



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ARKANSAS CITY, KS

Constitution & Bylaws

[Our Mission](#)

*Encounter God Relationally, Encourage Others Spiritually, Engage All Actively*

# Constitution

## **Article I. Name**

This organization shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Arkansas City, KS. The church was organized in 1882. The organization was accomplished under the inspiration and direction of the Reverend James Cairns, who was at the time pastor of the First Baptist Church of Winfield. There were eleven charter members.

## **Article II. Authority**

The primary authority by which this church exists as an ecclesiastical body is God Himself as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and we acknowledge no other authority in all matters of faith and practice.

The secondary authority is the laws of the State of Kansas, under which the church was formed.

## **Article III. Polity**

Under the headship of Christ, the government of this church is vested in its members and no external person or organization has authority over its faith and practice.

## **Article IV. Affiliation**

First Baptist Church is a local autonomous body, this church shall affiliate with the American Baptist Churches USA (ABC), American Baptist Churches Central Region (ABCCR). This affiliation shall continue insofar and so long as these organizations shall remain true, in the judgment of our congregation, to the Statement of Faith and the Holy Scriptures.

## **Article V. Purpose**

Our purpose is to bring glory to God. As an assembly of believers in Jesus Christ we will gather regularly to worship God; teach, equip and shepherd believers to full maturity; evangelize our community and world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and send forth others with our support and prayers to do likewise. We will accomplish our purpose through encountering God relationally, encouraging others spiritually, and actively engaging all people.

## **Article VI. Membership**

Membership is open to all who have professed faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, publicly evidenced this faith through believer's baptism by immersion, and expressed their intention to live according to the will of God as revealed in the Bible.

## **Article VII. Officers**

The officers of this church shall be persons elected by the congregation including: The Pastor(s), members of the Board of Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, Church Financial Secretary, and Church Moderator.

## **Article VIII. Meetings**

Meetings for worship, prayer, praise, Bible study, fellowship, business and special purposes shall be held as set forth in the By-Laws.

## **Article IX. By-laws**

The By-laws are adopted, and established for the purpose of governance, planning, worship and service. In the event of a conflict, Articles of this Constitution take precedence over the By-laws.

## **Article X. Use of Property**

Members of this church have no personal property rights and no personal interest in its assets at any time. In the event of the dissolution of the First Baptist Church, Arkansas City, KS, church property shall be distributed as follows: all property, real or personal, owned by this organization shall be, and hereby is, irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes and uses. Further, if liquidated, dissolved or abandoned, the church will not ensue to the benefit of any private person but will be dispersed according to policy established by the Board of Elders and approved by the congregation.

## **Article XI. Amendments**

The Articles of Faith, Constitution, or By-Laws may be amended by a three-fourths vote of an appropriate quorum at a called meeting of the members. The members must be given two months notice of such a meeting including details of the proposed changes. The two months notice must come by way of a regularly mailed or e-mailed newsletter as well as written announcements in the weekly worship service.

## **Article XII. Resolution/Implementation**

Be it resolved that this Constitution and By-Laws, implemented January 1, 2017, will serve as a complete repeal, revocation and cancellation of all previously existing Constitutions and By-Laws of the First Baptist Church, Arkansas City, KS. Immediately upon approval, it will become the operating document of the church, with all adjustments phased into operation immediately.

# By-laws

**I. Membership** *(Note: All members prior to the adoption of this document will be “grandfathered” under the terms of membership, part A and B. This section will apply to new membership following adoption.)*

## **A. Eligibility for Membership**

A person desiring membership:

1. must have a personal experience of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and
2. must be baptized by immersion following confession of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and
3. must express a willingness to live a godly life in Christ Jesus and will embrace the views of faith and practice as held by this church. Their willingness to live such a life and unite in membership with First Baptist Church will be evidenced by the completion of a New Members Class taught by an elder(s) where they shall be instructed in the Statement of Faith and the concept of stewardship (including time, talents and possessions), church doctrine, constitution, and by-laws.

## **B. Admission to Membership**

1. Individuals may be received through meeting the eligibility of membership stated above. The Elders will recommend potential members for approval by the membership at a regular business meeting or regular worship service of the church. Approval of membership will be granted by a majority vote of the quorum of members at the meeting. Those received into membership will be officially welcomed into the congregation.

## **C. Termination of Membership**

Termination of membership can be a sensitive issue. Cases of termination will be addressed **on a case-by-case basis** taking into consideration all aspects of membership and or lack of involvement. The Elders will appoint a committee to address termination of membership. Membership may be terminated in one of the following ways:

1. Move outside the area—Members known to have permanently moved outside the normal commuting area of the church may be removed from the membership roll after two years on the inactive list.
2. Personal request—A member may request in writing that his name be removed from the roll, in which case no letter will be issued.
3. Death—In such cases as death, the member’s name will be automatically dropped with no need of congregational action.
4. Inaction—When a member does not attend church services evidenced by the absence of support of the ministry, such as: attendance, use of spiritual gifts, and stewardship for one year, they automatically become inactive and forfeit the privileges of membership. In situations of shut-ins, college students away at school, and those serving in the military, inaction is not applicable. The Elders will attempt to make contact with the individual by phone or through their address of record and may waive their inactive status at a subsequent Elders’ meeting.

5. Discipline - Sadly, some believers are overtaken by sin (Gal. 6:1) and forsake their obedient life-style. Action to **restore** such **members** will be initiated by the Elders in accordance with a biblical process (Mt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1-5; 1 Tim. 5:19-20). When repentance is absent and/or there is refusal to make confession and enter a restoration process, the Elders may recommend termination of membership as prescribed in Mt. 18:15-20. The contemplated action shall have been announced at a regular service on two Sundays of consecutive weeks prior to the action.

Except in the case of death or inaction, the Elders will present action for changes in membership status to the congregation. A majority vote of the quorum of members affirms the action except in the case of discipline, which requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority of quorum of members. A disciplined member will be advised in advance of the action, and the vote will be taken by secret ballot.

#### **D. Responsibilities of Members**

Each member is expected to seek continued growth in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible; to be faithful and systematic in the generous investment of time, gifts, abilities, and resources; **to preserve the unity of the Spirit** within the congregation in both its doctrine and practice; and to submit voluntarily to the designated leaders of the church. If, after consultation with the Elders, any members are unable to harmonize with the beliefs and practices of First Baptist Church, they agree to quietly remove themselves and refrain from cultivating conflict and disruption.

#### **E. Classifications of Members/Types of Membership**

##### **1. Active Members**

Active members are members who actively support the church. This support is normally evidenced by attending, giving, and serving. In addition, active members should strive to live in accordance with the doctrinal standards of Holy Scripture. Prior to the annual meeting an appointed committee which reviews membership shall report to the Elders the status of active/inactive membership. At each Annual Meeting, the Board of Elders shall update the roll of active church members.

##### **2. Inactive Members**

Inactive members are any members who have been absent from the church for a period of one year without manifesting interest and making contribution by attending, giving, and serving. Such persons **may** be placed on the inactive roll by the Board of Elders. Persons carried on the inactive roll shall not be counted as active members and shall have no voting rights. Inactive members will be contacted as expeditiously as possible by the Board of Elders to determine their level of interest in First Baptist Church membership. If after contact the inactive member desires to continue said inactivity, First Baptist Church, then may commence the aforementioned removal procedures stated above.

3. **Restoration** - Any person whose name has been placed on the role of inactive members, may by making satisfactory explanation to the Board of Elders, be recommended to the church for restoration to the active roll.

## **II. Officers**

### **A. General**

1. All duly elected officers of the church shall be required to show their adherence to the Statement of Faith by signing it annually. All records and keys in the possession of an officer are the property of the church and shall be turned over to the Board of Elders as a permanent record of the close of their term of office. No officer shall spend non-budgeted funds of the church except as authorized by the Board of Elders or the church body.
2. All officers other than pastors will be elected by the church body at a specially called business meeting. Their term of office will begin on January 1, and they are eligible for re-election at the conclusion of that term. All resignations before the conclusion of a term shall be presented in writing to the Board of Elders.
3. Any officer other than a pastor who willfully neglects his or her duty or demonstrates conduct contrary to scripture, impairing his or her service may be removed from office by one of the following procedures: 1) a petition signed by 20% of the active voting members will constitute a call for special business meeting with the recommendation for removal, and at that meeting a simple majority of those voting can ratify the recommendation to remove the officer or 2) a vote of two thirds of the currently elected Elder Board.

### **B. Pastoral Staff**

#### **1. Description**

##### **a. Lead Pastor**

The Lead Pastor will be the leader, teaching elder, shepherd and guide of the church. He will perform all of the biblical duties of the pastoral office as defined under qualifications and duties. He will be granted authority under God to provide leadership and direction to the church by precept, persuasion, and example. He will either be ordained and/or a licensed minister.

##### **b. Associate Pastor**

An Associate Pastor will be able to perform all of the biblical duties of the pastoral office as defined under qualifications and duties. His authority is granted by God to provide leadership and direction to the church by precept, persuasion, and example, and is subordinate to that of the Lead Pastor. He may either be ordained and/or a licensed minister.

#### **2. Qualifications**

A Pastor of this church shall have experienced Christ's saving work in his life (cf. Hebrew 13:7; 1 Timothy 3:6; Eph. 2:8-10). He shall accept the fundamental doctrines as expressed by the Articles of Faith (Titus 1:9; cf. Acts. 20:30f). He shall have a sense of God's calling to the pastoral ministry (cf. 1 Timothy 4:14). He shall be a man of prayer and study of the Word (Acts 6:4; Titus 1:9; cf. James 5:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:15). He shall have a high moral and spiritual character and godly example which have been recognized by those around him (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6ff). He shall possess demonstrated leadership abilities, yet be able to show pastoral care with genuine gentleness and humility (Titus 1:7; cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:4-f; 1 Peter 5:2f). He shall possess the gifts and talents necessary to perform his particular pastoral duties, especially an ability to teach

(1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; cf. Ephesians 4:11-13). He shall possess the appropriate biblical training and other educational qualifications for his particular area of responsibility (cf. 1 Timothy 3:2, 7). He shall have zeal for evangelism and missions that extend world-wide (cf. 2 Timothy 4:2; cf. Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

### **3. Selection**

A vacancy in the office of Lead Pastor will initiate the appointment of a Pulpit Committee by the Elders. The Pulpit Committee shall be composed of seven members, two of whom shall be Elders or Deacons. The other five shall be active members of the congregation and shall be representative of the church body. The Pulpit Committee will seek a qualified candidate, secure approval of the Elders, and then present the candidate to the congregation. A written recommendation will be followed by opportunities for the congregation to meet the candidate and his family. No vote will be taken for at least two weeks following the written recommendation. A minimum three-fourths (75%) majority of a voting quorum and voting by secret ballot is required to extend a call. The vote may be taken at a regular or special business meeting of the congregation. Notice of this meeting and its purpose shall be communicated to each member and read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays immediately prior to the event. The Lead Pastor will serve as an Elder by virtue of his call. Any Pastor shall be called, or offered a position, prior to membership in the church, but he must meet the qualifications of members. The initial salary, allowances and vacation as well as any other considerations deemed advisable shall be determined by the church at the time of the call and submitted to the candidate in writing. These considerations may be changed by a vote of the church at any regular or special business meeting based on a recommendation from the Board of Elders.

### **4. Term**

A Pastor serves for an indefinite period of time. His services may be terminated by either party with a minimum of 30 days written notice.

### **5. Duties**

#### **a. The Lead Pastor shall:**

- i.** preach the Gospel regularly, provide for the ordinances, have oversight of the church's teaching ministry and encourage the missionary program.
- ii.** tenderly watch over the church membership and its spiritual interests, and organize and develop its strength for the best possible service.
- iii.** represent the church in welcoming new members before the congregation.
- iv.** be an ex-officio member of the Board of Elders and all boards and committees of the church, and may attend the meetings of all committees of the church and its auxiliary organizations.
- v.** supervise the work of all pastoral staff. He may delegate authority over a particular field of service to an Associate Pastor.
- vi.** supervise the work of all non-pastoral staff or, with the approval of the Board of Elders, appoint a person to exercise all or part of this supervision.
- vii.** perform such other duties as generally pertain to such a position.

#### **b. An Associate Pastor shall:**

- i.** share in the entire pastoral ministry as directed by the Board of Elders.
- ii.** be able to fill the pulpit in the absence of the Lead Pastor.

- iii. assist in the administration of the ordinances.
- iv. help supervise the church's teaching ministry and encourage the missionary program.
- v. aid in the pastoral care of the church's membership and help organize and develop its strength for the best possible service.
- vi. be member of the Board of Elders but hold no voting rights on the board and may attend the meetings of all committees of the church and its auxiliary organizations.
- vii. may supervise the work of non-pastoral staff.
- viii. perform such other duties as directed by the Board of Elders.

**6. Termination**

The relationship between a Pastor and the church shall be continuous until dissolved by either giving thirty days written notice or less by mutual consent. In the event the church initiates such action, the matter shall be presented to the church by the Board of Elders at a Special Business Meeting called for that purpose. Prior to said meeting at least two weeks written notice shall be given to the congregation. In the case of dismissal, the termination shall be immediate, with the Pastor receiving one month's salary as severance pay. The dismissal of a Pastor shall require a three-fourths vote of an appropriate voting quorum to make such an action valid.

If the Elders confirm sinful behavior on the part of the Lead Pastor that is disqualifying according to 1 Timothy 3:1-8; 5:19-20, and Titus 1:5-9, they may act to immediately remove the Pastor from all privileges, responsibilities and duties, pending a vote of the membership to affirm their action. Severance will not be available to the pastor under these circumstances. If he chooses, the Pastor will be given opportunity to address the charges before the vote is taken.

A Pastor who has been disabled to the point where he cannot adequately perform his duties will be maintained on full salary for a period of three months. After that he may be given a leave of absence without pay for a period of up to nine months. If there is no reasonable prospect of his return to full functioning at the end of that period, his employment shall be terminated.

**C. Elders**

**1. Qualifications**

Male members of the congregation who meet the character and leadership qualifications revealed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, have completed the Elder training course, and fully support the doctrine and practice of First Baptist Church are eligible to serve as Elders.

**2. Duties**

The Elders will:

- a. work with the Lead Pastor and other pastoral staff to shepherd the spiritual affairs of the church. Their spiritual duties will include prayer, Bible teaching, pastoral care, and counseling.
- b. oversee the physical facilities of the church
- c. oversee and be responsible for all financial aspects of the church

- d. a minimum of two elders will oversee and count church receipts each Sunday on a rotational basis and record and deposit church money in the church's designated bank account. They will provide a record of deposits to the financial secretary.
- e. appoint a trustee team consisting of three members to carry out the financial directives regarding building and grounds

### **3. Board of Elders**

This board shall be comprised of the Lead Pastor who shall be *primus inter pares* (first among equals) together with seven men who meet the qualifications above. In addition to the above duties the Board of Elders shall work together with the Lead Pastor to establish the churches mission and vision as well as develop necessary policy and ministries to implement them.

The Board of Elders are the Board of Directors for the church, and the officers of the Board will function as the officers of that corporate body. (Chairman - President; Vice-Chairman - Vice-President, and Secretary – Secretary)

### **4. Board Term**

A minimum of seven elders will serve at all times, but more may be elected as ministry needs require. Approximately one third of their number will be up for election each year.

The term of office for an Elder will be three consecutive years. They may not be eligible for re-election after serving 24 months of an unexpired term. Upon completion of a term they are required to lay out for one year.

## **Diaconate Board**

**Shall consist of eight men and eight women who meet the qualifications. They shall select their own chairpersons at the first meeting of a new calendar year.**

## **D. Deacons**

### **1. Qualifications**

Male members of the congregation who meet the qualifications revealed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and fully support the doctrine and practice of First Baptist Church are eligible to serve as Deacons.

### **2. Term**

Deacons will be elected by the church body. A minimum of eight will serve at all times, but more may be elected as ministry needs require. Approximately one half of their number will be up for election each year. A Deacon shall be elected for a two-year term. They may not be eligible for re-election after serving 12 months of an unexpired term. Upon completion of a term they are required to lay out for one year.

### **3. Duties: A Deacon shall oversee and give attention to:**

- a. the practical aspects of ministry
- b. the ordinances of the church
- c. set up and break down for events
- d. worship greeters and ushers
- e. weddings

- f. bereavement
- g. hospitality
- h. nursery
- i. event planning

They will select their chairperson.

## **E. Deaconesses**

### **1. Qualifications**

Female members of the congregation who meet the character and leadership qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:11 are eligible to serve as Deaconesses. Titus 2:3-5.

### **2. Term**

Deaconesses shall be elected by the church body. A minimum of eight Deaconesses will serve at all times, but more may be elected as ministry needs require.

Approximately one half of their number will be up for election each year. A Deaconess shall be elected for a two-year term. They may not be eligible for re-election after serving 12 months of an unexpired term. Upon completion of a term they are required to lay out for one year.

### **3. Duties: A Deaconesses shall:**

Be responsible to work in conjunction with the Deacons to provide ministry to the church and to assist in administrating the programs of the church as needed.

They will select their chairperson.

## **F. Treasurer**

### **1. Qualifications**

The Treasurer of First Baptist Church will have, at least, a working knowledge of bookkeeping, and will know or be willing to learn the computer software that the church currently uses for budgetary and accounting purposes.

### **2. Term**

The Treasurer shall be elected for a one-year term not to exceed three consecutive years. In the event the nominating committee cannot find a qualified candidate for this position, the chairman of the nominating committee shall meet with the Elder Board for approval to extend the term for an additional year. The final approval for this would take place by the church at the annual election of officers. He or she shall endeavor to serve his or her respective office until a successor is duly elected and orientated.

### **3. Duties: The Church Treasurer shall:**

a. make all disbursements by check for which authorizations have been approved in accordance with the By Laws.

b. keep records required by law as well as records of all money spent.

c. present a monthly report to the Board of Elders.

d. present a quarterly report of all receipts and disbursements at the Church's Quarterly Business Meetings.

## **G. Financial Secretary**

### **1. Qualifications**

The Financial Secretary of First Baptist Church will have, at least, a working knowledge of bookkeeping, and will know or be willing to learn the computer software that the church currently uses for tracking giving. Potential candidates for this position shall also be people of discretion.

### **2. Term**

The Financial Secretary shall be elected for a one-year term not to exceed three consecutive years. He or she shall endeavor to serve his or her respective office until a successor is duly elected and orientated.

### **3. Duties:** The Church Financial Secretary shall:

- a.** Keep a separate account of each contributor and furnish each with a statement of it at the end of year.
- b.** Render to the Church Treasurer a regular report of all deposits.

## **H. Church Clerk**

### **1. Qualifications**

The Church Clerk shall be a member and have the ability to take minutes at business meetings and produce them in printed form.

### **2. Term**

The Church Clerk shall be elected for a one-year term not to exceed three consecutive years. He or she shall endeavor to serve his or her respective office until a successor is duly elected and orientated.

### **3. Duties:** The Church Clerk will:

- a.** Keep a correct record of the proceedings of the church at all Business Meetings.
- b.** Keep a complete list of the membership of the church with appropriate demographic information.
- c.** He or she shall preserve intact all documents, papers and letters pertaining to the office and deliver the same, together with all records, to the church at the expiration of his or her tenure.
- d.** Present a written report to the congregation at the church's Quarterly Business Meetings.

## **I. Church Moderator**

### **1. Qualifications:** The Church Moderator shall:

- a.** Be an adult church member other than an Elder Board member or a Pastor.
- b.** Possess an even disposition, equitability and fair-mindedness.
- c.** Have an ability to lead discussion well.
- d.** Have a knowledge of parliamentary procedure.
- e.** Be well-established in the congregation, knowing its needs.
- f.** In the event the moderator is unable to moderate, the chairman of the Board of Deacons will moderate the meeting.

- 2. Duties:** This person shall preside at all Business Meetings of the church body and may attend the meetings of the Board of Elders, the moderator shall be ex-officio of all committees and boards of the church and its auxiliary organizations with the exception of the Board of Elders.
- 3. Manner of Selection:** The Church Moderator shall be nominated or replaced by the nominating committee. (Per Article VII of the Constitution)
- 4. Term of Office:** The Moderator shall be elected for a term of one year. He shall not serve more than three consecutive terms; after which he cannot be re-elected until one year has elapsed.

### **III. Groups**

#### **A. Nominating Committee**

##### **1. Qualifications**

Because their task is to suggest the names of those to lead the church in the next year, the members of the Nominating Committee must be persons of understanding, maturity and discretion.

##### **2. Composition/Selection**

Members of all other leadership teams or ministry directors established by the Elders will be appointed and may be removed by the Elders. The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members composed as follows: the Lead Pastor, an Elder, and three members of the church appointed by the Board of Elders. They shall be appointed no later than October 1st.

##### **3. Duties**

The specific task of the Nominating Committee is to prepare and present to the church a slate of qualified candidates for church officers described in section II.C-I above. This slate is to be submitted to the congregation at least three weeks before the specially called December business meeting prior to election of officers. This committee shall also nominate candidates for offices that become vacant during the year.

##### **4. Term**

The term of office for members of the Nominating Committee shall be one year.

#### **B. Constitution Review Committee**

##### **1. Qualifications**

Members of the Constitution Review Committee shall be active members of the church and shall possess sufficient organizational and administrative understanding for the task.

##### **2. Composition/Selection**

The Constitution Review Committee shall consist of five members composed as follows: the Lead Pastor, an Elder, and three members of the church appointed by the Board of Elders. This committee shall be appointed by the Board of Elders every even-numbered year.

##### **3. Duties**

It shall be the responsibility of the Constitution Review Committee to review the Church Constitution and By Laws and to study the propriety of making any changes

in these documents. It shall suggest changes to the Board of Elders when they are deemed necessary.

**4. Term**

The term of office shall be two years.

**C. Pastoral Search Committee**

**1. Composition/Selection**

The Pastoral Search Committee shall be composed of seven members, two of whom shall be Elders or Deacons. The other five shall be active members of the congregation and shall be representative of the church body. The members of this committee shall be appointed by the Board of Elders.

**2. Duties.** The Pastoral Search Committee shall:

- a. Seek a qualified candidate to fill a vacant Pastoral Staff position.
- b. Present only one candidate at a time for consideration by the church.
- c. The Pastoral Search Committee will also present a report of its progress to the congregation at least quarterly.

**3. Term**

The term of office shall expire when a new Pastoral Staff member has officially been received by the church.

**IV. Other Employees**

Salaried and hourly employees, except as otherwise provided in this document, will be employed and dismissed by the Elders, or those to whom they delegate the task.

**V. Other**

**1. Meetings**

**a. Church Services.** The Church shall conduct the following services:

- i. A worship service(s) on Sunday morning.
- ii. Sunday School on Sunday morning.
- iii. Times during the week for Bible study, prayer and fellowship.
- iv. An observance of the Lord's Supper at least once each month.
- v. Any other services deemed necessary or useful by the Board of Elders.

**b. Business Meetings**

**i. Regular**

The Regular Business Meetings are the Quarterly Business Meetings held in January, April, July, and October. The specific date and time of each meeting shall be determined by the Board of Elders, and this information shall be announced two weeks in advance in writing and in church services.

**ii. Special**

a. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time by the Lead Pastor or the Chairman of the Board of Elders provided that the announcement of the meeting and its purpose is made for two weeks from both the pulpit and in the bulletin. Matters of greater gravity may require a mailed notice to all the membership.

- b. The Pastor or the Chairman of the Board of Elders shall call a Special Business Meeting whenever requested to do so by 50 members of the active adult membership of the church.
- c. A meeting may be called at any regular service by the Pastor or the Board of Elders without a two-week notice for the purpose of acting on the recommendation for the reception of new church members.

## **2. Quorum**

Thirty (30) active members for the April, July, and October meetings and Fifty (50) active members for the January Meeting.

## **3. Voting**

### **a. Eligibility**

All active members except those under fourteen years of age are eligible to vote.

### **b. Voting Procedures**

1. A vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members present shall be necessary for the following:
  - a. The call or dismissal of any Pastoral Staff.
  - b. The amending of the Articles of Faith, Constitution, and By-Laws.
2. A majority vote of the members present shall be necessary in all other matters of business.

## **4. Secret Ballot.** The use of the secret ballot shall be mandatory:

- a. For all non-procedural matters requiring more than a majority vote.
- b. When a motion is passed requesting a secret ballot.

## **5. Rules of Order**

It is understood that the Bible is our final authority and that the biblical principles of unity, cooperation, and doing all things to the glory of Jesus Christ are the guiding concern. If procedural assistance is required, and questions of order arise, these shall be settled by the customary rules governing deliberative bodies as given in *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

## **6. Minutes & Agenda**

Minutes of church business meetings and Elders' meetings are the official records of the church. The Church Clerk and Secretary of the Elders, respectively, will maintain these records, assisted by any clerical help appointed by the Elders. Minutes of meetings, balance sheets, and budget reports are open to the members upon request. All other records maintained by the Secretary, Clerk, and Treasurer are only available to the members with the permission of the Elders. Matters of a sensitive nature may be treated as confidential in the records.

Agendas for business or Elders' meetings may be requested for review prior to the meeting. Items not included on the agenda may be brought to the floor by the moderator or chairman at his or her discretion. The Elders will determine when issues on their agenda are only suitable for executive session. Executive sessions are open only to the Elders and any others they request to attend, and the minutes will be treated as confidential.

Regular records should be maintained by all Committees and ministries as appropriate. Copies should be forwarded to the Chairman of the Elders and Lead Pastor and shall be disseminated as necessary.

### **7. Annual Report**

Following the close of each fiscal year the Elders will be responsible to direct the Treasurer, other Boards and Committees to present an annual report to the congregation.

## **B. Financial Matters**

### **1. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church will be January 1 through December 31.

### **2. Annual Budget**

Each December a Finance Committee consisting of the church treasurer, member of the Diaconate, three members at large, Trustee team member, an elder, and the Lead Pastor will recommend a budget for approval by the membership to the Board of Elders. The elder will chair the finance committee. The Board of Elders and the Finance Committee will meet to agree on a final budget proposal. The Finance Committee will present the budget to the membership for approval at the annual meeting. Once approved, the budget is not a mandate to spend, but provides reasonable parameters for fulfilling the ministry in the coming year. The Elders are authorized and responsible to conduct the affairs of the church within that budget and see that delegated budget managers also do so. The Elders are also authorized to establish, manage, and disburse designated funds which will advance the ministry of the church. They may also take action outside the budget if emergency conditions exist where a delay would likely cause material or irreparable loss, damage, or injury to people, property, or the welfare of the church, provided these expenses are reported to the congregation at the next regular business meeting. They may also make strategic expenditures beyond the budget if funds are available, but not to exceed six percent (6%) of the annual budget without prior congregational approval and provided the congregation is notified at the next regular business meeting.

### **3. Financial Review**

A review of the church financial records will be conducted annually, in accordance with acceptable practices and by qualified individuals. Appropriate professionals may be retained by the Elders, should an external audit be deemed necessary. In January, the Board of Elders shall either appoint two members of the church other than the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer and their assistants, or secure the services of an accountant to audit the books of the church and submit a report. An audit of these books shall also be made upon the change in the office of Church Treasurer during the fiscal year. The auditors shall work with the Treasurer and Financial Secretary to answer any questions or resolve any discrepancies. They shall submit a report to the Board of Elders within two months. The Board shall bring any unresolved discrepancies to the congregation at the next Quarterly Business Meeting.

### **4. Financial Policy**

Funding for the local and world-wide ministry of First Baptist Church will be obtained through the voluntary gifts of the members and friends of the church. All fund-raisers outside the normal operational ministries of the church are subject to

approval by the Elders. Funds for auxiliary or para-church ministries may not be solicited without approval of the Elders.

#### **5. Gifts**

Any gifts of money or other physical property given to the church or any of its ministries will become the property of the church and will be administered by the Elders or their designees. The church reserves the right to accept or deny designated gifts. Designated gifts will be used for the purposes designated within legal limits. If a gift is given under unacceptable conditions, the church will seek an appropriate designation or attempt to return the gift to the donor. Designated gifts not disbursed within three years of the initial gift shall be disbursed in a way that is as close to the original intent to which the gift was given.

*Adopted: October 12, 2016*

*Effective: January 1, 2017*

## Statement of Faith

### The Bible

We believe the Bible (the 66 canonical books of the Old and New Testaments) is the inspired Word of God and His completed revelation. God the Holy Spirit moved in and through the human authors to produce all the words of the text, while at the same time preserving the individual style of each human author (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21).

We believe the original manuscripts were free from error and is therefore wholly true, accurate, trustworthy, and the supreme and final authority in everything it teaches, whether ethical, moral, behavioral, doctrinal, historical, geographic, or scientific. We believe the accurate understanding of the Bible is arrived at through a literal, contextual, grammatical, and historical interpretive process (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 2:1-13).

### The Trinity

We believe in one God, creator and sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each is equal in every divine quality and executes distinct but harmonious functions (Matthew 28:19; John 1:1, 14, 18; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6).

### God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. In His very essence (Genesis 1:1; John 4:24; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13), God is self-existent, eternal, and unchanging (Jeremiah 23:24; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 119:137). God is all-powerful and all-knowing, and His perfect knowledge extends to all things past, present and future (Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 46:9, 10; Hebrews 4:13). Although God detests evil, He is longsuffering and compassionate toward sinful people (Psalm 116:5; Ephesians 2:4-7), He concerns Himself in the affairs of men, He hears and answers prayer, and He saves from sin and Hell all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:8-11; John 3:16).

### Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son who has become incarnate. God the Son has precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe that He is not only perfect God, but perfect man (John 3:16; John 10:30; John 5:20).

We believe Jesus Christ is one person with two complete natures, inseparable, yet wholly distinct—one human and one divine. As a man, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to the Virgin Mary. Though he experienced genuine temptation, he did not sin (Luke 1:3 1, 35; Luke 2:6-7; Mark 1:13).

We believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead in the same (yet glorified) body in which He had lived and died. Upon His ascension, He was received by His Father as the ultimate assurance that His redeeming work was accomplished (Matthew 28:6-7; Luke 24:37-39; Acts 1:9). He is presently seated at the right hand of God the Father, where He intercedes on behalf of His redeemed people.

### The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit and in His distinct personality. He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. His ministry glorifies Jesus Christ and implements Christ's work of salvation (Acts 5:3, 4; John 16: 8-10).

We believe the Holy Spirit regenerates (Titus 3), baptizes (1 Corinthians 12:13), seals (Ephesians 1:13), and indwells (1 Corinthians 6:19) all believers, securing them in Christ forever, and empowering them for godly living and service. Spiritual gifts are sovereignly given to all believers for the common good of the church. No gift signifies His baptism or filling, nor does any gift provide authoritative revelation beyond what has already been revealed in the Holy Scriptures (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11).

The evidence of the Holy Spirit's ministry is demonstrated by the fruit of the Spirit and the building up of the body into Christ-likeness (Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:12-16). Life in the Spirit includes trials and does not guarantee physical health, material wealth, or confirming signs. Sign gifts were given for the express purpose of authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of all believers (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

### Humanity

We believe God directly created the first man and first woman, Adam and Eve, in His own image and free from sin. God created human beings as immortal, rational, and morally responsible individuals. The purposes given to humanity are to glorify God, to enjoy His fellowship, and to accomplish His will on earth (Genesis 1:26-31; 2:7; Matthew 19:4).

We believe Adam sinned; as a result, all people are sinners by nature and choice and are spiritually dead in their relationship to God. Because sin is rooted in the core of their being, they are totally incapable of being reconciled to God apart from divine grace (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:1-10).

We believe all people stand in need of the Savior, who alone can address their spiritually dead condition. We believe those who repent of sin and trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and reconciled to God. We believe genuine saving faith should, be and will be evidenced by a life of faith expressed through obedience to the Word and righteous living, good works, and proper social concern (John 14:1-6; Romans 1:16-17; Titus 3:3-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

We believe marriage was established by God (Genesis 2:24, 25; Matthew 19:4, 5) as a lifelong covenantal relationship between

one man and one woman (Romans 7:2). As such, it is the only permissible context for intimate sexual expression and is the foundation for the human family (1 Corinthians 7:1-9). We believe in the sanctity of human life (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-15), which has value in God's sight from the beginning, at conception, until death, when our spirit returns to God who gave it (Psalm 51; Ecclesiastes 12:7).

### **Salvation**

We believe salvation is provided wholly by God's grace and received through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).

We believe God the Father, by His love and grace, was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself by giving His Son as the sinless, substitutionary sacrifice for sinful humanity. In the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, full payment was made for the sins of the world, and God's perfect justice was satisfied (Colossians 1:19-20; Hebrews 10:12; 1 John 2:1-2; Titus 3:5; Galatians 2:6-8).

We believe personal salvation is received through faith in the person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ alone, apart from any human merit, deed, or ritual. Upon faith, God justifies, regenerates, redeems, forgives, and gives eternal life. God's faithfulness guarantees the eternal security of all true believers (Romans 8:1; 1 John 5:13; John 6:47; John 10:27-30).

### **Church**

We believe in the Universal Church, the spiritual body of Christ, of which He is the head. We believe the Church began on the Day of Pentecost and is comprised of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Colossians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 12:13, 27, Romans 12:4-5, Acts 2).

We believe the Universal Church is expressed in local churches whose members have been baptized by immersion upon credible confession of faith and associated themselves for worship, instruction, evangelism, and service. Each believer has equal access to God, and has the responsibility to offer up sacrifices, including self, praise, and possessions (1 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:2, 1 Peter 2:5).

We believe there are two ordinances for the local church: believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 28:19, Acts 19:3-5, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). We believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial to the death of Jesus Christ. The elements of the Lord's Supper are symbols. There is no real presence of Christ in them, nor is grace received through participation (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

While recognizing the value of cooperation and interdependency, we believe in the autonomy of each local church. The leadership of the church is responsible and accountable first to Jesus Christ as the Chief Shepherd, then to the congregation, as servants, overseeing in love and humility. We believe only biblically qualified men are to serve in the position of pastor or elder (Romans 15:25-27, 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-7).

### **Relation of Church and State**

We believe God in His wisdom has ordained human government. God uses government as an instrument for promoting good and punishing evil among those governed. The church is God's instrument for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, calling people to salvation, expressed through a life of faith and service. The church and State are best served when citizens are free to faithfully "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:15-22; Rom 13:1-7).

### **Last Things**

We believe a person's eternal destiny is forever sealed by their acceptance or rejection, in this lifetime, of Christ and His work on the cross. Believers will experience eternity in the presence of God. Unbelievers will be in Hell, a place of suffering and loss, eternally separated from the presence of God (Luke 16:19-31; John 3:16; John 14:1-3; Matthew 10:28).

We believe in the personal and pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ. He will gather His Church and set up His kingdom on earth. After this, Christ will establish his eternal kingdom, where believers will live with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:1-2; Revelation 21:1-4).

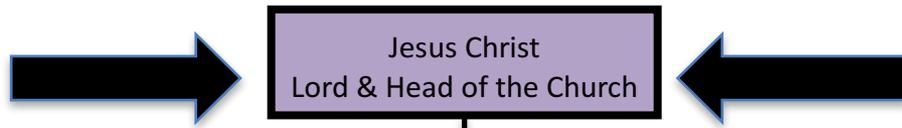
As a member, volunteer or employee I wholeheartedly agree with the above Statement of Faith and will, to the best of my ability, as I am being lead by the Holy Spirit practice these biblical concepts and directives.

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Member, Volunteer or Employee of First Baptist Church

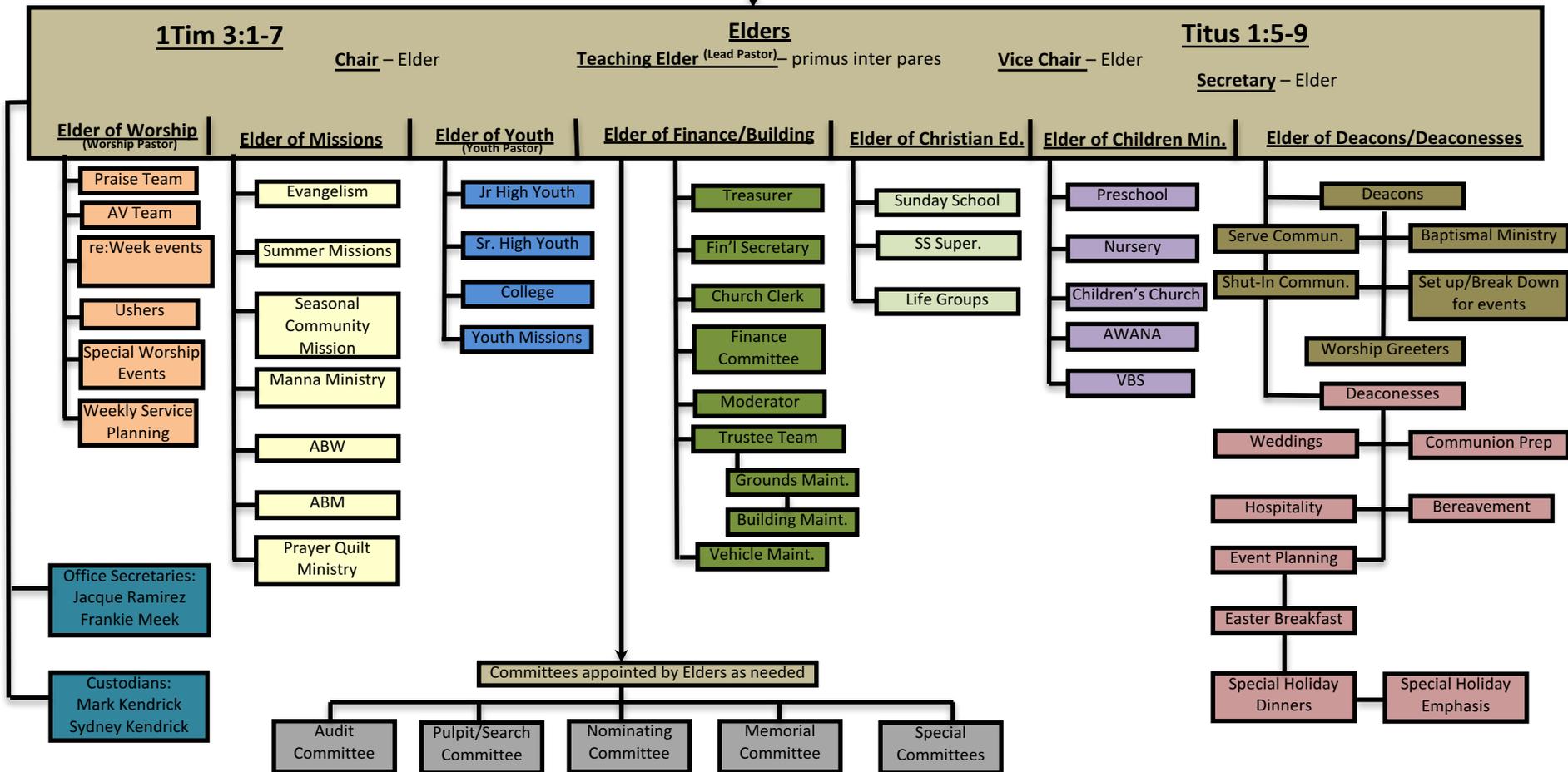
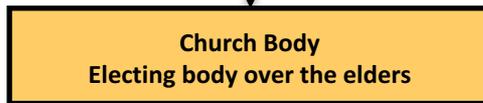
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Date



Plurality of Elders Model

Congregationally governed  
Elder led



With this model 8 elders would need to be elected and more trained and in reserve as their terms expire.

1Tim 3:8-10; 12-13  
Phil 1:1