services and other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar at the direction of the pastor, ministerial staff, or church ministry groups.

## **6.3 Regular Business Meetings**

The church shall hold regular business meeting no less than two times per year—one in the fall, one in the spring. Notice of regular business meetings must be published and announced no later than one week in advance. A summary of the agenda is included with the notification.

## **6.4 Special (Called) Business Meetings**

The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. Notice of Special Called Business Meetings must be published and announced at least one week before the meeting is to take place, unless extreme urgency makes such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, date, time and place; and it must be given in a way that all resident members have opportunity to be made aware of the meeting.

## **6.5 Quorum**

For all business meetings of the church, the quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called. Absentee ballots can be allowed if such action is stated in the written and announced notification for the business meeting. There will be no occasion for proxy votes.

## **6.6 Parliamentary Rules**

*Roberts Rules of Order, Revised*, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

# **ARTICLE SEVEN: CHURCH FINANCES**

## **7.1 Stewardship**

1. The Bible teaches that every believer is a steward of all that God has given to them and is responsible to use all those possessions in a way that pleases God.
2. The Bible teaches that every believer is to worship God by giving a portion of their resources back to the God who gave them through the local church—our talents, our money and possessions, and our time.
3. The tithe is the expected stewardship gift for every believer.

## **7.2 Accountability**

1. The church shall have jurisdiction over all accounts and resources. All financial matters shall be a matter of record available to all members in good standing with the church.
2. The Finance committee shall have administrative oversight of all finances regarding general or restricted funds of the church.
3. The First Baptist Church Foundation Board shall have administrative oversight of all FBC Foundation funds.

## **7.3 Budget**

1. The Finance committee, in consultation with the pastor, ministerial staff, standing committees and ministry teams, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by item the amount needed for local and other expenses.
2. Financial support for the approved budget is expected from all members. Offering envelopes, online giving sites, and other means will be provided for members to facilitate their support.

## **7.4 Accounting Procedures**

1. All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the church teller committee, treasurer, administrator, and/or financial secretary, and will be properly recorded.
2. Those who have responsibility that involves actual handling of funds may be bonded, the church paying the bond.
3. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the administrator, treasurer, and finance committee.
4. The administrator, treasurer, and/or financial secretary shall provide an accurate accounting at the end of each year to those members who have contributed during the year.

# **ARTICLE EIGHT: CHURCH POLICY MANUAL**

## **8.1 Responsibility**

The church shall develop and keep updated a Church Policy Manual. This manual should include church policies and procedures, organizational charts indicating lines of responsibility to be used in the administration of the church. The manual shall be maintained in the church office by the pastor/administrator and church clerk and made available for use by any member of the church.

## **8.2 Review/Update**

1. The pastor, administrator, ministerial staff, church council, or a special committee formed for that purpose, shall review the manual at least annually..

2. Any church member, standing committee, or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual.
3. Addition, revision, or deletion of church policies requires: (1) the recommendation of the church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the procedures or policies relate, and (2) approval by the administrator, ministerial staff, and, if appropriate, the church council.

### **8.3 Approval**

Upon initial review and approval by the church, the Church Policy Manual shall have ongoing approval status from the date of church approval, based on proper Review and Updating by responsible committees and ministry teams.

## **ARTICLE NINE: AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS**

### **9.1 Changes in the By-Laws**

1. Changes to the By-Laws may be made at any regular or called business meeting of the church provided that each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to the church membership at the time the amendments were first presented.
2. Amendments to the By-Laws shall be by a two-thirds affirmative vote of church members present and voting.