

# Covenant and Constitution

**Revised 2015-04-26**

**Faith Baptist Church**  
2140 Crystal Beach Road  
Winter Haven, FL 33880  
**(863) 293-0689 | [www.faithbaptistwh.org](http://www.faithbaptistwh.org)**

**COVENANT**  
of  
**Faith Baptist Church**  
**Winter Haven, Florida**

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

We purpose, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love and to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort. We will promote its prosperity and spirituality, and attend its services regularly. We covenant to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines, and to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin. We will give faithfully of time and talent in its activities, and contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God prospers us. Such giving is to support the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions, and to train our children according to the Word of God. We will seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances, and walk circumspectly in the world. We will be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct. We covenant to avoid all gossip, backbiting and unrighteous anger, and to abstain from all forms of activity which dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ or cause a fellow believer to stumble or hinder the leading of a soul to Christ. We will be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior, and to give Him preeminence in all things.

We purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return. We will watch over one another in brotherly love, and remember each other in prayer.

We further purpose to aid each other in sickness and distress, and to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech. We will be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and be mindful of the guidelines of our Savior, to seek it without delay.

We, moreover, purpose, that when we move from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith and order where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. In the event there is no such church, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one.

**CONSTITUTION**  
of  
**Faith Baptist Church**  
**Winter Haven, Florida**

**THE PREAMBLE**

Having placed our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and believing in the teachings of the Holy Bible as the plenary and verbally inspired Word of the living God, we have affiliated ourselves with one another as a body of immersed believers, and we adopt this Constitution as a declaration of our convictions so that we may carry on the Lord's work decently and in order.

**ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this organization shall be Faith Baptist Church of Winter Haven, Florida. It is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Florida.

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

Our purpose is to glorify God by conducting a Baptist church in accordance with the Word of God, the Articles of Faith, the Covenant and the Constitution of Faith Baptist Church, promoting the worship of our God, edifying believers, teaching the whole counsel of God, administering the ordinances and biblical discipline, seeking to lead the lost to Christ through personal witnessing and the preaching of the gospel, carrying on a vigorous missionary program around the world, establishing other Baptist churches, defending the faith, and maintaining a good testimony for Christ in our community by godliness and good works.

**ARTICLE III - ASSOCIATIONS**

**Section 1**

This church shall be independent, autonomous church, subject only to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. It has the right to cooperate and associate with other biblical groups on a voluntary basis. There shall be no cooperation with any group that permits the presence of apostates or apostasy, or that endorses groups that permit the presence of apostates or apostasy.

**Section 2**

This church shall fellowship with the following associations:

1. The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.
2. The Sunshine State Fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches.

The above-named associations now hold strong biblical convictions, and are vigorously opposed to all apostasy and compromise. If these associations should waver from their present biblical stand, this church in standing true to the Word of God shall take appropriate action to withdraw from them.

## **ARTICLE IV - ARTICLES OF FAITH**

### **1. THE SCRIPTURES**

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was verbally and plenary inspired and the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore, is true without any mixture of error for its content.

We believe that God preserved the content of the inspired manuscripts through many faithful copies of these original documents, and from the multitude of these documents reliable translations have been, and are being, made in many languages. These languages, when based upon the best texts and translated literally, are sufficient in every way for faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Mark 13:31; 1 Peter 1:25).

### **2. THE TRUE GOD**

#### **A. God the Father**

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite, sovereign Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth. He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love. The unity of the Godhead is in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Ex. 20:2-3; Deut. 6:4; John 4:24; 1 Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Cor. 13:14).

#### **B. God the Son**

We believe in the absolute deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was divine as no other man can be, being God of very God, existing from all eternity, and co-equal with the Father and the Spirit. His humanity did not consist in laying aside His deity. As a man He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (John 1:1-2; 1 John 5:20; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26-38; Phil. 2:5-8).

#### **C. God the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature. He was active in creation, and in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled. He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony. He is the agent in the new birth. He indwells, seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. The gifts of tongues and

healing were sign-gifts until the Scriptures were completed. The gifts ceased at that time (John 14:16-17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; John 16:7-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5-6; Eph. 1:13-14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Rom. 8:14, 16, 26-27; 15:19; Heb. 2:4; 1 Cor. 13:8; 12:13).

### **3. THE DEVIL, OR SATAN**

We believe that Satan is a created angelic being that originally was perfect but fell through pride and rebellion against God.

We believe in the personality of Satan that he is the prince of this world and the ruler of all the powers of darkness, and is destined to be chained and cast into the bottomless pit for the one thousand-year millennial kingdom and released to eternal judgment in the lake of fire (Ezek. 28:11-19; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10; John 12:31; 14:20; Rev. 12:9; 20:1-3).

### **4. CREATION**

We believe the Genesis account of creation as being neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process. Man, spirit, soul and body, were created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life. All people are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race (Gen. 1 and 2; Col. 1:16-17; John 1:3).

### **5. THE FALL OF MAN**

We believe that man was created in innocence in the image and likeness of God under the law of his maker. By voluntary transgression Adam fell from his sinless and blessed state, and, because of this all people are born in sin, and thus are totally depraved and partakers of Adam's fallen nature. Everyone is a sinner by nature and by conduct, and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse (Gen. 1:26; 3:1-6, 24; Rom. 3:10-19; 5:12; 1:18, 32; Eph. 2:1-3).

### **6. SALVATION**

We believe that the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated and wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin. He was the only and perfect sacrifice for man's sin. By the shedding of His blood in His death, Christ fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin. His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. Having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in Heaven. Christ is in every way qualified to be the substitute, a compassionate and all-sufficient Savior.

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit and is an integral part of saving faith (Jonah 2:9; Eph. 2; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24-25; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7-8; Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53:4-7; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:12-14, 22; 1 Peter 21:24).

## **7. RESURRECTION AND PRIESTHOOD**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, in His ascension into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest interceding for us (Matt. 28:6-7; Luke 24:2-6; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 8:6; 12:2; 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 2:17; 5:9-10).

## **8. GRACE AND THE NEW BIRTH**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again. The new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus, and is instantaneous and not a process. In the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God. Also the new birth is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel. Its evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life (John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 16:30-33; 2 Peter 1:4; John 3:16; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1, 5; 2 Cor. 5:19; Col. 2:13; John 3:8).

## **9. JUSTIFICATION**

We believe that justification is that judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous upon the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ. It is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood (Rom. 3:24; 4:5; 5:1, 9; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9; Acts 13:39; Isa. 53:11; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Titus 3:5; Rom. 8:1).

## **10. SANCTIFICATION**

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting apart of the believer unto God, which is accomplished in a threefold manner. First, it is an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior. Second, it is a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life. Third, it is the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return (Heb. 10:10-14; John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 5:23-24; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24-25; Rev. 22:11; 2 Cor. 1:10).

## **11. ADOPTION**

We believe that adoption is the act whereby the Father, for the sake of Christ, places new believers into the honored position of adult sons, in contrast with regeneration whereby the believer receives the nature of God and becomes a child of God. The full benefits of

the position accorded by adoption as the sons of God awaits the glorification of the believer at the coming of the Lord (Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:1-7; John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-2).

## **12. SECURITY OF THE SAINTS**

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ. This assurance of eternal life is founded solely on the testimony of God in His written Word.

We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in this assurance which, however, forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh (Phil. 1:6; John 10:28-29; 6:47; Rom. 8:35-39; 1 John 5:13; Jude 1; Rom. 8:12-17; 13:13; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

## **13. THE CHURCH**

We believe in the unity of all true believers in the Church which is the Body of Christ, which was established on the day of Pentecost, and that all believers, from Pentecost to the Rapture, both Jews and Gentiles, are added to the Church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit when we accept Christ as Savior.

We believe that this Church is manifested through the local church which is a congregation of immersed believers associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word. Its officers are pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures.

We believe the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all people as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations. The one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel. Each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. On all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline, and benevolence, the will of the local church is final (Eph. 3:1-20; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:11; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-24; Acts 15:13-18; Matt. 16:18; Acts 11:15).

## **14. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe that scriptural baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, under authority of the local church, in obedience to the Lord's command, and shows forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, through whom we died to sin and rose to a new life. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of membership in Faith Baptist Church.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of Christ's death until He returns, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination.

We believe that the biblical order of the ordinances is baptism and the Lord's Supper, and that participants should be immersed believers (Acts 8:36, 39; Matt. 3:16; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42).

## **15. SEPARATION**

We believe in obedience to the biblical commands to separate entirely from worldliness unto God. This includes separation from churches or other groups which adhere to unbiblical doctrine (2 Cor. 6:14--7:1; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11).

## **16. GOVERNMENTS**

### **A. Civil Order**

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good of human society. The magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and the coming King of kings (Rom. 13:1-7; 2 Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29; 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17-18).

### **B. Church Order**

We believe that the government of this local church is vested in the body of believers of which it is composed. In keeping with historic Baptist faith, the government of this church shall be democratic in its operation, remaining independent as it assumes sole responsibility for its actions and decisions (Matt. 18:15-17; Acts 15:3-4, 6-7, 22).

### **C. Family Order**

We believe that marriage and family units are ordained of God and are basic to the social order of the human race. We furthermore accept the biblical prohibitions of sexual union and cohabitation outside of marriage, and the biblical directives concerning husband and wife and family as fully applicable to believers in our time (Gen. 2:24; Ex. 20:14; Prov. 6:24-33; Matt. 19:4-10; 5:27-28; Heb. 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-8).

### **D. Sexual Immorality**

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe than 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; I Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13.4)
2. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)



## **17. LAST THINGS**

### **A. The Rapture**

We believe in the imminent, pre-millennial return of Christ for His Church, and at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seventieth week of Daniel (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 51-54; Phil. 3:20; Rev. 3:10).

### **B. The Tribulation**

We believe that the rapture of the church saints will be followed by a seven-year period called the Tribulation or Daniel's seventieth week. The church will be in Heaven during these years, during which time believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The last three and a half years of the Tribulation is called the Great Tribulation or Jacob's Trouble, a time of severe judgments upon the whole earth (Dan. 9:27; Jer. 30:7; Matt. 24:15-21; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 16:1-21).

### **C. The Millennial Kingdom**

We believe the Tribulation will be terminated by Christ's coming in judgment to establish the Millennial Kingdom, during which time He will fulfill the promises to Israel concerning their earthly kingdom.

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the land of Palestine as promised in the Abrahamic Covenant and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ezek. 37; Isa. 65:17-25; Rev. 20:3; Jer. 31:31-34).

### **D. The Judgment of the Wicked**

We believe the Millennial Kingdom will terminate with the release of Satan from the bottomless pit, who will lead an insurrection against the Son of God and will be eternally defeated by God. This will be followed by the Great White Throne Judgment, where all unbelievers will be judged and sentenced, but will be in conscious torment forever (2 Thess. 1:7-9; Mark 9:42-48; Rev. 20:2-3, 7-10).

### **E. The New Heaven and the New Earth**

We believe in the new Heaven and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, and which will be the abiding place of the redeemed for all eternity, where Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 21:1-27; 22:3; 19:16).

## **18. DISPENSATIONALISM**

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life, which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose (John 1:17; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25; Heb. 7:19; Rev. 20:2-6).

## **ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1 - Reception of Members**

A. This church shall be composed of members who profess to be saved by grace, through faith, and who have been baptized following their confession of faith in Christ, by single immersion in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

B. All persons desiring to unite with this church shall meet with a member of the pastoral staff and deacons, and shall give testimony of conversion and Christian experience, and affirm acceptance of and adherence to the Articles of Faith, Constitution and Covenant of this church.

C. Upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor and deacons, candidates shall be presented to the church. Candidates will be accepted by unanimous vote of members present and voting. Any negative vote shall be given consideration by the Senior Pastor and deacons. If the reason given shall be found to be sufficient as to warrant, membership shall be withheld; if not, the matter shall again be presented to the church and the person or persons shall be received into membership by a majority vote of members present and voting.

D. Members may be received in one of the following four ways:

1. By baptism following confession of faith in Christ.
2. By receipt of a letter of good standing from a church of like faith and order, accompanied by personal confession of faith.
3. By confession of faith, having been saved and immersed.
4. By restoration.

### **Section 2 - Discipline of Members**

- A. It is vital to the testimony of this church and the glory of our Lord that the purity of the church be preserved and its peace protected. With these ends in view, it shall be the duty of the Senior Pastor and deacons to seek diligently to reclaim any member known to be living in disregard of his/her biblical and covenant obligations. It is specifically directed that the Senior Pastor and deacons move with promptness and vigor in dealing with anyone who is obstructing the work or disturbing the peace of the church by slander, falsehood, gossip, conspiracy or other unfair and unchristian methods. It is recognized that a Baptist church must be a democracy in which the majority shall rule. It is recognized further that while the minority has the right of private opinion in all questions and the right of appeal in any constitutional and proper manner, it shall not have the right to engage in secret or open propaganda, of deliberately disturbing the peace and interrupting the work of the church. It is further recognized that when the church, by regular order and proper vote, has determined upon a course of action, that course becomes the duty of every member of the church. If any member cannot conscientiously follow the decision of the church, he/she is to quietly and peacefully withdraw from the membership.
- B. If a member is walking disorderly in conflict with the above principles, or is involved in any known immorality, dishonesty or public scandal, and such member cannot be restored to fellowship through confession and correction of his/her sins, the individual shall be dealt with on the basis of Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5. The member's case shall be brought before the church by recommendation of the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons (see Paragraph H). The member shall be given a statement of the charges against him/her, and the individual shall have opportunity to present his/her case before the church. The church may vote to remove the individual from the membership if the charges and evidence warrant such action. In less serious matters, such a person may be placed under discipline and on the inactive membership list by vote of the church. He/she shall be restored to active membership only by vote of the church after satisfactory evidence is given of scriptural repentance and confession.
- C. During the last quarter of each year the Senior Pastor and deacons shall review the membership roll. Any member habitually absent from the services of the church without due cause, and who is negligent to spiritual duties, shall be removed from active membership by vote of the church, upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor and deacons, and placed on the inactive membership list. The individual shall be informed of this action. This section shall be implemented only after faithful efforts have been made to reclaim the member. Restoration to active membership shall be by vote of the church, upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons, only after there is satisfactory evidence of a renewed spiritual walk.
- D. No person on the inactive membership list shall be entitled to vote, hold office or teach.
- E. The Senior Pastor, deacons and members shall make a sincere effort to reclaim spiritually those on the inactive list. During the last quarter of each year the Senior Pastor and deacons shall review the inactive members. After one year of inactive status they shall be recommended to the church to be dropped from membership. A

permanent card file of these former members shall be maintained for continued, prayerful effort to reclaim them for Christ and the church.

- F. In the event of differences between members, it is recommended that they be settled personally in accordance with Matthew 18:15-16.
- G. If a member desires to prefer charges against another member, including violation of covenant obligations or of immoral, improper or unchristian conduct, such charges must be submitted to the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons in writing, and must be duly signed by the accuser.
- H. In order to prevent unnecessary public scandal, the Senior Pastor and deacons may hear the charges, pro and con, in any discipline case, if this is mutually satisfactory with the accused and the accuser. If the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons recommend dismissal, the recommendation must be presented to the church, preferably without details, for final action. The entire matter must be brought before the church at the request of the accuser, or of the church. No member may be dismissed except by vote of the church.
- I. No non-member shall be permitted in such a church meeting (as witness, defense or otherwise) without permission of three-fourths of the members present and voting.

### **Section 3 - Dismissal of Members**

- A. Removal from church membership shall be by death, letter or exclusion.
- B. Any member in good standing may be granted a letter of transfer to any church of like faith and practice, which may be requested by the member of the new church. The letter shall be sent to the church with which the member wishes to unite.
- C. A letter of removal from membership without recommendation may be sent to any other church.
- D. No member who has conducted himself in such a manner as to be cited for disciplinary action may be dropped from membership at his own request since such a procedure would remove him from the authority of the church.

### **Section 4 - Additional Regulations**

- A. The church shall vote on each candidate before baptism, to receive him/her into fellowship.
- B. Only active members shall serve as regular teachers in the church Sunday school or other groups.
- C. The church shall conduct regularly or periodically, according to need, classes for new members. These shall be taught by the Senior Pastor or some other competent leader. They shall include an overview of the Covenant and Constitution of Faith Baptist Church and instruction on such things as ordinances, church government,

responsibilities of church members, stewardship, prayer, Bible reading, witnessing for Christ, the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, basic doctrines (including separation to God from worldliness and apostasy), etc.

- D. It shall be deemed proper to receive members or grant letters at any meeting of the church. If disciplinary action is involved, it shall require a special business meeting of the church, the purpose of which shall be announced by letter to the members of voting age at least two weeks in advance.
- E. This church shall allow associate membership for students, or others who may be temporarily residing in the area, in which they will have all the privileges of membership except voting and holding elective offices of the church as stated under Article VII, Section 1, Paragraph A. When associate members cease attending and/or move away, their membership will be automatically dropped by discretion of the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons.
- F. Non-members participating in any church ministry such as usher, choir member or similar ministry are automatically putting themselves under the discipline of the church should it be deemed necessary.

## **ARTICLE VI - ORDINANCES**

### **Section 1 - Baptism**

Those professing faith in Christ shall, upon authorization of the church, be immersed in water by the Senior Pastor or someone else appointed by the church. Only those who are being received into the membership shall be baptized. Immersion, as a believer, shall be a prerequisite to church membership.

### **Section 2 - The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper shall normally be served to the assembled church by the Senior Pastor, or some other person authorized by the church, on the first Sunday of each month, or at such time as may be decided by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons. Since it is the Lord's Table, none that are His shall be barred, but the Senior Pastor shall frequently state the scriptural order, which places baptism as a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, and shall explain the meaning of the ordinances. The elements shall be unleavened bread and grape juice.

## **ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

### **Section 1 - Officers of the Church**

- A. The elected officers of the church shall be the Senior Pastor and deacons. All other officers are to be appointed by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons.
- B. No one shall be elected to office, with the exception of the Senior Pastor, who has not been a member of this church for at least one year, except that upon recommendation

of the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons a person may be considered by the church for office after six months of membership.

- C. All officers shall be spiritually mature, of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, dedicated and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual and material welfare of this church. They shall be faithful in attendance and participation, both in regular services and business meetings of the church. Their moral conduct shall be beyond reproach and free of carnal indulgences, such as the use of intoxicating beverages, tobacco in all forms, narcotic drugs and other worldly practices. They shall not be members of any type of secret organization. In the light of 1 Timothy 3, the home and family relationships must be considered, as well as individual qualifications. The candidate for office must give an unequivocal affirmation of his allegiance to the Articles of Faith.
- D. All officers shall normally assume their duties immediately following the election at the annual meeting in January. Retiring officers shall hold office until the terms of newly elected officers begin.
- E. Any officer unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties of his office shall resign. If it is not received within a reasonable time, the office shall be declared vacant by vote of the church.

## **Section 2 - The Senior Pastor**

- A. A candidate for the Senior Pastorate will be carefully examined by the Pulpit Committee as to his salvation, doctrine, Christian conduct and call to the ministry. If he has served in other churches, his ministry there should be explored. He shall be required to state his acceptance of and adherence to the Articles of Faith, Constitution and Covenant of the church. Any differences that he holds concerning these doctrines should be submitted to the Pulpit Committee in writing. He shall also state in writing any differences that he holds relating to groups and associations with which this church is in fellowship. The Pulpit Committee shall present only one man at a time for the consideration and vote of the church.
- B. A call to a Senior Pastor shall be extended at a meeting of the church called for that purpose and announced from the pulpit two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. A three-fourths majority of those present and voting shall be necessary for a call. Voting shall be by ballot. A written call and agreement shall be presented to the prospective Senior Pastor, giving details of church-pastor relationship, including salary, housing and car allowances, insurance, vacations, etc., after these matters have been discussed with the Senior Pastor and approved mutually.
- C. The Senior Pastor shall continue in office until he resigns or is dismissed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a special meeting called for that purpose except on moral issues, where church action should be taken immediately. Such a meeting shall be announced from the pulpit for two Sundays immediately preceding the date of such meeting (see Article IX, Section 2, E).

- D. The Senior Pastor shall give the church not less than thirty days or more than sixty days notice of his intentions to discontinue as Senior Pastor. The church shall give the Senior Pastor not less than sixty days notice of dismissal. If, in the judgment of the church, the conduct of the Senior Pastor justifies immediate termination of his ministry, the church may declare the pulpit vacant and pay two months salary beyond that date.
- E. The Senior Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church. He shall preach the gospel, teach the Word, and have charge of the services of the church. He shall administer the ordinances and perform the usual duties of a Baptist minister.
- F. The Senior Pastor shall secure speakers and programs for the church in conjunction with the approval of the Board of Deacons.
- G. The Senior Pastor shall moderate the business sessions of the church. In his absence, the chairman of the Board of Deacons shall call the meeting to order, and the church shall elect a moderator. If the Senior Pastor is to be under discussion in a business session, another moderator shall be elected, and the Senior Pastor and his family shall withdraw from the meeting.
- H. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees. He shall also be a member of the church.
- I. Salaries for necessary church staff shall be determined by the church, and qualified individuals are to be hired or dismissed by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons. These shall work under the direction and supervision of the Senior Pastor.

### **Section 3 - Deacons**

- A. The qualifications shall be as described and set forth in the New Testament (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). Reference shall be made to these qualifications when candidates for the office are under consideration.
- B. The church shall elect from its membership at least three deacons. The Board of Deacons shall enlarge at the discretion of the church membership. The term of office shall be for three years and so arranged that where possible one-third (1/3) of the board is elected each year. A deacon having served two consecutive three-year terms shall be eligible for re-election after an interval of at least one year.
- C. It shall be the duty of the deacons to assist the Senior Pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church; to be his helpers and counselors; to exercise prudent watch care over the church membership; to seek out such members as need alms; to visit the sick; to examine with the Senior Pastor candidates for church membership; and to supervise the preparation and distribution of the Lord's Supper.

- D. They shall appoint a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary from their number, keep minutes of their meetings in a permanent record, and report quarterly and annually to the church.
- E. At least four deacons shall be members of the Pulpit Committee, recommending candidates for the pastorate.
- F. They shall appoint the head usher to serve at all meetings of the church.
- G. They shall establish and administer the deacons' fund, which shall be for the purpose of aiding members and friends of the church who are in special needs.
- H. The deacons shall serve as trustees of this church. They shall not have authority to sell, lease, give away or dispose of church property in excess of \$3,500 in value; nor to mortgage or encumber the church with debt exceeding the above amount, except as the church shall order by corporate act. They shall be responsible for the care and upkeep of the physical properties of the church. All non-budgeted projects involving the expenditure of more than \$3,500 are to be submitted to the church for approval except in routine matters.

#### **Section 4 - Clerk**

- A. The church clerk shall be appointed annually by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons from the church membership, and shall have charge of the official correspondence. The clerk shall keep a record of all business meetings of the church, and shall keep in a bound book—a record of the membership, of baptisms, and of the reception and dismissal of members. The clerk shall perform such other duties as properly belonging to the office, and shall make annual reports to the church.
- B. The clerk shall provide the financial secretary and the treasurer promptly with a transcript of the minutes of each church business meeting in which authority is granted for the disbursements or transfer of funds.
- C. The clerk shall certify annually to the bank the names of officers who are authorized to have access to the safety deposit boxes and to sign checks for disbursements of funds.
- D. Upon retirement or removal from office, the clerk shall deliver to his/her successor, or the chairman of the Board of Deacons, all records, files and/or other papers belonging to the church, and shall present the same with all contents complete to the date of the surrender of such documents.

#### **Section 5 - Financial Secretary**

- A. The Board of Deacons shall appoint the church financial secretary. It shall be the duty of the financial secretary to oversee all receipts and disbursement of funds. This shall be done in accordance with the Financial Policies of FBC as established by the Finance Committee.



- B. The financial secretary shall be responsible for the oversight of the depositing of all funds in the bank, including monies received from organizations within the church or from individuals.
- C. The financial secretary shall provide the treasurer with a record of all monies received and deposited, specifying the distribution into various funds, as indicated by the donors or by special offerings.
- D. The chairman of the Board of Deacons shall assume the duties of financial secretary in the absence of the latter, except that he may not assume simultaneously the duties of the treasurer as outlined in Section 6.
- E. To ensure adequate separation of duties, the financial secretary shall not have the ability to record financial transactions to the book of record.

### **Section 6 - Treasurer**

- A. The church treasurer shall be appointed annually by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons from the church membership, and shall be responsible for the recording of all financial transactions in permanent records. This shall be done in accordance with the Financial Policies of FBC as established by the Finance Committee.
- B. To ensure adequate separation of duties, the Treasurer shall not have the ability to disburse funds.

### **Section 7 - Sunday School Superintendent**

- A. The Sunday school superintendent shall be appointed annually by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons from the church membership, and shall have general supervision over the Sunday school, teachers and officers. He shall carry out the program established by the Christian Education Committee, and shall report periodically and annually to the church.
- B. The Christian Education Committee shall appoint all teachers and other officers for the Sunday school, in consultation with the Senior Pastor.

## **ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1 – Finance Committee**

- A. The Finance Committee shall consist of the Senior Pastor, the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, and those appointed by the Deacons. The chairman shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Deacons. The Committee shall be responsible for presenting financial statements to the congregation on a quarterly basis.

- B. The duty of the committee shall be to prepare the budget for the ensuing year for the presentation to the church for its approval at the annual meeting.
- C. The committee shall function throughout the year to recommend budget revisions to the church as may be deemed necessary. shall also review the monthly financial statements.
- D. The Finance Committee shall be responsible for establishing the procedures and methods to be followed by the financial secretary and treasurer in maintaining the financial records.

## **Section 2 - Nominating Committee**

- A. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of at least five members, consisting of two deacons, the Sunday school superintendent, and two members-at-large selected by the Board of Deacons. The chairman shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons.
- B. The committee shall post a list of deacons, who qualify as described and set forth in the New Testament (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-13), in the church building at least two Sundays prior to the election.
- C. Before posting the nominations, the committee shall approach each nominee and secure consent, if elected, to serve in harmony with the Senior Pastor, the Constitution of the church, and the standards established for this office.

## **Section 3 – Financial Review Committee**

- A. The Financial Review Committee shall consist of a minimum of three members appointed by the Board of Deacons following the annual election. The chairman shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Deacons.
- B. It shall review all accounts of the church and certify same, reporting at the next quarterly business meeting.
- C. The Deacons may vote to authorize an audit by a professional auditing firm rather than by a committee.

## **Section 4 - Christian Education Committee**

- A. The Christian Education Committee shall consist of the director of Christian education (if there is such), two deacons, the Sunday school superintendent, an advisor from the Bible training programs and two other members of the church, who shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons. The chairman shall be other than the Sunday school superintendent.

- B. This committee shall supervise and coordinate the general teaching program of the church in the Sunday school, Bible training programs, Vacation Bible School and other special teaching programs, and shall make recommendations to the Board of Deacons concerning the literature to be used. The Board of Deacons shall make the final decision on the literature.
- C. It shall constitute a subcommittee for appointing all teachers and officers as applicable to the various teaching sections of the church, and shall assign rooms to the various groups.

### **Section 5 - Missionary Committee**

- A. The Missionary Committee shall consist of a select number of appointed deacons and church members. The chairman shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons.
- B. It shall recommend the missionaries and missionary projects to be supported by the church, and shall be informed of the missionary projects of auxiliary organizations of the church.
- C. The Missionary Committee shall maintain contacts with missionaries supported by the church, and encourage prayer for, and church-wide interest in these and other missionaries.

### **Section 6 - Hospitality Chairman**

The hospitality chairman shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons, and shall be responsible for arranging hospitality for visiting speakers, musical groups, etc. in consultation with the Senior Pastor.

### **Section 7 - Church Historian**

A church historian shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons, and shall keep an accurate record of the progressive history of the church.

### **Section 8 - Additional Committees**

- A. A Music Committee, a Flower Committee, an Advertising Committee and any others deemed necessary may be appointed by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons.
- B. If a Building Committee is needed, it shall be nominated by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons and elected by the church.
- C. All committees shall report annually to the church unless otherwise instructed.

## **ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS**

### **Section 1 - Public Worship**

- A. Public worship services shall be held regularly, morning and evening, on the Lord's Day. These services shall normally be given over to prayer, preaching and teaching of the Word, with appropriate musical ministry. Any other special presentation shall be subject to approval by the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons. Neither shall they be merged into union services with other denominations.
- B. At least once each week there shall be a meeting for prayer and praise.
- C. It shall be the practice of this church to observe the Lord's Supper at least once a month, at which time the church covenant may be read.

### **Section 2 - Business Meetings**

- A. The official church year shall begin January 1 and end December 31.
- B. The annual meeting shall be held on the third Sunday in January.
- C. A quarterly business meeting shall be held at the conclusion of the third Sunday evening service in the months of January, April, July, and October. At this time, written reports shall be read as required by the Constitution.
- D. The Senior Pastor or Board of Deacons or any ten percent of the voting membership of the church may call a special meeting by giving notice of the same and the purpose for which it is called, to the church at both regular stated services of worship, on the two Sundays prior to such meeting. No other business shall be transacted at such meeting save that which is stated in the purpose of the meeting.
- E. Only members sixteen years of age and above shall be eligible to vote. Only members eighteen years of age and above shall be eligible to vote upon corporate matters such as buying, selling or mortgaging of property, or elections of deacons.
- F. Those members present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum.

### **Section 3 - Rules of Order of Business**

The ordinary rules of deliberative assemblies shall be observed in the transaction of business, as set forth in *Robert's Rules of Order Revised*, Henry M. Robert, or *Parliamentary Law*, F. M. Gregg.

## **ARTICLE X - CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Section 1 - Sunday School**

- A. The purpose of the Sunday school is to lead people to the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, and to instruct them in the Word and in Christian living, including church attendance and membership.
- B. All teachers and class officers shall be members of the church.
- C. All teachers and officers shall be appointed annually.

### **Section 2 - Bible Training Programs**

- A. The purpose of the Bible training programs is to train Christian young people and adults for Christian service.
- B. All officers of the junior high age and above shall be members of the church.
- C. All counselors must first be approved by the Christian Education Committee. The literature shall be approved by the Board of Deacons.

### **Section 3 - Subsidiary Organizations**

- A. No subsidiary organization of the church shall engage in any practice or hold any policy contrary to the general position of the church itself. All officers and regular teachers shall be members of the church.
- B. All such organizations are self-governing but are subject finally to the control of the church in accordance with its Constitution and voted church policies.

## **ARTICLE XI - MISSIONS**

It shall be the policy of this church to support regularly missionaries engaged principally in evangelization and establishment of baptistic churches (schools, hospitals and similar ministries must be kept subordinate to the primary objectives). They shall be known to be in agreement with our confession of faith, both in doctrine and practice. The missions and missionaries shall be baptistic in practice, and shall be approved by the Missions Committee and the Board of Deacons. Christian schools and social agencies, such as homes for the aged, children's homes, etc., shall be considered an appropriate part of the missionary program.

Due to regulations of the Internal Revenue Service no designated gifts by a church member to individuals or organizations will be channeled through the church treasury, and if received, will be returned to the donor.

## **ARTICLE XII - GENERAL**

### **Section 1 - Use of the Church Property and Name**

- A. Use of the property for other than regularly scheduled meetings and church functions, such as weddings, funerals, etc. shall first be approved by the Board of Deacons.
- B. All gatherings off the church property held in the name of the church shall be subject to the approval of the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons.
- C. No secret society will be permitted to hold services in the church. The funeral of any person so associated may be held in the church if conducted by the Senior Pastor.
- D. Any visiting speaker must have the approval of the Senior Pastor.

### **Section 2 - Senior Pastor's Vacation and Salary**

- A. The Senior Pastor shall have not less than three weeks paid vacation each year.
- B. The Senior Pastor's salary shall be reviewed and determined at least once a year, with consideration being given to rising costs of living.
- C. Attendance at the annual GARBC conference shall not be considered part of the Senior Pastor's vacation. His attendance at such shall be encouraged, and the church, when possible, shall make allowances to cover travel and living expenses while there.
- D. The church shall allow the Senior Pastor to be absent for special meetings for two Sundays out of each year. Any requests beyond this shall be approved by the Board of Deacons. The church shall pay all substitute speakers.

### **Section 3 - Monetary Principles**

- A. The systematic giving of money for the support of the work of the Lord is worship as well as duty. The financial support of the church and its various activities shall be raised through tithes, offerings, and donations.
- B. A statement of each donor's account shall be given to him/her at the end of each year by the financial secretary. Numbered envelopes will be provided to enable proper records to be kept.

### **Section 4 - Legal Provisions**

- A. This church shall have the right to own, buy or sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through properly elected officers, when authorized by the vote of the church.
- B. No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any individual from the assets, holdings or other transactions in which this corporation may become involved.

- C. In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated by the Board of Deacons prior to dissolution to such other non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Articles of Faith adopted by this church, and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service Code of 1954 (Section 501 C-3).

### **ARTICLE XIII - INTERPRETATION**

The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. When a question of scriptural interpretation arises, the Senior Pastor is the church's sole authoritative interpreter of Scripture. When a question of constitutional interpretation arises, the decision of the Senior Pastor and Board of Deacons will be final.

### **ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS AND BYLAWS**

This Constitution may be amended, altered, revised or amplified at any business meeting by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, provided such proposed changes shall have been submitted to the membership during the preceding business meeting.