

THE CONSTITUTION
(The Preamble, Covenant, Articles of Faith, and Bylaws)

of

First Baptist Church
Grove City, Pennsylvania

Amended (Major Revision): November 19, 2008

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenants of the Baptist faith, and for the purpose of the preserving of the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we hereby rescind all previous action contrary thereto, and we do declare and establish this constitution.

NAME

This body shall be known as The First Baptist Church of Grove City, Pennsylvania.

“...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25). Jesus said, *“...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16:18).

CHURCH COVENANT

Having 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 this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We commit, therefore, 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; 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 the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also commit to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances; to walk cautiously in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossiping, slander, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage; and, to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further commit to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and, being mindful of the rules of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

We moreover commit that when we remove from this place, 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.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

ARTICLE I — SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was completely and verbally inspired and the product of Spirit-controlled men; therefore, it is truth without mixture of error. We believe that it is the true center of Christian union and the only infallible rule for all human conduct, creeds and opinions, and has salvation for its end (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

ARTICLE II — GOD

SECTION ONE: TRINITY

We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, coequal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 14:10, 26; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

SECTION TWO: GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth, Who is perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer; and, that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (Genesis 1 & 2; John 17:20-26; Ephesians 1:3-10).

SECTION THREE: GOD THE SON

We believe in the absolute deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; that He is divine as no other man can be, being very God of very God, existing from all eternity with the Father and the Spirit; that He never ceased to be God for one instant and that His humiliation did not consist in laying aside His deity; and, that as a man He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (John 1:1-3, 14; 1 John 5:20; Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:26-38).

SECTION FOUR: GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person equal with the Father and the Son and of the same substance and nature; that He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment, bears witness to the truth, is the agent of the new birth and that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies and helps the believer, indwelling and giving service gifts to every true child of God. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing (2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16-17; Romans 8:14-27; 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 13:8-10; Hebrews 2:3-4).

ARTICLE III — SATAN OR THE DEVIL

We believe in the distinct personality of Satan; that he is the god of this age, author of all the powers of darkness and sin, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire; that he was originally created a holy and perfect being but, through pride and unlawful ambition, rebelled against God thus becoming totally depraved in character, that he is the great adversary of God and His people, leader of all other evil angels and spirits, and the deceiver; that his powers are supernaturally great but strictly limited by the permissive will of God; that he

was defeated and judged at the cross and, therefore, his final doom is certain; and, that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God and by the blood of the Lamb (Isaiah 14:13-14; Job 1:1-22; Ezekiel 28:13-17; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 22:31-32; Matthew 12:24-26; 25:41; John 8:44; 12:31-32; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 6:12-18; 1 Timothy 3:7; Revelation 12:9-11; 20:10).

ARTICLE IV — CREATION

We believe in the Genesis account of creation and that it is to be accepted literally; that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life (“*each after its own kind*”) by a direct act and not by evolution or any other process. We believe the Genesis “day of creation” to be a literal twenty-four hour day and that man was created directly in God’s own image and after His own likeness (Genesis 1:1, 2, 26, 27; Exodus 20:11; John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 1:16-17).

ARTICLE V — MAN

SECTION ONE: FALL OF MAN

We believe that man, in the person of the first Adam, was created in innocence and in the image of God, and was free from sin but, by voluntary transgression, fell into sin thus plunging the whole race into condemnation and death, so that now all mankind is conceived and born in sin and shapen in iniquity and expresses that sinful nature by personal choice and is without excuse before God (Genesis 3; Romans 5:10-19).

We believe in the total depravity of man and that because of this depravity he has within himself no means of recovery or salvation (Matthew 19:26; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 7:18; 3:10-20; Genesis 1, 2, and 3; Psalm 51:5; Proverbs 14:12; Ecclesiastes 7:20-29; Isaiah 53:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:18; Ephesians 2:1-10).

SECTION TWO: FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- A. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).
- B. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the scriptural leadership of her husband even as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are an heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including scriptural corporal correction (Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalms 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; 1 Corinthians. 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

SECTION THREE: HUMAN SEXUALITY

- A. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that actions such as homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God’s gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one’s gender by surgery or appearance (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
- B. We believe that the only scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23).

SECTION FOUR: MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

- A. We believe God gives man the gift of marriage intending this relationship to last until one spouse dies thus modeling Christ's permanent relationship with His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33).
- B. We believe that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16); but, because of man's sin, God does allow divorce when a person is abandoned by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10-17).
- C. Although divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service (as long as the sin has been dealt with biblically), they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon (Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

SECTION FIVE: LAWSUITS

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32).

SECTION SIX: ABORTION

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified and unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that sets forth as being acceptable the abortion of pregnancy due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well-being of the mother (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

SECTION SEVEN: EUTHANASIA

We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil regardless of the intention. Life is a gift from God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus, we believe that an act or omission which of itself or by intention causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes murder which is contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing life support can be a legitimate choice for medically hopeless situations.

ARTICLE VI — ELECTION

We believe election is God's eternal and sovereign choice of individuals unto everlasting life—not because of foreseen merit in them, but of His mercy and grace in Christ—in consequence of which choice they are called, justified, and glorified. We further believe that God elects the saint in His foreknowledge. *“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren”* (Romans 8:29). See also Matthew 22:14; Romans 11:5; 1 Corinthians 1:27-28; and, Ephesians 1:4-7.

ARTICLE VII — ATONEMENT

We believe that the only escape from the condemnation of sin is through the atonement accomplished by Jesus Christ when He voluntarily took upon Himself a human body and nature, yet without sin, and by His suffering, death, and resurrection made full satisfaction to the justice of God for the sin of man; and, that the blessings of this salvation are given on the grounds of grace to all who believe and confess; and, that it is the immediate duty of all to accept these offers of mercy.

We believe that justification is God's gracious and full pardon for sinners. This pardon is based solely on the merits of Christ's death on the cross as He became the only and perfect sacrifice for all men. Completely apart from any human attempt at good works or self-reformation, God's holy justice is satisfied by Christ's death alone.

Trusting Christ as their substitute, sinners are pardoned and given life eternal (1 Peter 1:18-21; Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 10:4-14; Acts 16:30-33).

ARTICLE VIII — SALVATION BY GRACE

We believe that faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation from sin and that this salvation is wholly by grace. No works, however good, make this salvation more secure (Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; Romans 10:9-13).

We believe regeneration is a change of heart accomplished by the Holy Spirit Who quickens the dead in trespasses and sins, enlightening their minds spiritually and effectually to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature so that they love and practice holiness. It is the work of God's free and special grace alone.

We believe that saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ. It is accepting Christ and resting upon Him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life. It is worked in the heart by the Holy Spirit and leads to a life of holiness.

We believe that repentance is an evangelical grace wherein a person, being made aware by the Holy Spirit of the manifold evil of sin, humbles himself for it with godly sorrow and self-abhorrence, and purposes to walk before God so as to please Him in all things.

We believe that those who have been regenerated are also sanctified by God's Word and the Spirit dwelling in them.

ARTICLE IX — THE CHURCH

SECTION ONE: UNIVERSAL CHURCH

We believe that the church universal is a New Testament institution, unknown to the Old Testament prophets but revealed through the apostles, established by Jesus Christ who is its sole Head. It is empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit and is composed of believers (both Jew and Gentile) in Christ Jesus, who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and called out from the world to be His body for service and His bride in glory. It began with Pentecost and will be consummated at the meeting of Christ in the rapture (Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 1:8; 2:1-13; 2:41-47; 15:14; Romans 16:26; 1 Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 1:21; 5:23-33; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

SECTION TWO: LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that the church universal is manifested through the local church which is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in it by His Word; and to each of these churches Christ has given needful authority for administering that order, discipline, and worship which He has appointed. Its officers are bishops or elders (pastors) and deacons; that it has the absolute right of self-government directed by the Holy Spirit and is answerable only to Christ, and that in all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline and benevolence, the will of the local church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is final (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:4-5; 7:17; 1 Timothy 3:1-15).

SECTION THREE: ORDINANCES

We believe that there are two church ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion).

- A. Baptism is the immersion of a born-again believer in water and is properly called believer's baptism. It sets forth in a beautiful and solemn way our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effects in

our lives of death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership (Acts 8:36-38; Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-5).

- B. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a memorial service and is the setting forth in a sacred and symbolic manner the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. The Lord's Supper is only for believers who are obedient to the Word, including the matter of baptism, the other ordinance of the local church. The emblems of the communion service are not literally the body and blood of Christ nor do they contain His flesh and blood (1 Corinthians 11:23-32; Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:19).

SECTION FOUR: AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

- A. We believe that the church is independent and autonomous and must be kept free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; but, it may be associated with other Baptist churches for fellowship and the spread of the Gospel.
- B. We believe in the solemn obligation of majority rule guaranteeing equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

ARTICLE X — THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. Only such as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are truly righteous in God's esteem. All who continue in unrepentance and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and are under the curse. This distinction holds among mankind both in and after death with everlasting bliss for the saved and everlasting and conscious suffering for the lost (John 8:41-47; Romans 6:17-23; Luke 6:25; John 8:21).

ARTICLE XI — SECURITY OF THE SAINTS

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and are eternally secure in Jesus Christ (John 1:11-12; 3:3; 10:28-29; Romans 8:35-39; 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:6).

ARTICLE XII — SEPARATION

SECTION ONE: ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy (2 Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Romans 16:17; 2 John 9-11).

SECTION TWO: PERSONAL SEPARATION

We believe that we are called with a holy calling to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit so that we would not fulfill the lusts of the flesh; however, the flesh is still in us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage and needs to be kept constantly in subjection to Christ or it will surely manifest its presence to the dishonor of His name (Romans 8:12-13; 13:14; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

We believe that separation from all worldly practices and a wholehearted devotion to the cause of Christ are the only scriptural bases for a happy and useful Christian life. Therefore, we believe that believers should avoid all worldly practices specifically mentioned in scripture (i.e., drunkenness, gossip, envy, etc.). In addition, and as important, believers should avoid worldly practices not specifically mentioned in scripture if they violate equally clear scriptural principles.

It is expected of every believer, using Spirit-guided discernment within the bounds of Christian liberty, to: (1) protect the name and cause of Jesus Christ, (2) avoid all appearance of evil, (3) avoid anything which violates conscience (not of faith), (4) avoid causing a weaker brother to stumble, (5) pursue whatsoever things protect and edify the believer's conscience, character, and Christian testimony, and (6) to abstain from activities or actions that might be harmful to the body or mind (Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 7:1; Romans 12:1-2; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Romans 14; Philippians 4:8; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

ARTICLE XIII — RETURN OF CHRIST

SECTION ONE: THE RAPTURE

We believe in the bodily, personal, and premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ; that He will come before the seven-year tribulation period to catch away His church; that He will come only into the air and that following this the judgement of the believer's works will take place in heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1:10; 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8; Revelation 4:1; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 9:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; 2 John 8).

SECTION TWO: THE REVELATION

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come, with His church, at the close of the tribulation to judge the living nations and to set up His kingdom on earth and that He will rule and reign for one thousand years (Psalm 72:8; Isaiah 32:1; Zechariah 14:4; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Revelation 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 20:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 19:11-21).

ARTICLE XIV — THE RESURRECTION

SECTION ONE: OF BELIEVERS

We believe in the resurrection of the bodies of believers who die in Christ. They will be raised at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His church and, along with living saints, will receive glorified, incorruptible bodies like unto the Lord Himself, and then be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air to be forever with Him (1 Corinthians 15:23; 15:35-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:4-5; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2).

SECTION TWO: OF UNBELIEVERS

We believe that the wicked dead will be raised at the close of the millennial kingdom and will stand in their bodies at the great white throne judgment to receive their final doom in the lake of fire (John 5:21-30; Psalm 9:17; Matthew 5:22-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:18, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Revelation 20:11-15).

ARTICLE XV — ISRAEL

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ (Genesis 13:14-17; Romans 9-11; Ezekiel 37).

ARTICLE XVI — CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment and for the interests and good order of human society; and, that secular authorities are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed except in things directly opposed to the will of God as set forth in His Holy Word. Furthermore, we believe in the separation of

church and state in the spirit of the First Amendment of The Constitution of the United States of America which states: “*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...*” We must remember the distinct roles of church and state; but, we believe we have the freedom to lovingly and courageously influence the government and culture and to appeal to our legally granted civil rights (2 Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21-22; Daniel 3:17-18; Matthew 22:21; Acts 4:18-20; 5:29; 23:5; Romans 13:1-7).

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I — PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is the salvation of souls, the edification of saints, the teaching of God's Word, the worldwide proclamation of God's saving grace expressed in the shed blood and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, the promotion of godly worship, the defense of the faith once delivered, and cooperation with Christian activity functioning in harmony with God's Holy Word, the Bible, until He comes.

ARTICLE II — ASSOCIATION

As a New Testament church cannot join anything outside itself, but only affiliate therewith on the grounds of fellowship, this church declares itself to be an independent Baptist fellowship and cannot be changed.

This church declares itself to be in agreement with the principles and doctrine of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches, and the Association of Independent Baptist Churches of Western Pennsylvania and is affiliated with each organization for fellowship only. These affiliations can be terminated for any reason by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the church.

ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP

SECTION ONE: PRESENT MEMBERSHIP

All whose names appear upon the rolls of this church are members, but only those upon the active list are considered in good and regular standing. Those whose names appear upon the inactive list have no right to vote, hold office, or teach, and may not be granted a letter of good and regular standing.

SECTION TWO: RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

- A. Any person who has accepted Christ as his Savior, who gives assurance of his desire to live a consistent Christian life, who has confessed the Lord in Christian baptism (immersion), and who accepts the doctrinal views and standards of this church, may, after satisfactory examination by the pastor and Board of Deacons, be recommended for acceptance in the membership.
- B. Upon the recommendation of the Board of Deacons and the approval of the church, persons may become members of this church in one of four ways:
 1. Baptism (scriptural, single immersion)
 2. By letter from a Baptist church of like faith and practice
 3. By experience—a statement of faith and previous obedience to the Word in baptism
 4. By restoration—an excluded member may be restored to membership upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons after such member has given to them acceptable evidence of honest repentance and made full confession of wrongdoing
- C. Persons seeking church membership shall appear personally before the pastor and deacons who shall pass upon their qualifications and prescribe any restrictions they may deem advisable for the best interests of the church. Having been recommended by the deacons, the name shall be submitted to the church for acceptance or rejection. Five dissenting votes shall constitute a refusal of admission; but, any member objecting may be required to present the grounds of his objection before the deacons at their next meeting.

A two-thirds (2/3) vote by the deacons shall overrule the objection and the name shall be submitted once more to the church.

SECTION THREE: ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Members from churches of like faith and practice, having temporary residence here, shall be extended the privilege of associate membership. Associate membership entitles these individuals to all the privileges and responsibilities of full members except for the right to vote and hold any elected office.

SECTION FOUR: DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

- A. The duties of members are set forth in general in the church covenant.
- B. Members shall observe the God-given ordinances of the church: to have been baptized according to the example and express command of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:15-17); to partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26); to participate in the Lord's service within the church; to attend ALL of the regular services of the church unless hindered by circumstances beyond their control; and, to contribute a scriptural portion of their money to the church for the preaching of the Gospel at home and in the foreign fields (Malachi 3:9-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; 9:6-8).
- C. Each member shall endeavor to lead a godly life and to be diligent in prayer and study of God's Word.

SECTION FIVE: MAINTENANCE OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. The Membership Committee shall consist of the Board of Deacons and the pastor who shall review and revise the membership roll semiannually.
- B. Members failing to support the church by their attendance within a period of six (6) months without legitimate excuse (such support and excuse to be defined by the deacons) may be placed on the inactive list and so lose their right to vote, hold office, or teach. Names continuing upon the inactive list for more than six (6) months may be removed from the church membership roll subject to Section 6, paragraph B.
- C. Any member whose name has been placed upon a list of inactive members may have his name returned to the roll of active members, with power to vote, when he attends the church regularly and contributes to its support. Such restoration takes place upon the recommendation of the pastor and deacons and upon the approval of the church.

SECTION SIX: DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

Membership in this church may be terminated by the following means:

- A. By letter

Letters of dismissal may be granted any member in good and regular standing. Such letters must be addressed to a Baptist church of like faith and order as this and sent by the clerk to the pastor or clerk of the church to which the member is dismissed. Such letters shall be valid for six months from the date of the official vote, and the member so dismissed shall remain subject to the discipline of this church until notification has been received of the acceptance by the church addressed.

- B. By exclusion

Any member, after having been given due notice and opportunity to be heard, may be dismissed from the membership by vote of the church on recommendation of the Board of Deacons for any of the following reasons:

1. Continued absence or irregular attendance for a period of six months without satisfactory excuse, and for possessing an indifferent or hostile attitude. This shall be determined by the Board of Deacons and the pastor for recommendation to the church for a vote.
 2. Any member of this church who is guilty of immorality, who disregards persistently his covenant obligations, or who unites with some other church, may have his or her name removed from the membership.
- C. By written request of the member
- D. By death

Upon the death of any member the clerk shall, without action of the church, remove the name of such member from the church roll.

SECTION SEVEN: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- A. The matter of discipline of the membership shall be the responsibility of the pastor and deacons assisted by the church. No member shall be expelled until every effort, including personal visits if physically possible, has been made to reclaim him or her for Christ and the church.
- B. Denial of belief in our doctrinal statement, refusal to teach sound doctrine as a teacher, or deliberate attempts to influence others to disbelieve sound doctrine shall be sufficient evidence for recommendation of dismissal from membership.
- C. Any other scriptural reasons deemed sufficient by the Board of Deacons and upon approval of the church shall result in church discipline.
- D. In case of a personal difference between members of the church, the Board of Deacons shall recommend that the parties endeavor to settle their difference in the manner laid down by our Savior in Matthew 18:15-17.

When offense is given to one member of the church by the language or conduct of another, if the offense relates only to himself and is known to none other, the offended shall, without consulting or informing any person, seek private reconciliation which, if effected, shall end the matter. If the matter is not cleared, it shall be the duty of the offended to select two or three others with whom he may seek to effect reconciliation. If this shall fail, it shall be the duty of the offended to lay the matter before the church.

- E. If any member of the church shall be publicly guilty of any crime or gross impropriety, it shall be the duty of the member knowing of the transgression to contact the offender and inform him of his intention to lay the matter before the board and the church so that he may appear in his own defense. When rumor charges a crime or gross impropriety against a member, it shall be the duty of the member hearing it to visit or write to the accused and inform him of the report; and, if he has reason to believe that it is true, to take the most judicious measures to ascertain its correctness and to lay the charge and its evidence before the Board of Deacons.
- F. Every member against whom a charge of misconduct is brought shall have the privilege of speaking in his own defense.

If a member fails to give satisfaction to the church in relation to charges brought against him or deliberately refuses to appear before the church when cited, he shall be excluded (Psalm 119:165; 133:1; Matthew 7:1-5; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:1-3, 31-32; Philippians 2:3-4, 12-13; 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; 2 Thessalonians 3:11-14).

ARTICLE IV — ORDINANCES

SECTION ONE: BAPTISM

Those professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior shall be baptized by immersion in water in accordance with scriptural teaching. Baptism shall be a prerequisite to church membership.

SECTION TWO: LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper (Communion) shall be served to the assembled church by the pastor (or in his absence, one of the deacons of the church) and the deacons on the first Sunday morning or evening of each month. Since it is the Lord's Table, none who are His shall be barred; but, the pastor shall frequently explain the meaning of the ordinance.

ARTICLE V — OFFICERS, LEADERS, & TEACHERS

SECTION ONE: QUALIFICATIONS

All officers, teachers, and leaders of the church shall meet the following qualifications:

- A. Attend the major services of this church such as Sunday School, both worship services on the Lord's Day and the prayer service.
- B. Attend all council and committee meetings in connection with their appointed duties.
- C. Be a strong supporter of the church stewardship program.
- D. Uphold the church program as approved by the church.

All officers shall be members of the church in good standing for a period of six (6) months before being placed in nomination. Because of scriptures like 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (husband of one wife) and others, it is our belief that women cannot hold the office of pastor or deacon. Women may serve in any other office for which they are qualified.

SECTION TWO: RESIGNATION

Any officer, teacher, or leader not able to fulfill the above qualifications should submit his resignation without hesitation so that proper leadership can be secured without delay.

SECTION THREE: REMOVAL

Any officer can be removed from his office by the church for conduct unbecoming a Christian or for negligence after due deliberation by and recommendation from the deacons. This applies as well to the pastor. Reference on the removal of the pastor is well defined in *The New Church Directory for Baptist Churches* by Hiscox, chapter VIII, pages 206-215 (1951 or prior edition).

SECTION FOUR: OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall be pastor, deacons, Sunday school superintendent, clerk, church treasurer, financial secretary, deaconesses, and other such officers as the church shall consider it necessary to elect. Scriptural authority for these offices is found in 1 Corinthians 12:28.

SECTION FIVE: LEADERS

The leaders of all youth organizations and ministries shall be appointed by the pastor and youth pastor and approved by the Board of Deacons.

SECTION SIX: CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

All officers of this church shall signify in writing their agreement with the Constitution and program of the church.

ARTICLE VI — DUTIES OF OFFICERS

SECTION ONE: PASTOR

The pastor shall be an ordained Baptist minister who is in full agreement with the Constitution of this church. He shall affirm the doctrinal statement of this church on the acceptance of his call.

A. Qualifications and Call

The qualifications of the pastor will follow the scriptures as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and continue therein during his pastorate with the church.

The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period. Notice of the proposed choice of pastor (in the event of a vacancy) shall be given from the pulpit for two regularly scheduled meetings preceding the vote. Voting shall be by paper ballot. A three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority of the votes cast is required for approval. If the pastor called is married, his wife will automatically be added to the membership. Any children will follow the normal membership procedures.

B. Termination

The pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by mutual consent or by three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority of the votes cast by the church. The pastor shall give to the church, in writing, his intention to terminate his ministry as pastor. Such notice shall not exceed sixty (60) days or be less than thirty (30) days from his date of termination. The church shall likewise give notice of her intention to terminate the pastor. In the case of immoral conduct or reproach upon the name of Christ, his ministry shall cease immediately.

C. Duties and Responsibilities

1. The pastor shall fulfill the scriptural requirements according to the New Testament and in particular, 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The pastor's work and office are well defined by the New Testament names given him: *pastor*, meaning shepherd; *bishop*, defined as overseer; and, *elder* (Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2); thus, the pastor is to exercise spiritual oversight, to feed, and to care for the flock. He is the preacher, teacher, leader, and counselor. He shall administer the ordinances, moderate all meetings, and confer on the appointing of all committees (subject to ratification of the church). He shall be a member of all committees and councils.
2. The pastor shall earnestly seek to promote the spiritual and general welfare of the church in every way consistent with biblical and ethical standards.
3. The pastor shall be the executive officer of the church, supervising the ministry and program of the church, tenderly watching, nurturing, and promoting the best interests of the church. The pastor shall carry out his responsibilities of the pastoral office in full cooperation with the deacons.

SECTION TWO: YOUTH PASTOR

The youth pastor shall be in full agreement with the Constitution of this church. He shall affirm the doctrinal statement of this church on the acceptance of his call.

A. Qualifications and Call

The qualifications of the youth pastor will follow the scriptures as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and continue therein during his pastorate with the church. The youth pastor shall be called for an indefinite period. Notice of the proposed choice of youth pastor (in the event of a vacancy) shall be given from the pulpit for two regularly scheduled meetings preceding the vote. Voting shall be by paper ballot. A three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority of the votes cast is required for approval. If the youth pastor called is married, his wife will automatically be added to the membership. Any children will follow the normal membership procedures.

B. Termination

The youth pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by mutual consent or by three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority of the votes cast by the church. The youth pastor shall give to the church, in writing, his intention to terminate his ministry. Such notice shall not exceed sixty (60) days or be less than thirty (30) days from the date of his termination. The church shall likewise give notice of her intention to terminate the youth pastor. In the case of immoral conduct or reproach upon the name of Christ his ministry shall cease immediately.

C. Duties and Responsibilities

The youth pastor shall be responsible for managing (planning, organizing, leading, and supervising) all youth ministries of the church. In doing so, he shall develop a team of workers to assist in the ministry and to ensure consistency of philosophy, purpose, and activity. He is directly responsible to the senior pastor and ultimately accountable to the Board of Deacons and congregation.

SECTION THREE: DEACONS AND TRUSTEES

- A. The Board of Deacons shall be nine (9) but shall not exceed twelve (12) in number. They shall be elected annually by the church for a term of three (3) years. A deacon shall be eligible for reelection to a second term but shall not serve more than two terms consecutively (six years total). One-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the deacon board shall retire each year. The Board of Deacons shall notify the church of any desired change in their number.
- B. Should a vacancy occur in the Board of Deacons before the expiration of any term, such vacancy shall be filled by the church at any regular or special meeting providing notice of such meeting is given from the pulpit two weeks preceding the meeting and in accordance with Article VIII, Section 1.
- C. The qualifications for the members of the deacon board are delineated in 1 Timothy 3:10-13. Deacons shall also meet the general qualifications for church officers as covered in Article V, Section 1.
- D. Should a member of the deacon board be absent (legitimacy to be determined by the board) from the services of the church or from regular meetings of the board for a period of six months, he shall receive counsel from the board as to his responsibilities to the church. If this fails to reestablish him in his position, his name shall be brought to the church for consideration of terminating his service as a board member.
- E. The deacons shall meet on a monthly basis and otherwise as may be deemed necessary in performing the duties of the office. At their first meeting following the annual election, they shall select a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. A record of all meetings shall be kept and an annual report submitted to the church. A quorum shall constitute a simple majority of the board. The Board of Deacons shall serve as the trustees of the church.

F. Responsibilities of Deacons and Trustees:

1. Deacons

- a) To examine candidates for church membership and to recommend them to the church when approved.
- b) To assist the pastor in the spiritual supervision of the church. The deacons shall be watchful guardians of the purity and good order of the church, striving to maintain a healthful tone of piety and Christian activity in the body. They do not constitute a coordinate branch for the administration of its government. In the exercise of their functions, they act only in conjunction with the pastor and not independent of him.
- c) To assist the pastor in serving the Lord's Table.
- d) To assist the pastor in matters of discipline, to deal with members who are neglecting their duties to and who may be walking disorderly in their relationship towards the church as a body.
- e) To have general supervision of all departments of the church work.

2. Trustees

The Board of Deacons shall serve as the trustees of the church.

- a) They shall hold in trust all property of the church and shall be charged with the management and upkeep of it.
- b) They shall not sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber the real estate or other property of the church without the consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at a meeting called in accordance with the provisions of the laws of the state.
- c) They shall direct the treasurer in the expenditure of funds under their jurisdiction and may expend monies not to exceed \$750.00 without authorization from the church providing such expenditures are reported at the next regular business meeting.
- d) They shall be responsible for the hiring of paid employees of the church.

SECTION FOUR: CLERK

The church clerk shall keep a correct record of the proceedings of the church, of the membership, and of all baptisms. He shall issue letters and certificates of Christian character as directed by the church, conduct all official correspondence, and preserve all documents, papers, and letters coming into his hands during his term of office. He shall deliver the same with all records kept by him to his successor. He shall keep an account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical interest and value.

The church may provide clerical assistance in keeping the church records.

SECTION FIVE: TREASURER

The church treasurer shall have charge of church monies except as shall otherwise be provided for. He shall pay out the same only as directed by the Board of Deacons. He shall make a quarterly report and an annual report to the church.

SECTION SIX: FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The financial secretary, in company with the treasurer or properly authorized substitutes, shall count all the offerings and turn them over to the treasurer. He shall keep all individual accounts and supply members with offering envelopes.

SECTION SEVEN: DEACONESSES

- A. The deaconess board shall consist of six (6) members with three (3) being elected each year to serve a two-year term. They shall elect their own chairman and vice-chairman.
- B. It shall be the duty of the deaconesses to work under the supervision of the Board of Deacons. They shall have oversight of the spiritual welfare of the women and girls of the church. They shall prepare the elements of the Lord's Supper, care for the needs of the sick and bereaved, care for the needs of hospitality for special meetings, conferences, etc., assist in baptismal services and other duties as requested by the Board of Deacons and/or the pastor. They may secure others to assist in the fulfillment of their duties.
- C. The deaconesses shall be responsible for the interior beautification and decoration of the church.

ARTICLE VII — CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION ONE: SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School is an integral part of the church. All officers and regular teachers in the Sunday School must be members of the church in good and regular standing and shall constitute the Sunday School Council.

- A. Sunday School Superintendent

The Sunday School superintendent and assistant shall be responsible for the education program of the Sunday School. The superintendent shall direct the work of the Sunday School; he shall preside at the quarterly meetings of the Sunday School Council for the purpose of determining curricula, activities, and policies of the school. The superintendent shall be responsible for supervising the classes and making whatever recommendations or staff changes deemed necessary to maintain a high standard of spiritual instruction. He shall submit all appointments to the Board of Deacons for approval. He shall encourage and promote attendance. He shall be elected at the annual election for a one-year term of office. The nominee receiving the second highest number of votes shall serve as assistant superintendent. The Sunday School superintendent shall submit an annual report of the program of the Sunday School to the church.

- B. Teachers and Officers

All teachers and officers of the Sunday School shall be members of First Baptist Church in good and regular standing for a period of at least six months and shall subscribe to the Constitution. All prospective teachers shall be submitted to the Board of Deacons for approval.

SECTION TWO: YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Youth organizations shall meet on a scheduled basis. All youth organizations shall be under the direct supervision of the youth pastor. In the event of the absence of a youth pastor, youth organizations shall be supervised by member(s) appointed by the Board of Deacons.

SECTION THREE: CHILDREN'S CHURCH

- A. Separate Sunday morning services shall be arranged for children in first grade and under.
- B. The Board of Deacons shall annually appoint the director or directors for this ministry.

SECTION FOUR: OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Other organizations may be formed to better fulfil the ministry of the church. All leaders of these self-governing organizations must be members of the church in good and regular standing and in full agreement with the Constitution and the church's leadership.

SECTION FIVE: CHOIR

It shall be the duty of the choir director to annually submit a list of members for the choir to the Board of Deacons. Only those approved by the board and who are members or associate members of the church in regular attendance may serve in the choir.

SECTION SIX: LITERATURE

All literature for the Sunday School and church ministries must be approved by the Board of Deacons and purchased from a fundamental publishing house as approved by the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE VIII — COMMITTEES

SECTION ONE: NOMINATING COMMITTEES

- A. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Board of Deacons under the leadership of the pastor.
- B. A special nominating committee of four (4) members shall be elected by the church to nominate deacons to fill vacancies within the board.
- C. It shall be the duty of these committees to prepare a list of nominees (two or more for each position, if available) of all officers and committee members to be elected at the annual election of officers, or upon occurrence of a vacancy in an office.
- D. This list of nominees shall be posted in the church two (2) Sundays prior to the election.

SECTION TWO: MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

- A. The Missionary Committee shall consist of the pastor, who shall act as chairman, the president of the Ladies Missionary Fellowship, and three (3) others elected by the church.
- B. It shall be the duty of the Missionary Committee to recommend projects and new missionaries for support by the church and other organizations of the church, and annually review current missionary support levels with recommendations to be made to the Finance Committee. The Missionary Committee shall be responsible for an annual missionary conference.

SECTION THREE: FINANCE COMMITTEE

- A. The Finance Committee shall consist of the chairman of the Board of Deacons, church clerk, financial secretary, and church treasurer.
- B. It shall be the duty of the Finance Committee to prepare the annual budget for the approval of the Board of Deacons and the church and to encourage every member in scriptural giving.

SECTION FOUR: AUDITING COMMITTEE

This committee shall be composed of three (3) members appointed annually by the Board of Deacons who shall also appoint the chairman of the committee. The Auditing Committee shall audit the books of the financial

secretary and treasurer at the close of each year making appropriate report to the church. Each fifth year, or sooner, the audit shall be conducted by an outside auditor or auditing service.

SECTION FIVE: MUSIC COMMITTEE

- A. The members of the Music Committee shall be three (3) in number. The church shall elect one (1) member at large representing the church. The senior choir shall appoint one (1) member and the Board of Deacons shall appoint one (1) member.
- B. It shall be the duty of the Music Committee to schedule special music for the Sunday services and special meetings. It shall also be the duty of the committee to preapprove all recorded music to ensure that it is Christ honoring.

SECTION SIX: USHER COMMITTEE

- A. The Usher Committee shall consist of a chairman and all ushers.
- B. The chairman shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons.
- C. The chairman shall select ushers for approval by the Board of Deacons.
- D. The chairman shall instruct and supervise the ushers in their duties and appoint hosts or hostesses, as needed, to greet visitors.
- E. The Usher Committee shall be responsible to collect offerings, to distribute bulletins, and to welcome members and visitors. They shall also maintain the security of the church building during services. The Usher Committee shall assist in helping the services to run as smoothly as possible.

SECTION SEVEN: TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

- A. The Transportation Committee shall consist of the vice-chairman of the Board of Deacons and one (1) other member appointed by the Board of Deacons.
- B. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to oversee the maintenance of vehicles and to schedule drivers for Sunday services.

SECTION EIGHT: SEARCH COMMITTEE

- A. When it is necessary to call a pastor, youth pastor, or other ministerial staff member, a search committee shall be created.
- B. This committee shall be composed of a minimum of four deacons plus three members elected from the membership.
- C. This committee shall thoroughly investigate the merits of every person under consideration in regard to his personal character, ministerial record, preaching ability, and doctrinal soundness in determining his fitness for the position to be filled.
- D. The pastor shall serve as the chairman of this committee. In the absence of a pastor, the chairman of the deacon board shall serve as chairman.
- E. The search committee shall consider only one candidate at a time.

ARTICLE IX — MEETINGS

SECTION ONE: PUBLIC WORSHIP

The stated meetings of this church for public worship shall be Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening. A Sunday School shall be maintained and any such other meetings as the church may authorize.

SECTION TWO: BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A. The Annual Election shall be held on the second Wednesday in June for the purpose of electing all officers of the church and such committee members as dictated by these Bylaws. The Annual Business Meeting shall be held the first Wednesday after the tenth (10th) of January. Quarterly business meetings shall be held on the second Wednesday of each quarter. In case of any omission in holding the above meetings, the meeting shall be called for the earliest available date thereafter.
- B. Special business meetings may be called by the pastor, the Board of Deacons, or by the written request of ten (10) members in good and regular standing.
- C. Notices of regular and special business meetings shall be announced from the pulpit on the Sunday preceding the stated date of such meetings. Normally there shall be no business transacted on Sunday other than the reception of members.
- D. A quorum shall consist of ten percent (1/10) of the active voting members.
- E. Voting Members
 - 1. Only members who are in good and regular standing shall participate in the government of the church and in the administration of her affairs.
 - 2. Only members of the church in good and regular standing, sixteen (16) years of age and older, shall be entitled to vote on church business (discipline, election of officers, etc).
- F. *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be used as the basic guidelines for parliamentary procedure in business meetings. The following is a suggested order of business:
 - 1. Scripture and prayer
 - 2. Reading of minutes of last meeting
 - 3. Reports of officers and committees
 - 4. Unfinished business
 - 5. New business
 - 6. Adjournment and prayer

ARTICLE X — ELECTIONS

In all cases the election of officers shall be by ballot and on the basis of a majority of votes cast even if a candidate is the only nominee on the ballot.

The election of committee members shall be on the basis of the highest number of votes.

- A. All officers shall be elected for one year except as otherwise provided herein.
- B. The nominee receiving the second highest vote in an election shall be the assistant in any case requiring an assistant.

- C. Proxy votes and absentee ballots shall be provided to members in good and regular standing upon request. All proxy voters must have a written and signed statement from the absentee member authorizing him to vote in their stead.

ARTICLE XI — PAID STAFF

SECTION ONE: CUSTODIAN

It shall be the duty of the deacon board acting as trustees to hire a custodian to care for the church properties. His duties shall be outlined by the board and shall be supervised by the vice-chairman. It shall be the duty of the board to replace the custodian in the event of poor performance or resignation.

SECTION TWO: MINISTERIAL STAFF

Ministerial staff, such as an associate pastor or director of religious education, shall be elected by the church upon recommendation of the board. All salaries shall be determined by the board and approved by the church. All ministerial staff shall be under the supervision of the pastor, and should he feel a change in personnel is necessary, he shall refer the matter to the board who shall make recommendations to the church if necessary.

SECTION THREE: OTHER PAID STAFF

Other paid staff, such as office or secretarial help, shall be hired by the Board of Deacons acting as trustees and shall be under the general supervision of the pastor. It shall be the duty of the board to replace such staff in the event of poor performance or resignation.

ARTICLE XII — FINANCES

SECTION ONE: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall begin on January 1 of each year and end on the following December 31.

SECTION TWO: FUND RAISERS

No monies shall be raised by the church or by any auxiliary organization except by freewill giving.

SECTION THREE: FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

No financial obligation shall be placed upon the church either as a mortgage, note, or outstanding bill, or in any other form unless by a corporate act of the church.

SECTION FOUR: SPECIAL FUNDS

Special designated funds may be established by the church or by any of its organizations only upon the recommendation of the Board of Deacons and the approval of the church. Individuals may give special offerings at any time to these special funds as the Spirit of God may move them.

ARTICLE XIII — MISSIONS POLICY

It shall be the policy of this church to support only missionary enterprises and schools that are known to be in hearty agreement with our confession of faith, both in doctrine and in practice, and shall be Baptist in name as well as practice. The only exception (and that should be allowed infrequently) might be for projects in our immediate geographical area where no other suitable agency exists to do the same work.

ARTICLE XIV — LICENSING AND ORDINATION

SECTION ONE: LICENSING

- A. Any man of the membership who meets the scriptural qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 and gives evidence that he is called of God, may be granted a license to preach the Gospel by a majority vote at a duly called business meeting.
- B. The candidate for license must first be recommended by the pastor and deacons and preach to the congregation at a Sunday service before a vote can be taken.

SECTION TWO: ORDINATION

- A. Any man of the membership who gives evidence of a genuine call of God to the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.
- B. Upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons, the church shall vote to call an ordination council of ordained ministers and leaders from churches of like faith for the purpose of examining the applicant for ordination as to his salvation experience, call to the ministry, character, doctrinal beliefs, education, and overall fitness for the ministry.
- C. Upon recommendation of the ordination council, the church shall proceed with the ordination.
- D. Following an impartial investigation by the pastor and deacons, it shall be within the providence of this church to revoke the ordination credentials of any minister ordained by this church if he fails to live up to the biblical qualifications referred to in paragraph A of this section.

ARTICLE XV — CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Baptist church government not treated by these bylaws shall be governed by the principles set forth in *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches: A Guide to the Administration of Baptist Churches* by Rev. Edward T. Hiscox, D.D., the recognized authority on such matters in Baptist churches.

ARTICLE XVI — CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

SECTION ONE: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended, altered or revised by the following method:

- A. The proposed change must be submitted in writing at a regularly scheduled business meeting and posted for all voting members to review.
- B. The proposed change must be voted on at a special business meeting duly called for the purpose of voting on the change or at the next regularly scheduled business meeting.
- C. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by active voting members is required to pass said amendment.

SECTION TWO: REPEAL

All bylaws, rules, resolutions or regulations heretofore adopted or in force in this church and not consistent with these bylaws are hereby repealed.

SECTION THREE: DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the church, the trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the trustees shall determine. Assets may only be distributed to tax-exempt organizations which agree with the church's Articles of Faith. Such action to dissolve shall be by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of active voting members.

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