

# **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **College Station, Texas**

### **CONSTITUTION**

#### **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of The First Baptist Church, College Station, Texas, declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and freedom of action of this body to maintain the autonomy of this church in its relation to other churches and other organizations.

#### **I. NAME**

This body shall be known as The First Baptist Church, College Station, located in College Station, Texas, and incorporated under the laws of Texas by charter No. 52638. (Hereafter "the church".)

#### **II. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the church are:

- To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Jesus Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community and throughout the world.

- To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing his person and responding in obedience to his leadership.

- To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

- To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.

- To be a church that ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and the world in Jesus' name.

- To be a church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality and possessions to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

#### **III. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention as amended in 1998. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, who are personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

#### **IV. RELATIONSHIPS**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. The church is subject to the control of no other civil or ecclesiastical body and recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as it is deemed appropriate by its members, this church will cooperate and support the Creath Brazos Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

\* A copy of the "Baptist Faith and Message of 1963" is appended to this document.

# **BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE I Religious Beliefs**

The sincerely held Religious Beliefs of the congregation of The First Baptist Church, College Station are...

- the belief in one supreme God, personified as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 45:5, Matthew 4:10),
- the belief in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8, John 3:16),
- the belief in repentance and the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38),
- the belief that as Christians, we are all one in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:28),
- the belief in the power of prayer (Matthew 21:22),
- the belief that the Bible is the divinely inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16),
- the belief in the priesthood of the believer (each believer is empowered to interpret Scripture as led by the Holy Spirit and speak directly to God with no mediator except Jesus Christ) (Luke 23:45b),
- the belief in witnessing to all, Christian and non-Christian, presenting Jesus Christ to the world as Savior and Lord (Acts 1:8),
- the belief in the freedom of worship and religious expression in a free society (Matthew 22:21b, Acts 5:29),
- the belief in the ordinances of Baptism and The Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-28, 28:19),
- the belief in good stewardship/obedience, becoming more Christ-like as led by the Holy Spirit (James 1:22, Matt 25),
- the belief that people were created in the image of God and created by God as either male or female (Gen 1:26-27; Gen 5:2). We believe that God created man and woman to be immutably identified by their gender at birth,
- the belief that marriage is a biblical institution established by God as described by Scripture. We believe biblical marriage can only occur between one man and one woman. This church recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment. Accordingly, this church's pastors and staff will not officiate in same-sex unions, same-sex marriages, same-sex commitment ceremonies, or same-sex anniversary ceremonies, nor will the church's property or resources be used for such purposes (Genesis 1:26-28, Mark 10:6-12),
- the belief that the Bible teaches that legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage between a man and woman. Hence, the church affirms the teachings on sexual immorality as defined by Scripture (Leviticus 18),
- the belief that we should work to provide for the abused and neglected (James 1:27, 2:8, Matt: 25:35),
- the belief that we should speak on behalf of and contend for the sanctity of all human life beginning at conception (Psalm 139: 13-16),
- the belief that every Christian should express the principles of righteousness, truth, and unconditional love to all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, or country of origin (Matt: 5:13-16, John 15:12-13, Galatians 3:26-28).

## **ARTICLE II Membership**

### **Section 1 General**

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

### **Section 2 Candidacy**

Any person may come forward as a candidate for membership in the church. Such persons shall be welcomed at any regular church service during which they present themselves as candidates for membership in any of the following ways:

A. Regular membership

1. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of the church. Biblical baptism shall be by immersion following a profession of faith as a sign of fellowship with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection for remission of sin. (Rom 10:9; Acts 16:31-33; Acts 22:16)
2. By promise of a letter or recommendation from another Baptist church of like faith.
3. By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church of like faith when no letter is obtainable.
4. By statement when the candidate has received baptism by immersion.

B. Watchcare program

1. The Watchcare program would include any Christian who is a member of another church and who, for one reason or another, is not ready to become a Baptist through baptism. This program would give them time to study, think, and come to know and understand Baptist ways and people. It would also give them a sense of belonging to the total group which would result in more personal involvement in the life of the church.
2. The Watchcare program is not admittance to full membership rights in the life of the church that includes voting or office-holding privileges. It would, however, help to establish a pastoral, educational, fellowship, and worship relationship which would be conducive to guiding such persons toward eventual baptism and full church membership.

Section 3 Voting of Candidates for Membership

All candidates will be presented for membership by vote of the church assembled at the next regular business conference. Baptism may be administered at any time desired.

Section 4 Dissent on Candidates for Membership

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate for membership, such dissent shall be referred in writing to the pastor and the deacons for investigation. The pastor and deacons shall complete an investigation of the dissent and make a recommendation to the church within 30 days of the date of the filing of the dissent. A three-fourths vote of those church members present and voting at a special called or regular scheduled business meeting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership. Such a vote shall be considered a major item of church business and so publicized according to Article VIII Church Meetings of these By-laws. A quorum as specified in Article VIII Church Meetings of these By-laws is required for such a vote.

Section 5 New Member Orientation

New church members will be encouraged to participate in the church's new member orientation program.

Section 6 Voting Rights of Members

Every regular member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church during regular or special business meetings, provided the member is present. The church is authorized to provide absentee ballots at the discretion of the church body.

Section 7 Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- A. Death,
- B. Transfer to another Baptist church,
- C. Exclusion by action of the church, or
- D. Written request of the member

Section 8 Discipline

- A. It shall be the basic purpose of discipline in the church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Love and redemption, rather than punishment, should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another. (Gal 6:1-2)
- B. Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the purpose of, or the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the purpose or welfare of the church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a two-thirds vote of at least a quorum present at a meeting called for this purpose in accordance with Article VIII Church Meetings. The church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. (Matt 18:15-17; Titus 3:9-11)
- C. Any person, whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has made it necessary for the church to exclude, may upon request be restored to membership by a vote of the church upon evidence of the person's repentance and reformation. (2 Cor 2:5-8)

### **ARTICLE III Church Officers**

All Church Officers, as identified in Sections 1-5, must be regular members of First Baptist Church. The church shall elect such officers as the membership shall need.

#### **Section 1 Deacons**

The Deacon's Constitution and By-laws, as approved by the church, are filed with the church Business Administrator and Chairman of the Deacons.

#### **Section 2 Moderator**

The Chairman of the Deacons shall be the Moderator. In this person's absence, the Vice-Chair, Vice-Chair Elect, or Secretary of the deacons shall preside. In the absence of all four, a staff member shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

#### **Section 3 Clerk**

The Pastor or his designee shall serve as the Church Clerk. The Church Clerk shall keep a record of all the actions of the church and register the names of members, including dates of admission, dismissal, death, and baptism. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings in which such notice is necessary, as indicated in these By-laws. The Clerk shall treat all records as church property and shall file them in the church office or in a safe deposit box.

#### **Section 4 Treasurer**

The Chair of the Budget/Finance Committee serves as the Treasurer; and shall be recommended by the Committee on Committees and be approved by the church. The Treasurer shall render to the church at each regular business meeting a report of all the receipts and disbursements for the preceding quarter.

#### **Section 5 Trustees**

- A. The church Trustees shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and be approved by the church. The Trustees shall hold the church property in trust and affix their signatures to legal documents that authorize the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of this property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without authorization through a vote of the church. The church shall elect three or more Trustees who will serve a three-year term on a rotating basis, with one Trustee elected or re-elected each year.
- B. The Trustees shall have the following duties:

1. Act as a signatory agent for the church congregation in matters that require a formal or contractual agreement. This agent role may be required at any time and shall be performed at the direction of the congregation. Business matters which require Trustee signatures include, but are not limited to, (a) agreements and property transfer in the buying and selling of real estate; (b) construction contracts and agreements for improvements on the physical plant of the church; (c) insurance agreements and contracts; and (d) public and private utility agreements, including street improvements.
2. Review and analyze the financial condition of the church as related to the duties of the Trustees.
3. Acquire and share knowledge on church-state relationships, especially issues of taxation and legislation, as they relate to church property and financial resources.
4. Keep a record of all transactions, including meetings of Trustees with Deacons, with the church, and with outside parties. Maintain separate files for (a) minutes, (b) agreements and contracts, (c) reviews, analyses, and reports, (d) notes and report drafts, and (e) any other files deemed useful, including terms of Trustees, job descriptions, lists, and amendments.
5. The Trustees may ask the church to set up subcommittees from outside of trustee membership to carry out specific functions. These committees function under the Trustees' direction and shall include legal counsel, when needed.

## **ARTICLE IV Church Personnel**

### **Section 1 Church Personnel**

The Personnel Committee of the church shall write, and the church shall approve, a job description for each Church Minister. The Committee on Committees/Ministry Teams and the Personnel Committee shall recommend the appointment of a special search committee for the Pastor position and all Ministerial Staff positions. The Personnel Committee shall develop, recommend, and maintain all church policies and procedures for personnel administration, including but not limited to, those recorded in Article IV of these By-laws.

#### **A. Pastor**

1. **Duties:** The Pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks. The Pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he works with deacons and church staff to lead the church in performing its tasks and objectives. Other pastoral duties, as adopted by the church, are filed with the church Business Administrator and Chair of the Personnel Committee.
2. **Selection:** A Pastor will be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The Committee on Committees/Ministry Teams and the Personnel Committee shall solicit nominees for the Pastor Search Committee from the church membership. The two committees will select nine members from the nominees by the church for the Pastor Search Committee. The Pastor Search Committee will then be presented for approval to the church at a regular or special called business meeting.
3. **Vote on Call:** The day and details of the vote to extend the call shall be determined by the Pastor Search Committee. At least one public notice of the vote to call shall be provided and such notice will be in accordance with Article VIII Church Meetings. The Teller Committee will tally the vote and report the results to the congregation. A job candidate so recommended with at least 75 percent of the affirmative vote of those voting at a regular or special business meeting shall determine a call.

#### **B. Other Ministerial Personnel**

1. **Titles and duties:** Titles and duties of all ministerial personnel, as adopted by the church, are filed with the church Business Administrator and Chair of the Personnel Committee.
2. **Selection:** Ministerial personnel will be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The Committee on Committees/Ministry Teams and the Personnel Committee shall solicit nominees from the church membership to serve on the selection committee. The two committees will select nine members for the Search Committee. The Pastor shall serve as the ex-officio

member of all search committees for ministerial staff. The Search Committee will then be presented for approval to the church at a regular or special called business meeting.

3. **Vote on Call:** The day and details of the vote to extend the call shall be determined by the Search Committee. At least one public notice of the vote to call shall be provided: such notice will be in accordance with Article VIII Church Meetings. The Teller Committee will tally the vote and report the results to the congregation. A job candidate so recommended with at least 75 percent of the affirmative vote of those voting at a regular or special business meeting shall determine a call.
- C. All other personnel issues are to be addressed in the Personnel Policies & Procedures document adopted by the church.

## **ARTICLE V Committees and Ministry Teams**

### **Section 1 General**

All church committee members and ministry teams shall be recommended by the Committee on Committees/Ministry Teams (COC/MT) and elected by the church. Members of the standing committees listed below shall serve a three-year term with one third elected each year. Members of ministry teams are approved by the church annually. The duration, duties, membership, and terms of office of other committees and ministry teams shall be recommended to the church by the COC/MT. Committee and Ministry Teams procedures, functions, and committee terms of office shall be specified in the Personnel Policies & Procedures document. All committees and ministry teams shall make annual reports to the church. All documents shall be recorded in the manual with most recent revision date included. (1Pet 4:10, Luke 10:1-2)

### **Section 2 Standing Committees**

The standing committees shall perform the ongoing administrative functions of the church. Standing Committees of the church are:

- Archive and Historical
- Budget/Finance
- Committee on Committees/Ministry Teams (COC/MT)
- Financial Procedures and Practices Oversight
- Lord's Supper
- Nominating
- Personnel
- Preschool Ministries
- Properties
- Teller
- Trustees

### **Section 3 Ministry Teams**

The ministry teams shall perform regular ministry functions of the church.

## **ARTICLE VI Program Organizations**

### **Section 1 General**

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching, church member training, church leader training, new member orientation; mission education, action and support; and music education, training and performance. All organization related to the church programs shall be guided by the church body. All program activities shall be subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for these programs. (Col 3:23)

## **ARTICLE VII Ordinances**

The ordinances of the church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

**Section 1 Baptism**

- A. A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes Him publicly at any worship service and who indicates a commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Lord shall be received for baptism. (Matt 3:13-17, Matt 28:19-20, Gal 3:27)
- B. Baptism shall be an immersion in water.
- C. Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor or whomever the church shall authorize.
- D. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.

**Section 2 The Lord's Supper**

- A. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming. (Luke 22:19-20, 1 Cor 11:23-29)
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly as scheduled by the Pastor or Deacon Chairman.
- C. The Pastor, Ministers and Deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

## **ARTICLE VIII Church Meetings**

**Section 1 Worship Services**

The church shall meet regularly Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, or other worship of Almighty God. These meetings will be open to all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor.

**Section 2 Regular Business Meetings**

- A. A regular business meeting shall be scheduled quarterly and be conducted by the moderator.
- B. Regular business meetings may be rescheduled with at least one-week notice by announcement in church publications, Sunday School departments, and worship services. Major items of church business shall be publicized at least one calendar week prior to the meeting wherein such topic is to be discussed.

**Section 3 Special Business Meetings**

- A. A special business meeting may be scheduled to consider matters of significant nature. A one-week notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be given for the special business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. "Extreme urgency" refers specifically to property damage, acts of violence, or natural catastrophes.
- B. Notification of meetings to consider church action on major financial and/or other church commitment shall apply to special business meetings the same as specified for regular business meetings.

**Section 4 Quorum**

A quorum to conduct official business shall consist of at least thirty (30) members in attendance at any business meeting.

**Section 5 Parliamentary Rules**

Robert's Rules of Order, most recent revision, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church. The Moderator serves as parliamentarian or may appoint one.

## **ARTICLE IX Church Finances**

**Section 1 Budget**

The Budget/Finance Committee in consultation with program leaders, appropriate committees, and staff, shall annually prepare a budget and submit it to the church for approval.

Section 2     Accounting Procedures

All funds received in the financial office shall be deposited in a timely manner and properly recorded on the books of the church. The Financial Procedures & Practices Oversight Committee shall oversee a system of accounting that will adequately provide for the control and handling of all funds.

Section 3     Bond

A blanket surety bond shall be provided for the protection of the church against the loss of funds.

Section 4     Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall be established by the church upon recommendations of the Budget/Finance Committee.

### **ARTICLE X Church Policies and & Procedures Manual**

Church policies and procedures shall be described in Personnel Policies & Procedures document and the Financial Procedures & Practices document. Church officers, groups, or individual members may recommend additions, revisions, and deletions to policies and procedures. These recommendations may be referred to an appropriate committee for review. Any changes to church policies and procedures shall be approved by the church. The documents shall be kept in the church office and be readily available to any member of the church. The Church Clerk will update the documents as actions occur. Each addition, deletion or amendment to the documents shall be recorded with a revised or entered date. The documents shall be reviewed at least every five (5) years by an ad-hoc committee to determine proper alignment with the Church Constitution and By-laws.

### **ARTICLE XI Amendments**

Any church member may recommend changes in the Constitution and By-laws. The recommended changes shall be assigned by the Pastor, Moderator, and Committee on Committees/Ministry Teams to determine the appropriate committee or other group for evaluation. After study by the appropriate committee or group, the suggested change shall be submitted for consideration by the church at a regular or special business meeting. Such recommendations shall be made available in writing to all church members three weeks prior to the vote.

Amendments to the Constitution and By-laws shall require two-thirds vote of all regular members of the church present and voting. All such changes shall become effective at once unless otherwise designated by the church.

### **ARTICLE XII Review**

The Constitution and By-laws of the church shall be reviewed by an ad-hoc committee recommended by the Committee on Committees and approved by the church at a regular business conference at least every five (5) years. Each five-year cycle commences at the date of the most recent committee review or ratification action by the church.

### **ARTICLE XIII Ratification**

The Constitution and By-laws are hereby ordained and established for The First Baptist Church, College Station, Texas by vote of the membership on **November 14, 2021**.