

CONSTITUTION, AND BY-LAWS

First Baptist Church Of Union, New Jersey

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I: Name

The church shall be called the First Baptist Church of Union, Union County, N.J.

ARTICLE II: Purpose, Covenant, Statement of Faith

The purpose of this church is to meet together for the worship of God, for the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, for the administration of the ordinances of the New Testament, and for the spiritual growth of its members. To remind us of our continuing purpose, we have adopted the following covenant:

Church Covenant of First Baptist Church of Union, N.J.

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and having professed our faith in Him, and as believers, repented of our old way of life and followed Him into the waters of baptism, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly covenant with each other and promise:

That we will walk in brother love as become members of a Christian Church;

That we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but will uphold the public worship of God;

That we will strive for the advancement of this church; promote its prosperity and spirituality, and give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin;

That we will contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has blessed us, 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.

That we will, by a life of holiness, purity and goodwill toward all men, declare to our friends and the world, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We also promise to cultivate the habit of Bible reading and prayer; to religiously educate our children; to work to personally win people to Christ; and to lead a consistent Christian life, honoring Christ in all our relationships.

We further promise 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 mindful of the rules of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

As a Church and as individuals, we will apply the teachings of our Lord to our lives, to the life of the community, our nation, and our world.

–This covenant was adopted May 12, 1948, revised version adopted January, 2004

Statement of Faith

The Word of God We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, the infallible and perfect Word of God, complete as the revelation of God's will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in all matters to which they speak. (Deut 4:2; Psalm 119:160; Matt. 5:18; John 10:35; 1 Cor. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Rev 22:18-22)

The Trinity We believe in one God, creator and sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that these are equal in every divine perfection and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. (Gen. 1:26; Deut 6:4; Isa 48:16; Matt 28:19; John 1:1,2; Acts 5:3,4; 2 Cor 13:14)

God the Father We believe in God, the Father, an infinite personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, justice, righteousness, and love. He is transcendent, and not of the same essence as His creation. We believe 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. (Matt 6:26; John 4:24; John 17:1-3; 1 Tim 6:15-16; James 1:17)

Jesus Christ We believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son, and has precisely the same nature and attributes as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe further that He is not only true God, but true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We also believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His death, burial, and bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, and His priestly intercession on behalf of His people. He is seated at the right hand of God and will return soon to judge the living and the dead and establish His kingdom, a kingdom that will endure forever. (Matt. 1:18-25; Matt 26:38; John 1:14; John 8:40; John 8:42; John 11:33; Heb 2:14, Heb 2:15)

Holy Spirit We believe in the Holy Spirit, His personality, and His work in regeneration, sanctification, and preservation. He reveals the Son and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and implement Christ's work of redeeming the lost and empowering the believer for godly living and service. (Psalm 139:7; Isa 40:13,14; John 3:5-7; John 14:16,17; John 16:8; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 2:10-11; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:13; Titus 3:5)

Man We believe God created man, the first male and female, in His image and that He gave them authority over all the earth. But man sinned and consequently experienced not only physical death, but also spiritual death (which is separation from God). The consequences of this sin effect the entire human race. All human beings are born with a sinful nature and reveal this nature by committing acts of sin. And while they are able to do some good works in the eyes of other humans, yet as to their spiritual standing before God, all are lost apart from the atoning work of Christ. We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man with one woman, as God intended; consequently, homosexual marriage, bigamy, and polygamy are prohibited by God. (Gen 1:26-27; Gen 2:17; Gen 2:24; Gen 3:6; Mark 7:20-23; John 2:24-25; Romans 5:12-19; Eph 2:1-3; Eph 4:18)

Satan We believe in the existence of Satan, a created being, who accuses the brethren and opposes God. He is still working in the world to destroy the souls of men; and he and all his angels, will eternally

perish in the lake of fire. (Matt25:41; Rev 12:9; Rev 19:20; Rev 20:10, 14, 15)

Resurrection We believe in the bodily resurrection of all mankind. Believers are resurrected to enjoy eternal life with God. Unbelievers are resurrected to eternal judgment, and will dwell forever in the lake of fire with the devil and his angels. (Dan 12:2; John 5:28,29; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thes 4:16; Rev 20:4-6; Rev 20:10-15; Rev 21:1-8)

Salvation We believe in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; “and there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” We further believe that this salvation is based upon the sovereign grace of God, and was purchased by Christ’s shed blood on the cross, and is received by man through faith, apart from any human merit, work or ritual. We further believe that salvation results in repentance from sin and obedience to Christ’s commands to love God and love your neighbor. (John 1:12; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:28; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 2:11; Titus 3:5; 1 John 1:17)

The Church We believe that the Church in its invisible form is universal, the true body of Christ. The Holy Church is the one institution specifically ordained of God to function in the furthering of the Kingdom until Christ comes again. It consists of all those regenerated by the Spirit of God, in spiritual union and communion both with Christ, the head of the Body, and with fellow-believers. Each member of the Church is gifted by God to build up the collective body and to be an ambassador of Christ. The Church is Christ’s Bride and will be presented by Him holy and spotless before His Father in Heaven. The Church will not be conquered by even hell itself. We believe the ordinances of the local church are believer’s baptism and the Lord’s Supper. (Matt 16:18; Matt 28:19; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:15-16; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Cor 12:13; 1 Cor 15:51-53; Col 1:18; 1 Thes 4:13-17; Titus 2:13)

Christian Life God commands the believer to be Spirit-filled; the Holy Spirit leads the believer in prayer, understanding of Scriptures, worship, fellowship, service, and enables the believer to have victory over temptation and sin. We believe that all true believers are kept eternally secure by the power of God, the indwelling and sealing of the Holy Spirit, and the intercession of Christ. We do not believe perfection is attainable in this life; however all believers are, by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, to make progressive steps of growth toward spiritual maturity and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. (Isa 45:22; Isa 49:6; Matt 28:18-20; John 10:28-30; John 14:16-17; John 17:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:12-15; Rom 5:12-19; Rom 6:1-11; Rom 8:11-13; Rom 8:38-39; Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:1-31; 2 Cor 5:18-20; Gal 6:1-2; Eph 2:1-3; Eph 2:10; Eph 4:11-16; Eph 4:30; Phil 2:12-13; Phil 3:12-16; Col 1:28; 1 Tim 3:1-12; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:3; 1 John 2:1)

ARTICLE III: Mission and Principles

To further define the work of the Church, we have adopted the following:

Mission

The mission of the people at First Baptist Church is to love God with all that we are and all that we have, and to love one another as Jesus loves us.

By God's grace and through His Spirit's power we will glorify Jesus by making disciples, proclaiming His good news to the lost, fulfilling the works He commands, and standing on His perfect Word, the Bible, thus increasing the worship of God in our lives and throughout the earth.

Principles regarding Our Mission

1. We value biblical teaching and view the avenues of biblical teaching (i.e. Sunday School, Sunday and Wednesday nights, etc.) as means to an end, and not an end in themselves. In other words, our teaching ministries exist to help meet the mission of the church; we cannot define success as merely having well-attended programs.
2. The local Church government needs to meet two criteria: first, it is to be Bible-based in its structure and function. Second, it is to be structured to allow for the most efficient and responsible stewardship of the resources (human and material) of the church.
3. We aim to have orderly and vibrant worship of God through song, remaining flexible in our styles and inviting participation from all the church family. God must be glorified among us in song, and we must do all in our power to encourage focused and enthusiastic worship among the family of God.
4. We are committed to promoting a Christian world view, engaging the culture, responding to current concerns and philosophies, bringing Christ's unchanging and eternal perspective to bear, so that we may be a preserving salt and a guiding light in our society.
5. As Jesus instructed the first believers to reach their local area ("Jerusalem"), their nearby neighbors ("all Judea"), their more distant neighbors ("Samaria"), and people in all places no matter how far ("even to the end of the earth"), we likewise feel the responsibility to bring the gospel to those in our own neighborhoods, in our town, in our state and nation, and throughout the world. We will continue to pray, work, and give generously to fulfill this task of bringing God's good news to the world.
6. We believe that God intends to work through our prayers, and that He calls His children to pray at all times. Prayer is essential to godly living and is a necessity for every believer. All good works of the church must be based on prayer. Therefore, we seek to foster prayer as individuals, at the family level, and as a church community.
7. We are mindful to honor the Lord's command to be devoted to one another in brotherly love. We are a family in Christ. We emphasize, therefore, hospitality, the sharing of meals, and the fellowship of believers in organized as well as casual meetings. Also, we are committed to meeting the basic needs of the saints, bearing one another's physical and emotional burdens, and sharing in one another's joys.
8. We are committed to crossing cultural boundaries in order to achieve the unity Jesus desires for His church. This means that we will continually seek to reach out across racial, generational, ethnic, and economic barriers that divide the world.
9. We value individual discipleship as the sure path to increased Christ-likeness. Spiritual maturity for each believer is God's desire, and is necessary to fulfill His goal of building the church, His bride. As Jesus has commanded us to "make disciples" so we must train each believer in the basic doctrines and disciplines taught by the Bible.
10. All resources are from God and belong to Him. He entrusts us with worldly wealth and our lives, so that we may use them to bring Him an eternal reward for His investment. We seek to worship and honor Him by wisely and generously using the spiritual and material gifts He has given us.
11. We take seriously our responsibility to minister financially to the needs of those among us who have inadequate means of supporting themselves.
12. We take seriously our responsibility to minister compassionately to those with emotional needs. There are those who come to Christ with deep hurts and in great need of loving attention and godly healing. We seek to bring such people to a point of victory in Christ so that they can serve Him with peace and joy.
13. We see our congregation as a part of the worldwide body of Christ. Accordingly, other believing congregations in our town are not our competitors but members of our family. We seek to strengthen those churches engaged in the same work as ourselves. Furthermore, we have a responsibility to pray for other congregations and to support their ministries as we are able.

14. The obvious extension of growth is a commitment to church planting. We seek opportunities to help others plant churches cross-culturally. Furthermore, as God blesses First Baptist with church growth, we will seek His direction in planting another church ourselves.

15. God intends for healthy churches to raise up leaders who will not only work within our congregation, but, at times, will go out from us to promote the Kingdom of God by ministering in other geographic areas as pastors, missionaries, and teachers. We are committed to training and developing the people of First Baptist according to the gifts and abilities that God has given them, enabling them to fulfill the ministry to which God has called them.

16. All believers are members of Christ's body and are necessary and important in God's plan for His Kingdom. "There are no little people." This means that not only are all to be ministered to, but also all are to minister to others, using the gifts God has given each one.

17. The body of Christ demonstrates its health by growth, both spiritually and numerically. We are committed to building up individuals so that they are spiritually healthy Christians who strengthen others in the body of Christ and spread the good news of salvation to neighbors, co-workers, and strangers, thereby growing the church.

18. We determine to praise God by broadcasting through word of mouth the great things He does for us as individuals and as a congregation. We are committed to providing opportunities for testimonies in united meetings, and encouraging spontaneous testimonies of praise in conversation.

19. We value the family as a God-ordained institution, and the basic unit of society. We are deeply committed to building and supporting godly marriages, promoting biblical parenting, and family worship. Furthermore, we will encourage the family to be the primary vehicle for discipling children.

20. In all things we seek to glorify God. We seek to increase our worship for Him in all ways according to His great holiness and power. He is the founder and focus of all that we do. We rob God if we will not worship Him with all of our strength, increasing His glory in the earth.

ARTICLE IV: Membership

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this Church, who have undergone baptism¹ as a believer and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church. It is assumed that members will abide by the articles of faith, regularly attend church services and events, and contribute from their time, talent, and treasure.

ARTICLE V: Leadership and Organization

(1) Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the Congregation of the Church is the final authority within this local Church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers to govern the Church. However, the vote of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in the By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:

- a) Accept members into the Church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the Church roll;
- b) Elect officers of the Church;
- c) Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from

¹It is the regular practice of this church to baptize by immersion.

office;

- d) Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property;
- e) Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Board of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;
- f) Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church;
- g) Approve the call, job description and initial salary of Vocational Pastors and Ministers.

(2) The officers of the Church shall be Elder and Deacon. The purpose of the officers of the Church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.

(3) The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Board of Elders who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word, and tending the flock of God in this Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.

(4) Deacons shall assist the Board of Elders by performing services of administration and implementation.

ARTICLE VI: The Church Property

(1) In the event of a division of this Church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this Church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the Church membership before recognizing a division therein provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the mediator(s) agreed upon by both parties. The decision of the mediator(s) shall be final.

(2) Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the Church work cannot continue, the Church property shall be transferred to a Christian congregation which is in agreement with the statement of faith within this constitution. Such a transfer would require an affirmative vote by at least 75% of all living members.

(3) Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of like faith and mission be advisable, the Board of Elders shall be authorized by the Church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this Church is concerned.

ARTICLE VII: Revisions, Additions and Amendments

(1) Revisions, additions or amendments of this constitution may be made only in the following manner:

- a) at the annual meeting; and
- b) by a majority vote of the membership, or a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting at such meeting, provided at least fifteen percent (15%) of the resident membership² of the Church is present at such meeting; and

²A "resident member" is a regularly attending member who feels that he or she lives close enough to the church building to think of First Baptist as his or her local congregation.

c) after presentation by written motion at a quarterly or special business meeting held at least three months before the annual meeting; and

d) if notice of the proposed change or addition has been given, in writing and from the pulpit on at least two Sundays in the interim period between said meetings.

(2) Articles II and VII of this constitution shall not be repealed, amended, nor revised.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I: Membership

Section 1 GENERAL PROCEDURE

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Board of Elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members, or upon transfer of members to other churches.

Section 2 ADMISSION BY BAPTISM

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of change of heart, and having accepted the faith, aims, and ideals of this Church as expressed in the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant, may be received into membership by baptism, upon recommendation of the Board of Elders. *Note: upon approval of the Board of Elders, a person may request to be baptized even though they choose not to become a member of First Baptist Church at that time.

Section 3 ADMISSION BY LETTER

Members from other Baptist or other Bible-believing churches holding like faith, having been previously baptized as believers, may be received as members with us upon presentation of letters of transfer from such churches, and upon acceptance of the faith, aims and ideals of this Church as expressed in the Statement of Faith and the Church Covenant.

Section 4 ADMISSION BY EXPERIENCE OR RESTORATION

All applicants for membership other than by baptism or by letter of transfer, that is by Christian experience if previously baptized, or by restoration, shall be received into the church in the same way as those by baptism, except the ordinance shall not be administered.

Section 5 INSTRUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS

All persons uniting with this Church in any of the ways set forth in Sections 2 through 4 above shall previously, by the Board of Elders, be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Statement of Faith. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations as to worship, service, and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the church.

Section 6 DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

- a) Any members who have fulfilled their obligations to the Church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the Elders, may, upon request, be granted a letter of transfer to unite with such Church of like mind as First Baptist of Union as they may designate. Such letter of transfer shall be sent to the Pastor or the Clerk of the Church the member intends to join. Members who shall unite with another Church without such letter shall be dropped from the Church roll.
- b) Members who move from this area, shall supply the Church with their new address and apply for a letter of dismissal within one year provided there be a church of the same faith and order in the place to which they move. If necessary, it shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to remind such members of their duties in this respect. In case there is no such church in the place, or there are circumstances which render it inadvisable to change membership, the member shall report to the Church as often as once a year at least, in person or by letter and by contribution. All non-resident members who do not so report shall be subject to dismissal by the Church after appropriate efforts have been made to contact the members and remind them of their duties.
- c) Members who live locally but do not attend regular worship services of the church for a

period of 6 months or who regularly attend another local church for a period of 6 months shall be officially contacted by the Board of Elders and urged to return to regular fellowship with First Baptist, or to officially transfer member to another church. If the member refuses to do either within a month of being contacted by the Elders, that member may be automatically removed from the membership rolls.

ARTICLE II: Church Government

Section 1 GENERAL STATEMENT

a) Elders. The Governing Officers of the Church shall be a Board of Elders. Elders shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as provided for in Article II, Section 2 and Section 3 of these By-Laws. All officers of the Church shall be members of the Church in good standing³. The Elders are responsible for overseeing the operation of the church.

b) Deacons. Deacons shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as provided for in Article II, Section 2 and Section 3 of these By-Laws. All deacons shall be members of the Church in good standing. The Deacons will operate under the direction and authority of the Board of Elders.

c) The Board of Elders shall be composed of men, the Deacons shall be composed of both men and women. Except as provided in paragraphs d) and e) below, the Board of Elders and the Deacons are the only bodies and positions created by these By-Laws.

d) Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. The Church, upon nomination by the Board of Elders shall elect at the annual meeting, members to the positions of Church Clerk, Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The functions of Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall not be performed by the same member(s). The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be bonded by the Church in a suitable amount. The Elders shall provide a written description of duties to the Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. The Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary shall regularly report to the Deacons or Elders, as often as required by the Deacons or Elders.

e) Committees and Appointees. The Board of Elders has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Board of Elders has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it created. The Board of Elders also has the authority to appoint Elders, Deacons or others to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. The Board of Elders may delegate to the Deacons the authority to appoint others to serve as members of such committees and as agents of the Board of Elders in such positions. Also, the Deacons have the authority to create committees or positions necessary to fulfill the duties of the Deacons. All of these committees and positions are to be communicated to the Board of Elders who maintain authority to edit or confirm such committees or positions. Every committee shall have a chairperson, responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who shall be appointed by the Board of Elders (or Deacons if the committee is created by the Deacons). The Board of Elders may delegate the responsibility for selecting the chairperson to the Deacons or to the committee. (For example, such committees and positions may include a Missions Committee and a Christian Education Committee, among others.)

³A member in good standing is a member who fits the qualifications for membership as outlined in Article IV of the Constitution. Any questions beyond this description will be referred to the Board of Elders on a case-by-case basis.

Section 2 VOCATIONAL PASTORS AND MINISTERS

a) Definition. Vocational Pastors are the ordained Elders of the church, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church of Christ. Vocational Ministers are the non-ordained ministers of the church who, in response to God's call, serve the church of Christ as their primary vocation. Both Vocational Pastors and Vocational Ministers are supported financially by the church in return for their vocational labors.

b) Duties. In addition to the duties of their office as described in Sections 4 and 5 below, Vocational Pastors and Ministers shall perform the duties determined by the Board of Elders and approved by the congregation. The duties shall be in writing at the time of the call to service, and substantial changes shall be approved by the church. The church's call of a Vocational Pastor is a call to the Eldership of the church. Therefore Vocational Pastors shall be members of the Board of Elders and have all the Biblical qualifications of an Elder. Vocational Ministers are not necessarily called as Elders, but as assisting partners in the ministry.

c) Vocational Call by the Church. The members shall call Vocational Pastors and Ministers (1) by ballot upon recommendation of the Board of Elders and (2) by at least a two-thirds majority of those members voting at the meeting with at least fifteen percent (15%) of the membership of the Church present. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the next two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Written notice shall also be given to the membership at least one week before the meeting.

d) Termination of Vocational Call by the Church.

(1) By resignation. The question of terminating the vocational call of a Vocational Pastor or Minister shall be considered at any time by the church upon the presentation of the Pastor's or Minister's resignation.

(2) Grievance. Where a grievance exists against a Pastor or Minister or Deacon, either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Board of Elders by any two members in good standing. If the Board, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the Pastor or Minister may be terminated at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least fifteen percent (15%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given in writing to the membership at least one week before the meeting.

e) Licensing . Any man who is a member and has the Scriptural knowledge, the zeal and the ability which gives evidence that he is called of God to preach the Gospel vocationally, and shall have preached before the church, shall be given a license, provided that two-thirds of the members present at a business meeting agree. Candidates for licensing must be recommended to the church by the Board of Elders.

f) Ordination. When any licensed preacher of our church shall desire to be ordained, he shall inform the Board of Elders. If the Board of Elders agree that the candidate has shown evidence of being called to full-time vocational ministry, they are to begin the process of ordination. If the candidate chooses to have his ordination recognized by any denominations with which First Baptist finds itself associated at that time, then the Elders will begin the process in accordance with denominational guidelines. If the candidate chooses to be ordained independent of any denomination, the Board of Elders will form their own ordination council, consisting of all current Elders of First Baptist Church, and at least 2 other local pastors. The Board of Elders may invite other qualified guests to be a part of the council. This council, so formed, will interview the candidate and complete the ordination process.

Section 3 NON-VOCATIONAL ELDERS AND DEACONS

a) Definition. Non-vocational elders and deacons are those Elders and Deacons who are not financially compensated for their service as an Elder or Deacon.

b) Duties. Non-vocational Elders and Deacons shall have the duties of their offices as described in Sections 4 and 5 below.

c) Calling. The Board of Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for non-vocational Elder and Deacon. The Board shall provide for individual members of the Church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Board as candidates for office and for the Board's further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Board of Elders concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion.

The Board of Elders shall present a ballot of candidates for calling as Elders or Deacons to the congregation at the annual meeting. The written ballot of nominees must be posted in a conspicuous place in the church building at least fourteen days in advance of the annual meeting. If the Board of Elders desires to nominate candidates for election to office at any quarterly or special meeting (other than the annual meeting), they must insure that the written ballot of nominees is posted in the church in a conspicuous location at least fourteen days in advance of the meeting - and is announced publicly to the church in the Sunday morning worship at least two Sundays in advance of the meeting.

Non-vocational Elders and Deacons shall be called by the Church for a normal term of three years. Lay Elders and Deacons shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. Following two consecutive terms the Elder or Deacon will not serve in the office in which they previously served for a period of one year. Following this period they are again eligible for nomination as Elder or Deacon. For purposes of this provision a term during which an Elder or Deacon serves less than two years shall not be considered a term in office.

d) Removal.

(1) Resignation. An non-vocational elder or deacon may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

(2) Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an officer of the Church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II, Sections 1 and 2 of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Board of Elders by any two members in good standing. If

the Board , after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting with at least fifteen percent (15%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given in writing to the membership at least one week before the meeting.

Section 4 BOARD OF ELDERS

a) Composition, Term, and Calling. The Board of Elders shall be composed of men, both Lay Elders and Vocational Elders. The Board of Elders shall be composed of at least four members, with the number of Elders determined by the Board of Elders, according to the needs of the ministry, and upon recommendation by the Board of Elders, and by the call and qualification of men in the church. There shall be at least twice as many Lay Elders as Vocational Elders. Each Elder shall be called by the membership of the Church to a term of three years.

*If the church size diminishes to the point that four qualified candidates for Elder are either not present or unwilling to serve, then the church should appoint such members as are qualified and willing to serve, even if that number is less than four.

b) Qualifications. Elders and nominees for Elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:1-4.

c) Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church.

The responsibilities of the Elders shall include: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official Church business, overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church, and mobilizing the Church for world mission. All responsibilities outlined above can be delegated to those outside the Board of Elders as the Board of Elders deems appropriate.

d) Organization. The Board of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The Elders will meet as many times as necessary to govern the church in a manner pleasing to the Lord. Meetings of the Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Board provides otherwise, meetings of the Board may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the Elders is defined as at least one-half of the Lay Elders plus at least one-half of the Vocational Elders, plus one other

Elder (either lay or vocational) to constitute a majority. The Board shall annually select its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its Lay Elders.

Section 5 DEACONS

a) Composition, Term, and Calling. The Deacons can be both men and women, and can be both Vocational Ministers and Lay Deacons. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the Elders according to the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men and women in the church. Each Deacon shall be called by the membership of the Church to a normal term of three years. The call shall be conducted as provided in Article II, Sections 2 and 3 of these By-Laws.

b) Qualifications. Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:8-12.

c) Responsibilities. The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include:

- (1) administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress;
- (2) the greeting and welcoming ministries of the church;
- (3) assisting in the ordinances of the Gospel;
- (4) assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church;
- (5) caring for and maintaining the Church properties;
- (6) administering the business affairs of the Church that pertain to its material assets.

d) Organization. The Deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the church. The Elders or the Deacons may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular Deaconal function. Meetings of the Deacons, or subcommittees thereof shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the Deacons. The Deacons will operate under the direction and authority of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE III: Church Employees

In addition to Vocational Pastors and Ministers, the church may employ additional personnel. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. The Board of Elders shall be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel. The Board of Elders may delegate oversight of any specific employee to the Deacons if they so desire.

ARTICLE IV: Church Finances

Section 1 IN GENERAL

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church. All funds donated for missions by the societies and organizations of the Church shall pass through the Church Finance Secretary and the Treasurer in order that due record may be made and credit given to the Church. The

Deacons shall provide assistance for the Financial Secretary in accounting for funds donated.

Section 2 CONTRIBUTIONS

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum.

Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Board of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

Section 3 FINANCIAL PLANNING

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Board of Elders, or, if authorized by the Board, the Deacons or other committees. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay Deacons or other lay members of the Church.

Section 4 ACCOUNTS

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Finance Secretary according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the Budgets or other authorized designations. All moneys for missions shall be remitted in accordance with the Mission Budget of the Church or otherwise designated.

Section 5 AUTHORITY TO BIND THE CHURCH

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board of Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

ARTICLE V: Meetings

Section 1 FOR WORSHIP

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month or at such other times as the Board of Elders may determine. Other worship services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

Section 2 FOR BUSINESS

a) The Annual Meeting. The annual meeting shall be held some time during the month of January, for the purpose of calling and reaffirming the officers, reviewing proposed budgets and other business. Officers called at the annual meeting shall assume their duties on the first of February, following the annual meeting. Notice of the annual meeting must be posted in a conspicuous place in the church building at least two weeks before the annual meeting.

b) Additional Meetings. Additional meetings shall be held sometime during the months of May and October each year. Notice of the May and October meetings must be posted in a conspicuous place in the church building at least two weeks before each meeting.

c) Special Meetings. The Board of Elders or any ten members in good standing, may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification,

the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on specially important matters not otherwise provided for.

d) Quorum. 15% of the membership shall constitute a quorum at any ordinary meeting of the Church. At meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in these By-Laws, the quorums prescribed shall apply.

e) Rules Governing Business Meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the business meetings of the Church. Relaxation of these Rules is permitted at the discretion of the moderator with a view to common sense in any given situation. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

f) Age. Members must be at least 18 years old to vote at official meetings of the church.

g) Notice Provisions. Unless specifically defined in other sections of these By-Laws or the Constitution, "notice . . . in writing" means a written announcement sent by regular U.S. mail, by electronic mail, or distributed in person; and "notice . . . from the pulpit" means an oral announcement at each of the Sunday morning services.

ARTICLE VI: Organization of Members for Ministry

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Board of Elders as an official ministry of First Baptist Church. Such sanction shall be granted provided that 1) the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and 2) the primary officers of the organization are: members of the church, or other regular attenders of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Board of Elders. Sanction by the Board of Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

ARTICLE VII : Discipline

The discipline of members shall be a responsibility of the Board of Elders under such rules and procedures as the Elders may from time to time establish on the basis of Scripture. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of prayer mingling Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE VIII: Amendments

GENERAL. Amendments to these By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any annual or regularly scheduled business meeting, but shall not be acted on until the following regularly scheduled or annual meeting, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the membership of the Church, or a two-thirds majority of those members present at the meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that at least fifteen percent (15%) of the membership of the Church be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two Sundays and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.