

ARTICLE 1

NAME AND PURPOSE

SECTION 1.01-NAME

This congregation of believers shall be known as First Baptist Church of Blessing. It is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Texas.

SECTION 1.02-PURPOSE

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), for such purposes including, but not limited to, the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; the establishing and maintaining of religious worship; the educating of believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture; and the maintaining of missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country.

ARTICLE 2

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

SECTION 2.01-STATEMENT OF FAITH

(A) The Holy Scriptures. We believe the Old and New Testament Scriptures are the verbally and plenarily inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed and are, therefore, the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning, and all issues of interpretation and meaning shall be addressed by the pastor in accordance with scripture. The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official translation used by the church. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)

(B) Dispensationalism. We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life that define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations—the law, the church, and the kingdom—are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal.3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 20:2-6)

(C) The Godhead. We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit-each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 14:10, 26; 2 Cor. 13:14)

(D) The Person and Work of Christ

- (1) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. Christ living a sinless life and only here to do God's will that we may have the perfect example to follow. (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)
- (2) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Peter 1:3-5)
- (3) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2)

(E) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

- (1) We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14)
- (2) We believe that He is the divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27)
- (3) We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the church to do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12)
- (4) We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. Ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, although God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22)

- (F) **The Total Depravity of Man.** We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God; but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19)
- (G) **Salvation.** We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that all sins, except blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, are forgivable. (Matt. 12:31-32; John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 1:9)
- (H) **The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.**
 - (1) We believe that once a person is saved, he is kept by God's power and remains secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:4-5)
 - (2) We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)
- (I) **The Church**
 - (1) We believe that the church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again believers. (1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27)
 - (2) We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)
 - (3) We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or controls, and any affiliations, societies, organizations, associations, or agencies this church affiliates with to further the objectives stated in the Purpose Statement are not authoritative in matters of church practice or belief. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)
 - (4) We recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 8:36-38; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

- (J) **Separation.** We believe that believers should maintain a godly testimony and live in such a way that their lives do not bring reproach upon their Savior. We stand against any and all worldly philosophies that seek to destroy or undermine the truth of Biblical Christianity. (Lev. 19:28; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11)
- (K) **The Second Coming of Christ.** We believe in that blessed hope, the personal, Imminent return of Christ, Who will rapture His church. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom, which was promised to the nation of Israel. (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)
- (L) **The Eternal State.**
- (1) We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13)
 - (2) We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body, and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first, resurrection when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)
 - (3) We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting Conscious punishment and torment. (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15)
- (M) **The Personality of Satan.** We believe that Satan is the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10)
- (N) **Creation.** We believe that the Genesis account of creation is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of God's creation of the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)

(O) Civil Government. We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. We believe that we must obey the state unless it requires us to act contrary to our faith at which time we must obey God rather than the state. (Matt. 22:15-22; Acts 5:29; Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Titus 3:1-2; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14)

(P) Human Sexuality.

- (1) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
- (2) We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman for life. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10 Eph. 5:22-23).

(Q) Family Relationships

- (1) We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God, but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and elders) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
- (2) We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)

- (R) **Divorce and Remarriage.** We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage are regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication or in the case of being unequally yoked an unbelieving spouse chooses to divorce the believing spouse. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, those seeking the office of pastor or deacon will be measured against scripture to determine their eligibility. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6, John 4:7-30, John 8:1-11, 1 Cor 7:12-16)

- (S) **Abortion.** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. The unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

- (T) **Euthanasia.** We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus, we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. (Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28)

- (U) **Love.** We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)

- (V) **Lawsuits Between Believers.** We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32; Matt. 18:15-17)

- (W) **Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ, we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations as well as our communities and not wait for them to come to us. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20)
- (X) **Giving.** We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to financially support his local church. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

SECTION 2.02-AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members. All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.

SECTION 2.03-COVENANT

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spreading of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the truth of God's Word; to seek the salvation of our families, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid excessive anger, tattling, backbiting, and all gossip or secretive meetings regarding personal issues of church members, church leadership, or practice; to abstain from such worldly amusements as watching demonic movies; pornography, and the abuse of intoxicating substances; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage 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 of speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready to secure reconciliation without delay.

We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE 3

MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 3.01-QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Those seeking membership must, through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

- (A) They must renounce sin and endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord.
- (B) Any Person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this Church. All such candidates shall be presented to the Church at any regular Church conference for membership based upon any of the following ways and after counseling with the Pastor or other assigned Elder:
 - 1. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this Church
 - 2. By promise of letter of recommendation from another Southern Baptist Church
 - 3. By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Church Council for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the Church within thirty days. A 3/4 vote of those active members present, and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

- (C) By restoration. (Reference **Section 3.04 Discipline of a Member G, F**)

SECTION 3.02-DUTIES OF A MEMBER

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the covenant contained in Section 2.03, each member further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the pastor; to pray for him; to recognize his authority in the spiritual and day-to-day affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, tithes, offerings, and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands, to support through a lifestyle walk affirming the beliefs and practices of the church.

SECTION 3.03-PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- (A) Each active member of the Church, 18 years of age or older, shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members, provided the member is present or on a case-by-case basis the Church makes the provision for absentee voting. Non Active members shall not be entitled to vote on any matter.
- (B) This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the under-shepherd with the counsel of the elders. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined by the church rules and in accordance with scripture. The pastor shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The elders shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor as requested by him.
- (C) Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor (or in his absence, his designee or an individual designated by the elders) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If, after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor, (or in his absence, an individual designated by the elders), be treated as a trespasser.
- (D) A member may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of church and committee meetings, provided he shall have made a written request upon the church and the church has received the written request at least ten business days before the requested inspection date. Minutes from deacon board and discipline committee meetings are exempt from this provision and are not subject to inspection or copy. (Reference **Section 4.06-Pastoral Oversight of Officers and Staff**)
 - (1) A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, the list of names and addresses of the church members, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.
 - (2) The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.

SECTION 3.04-DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER**NOTE**

All Steps of Section 3.04-Discipline of a Member should be read **PRIOR TO** implementation of this section.

- (A) The procedures provided in this section are based on all the following scriptures, Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11. There shall be a discipline board consisting of the pastor and the designated elders. These men shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith and violations of the church covenant. If the pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee. The pastor and elders shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline.
- (B) Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders the spiritual growth and testimony of an individual in the local church or the body as a whole, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.
- (C) If reconciliation is not reached and step 1 has been exhausted, a second member, either a deacon or the pastor, is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of Restoration.
- (D) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, the discipline board, as the church representatives Biblically responsible for putting down murmuring, shall hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing before the discipline committee, the committee shall recommend to the members of the church that they, after self-examination, make an effort personally to go to the offending member and seek that member's restoration.
- (E) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B), (C), and (D) have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church in accordance with scripture. (1 Cor 5)

- (F) No matter may be heard by the discipline committee or the church unless the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, except in the case of a public Offense.
- (G) If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the church membership, members of the church should have no social contact with him, and any contact from that point forward (except by family members) must be for the sake of restoration. Persons placed under church discipline must immediately return any property belonging to the church.

(1) Restoration of Disciplined Member

A private confession is for a private offense, i.e., a confession NOT made before the church congregation. Confession is made to the pastor and/or elders who then recommend restoration of member. Restoration may be discussed by the pastor and elders and handled accordingly.

A public confession is required for a public offense, however the details of the restoration process with the pastor and/or elders should remain private.

If having been removed from membership, upon 3/4 vote of the congregation after confession of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the pastor (or the elders if the office of pastor is vacant).

SECTION 3.05-TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Members not under the disciplinary process of Section 3.04 may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church.

SECTION 3.06-AUTOMATIC TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- (A) The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the pastor, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the Pastor, or in his absence, the church elders.
- (B) No member of this church may hold membership in another church. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member unites in membership with another church.
- (C) The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the elders or pastor become aware of a member's open and unrepentant involvement in any sexual misconduct described in Section 2.01(P) or if a member files a lawsuit in violation of Section 2.01(V).

- (D) The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member openly and unashamedly disagrees with any provision found in the Statement of Faith.
- (E) The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member in a spirit of dissension actively engages in secretive discussions and/or intentionally organized, secretive meetings in a concerted effort to overthrow the pastor or present church leadership.
- (F) The membership of an individual will automatically terminate upon his or her death.
- (G) No provision contained in this section shall be subject to or governed by the procedures regarding discipline of members set forth in Section 3.04.
- (H) A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the pastor and elders

SECTION 3.07- CLASSES OF MEMBERS

The Church shall have two classes of members consisting of Active and Non Active members. This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The active membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of the Church. The active membership reserved the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the conditions of such membership. A member of what? A New Testament Church which is an organized body of baptized believers administering its affairs under the headship of Christ, united in the belief of what He has taught, covenanting together to do what He has commanded, and cooperating with other like bodies in the Kingdom movements.

The Lord's Churches have the greatest task ever assigned in the world's history-to carry the glorious gospel of Christ the Savior to every nation and tongue. It is a great privilege to be a member of Baptist Churches. Membership brings each person great opportunities for Christian Fellowship, growth, development, training, and service. Each member has an inescapable obligation to make God and His work first in their lives.

SECTION 3.08 - STATUS CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership status may be changed for the following:

1. Failure to attend Sunday morning worship service for a 3-month consecutive period without proper reasoning.
2. Attending Sunday morning worship service for a 3-month consecutive period.

Active members should make every effort to attend and support the congregation on the Lord's Day (Sunday Morning) remembering that scripture instructs us in Hebrews Chapter 10 verse 25- "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the Day drawing near".

If an active member fails to attend Sunday Morning worship service for a 3-month consecutive period, without giving proper reasoning; the church membership will investigate the non-activity and report to the membership its findings during regular business meetings or special called meeting. The active membership will then determine whether there are sufficient grounds for the member to be moved to non-active membership. A three-fourths vote of those active members present and voting shall be required to change an active member's membership status to non-active membership.

If a non-active member returns to fellowship and attends Sunday Morning worship service for a period of 3 consecutive months, then the member's status will automatically be restored to active membership.

ARTICLE 4

OFFICERS

SECTION 4.01-NUMBER OF OFFICERS

The officers of the church shall consist of a pastor, trustees, deacons, a church clerk, a treasurer, and such other officers as the church may deem necessary.

SECTION 4.02-ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The pastor shall continue as an officer of the church until such time as the pastorate is terminated. All Officers will be elected at the pleasure of the church.

SECTION 4.03-PASTOR

The pastor is responsible to the church 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 leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. He is an ex officio and non-voting member of each committee or organization. As such he works with the other Church staff and members to 1) lead the Church in the achievement of its mission, 2) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and 3) care for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

SECTION 4.04-CALLING A PASTOR

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. The elections shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks' notice has been given to the Church. A pastor selection committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor and its recommendation shall constitute a nomination. The committee shall be made up of 5 or 7 active members with no husband and wife both serving as members. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only 1 name at a time. This committee shall report to the Church at a minimum of monthly of its progress. The election shall be by secret ballot an affirmative vote of three fourths of those present and voting being necessary for a choice. The pastor thus elected shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request which requires a vote of three fourths of those present and voting at any regular or called business meeting. He shall preside at meetings of this church and shall serve as moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized by these bylaws. If the pastor is reasonably unable to attend any meeting, he may designate an elder to act as moderator in his stead or may reschedule the meeting to another appropriate date within 30 days.

SECTION 4.05-Associate Pastor

The Pastor may choose someone to present to the church to elect as an associate pastor. The associate pastor role is to help the pastor and in the case of vacancy in the pastoral office, would temporarily assume the role of pastor until someone is elected to fill the position of pastor.

SECTION 4.06-PASTORAL OVERSIGHT OF OFFICERS AND STAFF

All church staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the pastor who has the sole authority to dismiss the same. No employee or volunteer shall be hired, appointed, or retained who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith.

SECTION 4.07-DEACONS

The deacons are to be qualified to serve according to 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Our understanding of that passage is as follows:

- He is well respected within the Church and Community.
- He does what he says he'll do, he is dependable.
- He does not let other things control him over the Spirit of God.
- He handles his resources as a good steward of God.
- He has a good understanding of God's Word.
- He has been proven by the Church in his service to the church for a reasonable period and he is willing to be trained as a deacon.
- He recognized that as he serves as a deacon, he will be subject to examination and respected.

There shall be no obligation to constitute as an assigned deacon one who has been a deacon in another Church; but in such instances as one might be chosen by this church for assignment as a deacon, his previous designation by another church of like faith and order shall suffice for this church.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the Church. Their task is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing the ministry of the church.

SECTION 4.08-CHURCH CLERK

The church clerk shall be responsible for making and keeping a record of church meetings. This record shall be submitted to the membership for approval at each succeeding meetings. The Church clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismission, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismission voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. All Church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained.

SECTION 4.09-TREASURER

The treasurer shall record the receipt and payout as authorized of all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of all receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The treasurer's records and reports shall be viewed by the church monthly. The records and reports of receipts and disbursements are the property of the church and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained.

SECTION 4.10-FAILURE TO PERFORM DUTIES

Any officer who neglects his duties as outlined in the bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from his office, at the discretion of the pastor, and another church member may be appointed by the pastor to serve temporarily until an election is held to fill the position.

ARTICLE 5

MEETINGS

SECTION 5.01-PROCEDURE FOR MEETINGS

The following procedures are established and shall be followed to ensure the correct handling of the business of the church in which we have been given stewardship over according to scripture.

(A) The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling. The following order shall generally be observed at the regular church business meetings:

1. Opening Prayer
2. Review of Financial Report
3. Review of Minutes
4. Old Business
- 5 .Report of Committees
6. Membership matters
7. Election of Officers
8. New business
9. Adjournment

- (B) For any meeting under this article, the moderator , in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. The moderator shall have full authority to order the removal of all children (ages to be determined by the moderator) if the moderator determines, in his sole discretion, that circumstances so warrant. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory , the moderator may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises in accordance with section 3.03 (C) and treat the person as a trespasser.

SECTION 5.03-SPECIAL MEETINGS

- (A) The pastor (or elders if the office of pastor is vacant or the pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or the severance of the relationship between the church and pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Sections 4.04(A) and 4.05.
- (B) Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the pastor deems Beneficial.

SECTION 5.04-MOTIONS

- (A) The moderator will call for motions to be made on the Financial Reports and Minutes after allowing reasonable time for proper review and discussion of these documents. No motion will be accepted before the moderator has called for a motion. Once the moderator has called for a motion, any active member in attendance can make a motion. Once a motion has been made, any active member in attendance can second the motion. After both a motion and a second has been made, the moderator shall call for a vote. Only active members can vote on motions, in accordance with section 2.03. A motion is accepted upon a majority vote, unless otherwise stated in these by laws.
- (B) Any active member in attendance can bring forth a topic for discussion and make motions during the "New Business" segment of the business meeting. Once a motion has been made, any active member in attendance can second the motion. After both a motion and a second has been made, the moderator shall call for any discussion on the motion. After allowing reasonable time for discussion, the moderator may call for a vote on the motion. Only active members can vote on motions, in accordance with section 2.03. A motion is accepted upon a majority vote, unless otherwise stated in these by laws.

SECTION 5.05 FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

SECTION 5.06-EXTRA-BUDGET EXPENDITURES

The treasurer may, in the ordinary course of his duties, make or authorize the making of any expenditure or obligation in any amount not exceeding Five Hundred dollars (\$500). The pastor and elders may make or authorize the making of any expenditure or obligation in any amount not exceeding One Thousand dollars (\$1000). The membership may make or authorize the making of any expenditure or obligation in any amount whatsoever.

SECTION 5.07-URGENT EXPENDITURES

- (A) The pastor and the elders, by a majority vote, must determine that the matter is of such urgency that it cannot wait until the next regular meeting of the membership or until a special meeting can be held.
- (B) Before making any decision, the pastor and the elders shall make a good faith effort to obtain the opinions of as many of the members as can be reached. The actual decision shall then be taken at a meeting of the pastor and the elders, any action requiring the approval of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the board.
- (C) The pastor shall report the action taken by the pastor and the elders to the next meeting of the members for approval. If the members refuse to approve, the action shall be reversed insofar as possible, but the pastor and the elders shall not be personally liable for such action, provided that they have, in good faith, followed the procedures set forth in this section.

ARTICLE 6
INDEMNIFICATION

SECTION 6.01-ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

- (A) The church shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful.
- (B) The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

SECTION 6.02-EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

To the extent that a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

SECTION 6.03-LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section 5.01. The determination shall be made (a) by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the pastor and elders who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested elders so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

SECTION 6.04-TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the elders in the specific case, so long as the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent agrees to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

SECTION 6.05—EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

SECTION 6.06—INSURANCE

The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE 7

COMMITTEES

SECTION 7.02—SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The pastor and the elders, in their discretion and of necessity, may create special committees to provide advice and information regarding matters submitted to the committee. The committee shall have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. Nominations for special committee members shall be made by the Church. The members of the committee shall be chosen by a majority vote of the church and shall serve solely at the pleasure of the church. The special committee shall be dissolved once its intended purpose has been fulfilled and it is no longer necessary.

SECTION 7.03-ACTIONS OF COMMITTEES

Committees have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. Their primary function is to research and recommend.

ARTICLE 8
BINDING ARBITRATION

SECTION 8.01-SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

SECTION 8.02-NOTICE OF ARBITRATION

- (A) In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to these bylaws or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians and in accord with Matthew 5:15-17.
- (B) To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution.
- (C) If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in Section 9.01, above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to Section 9.04, below.

SECTION 8.03-LIMITATIONS ON ARBITRATION DECISIONS

- (A) Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline, as outlined under Section 3.04, were followed.
- (B) Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Section 4.07 were followed.

SECTION 8.04-ARBITRATION PROCEDURES

The Procedures for Arbitration shall be as adopted by the pastor and the elders.

ARTICLE 9

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

SECTION 9.01-PURPOSE

The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to protect the Church's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might either benefit the private interest of an officer or trustee of the Church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

SECTION 9.02-DEFINITIONS

- (A) **Interested Person:** Any trustee or officer who has a direct or indirect financial interest.
- (B) **Financial interest:** A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
1. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Church has a transaction or arrangement,
 2. A compensation arrangement with the Church or with any entity or individual with which Church has a transaction or arrangement, or
 3. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which Church is negotiating a transaction or Arrangement.
 4. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the board decides that a conflict of interest exists.
- (C) **Compensation:** Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

SECTION 9.03-PROCEDURES

- (A) In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the trustees considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- (B) After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he shall leave the board meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

- (C) An interested person may make a presentation at the board meeting, but after the presentation, he shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
 - (1) The chairman of the board shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - (2) After exercising due diligence, the board or committee shall determine whether Church can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
 - (3) If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the board shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested trustees whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of Church, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
- (D) If the board has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- (E) If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the board determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.
- (F) If a conflict of interest is determined by the elders to exist, then it shall be brought before the church at any regular or special called business meeting. The church will by majority vote decide whether to proceed with or terminate the transaction or arrangement. Those who are party to the conflict of interest shall not vote on the matter and shall not be present during the voting.

SECTION 9.05 COMPENSATION

A voting member of the board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services rendered may not vote on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

ARTICLE 11

DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. All contributions to these funds shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the church. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of its tax-exempt purposes.

ARTICLE 12

AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a three quarters vote of the members present and voting at any regular church administration meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit for at least two consecutive Sundays, and at least fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken.

Proposed amendments or changes must be made available to voting members for review at least one week prior to the meeting at which the vote to amend the bylaws will be taken.

ADOPTION

These bylaws were adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the church in which a quorum was present.

These bylaws supersede any other bylaws of _____ church.

Date

Church Clerk