



first baptist church  
at the mall

**CHURCH CONSTITUTION  
& BYLAWS**

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AT THE MALL, INC.  
LAKELAND, FL

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# **CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AT THE MALL, INC.  
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## **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of First Baptist Church at the Mall, declare and establish the Church Constitution and Bylaws to preserve the principles of our faith, to govern the Church body in a Christian and orderly manner, and to secure the blessings of religious freedom for ourselves, our children, and future generations of this church. Furthermore, in sharing the challenge of accomplishing the Great Commission, we hereby establish the Church Constitution and Bylaws to further the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our desire at the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AT THE MALL is to love God, love people, and serve others as we intentionally reach the lost and equip believers to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ (Matt 22:36-40; Matt. 28:19-20; John 13:14-15; Gal. 5:13).

## **CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

### **CHURCH NAME**

This Church shall be known as THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AT THE MALL INC., of Lakeland, FL.

### **ARTICLES OF FAITH**

The Holy Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant word of God and is the basis for this statement of faith (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 19:7-11)

We subscribe to the doctrinal statement of the “Baptist Faith and Message” as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in the year 2000.

Copies of the “Baptist Faith and Message” shall be kept in the church office and shall be made available upon request to members. In addition, a copy is located in Appendix One of the Church Constitution and Bylaws.

### **CHURCH COVENANT**

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

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

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We also agree to maintain family worship and private devotions; to educate our children about our beliefs as Christians; to seek the salvation of our family members, friends, and acquaintances; to walk worthy of our calling in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our commitments and Christ-like in our behavior; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further agree to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to develop Christian sympathy toward others and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the example of our Savior to secure it without delay.

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

## CHURCH GOVERNANCE AND AFFILIATION

The governance of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable to the church. As a result, the membership retains for itself the right to be the final and ultimate decision-maker in regards to all church business.

This church acknowledges no superior ecclesiastical authority; nevertheless, we recognize the importance and advantage of cooperating with other churches and groups of Christians.

As a result, this church shall maintain membership in and cooperate with the South Florida Baptist Association, the Florida Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

## CHANGES TO THE CHURCH CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of this Church may be altered or amended after a recommendation of the Bylaws Committee and by three-fourths (3/4) vote with at least 500 active members in attendance at a business meeting of the church provided that:

1. Members receive at least four (4) weeks' notice of such proposed change prior to the church business meeting; **AND**
2. Copies of the proposed change(s) are distributed to members in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance of the church vote, designating the language affected and stating the proposed changes.

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## CHURCH BYLAWS

### ARTICLE 1: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

#### 1.1 CANDIDACY

Any person may offer himself or herself as a candidate for membership in this church at any worship service, during a meeting with a member of the pastoral staff, or at a meeting for membership. At such time he or she will be counseled by a member of the pastoral staff or their designee regarding membership.

Membership into the church is received in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and then baptism by immersion as a symbol of obedience set forth in Scripture (Matthew 3:16; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; 8:12-13; Acts 8:38-39); **OR**
2. By letter of transfer from another church of like faith and order, which practices only baptism by immersion after salvation; **OR**
3. By statement of a prior conversion experience and prior believer's baptism by immersion after salvation; **OR**
4. By statement of a prior conversion experience and willingness to be baptized by immersion as a symbol of obedience set forth in Scripture (Matthew 3:16; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; 8:12-13; Acts 8:38-);

Upon one or more of these occurrences, **AND AFTER** completion of any New Members Orientation requirements as prescribed by the Senior Church Staff, the prospective member is eligible for membership.

Should any questions arise about the prospective member's willingness or ability to adhere to the doctrines of this church, one or more members of the Senior Church Staff may choose to sit down with the prospective member and discuss such question(s). Unresolved questions—or concerns of the current membership about inclusion of the prospective member—may provide sufficient grounds to delay or prevent the granting of membership.

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## 1.2 PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

All members of this church shall enjoy the rights and privileges normally associated with membership in a church. Included in such rights is the right to vote on church business matters (subject to the limitations set forth in Article 3 below) and participate in church functions. Likewise, members of this church are responsible to fulfill the duties and obligations that are normally associated with membership in a church (some of which are set forth in other sections of these Bylaws).

## 1.3 CONFLICT RESOLUTION & CHURCH DISCIPLINE

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18, NIV).

The purpose of conflict resolution and discipline in the church is to promote unity among members, remove hindrances to the work of the Holy Spirit, and maintain a strong Christian witness. Restoration of estranged members, reconciliation of broken relationships, forgiveness of those who have entered into sin, and the spiritual growth of all members of the church is the intended outcome of any disciplinary or conflict resolution action.

### 1. Conflict Resolution.

Understanding that church congregations are made up of human beings—each of whom were born with a sinful, self-centered nature—the church recognizes that disputes among members (as well as disputes between members and the church staff) are inevitable. All church members shall use their best efforts to resolve such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement in a manner that befits Christians, and they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith; recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ and seeking to reach a just and equitable solution.

The church and its members shall strive to employ the following biblical procedures in every situation in which a dispute arises—regardless of who or what may be the adverse party. While it is possible that non-members or former members may refuse to abide by some or all of these procedures, the church and its members shall make every effort to encourage their use. All disputes, claims, questions, or disagreements arising out of or relating to these bylaws—*or any other matter*— shall be subject to the following dispute resolution framework:

#### a. Personal Attempts

When any dispute arises between one or more members of this church, the involved member(s) shall take time to pray about the basis for the dispute as well as the other involved member(s). After such prayer, the member(s) shall approach the other member(s) with whom they have the disagreement and attempt to work through the dispute in a spirit of love and understanding in private, without a third member.

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If a personal attempt to address the dispute directly does not result in a resolution, one or more of the members involved shall approach a Senior Church Staff member who is not involved in the dispute (or—if the entire staff is involved—the most senior member of the deacon body not involved in the dispute), and explain the dispute. The person(s) approached, as soon as possible but no later than thirty (30) days, shall select an appropriate spiritually mature church member/leader to meet with the disputing members separately to encourage the resolution of the dispute.

## b. **Mediation**

If the personal efforts described in a. above are unsuccessful, the members involved may submit their dispute to biblical mediation. Mediation is an informal, non-adversarial process with the objective of helping the disputing parties reach a mutually-acceptable and voluntary agreement. Mediation shall take place within thirty (30) days from the date any member involved in the dispute submits a written request for mediation to a Senior Church Staff member for mediation (but not before the procedure set forth in section a. above has been completed).

The mediation shall be conducted and facilitated by a neutral third-party, chosen by the parties to the dispute. Should the parties not be able to agree upon a mediator, the Senior Pastor—provided he is not a party to the dispute—shall pick a mediator to facilitate the resolution OR shall delegate this responsibility to the Executive Director/Executive Pastor—provided the Executive Director/Executive Pastor is not a party to the dispute. Should the Senior Pastor be a party to the dispute, the person to select a mediator will be the first in the following list to not be involved in the dispute: Executive Director/Executive Pastor, Pastor of Evangelism & Missions, Pastor of Pastoral Care, Discipleship Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons, and then each deacon (such deacons listed in *reverse* order of seniority).

The titles listed in this section refer to existing positions at the church. Unless and until any position is eliminated, the mediation selection procedure set forth herein shall remain intact and unchanged—regardless of any alteration of titles. Should any position be eliminated, the procedure set forth above will remain in effect except that the eliminated position shall likewise be eliminated from the procedure.

The basic process for conducting the mediation shall be as adopted by the Senior Pastor and deacon body.

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## c. **Arbitration**

If mediation is unsuccessful, the parties may proceed to biblical arbitration. Arbitration, as used here, means a process by which a dispute is heard by an impartial third person (or several persons), chosen by the parties, whose decision the parties have agreed to accept.

Either party may notify the other party(ies) of their desire to submit the disputes, claims, questions, or differences to binding arbitration within sixty (60) days from the date mediation was requested. If the party(ies) to whom a request for arbitration is made agrees to proceeding to arbitration, a response shall be given back within ten (10) days of receiving the request.

Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline as outlined under Article 1, section 1.3 were followed. Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church staff member or officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Article 6.6, Article 7.10, Article 8.1(2), 8.2(2), 8.3(2), 8.4(2), and Article 9.7(3) were followed.

The procedures for arbitration shall be adopted by the Senior Pastor and deacon body.

## 2. **Church Discipline**

- a. The Deacons shall constitute the Church Discipline Panel. The Senior Pastor, Executive Director/Executive Pastor, Deacon Chairman, or three (3) or more deacons who have signed a written request may recommend an investigation into the improper or un-Christian conduct of a church member. Primary guidance will come from the principles found in Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, Galatians 6:1 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15.
- b. The Executive Director/Executive Pastor or his designee AND the Deacon Chairman, after careful study of the known or alleged facts in the matter, shall appoint an Investigative Panel of three (3) deacons believed by him to be impartial and unbiased. This panel, after thorough and prayerful investigation, shall report to the Deacon body and recommend what it considers to be appropriate disciplinary action or dismissal of the charges.
- c. Recommendations for disciplinary action shall be approved by the Deacon body according to Matthew 18:15-19.

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## 1.4 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

The policy of this church shall be to remove the names of members from the church roll in the following manner:

1. By Death; **OR**
2. By Letter of Transfer. Any member in good standing with this church shall be granted a Letter of Transfer after receiving a proper request from any sister church of like faith; **OR**
3. By Church Discipline. Should a member become an offense to this church by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct (including actions which are inconsistent—or contrary to—these bylaws), the church may terminate that person’s membership. Such termination may occur only after employing church discipline procedures according to 1.3 and faithful, loving efforts to bring the member to repentance have been made; **OR**
4. By Erasure.
  - a. When requested in writing by the member;
  - b. When it is discovered that a member has joined another church;
5. When contact with a member has been lost for one (1) year or more and diligent attempts at renewed contact have proven futile (such erasure to be made after approval by the Deacon body).

## 1.5 RECONCILIATION

Members dismissed may be restored to our fellowship according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8. The reception and restoration of these members into the fellowship of the church shall require:

1. The request for restoration by the excluded person;
2. Completion of three (3) months of positive mentoring by Senior Church Staff or their designee;
3. By recommendation of the Deacon body

## ARTICLE 2: CHURCH CALENDAR

**2.1** The tenure-of-office (except as provided specifically for certain offices) shall begin on January 1<sup>st</sup> and end on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**2.2** The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1<sup>st</sup> and end on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

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## ARTICLE 3: CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

“But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner” (1 Corinthians 14:40 NAS).

### 3.1 NOTICE OF BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. Notice of all called business meetings of the church shall be given by public announcement in all worship services of the church at least two (2) Sundays prior to the business meeting, unless the Deacon Chairman and the Senior Pastor agree that extreme urgency renders such notice impractical.
2. When the announcement of an upcoming church business meeting is made, it shall be publically announced at all sessions of all worship services and also placed in writing for members to view. It shall include the date, hour and place of the meeting, a detailed statement of the meeting’s purpose, the quorum needed and the qualifications for voting as a member. Proper notification shall also include the date, time and place for open discussion between church members and the person(s) most familiar with an issue to be voted upon so members may be fully informed of the issue prior to the day of the business meeting.
3. The qualifications to vote as set forth in Article 3.4 shall be read prior to the vote.

### 3.2 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

1. The annual business meeting of the church shall be held in the last quarter of each year on a Sunday. At this meeting, the Finance Committee shall submit the proposed budget for the upcoming year for church approval. The Nominating Committee shall submit proposed names for those nominated to fill elected lay leadership positions for the upcoming year for church approval. All other committees, officers and departments may report as necessary.
2. Written copies of the proposed budget and a list of names for those nominated for elected lay leadership positions shall be made available to church members, according to notification procedures outlined in 3.1.

### 3.3 SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Specially called business meetings may be held at any regular worship service upon the call of the:

1. Senior Pastor; **OR**
2. Executive Director/Executive Pastor **OR**
3. Deacon Chairman (only at the request of a majority of the deacon body); **OR**
4. Pastors Search Committee Chairperson (as set forth in 7.6)

**AND** with a notice of the meeting as stated above in 3.1.

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## 3.4 VOTING

All voting shall be by those who:

1. Have fully satisfied the requirements for church membership as set forth in Article 1.1;  
**AND**
2. Are physically present at the church meeting when the vote is taken (no proxy votes, or absentee ballots are allowed); **AND**
3. Are at least sixteen (16) years of age.

## 3.5 QUORUM

1. A quorum for the transaction of any business except as provided below shall be two hundred and fifty (250) members.
2. A quorum for the election of Senior Pastor shall be seven hundred and fifty (750) members or one-fourth (1/4) of the active membership, whichever is smaller. Active membership is based on the average attendance in all Sunday morning worship services over the prior two (2) month period.
3. When any one (1) church service is held in more than one (1) session (i.e., two [2] or more morning worship services), all multiple sessions of each service (inclusive) shall count as a single service. When a church vote is subject to this “Multi-Sessions” rule, church action shall be determined by the cumulative total vote of those members present and voting at all sessions.

## 3.6 VOTING PROCEDURES

All church votes, unless otherwise voted upon by the membership, shall be by voice vote (i.e., by saying “Yes or “No”) **OR** by raised hand **OR** by standing when prompted by the Moderator. In the event the majority of the membership present elects to use a written ballot, the following procedure shall be utilized:

1. A written ballot (a plain slip of paper with only two boxes—one for “Yes” and one for “No”) shall be prepared prior to the business meeting. At the same time, the Executive Director/Executive Pastor shall print a list of the members who are eligible to vote based on the requirements set forth in sections 1.1, 1.2 and 3.4 of the bylaws.
2. Each member in attendance at the business meeting who believes they are eligible to vote shall be given a ballot slip. The members receiving a ballot slip shall also be given two envelopes capable of being sealed:
  - a. The first envelope shall be blank, with no writing or other marks on the outside.
  - b. The second envelope shall have a space whereupon the members are asked to write their full name and address.

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3. The actual vote shall be conducted as follows:
  - a. All members receiving a ballot shall indicate their vote by checking either the box indicating "Yes" or the box indicating "No."
  - b. The ballot shall then be placed into the blank envelope and sealed by the voting member.
  - c. That sealed envelope shall then be placed into the second envelope and sealed. At this time the member shall write his or her name, along with their home address (i.e., the address which is on file with the church) in the space provided.
  - d. The ballots (now sealed in two envelopes) will then be collected by the deacons (or other persons designated by the church to collect the ballots). The ballot envelopes shall then be delivered to the Moderator, who will then deliver the ballot envelopes to the assembled group of vice-chairpersons.
4. The ballots shall then be tabulated in a two-step process:
  - a. First, the vice-chairpersons for each of the standing committees shall meet privately to confirm the eligibility of each voter to cast a vote. This group shall obtain the list of eligible members from the Executive Director/Executive Pastor, and then compare the names on the list to the names on the envelopes containing ballots.
    - If the name on the outside of the envelope is on the list of those eligible to vote, the outside envelope is opened, and the blank envelope is placed (unopened) into a box of votes to be tabulated.
    - If the name on the outside of the envelope is not on the list of those eligible to vote, the envelope remains unopened and is placed in another box for safekeeping. A list of all voters whose ballot envelopes were unopened shall be made and provided to the Executive Director/Executive Pastor. Any member may contact the Executive Director/Executive Pastor in the five (5) business days following the vote and inquire whether their name appeared on the list of those eligible to vote.
    - The box of unopened envelopes shall be given to the Moderator and securely maintained and protected for fifteen (15) calendar days (in case of error or challenge to the determination of ineligibility).
  - b. Second, after all of the envelopes collected have been screened for eligibility, the group of committee vice-chairman shall, together, deliver the ballots (which are then still in sealed, anonymous, envelopes) to a group made of up the chairpersons of all standing committees which are already assembled together in private.
    - The chairpersons shall then begin opening the anonymous envelopes and recording the votes.
    - The result of the vote shall be then placed in written form, and the writing shall be delivered by the group of chairpersons, together, to the Moderator.

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5. Unless impossible or otherwise unduly burdensome, the steps of this procedure shall be conducted without delay (i.e., eligibility certification begins immediately following the vote, tabulation immediately follows certification, and delivery of the result is made immediately following tabulation).
6. The Moderator shall announce the result of the vote to the church at the next scheduled service.

## **3.7 RULES OF ORDER**

All church business meetings shall be conducted in an orderly and civil fashion. To the extent necessary (e.g., should a dispute arise as to the procedure to be followed in the meeting) meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except to the extent that this Church Constitution and Bylaws are inconsistent with it.

## **3.8 MODERATOR**

The Moderator shall first be the Senior Pastor. If he does not preside, the Executive Director/Executive Pastor shall preside. If the Executive Director does not preside, then the Deacon Chairman presides. If the Deacon Chairman does not preside, then the deacons at the meeting shall privately elect a member present to preside.

## **ARTICLE 4: CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

**4.1** Any person selected and/or elected to a position of leadership in this church shall be a member of this church as set forth in 1.1. He or she will be expected to set a Christian example, to diligently strive to live in accordance with the Church Covenant, and to abide by the Church Constitution and Bylaws and not exercise any power that is inconsistent with it. Additional leadership requirements may be prescribed by the Senior Church Staff and/or the deacon body.

## **ARTICLE 5: CHURCH OFFICERS**

**5.1** The Church Officers shall be the:

- Senior Pastor
- Executive Director/Executive Pastor
- Deacon Chairman
- Church Trustees
- And other such general officers as the Church shall from time to time elect.

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## ARTICLE 6: CHURCH TRUSTEES

### 6.1 NUMBER OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees shall consist of three (3) church members.

### 6.2 QUALIFICATIONS

Trustees shall:

- Be an active member of the church for at least ten (10) years.
- Be an active member of a Sunday School class.
- Share and support the current mission and vision of the Senior Pastor.
- Have knowledge in the areas of real estate and finances.
- Be active in giving tithes (Malachi 3:10).
- Exhibit the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9).
- Exhibit the ability to keep confidences (Proverbs 11:13; 20:19).
- Be active in service and vibrant in their Christian walk.

### 6.3 DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Trustees shall serve as legal custodians of the real property of the church, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer this real estate except by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the church at a properly called church meeting for this purpose. They shall execute any and all contracts, deeds, negotiable instruments, and/or other legal instruments pertaining to real property, but only when so directed by the proper and recorded action of the church body.
2. The Trustees shall insure that proper and adequate general liability insurance coverage and property insurance coverage are maintained at all times.

### 6.4 SELECTION, ELECTION, ROTATION, TERM

Trustees shall be selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church to serve for a term of three (3) years, with one (1) trustee rotating off each year. A trustee rotating off shall be ineligible to serve again until one (1) year has elapsed. This rule applies to a trustee who resigns as well as a trustee who is appointed to serve more than one (1) year of the remaining term of another member due to vacancy. Tenure -of-office for Trustees begins on January 1.

### 6.5 VACANCIES

Should the office of a Trustee become vacant, the Nominating Committee shall, within sixty (60) days appoint a replacement who shall serve the remainder of the term.

### 6.6 REMOVAL

A Trustee can be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a group consisting of the Nominating Committee, the Executive Director/Executive Pastor and the Chairman of the Deacons.

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## ARTICLE 7: SENIOR PASTOR

### 7.1 QUALIFICATIONS

The Senior Pastor shall meet the Scriptural qualifications for pastor as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. In addition, he shall be a duly licensed and ordained Baptist Minister of the Gospel, and will adhere to the Church's Statement of Faith, Church Covenant, Church Constitution and Bylaws.

### 7.2 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The duties of the Senior Pastor shall be to:

- Preach and teach the Gospel.
- Conduct the public services of worship.
- Administer the ordinances of the Church.
- Lead the Church in accomplishing the Great Commission.
- Act as the Chief Executive Officer of the Church.
- Arrange a proper substitute for the pulpit in case of illness or other absences, except resignation.
- Secure qualified speakers for special occasions.
- Oversee or delegate the supervision of all Church personnel.
- To discipline and terminate the employment of any Church staff member. This authority may be delegated as the Senior Pastor sees fit. However the involuntary termination of a Senior Church Staff member must first be approved by the Personnel Committee.
- Serve as an ex officio (non-voting) member of all committees, except the Pastor Search Committee.

### 7.3 TRANSITION IN THE OFFICE OF SENIOR PASTOR

1. When a planned or unplanned vacancy in the office of Senior Pastor occurs, the Deacon Chairman shall see that the church membership is notified in writing as soon as possible.
2. The Personnel Committee shall designate a Senior Church Staff member to be responsible for supervising Church personnel if there is no Executive Director/Executive Pastor.
3. The Personnel Committee shall fill the pulpit with an interim pastor or supply pastor until a permanent Senior Pastor is elected.
4. The Nominating Committee shall begin the process for forming the Pastor Search Committee within fourteen (14) days of the Senior Pastor's vacancy.
5. A planned transition in the office of Senior Pastor may occur in an alternate plan that is approved and presented by the Personnel Committee and then approved by a 2/3 vote of the congregation, according to the notification procedures outlined in Article 3.1.

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## 7.4 SELECTION & ELECTION OF THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastor Search Committee shall be immediately chosen by the church in the following manner:

1. The Nominating Committee shall immediately request and receive recommendations from Church Members to serve on the Pastor Search Committee, which will be comprised of seven (7) Laypersons and two (2) Layperson Alternates.
2. The Nominating Committee, Senior Church Staff, Personnel Committee, and Deacon Chairman shall serve as the "Pastor Search Committee Selection Panel." The Nominating Committee Chairperson shall serve as Chairperson of this panel. This panel shall disband immediately after the Pastor Search Committee is elected by the church.
3. Beginning with, but not limited to the recommendations received, the Selection Panel shall select the seven (7) Laypersons and two (2) Alternate Laypersons. The members should represent a cross section of the church's congregation and be willing to serve on the Pastor Search Committee. The Selection Panel shall collectively designate the Pastor Search Committee Chairperson out of the list of seven (7) Laypersons. The panel shall also designate the first and second Alternates. The names and designations (Chairperson, committee members, first and second Alternates) are then recommended to the Church congregation for approval as a whole unit.
4. At a specially called business meeting, the congregation must vote to approve or disapprove the list of names that is jointly recommended by the Selection Panel without making any amendments or deletions. Members shall be properly notified and informed of the list of names to be voted upon at least two (2) Sundays prior to the vote taking place as set forth in 3.1.
5. Once elected and formed, the Pastor Search Committee shall be diligent in its task. Alternates do not participate in committee meetings unless a vacancy occurs, at which time the first Alternate is placed into service as a committee member.
6. If the Church does not approve the submitted list of names of the proposed Pastor Search Committee, the Pastor Search Committee Selection Panel Committee shall begin the selection process anew.

## 7.5 SELECTION OF A SENIOR PASTORAL CANDIDATE

The Pastor Search Committee, after thorough investigation, much prayer, and direction by the Holy Spirit, shall unanimously recommend to the church one (1) pastoral candidate for consideration at a time.

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## 7.6 PRESENTATION OF A SENIOR PASTORAL CANDIDATE

The Pastor Search Committee shall invite the Senior Pastoral Candidate to preach at all Sunday morning worship services in view of a Call. The Pastor Search Committee Chairperson shall publicly notify the Church of a special business meeting to vote on the Senior Pastoral Candidate recommended by the Pastor Search Committee. Notice shall be given according to the notification guidelines in 3.1 (i.e., at least two (2) weeks in advance of the Church meeting).

## 7.7 COMPENSATION OF A SENIOR PASTORAL CANDIDATE

The Senior Pastor Candidate shall be presented with a total compensation package (which shall include a salary, an itemized benefits package, and moving package if applicable) in writing prior to the presentation of the candidate to the Church and contingent upon the candidate being elected. The total compensation package shall have been recommended by the Personnel and Finance Committees and agreed upon by all necessary personnel and/or committees prior to being offered to the candidate.

## 7.8 ELECTION OF A SENIOR PASTORAL CANDIDATE

The Senior Pastoral Candidate shall be elected by three-fourths (3/4) of the votes of Church members who are present, following the proper notification guidelines in 3.1.

## 7.9 RESIGNATION/CONTINUATION OF SERVICE

1. The Senior Pastor, when elected, shall be called for an indefinite term of service. If the Senior Pastor desires to resign, he shall give at least thirty (30) days notice in writing to the church. The Deacon Officers and the Personnel Committee will determine if the Senior Pastor continues in his capacity in the pulpit for those thirty (30) days.
2. If the Senior Pastor is incapacitated for an extended period of time, the church may declare the Office of Senior Pastor vacant, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote in a specially called church meeting following church meeting notification guidelines in 3.1.

## 7.10 DISMISSAL OF THE SENIOR PASTOR

1. Any church member who would seek to remove the Senior Pastor from his position at this church shall not attempt to do so in a manner that would cause strife or discord among the body of believers. Rather, after prayer and consideration, the member shall contact the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee and schedule a time to meet with the committee. After the member has shared his or her concerns, the committee shall then confer and vote on the proper response to such concerns, if any. Prior to enacting such response, the Personnel Committee's decision shall be reported to the deacon body as a report and recommendation. The deacons shall accept and follow the

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Personnel Committee's recommended course of action unless a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the deacons vote to overrule the recommendation and take different action.

2. If a motion to dismiss the Senior Pastor from office is made by the Personnel Committee OR the deacon body, a specially called business meeting shall be scheduled for the purpose of determining whether the Senior Pastor should be dismissed or retained in office, following notification guidelines set forth in Article 3.1. The Senior Pastor shall be dismissed with an affirmative vote of a simple majority (50% plus one) of the Church membership present and voting.

## ARTICLE 8: CHURCH STAFF PERSONNEL

The Church Staff of this church who works under the Senior Pastor consists of the Executive Director/Executive Pastor, Senior Church Staff, Church Ministries Staff, and Church Support Staff. Regardless of their position or title (and whether or not such title includes the term "minister"), **ALL** employees of the church hold ministry positions. From the clerical support staff to the facilities and/or grounds staff; each and every employee of the church can and will, at some point, minister to members and the public at large.

### 8.1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/EXECUTIVE PASTOR

1. The Executive Director/Executive Pastor assists the Senior Pastor by implementing the Senior Pastor's vision through the management of church operations and programs as well as the delegated supervision of all Church Staff. He assumes any other duties or responsibilities assigned by the Senior Pastor. He immediately notifies the Personnel Committee of any Church Staff changes that pertain to hiring and dismissal.
2. The Executive Director/Executive Pastor shall only be elected by the church upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor, and with the approval of the Personnel Committee. He can be involuntarily discharged only upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor, with the approval of the Personnel Committee. He shall be subject to the current policies and procedures manual set forth by the Personnel Committee.

### 8.2 SENIOR CHURCH STAFF

1. The Senior Church Staff assists the Senior Pastor through the Executive Director/Executive Pastor in the ministry of the church. They assume supervisory duties as established by the current organizational chart. They also assume other duties and responsibilities assigned by the Senior Pastor or the Executive Director/ Executive Pastor. The Senior Church Staff shall be comprised of those outlined as Senior Church Staff in the current organizational chart.

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2. Senior Church Staff members shall only be elected upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor or the Executive Director/Executive Pastor, with the approval of the Personnel Committee. They can be involuntarily discharged only upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor or the Executive Director/Executive Pastor, with the approval of the Personnel Committee who will then inform the church. They shall be subject to the current personnel policy and procedure manual set forth by the Personnel Committee.

## 8.3 CHURCH MINISTRY STAFF

1. The Church Ministry Staff assists the Senior Church Staff in the ministry of the church. Church Ministry Staff are all other ministers, pastors, and directors who are not Senior Church Staff members. They shall fill vacancies and needs within the various offices, organizations, and ministry committees within the church. They also assume other duties and responsibilities that are assigned by a Senior Church Staff member and approved by the Executive Director/Executive Pastor.
2. Church Ministry Staff members shall be selected upon the recommendation of Executive Director/Executive Pastor with the approval of the Personnel Committee. They can be involuntarily discharged by the Executive Director/Executive Pastor with the approval of the Personnel Committee. They shall be subject to the current personnel policy and procedure manual set forth by the Personnel Committee.

## 8.4 CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF

1. All employees of the Church who are not Senior Church Staff or Church Ministry Staff shall be referred to as Support Staff. They assist the Senior Pastor, Executive Director/Executive Pastor, Senior Church Staff and Church Ministry Staff in the ministry of the church.
2. Church Support Staff shall be selected upon the recommendation of the Senior Church Staff with the approval of the Executive Director/Executive Pastor. They can be involuntarily discharged by the Executive Director/Executive Pastor upon immediate notification of the Personnel Committee. They shall be subject to the current personnel policy and procedure manual set forth by the Personnel Committee.

## 8.5 INDEMNIFICATION OF CHURCH STAFF

Should any member(s) of the Senior Church Staff or Church Ministry Staff be faced with actual or threatened litigation as a result of the performance of their proper and normal duties, the Church will provide a sufficient and appropriate legal defense and/or indemnify such staff member(s) for costs and expenses relating to such actual or threatened litigation. This obligation to indemnify and/or provide a defense shall cease if at any time it is discovered that the staff member(s) in question acted contrary to Holy Scripture, in violation of law or otherwise acted in any way that was dishonest or lacking complete candor.

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## ARTICLE 9: CHURCH DEACONS

The Deacon body shall consist of qualified men who agree to serve and are voted upon by the church. Deacons shall be ordained by this church or another church of like faith.

### 9.1 QUALIFICATIONS:

To be eligible for consideration, any person recommended for the office of deacon shall meet the scriptural qualifications of deacon found in the New Testament. Such qualifications include, but are not limited to, those which are set out in Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, James 1:27, and Philippians 1:1 (NKJV). Among other things, Deacons of this church shall:

- Have been a Christian for at least five (5) years.
- Be a member of this Church for at least one (1) year.
- Be an active member of a Sunday school class.
- Be willing to serve and agree to abide by the policies and procedures established by the deacons.
- Be ordained by this church or church of like faith.
- Be active in giving tithes.
- Share and support the church mission and the vision of the Senior Pastor.
- Not be currently serving as an employee of the church.

### 9.2 DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

The duties of the Deacons of the Church are spiritual and ministry oriented by nature. They have the following duties and responsibilities:

- Serving with the Senior Pastor and Church Staff in the ministry of the church, to minister as under-shepherds to the members, as specific conditions might dictate.
- Praying regularly for the Senior Pastor, Church Staff, and Church.
- Proclaiming the Gospel to believers and nonbelievers.
- Caring for church members and other persons in the community.
- Providing a spiritual example.
- Participating in hospital visitation.
- Ministering to assigned widows/widowers.
- Assisting in administering the Lord's Supper.
- Attending scheduled Deacon Body meetings and activities.
- Turning in scheduled reports of ministry involvement.
- Attending beneficial training sessions.
- Serving on a Standing or Special Committee as an elected deacon representative, either as an active or inactive deacon.
- Serving in other areas of ministry such as Sunday school, Sunday prayer room, praying for the sick, ushering, prospect visiting for Sunday school and the church, baptism, decision counseling, and encouraging maturity and ministry as learners and leaders.

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- Participating in church conflict resolution, discipline, and reconciliation as set forth in 1.3 and 1.5.
- Establishing written operation policies and procedures of the Deacons as deemed necessary, which are maintained by the Deacon Secretary.
- Carrying out other assigned responsibilities and duties as outlined in the current deacon handbook.

## 9.3 SELECTION

1. Any member of the Church may recommend a prospective Deacon at any time during the calendar year by completing and signing a Deacon Nomination Form. All recommendations will be subject to the qualifications set forth in 9.1.
2. The Senior Church Staff shall review the nomination forms to determine whether the nominees satisfy—or with proper notice could satisfy—the various requirements and/or prerequisites of being a deacon. Such requirements and prerequisites include, but are not limited to, church membership, Sunday school attendance, giving, commitment to church unity and compatibility with the church staff.
3. The names of approved nominees are then sent to the Deacon Officers for review and to schedule interviews to those who meet the qualifications of deacon and who are willing and able to serve. Deacon Officers then make a final recommendation to the Senior Church Staff prior to Church vote approval.

## 9.4 ELECTION:

1. The names of all men recommended, who are selected and willing to serve, will be presented to the Church for approval and election.
2. Elected nominees shall be ordained or reactivated as deacons in an Ordination and Reactivation Ceremony.

## 9.5 ROTATION:

1. The term of office for an “Active Deacon” shall be for two (2) years after which time he may rotate into “inactive status” for one (1) year if he chooses. A deacon may forego entering “inactive status” and remain in active status.
2. Any deacon who chooses to become inactive will automatically revert to active status twelve (12) months later.
3. A deacon in “inactive status” is encouraged to continue to assist the Active Deacon body in administering the Lord’s Supper, caring for his assigned widow(s)/widower(s), and possibly serving on a Standing or Special Committee as an elected deacon representative.

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## 9.6 RESIGNATION/DISMISSAL

The performance of all active deacons is subject to review and evaluation by Deacon Officers semi-annually. If a deacon fails to meet the minimum performance standards:

1. A reminder notice will be sent to his home.
2. If no improvement is made by the next reporting time for the specific ministry in question, a letter will be sent to the deacon from the Deacon Chairman.
3. If still no improvement is made by the next reporting time for the specific ministry in question, the Deacon Chairman and Executive Director will meet with the deacon. The deacon will, in all likelihood, be asked to submit a letter of resignation to the Senior Pastor.

## 9.7 DEACON OFFICERS

### 1. SELECTION, ELECTION, ROTATION, TERM

- a. Deacon Officers are comprised of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman, Secretary, Widow/Widower Ministry Director and any other Deacon Officer deemed necessary by the Deacon Chairman. The Deacon Chairman shall be selected by the current Deacon Officers, with the advice of the Senior Pastor or his designee and the Deacon Liaison Staff member. This selection shall occur prior to contacting the Deacon Chairman Candidate to see if he is willing to serve. The candidate shall then be elected by the Deacon body for a two (2) year term. The Deacon Chairman cannot succeed himself for a back-to-back term as Chairman.
- b. The new Deacon Chairman shall annually appoint a Vice-Chairman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman, Secretary, Widow/Widower Ministry Director and any other officer deemed necessary. A Deacon Officer, other than Deacon Chairman, can serve back-to-back terms if appointed again.
- c. Tenure -of-office for Deacons Officers begins on January 1.

### 2. VACANCIES OF DEACON OFFICERS

The Deacon Chairman shall appoint a deacon to fill the unexpired term of Deacon Officer if a vacancy occurs aside from normal rotation (i.e., resignation, death, removal).

### 3. REMOVAL OF DEACON OFFICERS

Any Deacon Officer can be removed from office by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Deacon body.

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## 9.8 DEACON EMERITUS:

Deacon Emeritus status shall be open and available to any current member of this church and shall continue for the Deacon's lifetime if he meets the following criteria:

1. Has served at least one (1) term of service as a deacon in this church (An exception may be made provided the deacon has a serious health condition, is in declining health, and served at least three (3) years as a deacon in a sister Baptist church within the Southern Baptist Convention.); **AND**
2. Has reached the age of seventy (70); **AND**
3. Feels he is physically unable to perform the duties of an Active Deacon; **AND**
4. Requests this status by notifying the Deacon Secretary in writing at any time (requires no further action by the Deacon body).

As a Deacon Emeritus, he is invited to attend deacon activities and participate in the serving of communion as his health permits.

## ARTICLE 10: CHURCH HISTORIAN

**10.1** The Nominating Committee shall periodically elect a Church Historian and Assistant Church Historian for designated terms.

**10.2** The duties of the Historian shall be to record a continuous narrative account of worthy and interesting events in the church life, and to preserve it in permanent form.

**10.3** Historical records and artifacts shall be the property of the church, and shall be kept in the church office or another authorized location.

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## ARTICLE 11: CHURCH COMMITTEES

### 11.1 GENERAL RULES

Church committees help this church accomplish its administrative and ministry objectives through Standing and Special Committees. These general rules apply to all committees:

- All Standing and Special Committee members must undergo the Church nomination procedures as set forth in 11.7, unless appointed according to 11.4.
- No committee member shall serve on more than one (1) Standing Committee concurrently.
- Relatives may not serve together on the same Standing or the same Special committee. Relatives will include: legal spouse, mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, step-mother, step-father, grandmother, grandfather, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step-sister, step-brother, children, step-children, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.
- A church member who is a paid employee of the church **OR** the member's immediate family member (spouse, child, parent) may not serve on a Standing or Special Committee, unless in an ex officio capacity.
- A member who is contracted by the church for services **OR** the member's immediate family member (spouse, child, parent) may not serve on the Personnel or Finance Committee.
- No more than two (2) pastoral or church staff members may serve in an ex officio (non-voting) or advisory capacity on any committee at one time. However, Committee Chair persons may invite other church staff or personnel to attend designated meetings as the need arises.
- A minimum of two (2) deacons shall serve on each Standing Committee, except the Nominating Committee which will have a minimum of three (3) deacons.
- The Senior Pastor (or his designee) and Executive Director/Executive Pastor (or his designee) may serve as an ex officio (non-voting) member of all committees, except the Pastor Search Committee.
- Standing Committee terms begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- All committees shall meet within the first thirty (30) days of the new calendar year and periodically as needed to perform their duties.
- The Senior Pastor and the Executive Director/Executive Pastor shall be advised of all pending committee meetings.

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## 11.2 QUALIFICATIONS

All committee members shall be members of this church for at least one (1) year prior to being nominated for any committee member position except the Nominating Committee. Nominating Committee members shall be members of this church for a minimum of three (3) years prior to being nominated to serve. (See 1.1 for church membership requirements).

The primary qualifications to serve on any committee are calling, character, competency and compatibility. Secondary qualifications include:

- Being an active member of a Sunday school class.
- Exhibiting the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9).
- Exhibiting the ability to keep confidences (Proverbs 11:13; 20:19).
- Being active in service and vibrant in their Christian walk.
- Sharing and supporting the church mission and the vision of the Senior Pastor.

## 11.3 ROTATION

1. When Standing Committees are formed for the first time, the Nominating Committee shall activate the rotation process by designating three (3) members who will serve for three (3) years, three (3) members who will serve for two (2) years and three (3) members who will serve for one (1) year.
2. After the initial year, Standing Committee members shall serve for a term of three (3) years and shall then rotate off, with at least one-third (1/3) of the members replaced each year. Once rotated off, members shall wait one (1) year before he/she can be eligible to be nominated for service on any Standing Committee. This rule also applies to any committee member who resigns from a committee as well as those members who are appointed to serve more than one (1) year of the remaining term of another member.
3. Special Committee members shall serve until its assigned purpose is complete, since all Special Committees are established for a specific one-time purpose. However, special committees are subject to change and reorganization as deemed necessary by the Nominating Committee.
4. Ministry Committee members are subject to change and reorganization as deemed necessary by the Senior Church Staff.
5. At all times, the specified number of deacons shall be maintained for all Standing Committees.

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## 11.4 VACANCIES

1. If a vacancy on a committee occurs aside from normal rotation (resignation, death, relocation, dismissal), the remaining members will continue to act with full authority.
2. Nominating Committee vacancies that occur aside from normal rotation shall be filled by an appointment from the Nominating Committee Selection Panel within sixty (60) days. The new appointed member shall serve the remainder of the term.
3. Standing Committee vacancies that occur aside from normal rotation shall be filled by an appointment from the Nominating Committee within sixty (60) days. The new appointed member shall serve the remainder of the term.
4. Special Committees vacancies shall be filled by the Nominating Committee within sixty (60) days, with the exception of the Pastoral Search Committee whose vacancies shall be filled by elected alternates according to 7.4(5).
5. Ministry Committee vacancies are filled by the appropriate Senior Church Staff.

## 11.5 REMOVAL

1. Any Nominating Committee member may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Nominating Committee Selection Panel.
2. Any Standing or Special Committee member may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a group consisting of the Nominating Committee, the Executive Director/Executive Pastor and the Chairman of the Deacons.
3. Any Ministry Committee member may be removed by the appropriate Senior Church Staff.

## 11.6 SELECTION OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. The Senior Pastor, Deacon Chairman, Executive Director/Executive Pastor along with two (2) Deacons Officers whom the Deacon Chairman selects shall serve as the Nominating Committee Selection Panel. They shall collectively nominate the initial members for positions of membership on the Nominating Committee when the committee is first activated. When the Nominating Committee is formed for the first time, the Selection Panel shall activate the rotation process by designating three (3) members who will serve for three (3) years, three (3) members who will serve for two (2) years and three (3) members who will serve for one (1) year. They shall also appoint the first Chairperson.
2. The names of the nominees shall be published at least two (2) weeks prior to the business meeting for church body approval via vote as set forth in 3.1.

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3. After the initial Nominating Committee is formed, the Nominating Committee Selection Panel shall each year thereafter nominate three (3) members to serve for three (3) years and publish names of nominees as set forth in 11.6.2. They shall also appoint a Chairperson each year.

## **11.7 SELECTION OF ALL OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

1. Elected Nominating Committee members, with the advice of the Senior Pastor, Deacon Chairman, and Executive Director/ Executive Pastor, shall nominate all Standing Committee members (except Nominating Committee members as set forth in 11.6) and publish the nominees' names at least two (2) weeks prior to the annual business meeting for church body approval via vote. All newly elected Standing Committee members shall begin their terms January 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. Nominations by the Nominating Committee shall be presented no later than the annual business meeting.
3. The Nominating Committee, with the advice of the Senior Pastor, the Deacon Chairman, and the Executive Director/ Executive Pastor, shall nominate Special Committee members and publish the nominees' names at least two (2) weeks prior to presenting the names to the church body for approval via vote at any called business meeting. Exception to this procedure is the special selection of the Pastor Search Committee as set forth in 7.4.
4. Ministry Committee members are selected by the appropriate pastoral staff.

## **11.8 FORMING NEW COMMITTEES**

1. All other Standing and Special Committees shall be elected by the Church after recommendation of the Nominating Committee as the need arises and only for the time required to fulfill their duties.
2. New Ministry committees shall be formed and filled by the pastoral staff as the need arises and members shall represent a cross section of the church body.

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## 11.9 COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Each Standing and Special Committee (except the Nominating Committee as set forth in 11.6) shall annually elect their own Chairperson.
- Each Standing and Special Committee Chairperson shall appoint a Vice-Chairperson and Secretary annually.
- The Chairperson shall prepare the agenda for each meeting, oversee the meetings, designate and delegate duties to committee members. He/she shall advise and remind the committee of the church bylaws pertaining to their specific committee annually and give each committee member a copy at the annual meeting.
- The Vice-Chairperson shall serve in the Chairperson's place when he/she is absent, with the authority of the Chairperson, and perform other duties delegated and designated by the Chairperson.
- The Secretary shall keep minutes of each meeting, including attendance, and shall submit them to the Executive Director and the Nominating Committee Chairperson within two (2) weeks of the meeting.
- All other members shall perform duties designated by the Chairperson.
- Members of all committees must maintain a physical attendance record of 50% on their committee or he/she may be replaced by the Nominating Committee. For immediate decisions, other forms of communication can be used (phone, conference call, email) if a member cannot be physically present.
- Each Chairperson, by his or her own discretion, may notify the Nominating Committee Chairperson in writing of attendance issues or any other matter that negatively affects the workings of the committee.
- Each committee member shall attend Orientation Training and/or any other training designated by the Nominating Committee.

## 11.10 CHURCH STANDING COMMITTEES

A standing committee assists the Church in its administrative responsibilities. It requires on-going activity and functions throughout the year in order to carry out its responsibilities from year to year.

Standing committees of this church shall be:

- Nominating Committee
- Bylaws Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Finance Committee
- Stewardship Committee

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## 1. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee shall consist of nine (9) members and requires five (5) to be present to make decisions. The members of this committee shall consist of:

- Three (3) deacons
- Six (6) lay members

The Chairperson is annually appointed by the Nominating Committee Selection Panel as set forth in 11.6. The Chairman shall appoint a Vice-Chairperson and Secretary annually. The Chairperson shall provide committee members with a written copy of the current Church Constitution and Bylaws and shall annually advise/remind them of the bylaws pertaining to Committee Member Responsibilities (11.9), the Nominating Committee (11.10[1]), Church Committees (Article 11), Trustees (Article 6), and Church Historian (Article 10).

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Nominating Committee fills church-elected lay leadership positions on all Standing and Special Committees, for the office of Trustee, and lay positions of Church Historian and Assistant Historian. It ensures the integrity of these lay leadership structures.

Members of this committee have the following duties and responsibilities:

- Nominate church members to serve on all Standing and Special committees (except for the Nominating Committee), according to the General Rules as set forth in 11.1, Qualifications in 11.2, Rotation in 11.3, and Committee Member Responsibilities in 11.9.
- Fill vacancies of any Standing and Special Committee member (except the Nominating Committee) according to 11.4, within sixty (60) days whenever vacancies arise.
- Provide Orientation Training and/or other training to all Standing and Special Committee Members as necessary to maximize teamwork effectiveness.
- Recommend new Standing or Special Committees to the Church according to 11.8.
- Nominate church members to serve in the Office of Trustee according to 6.4
- Fill the unexpired term of a Trustee within sixty (60) days as set forth in 6.5.
- Shall follow nomination procedures set forth in 11.7 and submits recommended names to the Church body at the annual business meeting or any special business meeting.
- Shall periodically appoint church members to the lay position of Church Historian and Assistant Historian for designated terms (Article 10).
- Shall maintain records of all Standing and Special Committee members, Trustees, Church Historian and Assistant Historian to include their names, terms of service, and years served.

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AT THE MALL, INC.  
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## 2. BYLAWS COMMITTEE

The Bylaws Committee shall consist of nine (9) members and requires at least five (5) members to be present to make decisions. The members of this committee shall consist of:

- Two (2) deacons
- Seven (7) lay members

The members of the Bylaws Committee shall elect the Chairperson annually. The Chairperson shall appoint a Vice-Chairperson and Secretary annually. The Chairperson shall give committee members a written copy of the current Church Constitution and Bylaws and shall annually advise/remind of the bylaws pertaining to Committee Member Responsibilities (11.9), the Bylaws Committee (11.10[2]), the Church Bylaws (Articles 16) and Church Constitution.

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Bylaws Committee, with assistance from legal counsel if necessary, shall be the final and ultimate internal authority on the interpretation of the church's current bylaws. Should a dispute arise regarding any such interpretation, the dispute will be resolved in accordance with Section 1.3.

Members of this committee have the following responsibilities and duties:

- Oversee the interpretation of the Church's Covenant, Constitution & Bylaws
- Ensure the intention of the Church Constitution and Bylaws are being carried out
- Make appropriate recommendations to the congregation for changes and/or amendments to the Church Covenant, Constitution and Bylaws.

## 3. FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee shall consist of nine (9) voting members and requires at least five (5) voting members to be present to make decisions. The members of this committee shall be comprised of:

- Two (2) deacons
- Seven (7) lay members

The members of the Finance Committee shall elect the Chairperson annually. The Chairperson appoints the Vice-Chairperson and Secretary annually. The Chairperson shall give committee members a written copy of the current church bylaws and shall annually advise/remind them of the bylaws pertaining to Committee Member Responsibilities (11.9), the Finance Committee (11.10[3]) and Church Finances (Article 12). The Chairperson shall have ready access to all financial records of the Church as set forth in Article 13.

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

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## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Finance Committee acts as the fiscal agency of the church. The members of this committee have the following duties and responsibilities:

- Oversee and approve the sound policies and procedures regarding the processing and distributing of all offerings and receipts of the church. This includes the responsibility to oversee, approve, and then submit for church approval the annual budget.
- Govern the expenditures of anticipated contributions of funds from the members of the church.
- Oversee and approve the receipts of gifts, bequests or other donations and oversee the use of all designated gifts.
- Defer or decline accepting any gift at its discretion.
- Oversee and approve a Manual of Financial Practices and Procedures and any recommended changes regarding any matter in it.
- Oversee the purchasing policy of the Church.
- Review all church expenditures at least on a quarterly basis to insure that funds are being managed properly and according to church budgetary guidelines.
- Annually initiate a general audit of the financial statements of the church by an independent certified public accountant firm, if deemed necessary or if otherwise required. It also shall review the completed audit and serve as the church's "audit task force."
- Oversee, approve, and then submit for church approval the annual budget to govern the expenditures of anticipated contributions of funds from the members of the church.
- Review and approve any budgeted item in excess of \$25,000, with the exception of the approved current operating expenditures.
- May reallocate money in the budget as they see appropriate, so long as the annual cumulative effect does not exceed 5% of the approved annual budget AND it does not increase the approved total budget.
- May approve, a non-budgeted expenditure not to exceed 5% of the approved total budget but ONLY in an emergency or in time sensitive issues of the utmost importance.
- May approve a non-budgeted expenditure over 5% of the approved total budget but ONLY in the case of a dire emergency (i.e., hurricane, water damage, fire damage, etc.). A full report shall be made to the church congregation at the earliest possible convenience.
- May approve items not provided for in the budget exceeding 5% of the budget, ONLY with Church vote approval, provided that members are properly notified and fully informed of the issue at least two (2) weeks in advance as set forth in 3.1.
- Approve in writing, in cooperation with the Personnel Committee, the salaries of all new Church Staff hires and any salary increases or bonuses for existing church personnel not budgeted.
- Approve in writing, in cooperation with the Personnel Committee, any severance package with total compensation over two (2) weeks pay for any church employee, before the offer is made to the employee or the severance package will be considered invalid.

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## 4. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee shall consist of nine (9) members and requires at least five (5) present to make decisions. The members of this committee shall be comprised of:

- Two (2) deacons
- Seven (7) lay members

The members of the Personnel Committee shall elect the Chairperson annually. The Chairperson shall appoint the Vice-Chairperson and Secretary annually. The Chairperson shall give committee members a written copy of the current church bylaws and shall annually advise/remind them of the bylaws pertaining to Committee Member Responsibilities (11.9), the Personnel Committee (11.10[4]), the Senior Pastor (Article 7) and Church Staff Personnel (Article 8). The Chairperson of this committee shall have ready access to all personnel records of the Church as set forth in Article 13.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Personnel Committee acts as the human resources department of this Church. The members of this committee have the following duties and responsibilities:

- Advise the Senior Pastor and his staff accordingly as to all matters involving church staff and employees
- Oversee and approve in writing, in cooperation with the Finance Committee, the salaries of all new Church Staff hires and salary increases for existing church personnel not budgeted.
- Provide periodic salary reviews of all Church Staff personnel.
- Approve all involuntary terminations in writing for the positions of Executive Director/Executive Pastor, Senior Church Staff, and Church Ministry Staff prior to the termination taking place.
- Oversee setting and approving the personnel policies and procedures of church employees in the general areas of, but not limited to, employment, salaries, salary increases, benefits packages, vacation, sick leave, paid holidays, hospitalization insurance, retirement, social security, severance packages, termination, grievances, and authorized absences such as revivals, conventions, special conferences or seminars, and other related functions.
- Oversee and approve a written Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual and any recommended changes regarding any matter in it.
- Review and approve any severance package with total compensation over two (2) weeks pay for any church employee, in full cooperation with the Finance Committee, in writing before the offer is made to the employee or the severance package will be considered invalid.
- Select a person from the Senior Church Staff, in the absence of a permanent Senior Pastor, to supervise church staff personnel, if there is no Executive Director/Executive Pastor.
- Fill the pulpit with an interim Pastor or supply Pastor, in the absence of a permanent Senior Pastor, while the Pastor Search Committee seeks a permanent Senior Pastor.

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## 5. STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Stewardship Committee shall consist of nine (9) members and requires at least five (5) present to make decisions. The members of this committee shall be comprised of:

- Two (2) deacons
- Seven (7) lay members

The members of the Stewardship Committee shall elect a Chairperson annually. The Chairperson shall appoint a Vice-Chairperson and Secretary annually. The Chairperson shall give committee members a written copy of the current church bylaws and shall annually advise/remind them of the bylaws pertaining to Committee Member Responsibilities (11.9), the Stewardship Committee (11.10[5]), and Church Finances (Article 12).

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Stewardship Committee promotes stewardship giving within the church. The members of this committee have the following responsibilities and duties:

- Promote stewardship education programs and tithing.
- Oversee and conduct church fundraising campaigns.
- Encourage members and friends of the church to make provision for the church through wills, estate planning and trusts. It shall provide information to individuals and their attorneys, upon request, regarding gifts and bequests to the church.

## 6. ALL OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

Any other Standing Committees shall be elected by the Church after recommendation of the Nominating Committee as the need arises as set forth in 11.8.

### 11.11 SPECIAL CHURCH COMMITTEES

A special committee assists the church for unique, temporary assignments and dissolves when its assignment is complete. Special Committees shall consist of the number of lay members deemed necessary by the Nominating Committee, with at least two (2) deacons on each special committee. All Special Church Committees shall elect a Chairperson and the Chairperson shall appoint a Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. At the first meeting, the Chairperson shall advise and give committee members a written copy of the Church Bylaws pertaining to Committee Member Responsibilities (11.9) and any other section deemed necessary for the performance of its duties.

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## 1. BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Building Committee shall consist of nine (9) members and requires at least five (5) present to make decisions. The members of this committee shall be comprised of:

- Two (2) deacons
- Seven (7) lay members

The Building Committee shall be responsible for all facets of the use of church facilities. As part of this responsibility, the Building Committee shall determine construction needs of the church and then recommend and oversee construction programs of the church. Such responsibilities include, but are not limited to, overseeing the design, planning, budgeting, contracting, and scheduling of church construction programs.

## 2. PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastor Search Committee shall consist of seven (7) lay members and two (2) lay member alternates and are selected and elected according to 7.4.

The Chairperson is appointed by the Pastor Search Committee Selection Panel as set forth in 7.4[3]. The Chairperson appoints the Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. At the first meeting, the Chairperson shall give committee members a written copy of the current Church Bylaws and shall advise them of the bylaws pertaining to Committee Member Responsibilities (11.9), the Pastors Search Committee (11.11[2]) and Senior Pastor (Article 7). Alternates do not participate in Search Committee meetings until a vacancy becomes available, at which time the first Alternate is placed into service as a committee member as set forth in 7.4(5).

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Pastor Search Committee unanimously recommends a Senior Pastoral Candidate to the Church for consideration. The members of this committee have the following duties and responsibilities:

- Solicit and screen resumes.
- Examine the qualifications, experiences, spiritual beliefs, and references of top candidates.
- Interview top candidates and conduct criminal and credit background checks.
- Keep the internal workings, discussions and visits of the Pastor Search Committee confidential.
- The Chairperson or designee shall report the committee's progress to the church.
- Unanimously recommend and present a Senior Pastoral Candidate to the church.
- Work with the Personnel and Finance Committees regarding salary, itemized benefits package and moving package, if applicable, etc. according to 7.7.

# **CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**

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## **3. ALL OTHER SPECIAL CHURCH COMMITTEES**

Special Church Committees shall be elected by the church after recommendation of the Nominating Committee as the need arises and for the time required per nomination procedures set forth in 11.8.

## **11.12 CHURCH MINISTRY COMMITTEES**

A ministry committee assists the church in carrying out ministry assignments for one (1) specific ministry area so that that ministry area carries out its assigned objective. It shall consist of the number of members needed to accomplish its task.

Ministry committees:

- May be either time sensitive or ongoing depending on the nature of the assignment of a ministry area.
- Work under the appropriate staff or administrative structure for that ministry.
- Are formed by the pastoral staff.
- Are accountable to the pastoral staff.
- Are subject to change and reorganization as deemed necessary by the pastoral staff.

### **1. FAMILY BEREAVEMENT COMMITTEE**

This committee shall be responsible for directing membership assistance to families in time of bereavement and such other occasions which the committee deems to constitute a crisis.

### **2. MISSIONS COMMITTEE**

The Missions Committee helps the church fulfill its evangelism responsibility according to Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15. It teaches members the importance of missions, identifies opportunities for missions, and leads members to participate in special projects of the church.

### **3. ALL OTHER CHURCH MINISTRY COMMITTEES**

Church Ministry Committees are not limited to the ones listed in these bylaws. They are formed and filled by the pastoral staff as the need arises according to 11.8.

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

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## ARTICLE 12: CHURCH FINANCES

### 12.1 CONTRIBUTIONS

It shall be the duty of the members of this church to contribute at least a tithe (10%) of their income to the church.

### 12.2 ACCOUNT RECORDS

The church shall maintain accurate financial records of its members and other contributors.

### 12.3 FINANCIAL PRACTICES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

The Finance Committee shall oversee and approve a Manual of Financial Practices and Procedures and any recommended changes regarding any matter in it. This manual shall include financial procedures for handling, safekeeping and transporting of funds. It shall also oversee procedures that ensure accurate financial record keeping.

### 12.4 FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The church recognizes that, in the proper interest of efficiency, the church staff should be given limited unilateral authority to make and authorize certain non-budgeted expenditures. Such unilateral authority is hereby given for non-budgeted expenditures which do not exceed \$5,000 per month and only up to a total of \$25,000 per year. For any and all other expenditures (i.e., those which exceed \$5,000), the church shall be obligated to pay only those indebtedness that have been authorized by the Finance Committee and, when necessary, a vote of the church. Such authorization can come in either of the following ways:

1. Through the approval of the annual church budget. All budgeted items, with the exception of the approved current operating expenditures, will be subject to the following policy:
  - a. Any item in excess of twenty five thousand dollars (\$25,000) shall be reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee.
  - b. The Finance Committee may reallocate money in the budget as they see appropriate, so long as the annual cumulative effect does not exceed 5% of the approved annual budget and it does not increase the approved total budget.

**OR**

2. If conditions require, by church approval of a specific expenditure. All non-budgeted items in excess of \$5,000 shall be subject to the following policy:
  - a. Only in an emergency or in time sensitive issues of the utmost importance, the Finance Committee may approve a non-budgeted expenditure not to exceed 5% of the approved total budget.
  - b. The Finance Committee may approve a non-budgeted expenditure over 5% of the approved total budget but only in the case of a dire emergency (i.e., hurricane, water damage, fire damage, etc.). A full report shall be made to the church congregation at the earliest possible convenience.
  - c. Any items not provided for in the budget exceeding 5% of the budget shall require approval from the Finance Committee AND Church vote approval. Church members shall be properly notified and informed of the issue, and given an opportunity for discussion prior to the day of the vote as set forth in 3.1 or the vote will be considered invalid.

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## **12.5 GIFTS**

Material gifts (i.e., gifts with a value greater than \$100) shall be reported to and/or accepted by the Finance Committee on behalf of the church. The Finance Committee, as set forth above, may defer or decline accepting any gift. All material gifts shall be utilized, disbursed or administered under the direction of the Finance Committee and according to the donor's wishes, if any.

## **12.6 CONTRACTS**

The church shall not enter into any contractual obligations which involve more than \$5,000 without the signature of the Executive Director/Executive Pastor and/or the Director of Administration.

## **ARTICLE 13: INSPECTION OF RECORDS, REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS**

**13.1** All church members will be granted access to church records in a manner consistent with applicable Florida law. However, the church reserves its statutory right to confirm the requesting member's "proper purpose" in seeking access to church records. Any member of the church who wishes to obtain access to information regarding church finances or other issues shall speak to the Chairman of the appropriate committee.

## **ARTICLE 14: CHURCH FACILITIES**

**14.1** The Church Staff Personnel shall oversee implementation of a church facilities use policy. Such policy will ensure that the facilities of the church are used in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and in a manner consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message attached to these Bylaws. They shall also be charged with ensuring that any use of all or part of the church grounds or facilities by outside interests or entities will be sufficiently documented and memorialized so as to protect the church from unnecessary exposure to liability.

## **ARTICLE 15: LICENSING & ORDINATION**

**15.1** Licensing and ordaining of ministers and ordaining deacons shall be under the authority of the church and the joint leadership of the Senior Church Staff and Deacons.

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## **ARTICLE 16: CHURCH BYLAWS**

### **16.1 CHANGES**

The Bylaws of this Church may be altered or amended after a recommendation of the Bylaws Committee and by two-thirds (2/3) vote with at least 500 active members in attendance at a business meeting of the church provided that:

1. Members receive at least four (4) weeks' notice of such proposed change prior to the church business meeting; **AND**
2. Copies of the proposed change(s) are distributed to members in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance of the church vote, designating the Articles and Sections affected and stating the proposed changes.

### **16.2 CONFLICTS**

1. The Church Constitution and Bylaws shall be the final authority in the event any conflict should arise between any Church policy and the Church's Constitution and Bylaws.
2. If any portion of the Church Constitution and Bylaws becomes invalid or inoperative and deemed so by the Bylaws Committee, then as far as reasonably possible, the remainder of the Church Constitution and Bylaws shall be considered valid and operative.

### **16.3 CLARIFICATION**

The Bylaws Committee oversees the interpretation of the Church Constitution and Bylaws and provides collective clarification to any matter brought to its attention.

### **16.4 CHARGE**

All church members and all church staff shall abide by the Church Constitution and Bylaws.

## **Church Constitution & Bylaws of First Baptist Church at the Mall, Inc.**

**Approved and adopted by the membership (at a properly called meeting for that purpose) on the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2010.**

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

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## APPENDIX ONE

### THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE (2000)

#### I. THE SCRIPTURES

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is 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. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. 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. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

#### II. 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. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. 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.

##### A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

*Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

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## **B. God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord. *Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.*

## **C. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.*

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

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## III. 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. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*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.*

## IV. SALVATION

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, 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.

**A.** Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

**B.** Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

**C.** Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

**D.** Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

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*Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 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; Romans 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 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.*

## V. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 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; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

## VI. 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, 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. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

*Matthew 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; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-*

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*23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.*

## **VII. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.*

## **VIII. THE LORD'S DAY**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.*

## **IX. THE KINGDOM**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.*

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## X. LAST THINGS

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.*

## XI. EVANGELISM & MISSIONS

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.*

## XII. EDUCATION

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by

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the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

*Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.*

## **XIII. STEWARDSHIP**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

*Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.*

## **XIV. COOPERATION**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

*Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.*

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## **XV. THE CHRISTIAN & SOCIAL ORDER**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

*Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.*

## **XVI. PEACE & WAR**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.*

## **XVII. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ

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contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power. *Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.*

## **XVIII. 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.

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 people. 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. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

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.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 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; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*

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