

# Constitution

**PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY**



**FBC**



# ARTICLE I

## DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF THIS CONSTITUTION

We hereby declare our belief and understanding that the Holy Scripture is the sole authority for all doctrine, governance, organization, and ministry outlined in this document. Our agreement with and support of this constitution, its principles, goals and objectives will assure the progress and prosperity of this body as we seek to glorify God in all that we undertake and accomplish. (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3, 13).

We herein set forth and establish our beliefs, objectives, and structure to promote unity. Oneness of mind among our members, and a clear understanding of who we are by those interested in joining our ranks, is essential to corporate happiness, health, harmony and fulfillment of God's purposes.

This constitution is a human instrument. By definition it is limited in its effectiveness. Our church is a living body of believers. Effective ministry, circumstance, spiritual and numerical growth may require revision(s) to this instrument. Accordingly, amendment to any part, or all of this constitution may be affected as provided in Article XIV.

Conferred authority, privileges, rights, responsibilities and duties granted in this constitution are designed to serve our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the sovereign God of the universe. (Eph. 1:22; 4:12-16). The powers herein established are derived from and subject to Holy Scripture alone. Nothing within this document, expressed or inferred, is of higher authority than the Word of God.

This document is written to provide essential and foundational direction for our separate and corporate functions and relationships. Its purpose is to enable all members, staff and leaders to effectively serve God and one another. Each member of this body is called by God to serve and lead with humility in a responsible and loving manner. Nothing within this document is of higher authority than that which God has vested in those He has called to serve and to lead in the local church. (Heb. 13:17).

# ARTICLE II

## NAME AND LOCATION

The name of this local church shall be First Baptist Church, Wentzville, Missouri, a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Missouri. The street address of the principal location of this corporation shall be: 653 Luetkenhaus Blvd., Wentzville, MO 63385.

The officers of the corporation shall be president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. The Senior Pastor shall serve as president, the Business Administrator shall serve as vice-president, the church clerk shall serve as secretary, and the church treasurer shall serve as treasurer.

# ARTICLE III

## MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### A. Our Mission

The supreme mission of the church, and so also of every individual believer, is to glorify God and to serve Him forever (Eph. 3:21; Rom. 11:36; 1 Pet. 4:11). We should not engage in any practice, individually or corporately that does not result in fulfillment of our supreme mission.

### B. Our Goals

Our goals are to serve God and bring glory to Him. Certain God-ordained goals are established in Scripture for the local church. These are basically set forth in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

#### 1. Equipping Believers

Equipping the saints unto the work of the ministry in all its aspects along with their spiritual maturity in the Lord, is the second great goal of this church (Eph. 4:12-16; Col. 1:28-29).

#### 2. Evangelization of the Lost

Reaching the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ, both at home and abroad, is to be one of the goals of this church (Rom. 1:14-16; 1 Thess. 1:8; Acts 1:8).

### C. Our Objectives

#### 1. Internal Objectives and Functions

(a) Instruction in the Word of God—Teaching: To stand for the historic, fundamental truths of Scripture, and through Scripture, to equip the saints for service, and for the building up of the body of Christ for unity, knowledge of the Son of God, and maturity, measured by the stature of the fullness of Christ, and for protection against the deceitful scheming of Satan (Eph. 4:12-16).

(b) Fellowship: To encourage and provide for means of developing meaningful relationships among believers (expressions of sharing with and caring for, and loving one another, warning, stimulating, and encouraging one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24-25; 13:1-2; Acts 2:42-47).

(c) Worship: To provide the means for developing and expressing meaningful worship in prayer, songs of praise, adoration, admonishment, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper (Heb. 13:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-34; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:42).

(d) Ministry: To provide the means for developing and exercising spiritual gifts for the edification of the body and the evangelization of the lost (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).



## **2. External Objectives and Functions**

(a) Evangelism: To present the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have never trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and to encourage them to trust in Him (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Thess. 1:2-10).

(b) Holy Behavior: To live holy lives in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation acting as salt and as lights in the world (Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:11-15; Col. 4:5).

(c) Showing Mercy: To do good to all men whenever there is the opportunity and the means to do so within biblical principles and precepts (Gal. 6:10; Luke 10:29-37).

Our mission, goals and objectives set forth our philosophy of the local church and its ministry. This, in turn, must form the foundation for our thinking and activities as a body of people. It directs us in what we ought to be doing.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **DOCTRINE**

Since the Word of God is foundational and absolutely essential to true spirituality, fellowship, spiritual sustenance, effectiveness in service and ministry, faith and doctrinal accuracy, we believe that the most important function of this local church, and its central thrust, is consistent teaching and study of the Word of God (1 Tim. 4:6-7).

The study of the Word of God is not an end in itself, but it is a high priority and a necessary channel for fellowship with God and thereby also of effective ministry to one another and to the world. It will not therefore, be bypassed or made secondary in the interest of social concerns, actions, or activities, but must be so promoted that the Word, and the teaching of the Word, become the pulse and heartbeat behind all church and non-church related activities or concerns (Psa. 119:1ff; 138:2; Isa. 66:2b; Rom. 15:4; 16:25-26; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 1:5; 4:1-16; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 4:1-3).

This local church shall thus function as an independent, Southern Baptist Bible church, committed to the fundamental, historic truths recorded in God's inerrant revelation—the Holy Scriptures. To hold positions within First Baptist Church, Wentzville all Leadership Team members, ministry team leaders, pastoral staff, deacons and teachers must wholeheartedly agree with the Doctrinal Statement, Article V, of this church.



# ARTICLE V

## DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

### BAPTIST FAITH & MESSAGE 2000

#### A. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21*

#### B. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

##### 1. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

*Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7*

##### 2. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin.

He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross. He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

*Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16*

### **3. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17*

### **C. Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy



fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11*

#### **D. Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

1. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

2. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

3. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

4. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

*Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5*

#### **E. God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2*

## **F. The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

*Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3*

## **G. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12*



## **H. The Lord's Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10*

## **I. The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22*

## **J. Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13*

## **K. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17*

## **L. Education**

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

*Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17*

## **M. Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

*Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19*

## **N. Cooperation**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.



Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

*Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18*

#### **O. The Christian and the Social Order**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

*Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8*

#### **P. Peace and War**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; 777; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2*

#### **Q. Religious Liberty**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it.

Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

*Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19*

### **R. The Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; Psalms 127; Psalms 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7*



## ARTICLE VI

### GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The local church body is composed of one body with many members all of whom are in vital relationship with Jesus Christ, but the body also has “joints of supply,” units of control, and unity, i.e., church leaders (Eph. 4:16). This together suggests body participation under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ with leadership direction, submission, and authority in a two- directional manner.

First, the local government is invested in the body of believers who compose the local body under the headship of Jesus Christ according to the Word of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 18:20; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 5:21; Col. 1:18; 2:19).

Second, executive authority or leadership, however, is invested by the congregation, as authorized by Scripture, in a Leadership Team who leads the church and to whom the congregation is to submit under the headship of Christ. These men have the authority and responsibility to delegate to individuals, committees, or other teams (such as the Deacon Team) authority and responsibility to carry out the business or ministry of the church in spiritual and physical (material) matters (Acts 20:28; 15:6; Eph. 4:11-12; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17).

In using its delegated authority, and in making its decisions, the Leadership Team must seek to be guided by the Scripture, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and by input from the congregation (Acts 20:32; 6:2-5a; 11:22; 15:22; 2 Cor. 8:19).

In the event of the misuse of the delegated authority, the church has recourse to the principles as set forth in Articles VII, XI, and XIII.

Insofar as it is practical, this church will cooperate with, and support the Twin Rivers Association, the Missouri Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. The Leadership Team shall appoint messengers to represent it at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Missouri Baptist Convention, the association, and the quarterly meeting of the Executive Board.

## ARTICLE VII

### LEADERSHIP TEAM (ELDERS)

#### A. Qualifications

The Leadership Team shall be composed of the pastoral staff and ordained men whose lives are characterized by the qualities set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. These qualities can be categorized as:

- (1) They must desire the office of elder and demonstrate spiritual leadership abilities among the flock.
- (2) They must be able to teach and use the Word of God with wisdom and patience.

- (3) They must be lovers of God. Men who take God and His Word seriously.
- (4) They must be able to manage their household in a biblical manner.
- (5) They must be able to spiritually manage their interpersonal relationships.
- (6) They must be men who are seeking to be controlled by Christ and His Word rather than by worldly and fleshly desires.
- (7) These men shall hold to the doctrinal statement of this Constitution in accord with the statements of Article V, and be supportive of the entire Constitution.

## **B. Authority**

The ministry of First Baptist Church, Wentzville shall be under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ working in and through the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team will be the primary decision-making body within the church. However, it is critical that the Leadership Team make decisions based on carefully assembled facts, scriptural insight, the individual and corporate leading by the Holy Spirit, and input from the body (Acts 6:5; 15:6, 22; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13).

Jesus Christ Himself is the Head and Ruler of the church. However, as seen in Article VI, the Lord Jesus leads and directs through both the body and the elders (Leadership Team). Since the Lord Jesus dwells in each member of the body of Christ, and so leads and directs through the body as to needs, desires, and responsibilities for each local body, it is important and necessary for the Leadership Team to seek input, information and guidance from the body, especially on practical matters of church life. As a result of these biblical facts, in major decisions of church life, the congregation will vote to show a unified movement toward the direction in question and to show a sense of God's leading. The Leadership Team of elders will not move forward with a major decision unless, or until, the majority of the body is unified on the matter. The following illustrates the major areas:

- (1) Making major financial decisions (Article XII).
- (2) Adding or removing pastoral staff members (Article VIII).
- (3) Adding to or removing leaders from the Leadership Team (Article VII).
- (4) Carrying out church discipline (Article XI).
- (5) Long Range Planning Decisions

NOTE: When a vote is taken, the procedure outlined in Article X, Section F shall be followed.

## **C. Duties**

Because of external and internal Christian testimony to be promoted with the local body, the Leadership Team must first and foremost exercise a personal spiritual walk which promotes self examination, maintain a servant-like quality in life, and serve with gentleness and humility in all that he does. Out of his biblical perspective, the Leadership Team member is to joyfully undertake the following duties:

- (1) Give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.



- (2) Guard and protect the flock.
- (3) Oversee and provide spiritual direction for the activities and growth of the flock.
- (4) Aid in finding and developing gifted teachers of the Word (2 Tim. 2:2).
- (5) Warn and discipline as outlined in Article XI.
- (6) Support, encourage, counsel and lead in humility.
- (7) See to the appointment of deacons as per Article IX.
- (8) Provide guidance to the deacons as needed.
- (9) See to the oversight of the finances of the flock per Article XII.
- (10) Pray for and encourage the sick.
- (11) Seek the Lord's will to interpret the Articles and provisions of this Constitution in the light of Scripture.
- (12) Make decisions and perform any other duties as situations within the church dictate, either directly or through proper and orderly delegation of team ministry or persons as necessary.

The Leadership Team shall strive to maintain open communication with the flock, both to discern needs, concerns and viewpoints, and to communicate information and decisions. This may be done through the Sunday bulletin, pulpit announcements, congregational meetings, votes, and one-on-one personal contact (Acts 6:1-5; 11:22; 15:1, 6, 22; 16:2).

#### **D. Appointment (General Principles)**

The Scriptures emphasize that leaders in the church are not appointed by men, but by God (Acts 20:28). The task of the people in the church then, should be to seek and discover God's direction and leading within the church body in the appointment of the Leadership Team.

The need for an additional Leadership Team member, or additional staff, paid or non-paid, may be recognized by either the Leadership Team or other members of the church body.

If the Leadership Team determines that additional members are needed, the church would be asked to prayerfully and carefully seek God's direction concerning prospective team members.

Names would be submitted to the Leadership Team for their prayerful consideration.

It is the purpose of First Baptist Church, Wentzville to base the selection process upon an orderly, proper sequence of events, which will most easily facilitate the recognition of God's appointment of men to this ministry. The whole flock should be on the alert for men whose lives characterize the qualifications laid out in Scripture. Only qualified men will be appointed. If no qualified men are available, or if men are unwilling to serve, who would otherwise be qualified, no appointment will be made. The church should wait on the Lord either to remove the need or to provide qualified

men.

The Scriptures speak of two categories of leadership within a church body: non-paid leadership and paid leadership (1 Tim. 5:17-18). The following procedures outline the steps necessary to appoint Leadership Team members.

#### **E. Appointment of Non-Paid Leaders**

When the need arises for a new non-paid Leadership Team member (either for a new position or to replace a leader who has left the Team), the existing Leadership Team should assume a guiding and directing role in the search for the right man. The specific nature of the need and the decision to seek a new leader should be announced to the flock. The flock will be asked to suggest qualified men for the position based on the biblical criteria for leadership (elders). (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:6-9; Acts 14:23; 6:1ff).

After a period of time and prayerful consideration, the Leadership Team will meet to consider all the nominees as to their qualifications for the position. If the Leadership Team believes a man to be qualified, after they have considered the man's qualifications, a member of the Team will be appointed to approach each nominee to explain the specific nature of the need and to determine his willingness to serve (1 Tim. 5:22).

If the Team nominee(s) signifies his understanding of the specific nature of the need and his willingness to serve, the Leadership Team will announce this to the flock. A time and place will be announced for conducting a vote by the flock to insure substantial agreement among the flock and of God's selection of the nominee(s) (Acts 15:22). The vote will be conducted as outlined in Article X, Section F.

After the above steps are successfully completed, the appointment of the man as a non-paid leader will be announced to the flock. The church will ordain the new leader (elder).

#### **F. Tenure**

Leadership Team members are appointed to an indefinite tenure consistent with their continued desire and ability to serve in this capacity. This must be evaluated and recognized by themselves, by the other team leaders, and by the church body (Rom. 12:3-8). The removal of Leadership Team members from office shall be effected by personal resignation or by disciplinary actions in accordance with the following: Article VII, sections G & H.

#### **G. Voluntary Resignation**

Any Leadership Team member may step down at any time he so chooses. The Leadership Team member should prayerfully reflect on his decision and seek counsel from the Leadership Team before making a final decision.

#### **H. Involuntary Dismissal**

Involuntary dismissal of any church leader, paid or non-paid, will be a disciplinary action of the church body in accordance with the instruction of 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Galatians 6:1 and Matthew 18:15-18. The specific procedures for this are spelled out in Article XI with the following differences:



(1) If the situation is such that it necessitates dismissal from office, the Leadership Team may suggest voluntary resignation by the person involved. If he refuses, or believes he has been unfairly treated, then it is to be brought before the congregation to hear the issues and to allow the person concerned to present his case. It will then be decided by a simple majority vote of the body at a congregational meeting. The body must be informed of such meeting at least two weeks prior to the time of the meeting.

(2) If members of the body believe they are not being properly and biblically represented by the Leadership Team or any member of the Leadership Team, they are to follow the procedures of Matthew 18:15-16 and first discuss the issues with the Leadership Team. If, after following the above procedures, the issue is not resolved, then they have the right and may call for a congregational meeting (Matt. 18:17) where the issues may be presented and ruled on by a simple majority vote of the congregation. Again, a two-week announcement period will be necessary before the meeting can be held. The congregation, at such time, may remove any or all members of the Leadership Team.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **PASTOR / STAFF AND MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS**

#### **A. Pastor-Teacher**

The pastor plays a critical role in the growth, maturity, spirituality and effectiveness of the church. He is responsible for the leadership of the church and the quality and content of the teaching and counseling within the flock (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 4:6-16). First Baptist Church, Wentzville recognizes that the Lord has given spiritual gifts to all believers and therefore does not expect the pastor alone to provide all the teaching, evangelism, counseling, etc., within the body (Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). Rather they are to equip the saints “for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12).

#### **B. Pastor: Duties, Qualifications and Authority**

The duties, qualifications and authority of the pastor shall be the same as Article VII, with the following additional duties:

- (1) Provide leadership in conjunction with the Leadership Team and church body, concerning church business, ministry, and spiritual concerns within the body.
- (2) Provide the majority of the preaching/teaching during worship services (1 Tim. 4; 13).
- (3) The Senior Pastor shall supervise the paid church staff (secretaries, assistant pastors, youth pastors, etc.).
- (4) Coordinate the administration of the ordinances (baptism and the Lord’s supper).

### **C. Senior Pastor: Search and Selection**

Upon recognition of the need for a new Senior Pastor, the Leadership Team will guide and direct the selection process. The attitude of the Leadership Team should be one of submission to the Lord, waiting on Him to fill the need with the right man. They should also be expectant, knowing that God will provide a man to fill the need.

The following procedure outlines the method First Baptist Church, Wentzville will follow in selecting the Search and Selection Team:

- (1) The selection team shall be appointed with a member of the Leadership Team as the head of the team. The team shall consist of the Leadership Team along with, at least an equal number of members from the flock.
- (2) The flock will be asked to suggest qualified members for a position on the Search and Selection Team.
- (3) After a period of time and prayerful consideration, the Leadership Team will meet to consider all the nominees as to their qualifications for the position. If the Leadership Team believes a member to be qualified, a member of the Leadership Team will be appointed to approach each nominee to determine their willingness to serve.
- (4) If the nominee(s) signifies their willingness to serve, the Leadership Team will announce this to the flock. A time and place will be announced for conducting a vote by the flock to insure substantial agreement among the flock and of God's selection of the nominee(s). The vote will be conducted as outlined in Article X, Section F.

### **D. Paid Pastor(s): Tenure and Removal**

Tenure and removal of a paid leader will follow the same guidelines as outlined in Article VII.

### **E. Associate Pastoral Staff**

Any member of the church body or leadership may recognize the need for paid associate pastoral staff to assist in meeting the needs of the flock. The Senior Pastor (in consultation with the Leadership Team) must agree to such need before action is taken. The need for this expenditure should be discussed with the flock.

The Senior Pastor will supervise the selection for any associate staff. He will make recommendation to the church body for approval of additional staff.

All paid pastoral staff will look to the Senior Pastor for supervision of their duties and for periodic reviews of their performance. A written job description will be prepared for all paid staff members. The Senior Pastor in consultation with the Leadership Team will prepare this description.

After appropriate consultation with the Leadership Team, a recommendation by the Senior Pastor will be sufficient for modifying the duties or redirecting the efforts of any paid staff member.

### **F. Non-Pastoral Staff**

The hiring of baby sitters, janitorial services, church treasurer, additional secretary's



etc., will be planned for and directed by the responsible pastoral staff.

The Senior Pastor's secretary will be working primarily for the Senior Pastor. He will make the final decision, in consultation with the Leadership Team, on whom will fill the position.

#### **G. Ministry Team Leaders**

The Leadership Team will approve ministry team leaders. Team leaders will receive volunteers who desire to serve on their particular ministry team.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **DEACONS**

#### **A. Qualifications**

Deacons shall be men who desire to be servants of the local church body, who are able to serve, who meet all the qualifications of Scripture set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-12, and who are conscientiously and wholeheartedly in agreement with the Constitution of this church.

#### **B. Duties**

In Acts 6:1-4, certain men were appointed to minister to the physical needs of the flock, to relieve the elders so they would have more time to concentrate on prayer and on the Word. These were undoubtedly the first deacons and functioned as helpers to the leaders of the Jerusalem church. (These leaders were forerunners of the elders in the New Testament church.)

Deacons shall be helpers of the pastors in ministering to the needs of the body, especially the physical needs, though they may serve in other capacities as their gifts and training allow.

Their specific duties will be designated by the deacon team in consultation with the Senior Pastor according to the need of the church and a deacon's particular gifts, capacities, and talents.

#### **C. Appointment**

Deacons shall be appointed to serve as long as they are qualified and willing to serve and as long as a need for their ministry exists.

First Timothy 3:10 teaches those potential deacons are to be tested. The primary means of testing is time; time for the flock to evaluate a man's commitment to the Lord, his qualifications according to 1 Timothy 3:8-12, his doctrinal understanding, and his willingness to serve the local body. The flock and the Leadership Team should be on the alert to those men who demonstrate the qualifications of a deacon.

In the New Testament church, both the church leaders and the flock played an important role in choosing deacons (Acts 6:1-6). Deacons will be appointed as the need arises. However, only qualified and willing men will be appointed. If no qualified men are available, or if those qualified are unable or unwilling to serve, no

appointment will be made. The following outlines the procedure First Baptist Church, Wentzville will follow in selecting deacons:

- (1) The Leadership Team shall decide if the need for a deacon(s) exists.
- (2) When there is a need, the Leadership Team shall notify the congregation of the need and ask them to recommend to the Leadership Team those men whom they believe meet the qualifications.
- (3) The Leadership Team will review the names submitted to them along with any additional names of men they believe to be qualified.
- (4) Each name submitted will be carefully and prayerfully considered and reviewed according to their qualifications, gifts, the need, and the individual's willingness to serve.
- (5) If the nominee(s) signifies their willingness to serve, the Leadership Team will announce this to the flock. A time and place will be announced for conducting a vote by the flock to insure substantial agreement among the flock and of God's selection of the nominee(s). The vote will be conducted as outlined in Article X, Section F.

#### **D. Removal of Deacons**

##### **1. Voluntary**

A deacon may voluntarily step down from his position at any time he so chooses. The deacon should prayerfully reflect on his decision and seek counsel from the Leadership Team before making a final decision.

##### **2. Involuntary Dismissal**

Involuntary dismissal of a deacon shall be in accord with the procedures for church discipline outlined in Article XI. If the situation is such that it necessitates dismissal from office, the Leadership Team may suggest voluntary resignation by the person involved. If he refuses, the Leadership Team, may remove him from office, but only after the principles for church discipline have been prayerfully considered and followed (Matt. 18:15-18).

## **ARTICLE X**

### **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

#### **A. Union in the Universal Body of Christ**

At the time of personal faith in Jesus Christ, the believer is called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:2, 9; 12:12-13, 20; Col. 1:18), and joined into union with the universal body of Christ, the church, by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col. 1:18).

#### **B. Union With a Local Assembly of Believers**

There is another aspect of this fellowship into which the believer is joined. He is brought into the fellowship of fellow members of that body, other living believers



on earth that he might share and participate in the various blessings and ministries of the body of Christ. For this to occur properly, believers are to seek the fellowship of one another in a local body or assembly of believers to which they are to become responsible, a mini-flock, so to speak, of the greater and universal flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2-3; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1).

Believers in isolation, operating independently of other believers of a local assembly, is an idea contrary to Scripture. Scripture teaches that there are to be local assemblies of believers, united together by a common faith, by union in Christ, and the universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, by common purposes, commitments and responsibilities, and with a common leadership of that specific body, independent in government from other local assemblies (Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13). The local church is to be a body of people allotted to the charge of elders (1 Pet. 5:1-3; 1 Thess. 5:11; 1 Pet. 4:8-10; 1 Cor. 12:20-27), and subject to the discipline of that body or assembly (1 Cor. 5:2; 1 Thess. 5:14 [admonish the unruly], 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; 1 Tim. 5:20).

This of necessity implies more than a loose relationship of a believer or believers to a particular body or assembly. It involves a tie, an involvement, a commitment, responsibility, and submission to both the leadership and to each other.

### **C. Church Membership**

The Scriptures contain neither a mandate for, nor a command against, an official membership roll. In Acts, we see that believers were added to the church in Jerusalem. However, this serves primarily to show the growth in the early church (Acts 2:47; 9:31; 16:5). These people were devoting themselves to a local assembly and its leadership for teaching, leadership, fellowship and worship (Acts 2:42). There were also letters of commendation or acceptance written on behalf of both men and women to be welcomed and accepted into the fellowship of various assemblies. These letters commended believers to other assemblies regarding their faithfulness and ministry. (Rom. 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 16:10; Col. 4:10; 2 Cor. 3:1; 8:16-24).

The emphasis of these Scriptures is that every believer become identified and committed to a specific local assembly of believers following the leading and direction of God. This commitment is revealed by their attitude, faith, attendance, involvement, giving and submission to that assembly. Thus a membership roll cannot, in and of itself, serve as the sole means of commitment a believer has to a local body.

First Baptist Church, Wentzville does have a membership roll to aid in conducting ministry in an orderly manner and to provide legal protection in important, yet potentially controversial church decisions (such as discipline, Article XI). An individual's decision to be placed on the membership roll should flow from their commitment to the church. It is however, an important tool in helping the church function smoothly.

### **D. Procedure for Membership**

Any individual who confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and has been baptized by immersion and who understands and is in agreement with this Constitution and membership agreement is qualified and eligible for membership

in First Baptist Church, Wentzville. The church will not solicit anyone to become a member and thus will respect the privacy and personal initiative of the individual in this matter. Anyone who desires to become a member should request membership. The Senior Pastor will meet with the individual if they desire to discuss this decision. If the individual understands and meets the qualifications for membership, and attends the appropriate new member orientation classes he/she will be acknowledged before the flock as a new member.

Members 18 years or older may vote during business ministry meetings.

## **MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT**

“Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with First Baptist Church, Wentzville statements, strategy and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the First Baptist Church, Wentzville family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

### **I. I will protect the unity of my church...**

...By acting in love toward other members

...By refusing to gossip

...By following the leaders

“So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony and on the growth of our fellowship together.” Rom. 14:19 (Phillips)

“Live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ toward each other.” Rom 15:5 (LB)

“Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts.” 1 Peter 1:22 (GN)

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...” Eph. 4:29

“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you.” Heb. 13:17

### **II. I will share the responsibility of my church...**

...By praying for its growth

...By inviting the unchurched to attend

...By warmly welcoming those who visit

“To the church...we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly.”  
*1 Thess. 1:2*

“Go out into the country...and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full.” *Luke 14:23 (LB)*

“So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified.” *Rom. 15:7 (LB)*



### **III. I will serve the ministry of my church...**

...By discovering my gifts and talents

...By being equipped to serve by my church leaders

...By developing a servant's heart

...By actively participating in its ministries

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you..."

*1 Peter 4:10 (Ph)*

"God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." *Eph. 4:11-12*

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant..." *Phil 2:3-4, 7*

### **IV. I will serve the testimony of my church...**

...By attending faithfully

...By living a godly life

...By giving regularly

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another." *Heb. 10:25*

"But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ." *Phil. 1:27 (Ph)*

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering."

*1 Cor. 16:2*

"A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's, and it is holy." *Lev. 27:30*

### **E. Membership Roll**

The Senior Pastor will review the membership roll annually. Members may be removed from the roll by the member(s) choice, by church discipline (Article XI), or by noninvolvement with the body. If an individual appears to no longer be involved with the church, with a reasonable attempt, will be made to contact them to verify their membership status. No individual will be removed from the roll without being contacted by the Senior Pastor.

### **F. Voting and Congregational Meetings**

All voting in this church is designed to show God's leading within the flock on an issue. Unless specifically indicated differently within the Constitution, a two-thirds, majority vote in favor of an issue shall signify to the church leadership that the flock agrees that God is leading favorably in the decision being voted on. If the two-thirds majority vote in favor is not achieved, the leadership will reevaluate the situation. No steps will be taken on any issue that requires a vote without the two-thirds majority.

Any active member of the church 18 years or older may vote. The person may vote in person or they may vote absentee. An absentee vote is valid if the person writes down on any piece of paper the issue being voted on, their vote, and their signature. Absentee votes must be turned in no later than the date of the meeting.

There will be an **annual business ministry meeting** with notification given two weeks prior to the meeting.

The flock will be advised of the date and time of a special ministry meeting for at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

#### **G. Active and Inactive Members**

Any member who is known to have attended a worship service at the church within the previous six (6) months shall be considered an active member. Anyone who is physically unable to attend, but continues to cooperate with the church as physically and financially able, shall be considered an active member.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **CORRECTIVE CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

We believe in the responsibility and necessity of church discipline as clearly outlined in Scripture. It is a very difficult area and hard to practice. Nevertheless, church discipline has the divine authority of Scripture and is vital to the purity of the church. In church discipline, the following matters must be carefully understood and applied.

#### **A. The Pattern and Basis for Discipline**

The discipline of the church is first patterned after the fact that the Lord Himself disciplines His children (Heb. 12:6) and, as a father delegates part of the discipline of the children to the wife, so the Lord has delegated the discipline of the church family to the church itself.

Discipline is further based on the holy character of God (1 Pet. 1:16; Heb. 12:11). The pattern of God's holiness, his desire for the church to be holy, set apart unto Him, is an important reason for the necessity of church discipline. The church is therefore to clean out the leaven of malice and wickedness from its ranks (1 Cor. 5:6-8). A failure to discipline in a church today evidences a lack of awareness of the holiness of God.

Church discipline must be patterned after and based on the divine commands of Scripture. We have numerous passages which both command and give us biblical directives on the how, when and where of church discipline. Again, a failure to exercise this responsibility demonstrates a lack of obedience and belief in the authority of the Bible (1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1).

A final basis for the necessity of church discipline is the testimony of the church in the world. The world observes the behavior and life of the church. When the church acts no differently than the world it loses its credibility and authenticity (1 Pet. 2:11-18; 3:8-16; 4:1-4).

#### **B. The Purposes of Church Discipline**

(1) Concern for the glory of God and the testimony of the flock.



- (2) The restoration and building up of the sinning believer.
- (3) The winning of a soul to Christ (if only a professing Christian).
- (4) The purity of the local body and its protection from moral and doctrinally impure influences, knowing a little leaven can leaven the entire lump (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

Such goals govern the spirit in which all disciplinary action is to be given. Thus:

- (1) It must be done in the spirit of humility, gentleness and patience, looking to yourself lest you too be tempted (Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:24-25).
- (2) Those who walk disorderly are to be admonished, warned, and appealed to in love (1 Thess 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:2). This admonishing, etc., is not restricted to the leaders but may be done by any member (1 Thess. 5:14).
- (3) If there is no response in repentance and obedience, then members are to withhold intimate fellowship until there is obedience (2 Thess. 3:6, 14). This is to indicate to the offender that his action has caused a rupture in the harmony of the body. Its goal is restoration and the person is still to be counted as a brother (2 Thess. 3:14-15).
- (4) If the person persists after admonition and withdrawal of intimate fellowship, the final step is rejection or excommunication (Titus 3:10; Matt. 18:17b), accompanied by public rebuke before all (1 Tim. 5:20). Examples of church discipline are found in Scripture. The Corinthian believers were to be “gathered together” in order to take action against the offending brother (II Cor. 2:6). We also find that it was the whole church in Rome and in Thessalonica who were to take action with regard to the unruly and schismatic and not just a few (2 Thess. 3:6-15; Rom. 16:17).
- (5) Finally, discipline in the name of our Lord always includes a readiness to forgive. The many or majority who discipline must also be ready and eager to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm their love to the sinning person (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

## **C. The Practice of Church Discipline**

### **1. When it is to be Practiced**

Great care must be exercised here. Scripture does not warrant the exercise of church discipline for an individual or a church’s pet taboos or peeves. According to Scripture, there are five categories that warrant church discipline. These are:

- (a) Difficulties between members (Matt. 18:15-17).
- (b) Divisiveness. People causing divisions in the church (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11).
- (c) Disorderly conduct. Conduct clearly out of line with the prescribed commands of Scripture (2 Thess. 3:6-15).
- (d) Sins of the type mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5: incest, immorality, covetousness, idolatry, abusive speech, drunkenness, and swindling (1 Cor. 5:1, 11).

(e) False teaching. Erroneous teaching and views which concern the fundamentals of the faith, not lesser differences of interpretation (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18; also implied in Rev. 2:14–16; Phil. 3:2-3, 15-19; Rom. 16:17-18).

The key concerns here are: (a) the holy character of God, (b) the testimony of the flock, (c) the effect upon the unity and purity of the flock, and (d) the edification and restoration of the individual.

## **2. How it is to be Practiced**

Scriptural procedure here is clear and specific steps are prescribed. They are as follows:

(a) Recognize the offense. Caution—one must be sure it is an offense which calls for discipline. Again, the Word is our criterion.

(b) Seek private correction and/or reconciliation with the offender (Matt. 18:15). This is when the problem involves two believers. The one offended or the one who recognizes the offense is to go privately and try to rectify the problem. If this fails, he is to take witnesses, preferably spiritual leaders, so that if it must be brought before the whole church it can be firmly proven or established (Matt. 18:16-17).

(c) Seek reconciliation through the spiritual leadership if the problem involves an offense that is against the whole body, or is a threat to its unity. Initiatory action following the concept of Galatians 6:1 should be taken by the mature spiritual leaders of the church rather than by just one person. “You who are spiritual” in Gal. 6:1 is plural meaning literally, “you, the spiritual ones ...” These initial contacts provide opportunity for loving admonition, correction and forgiveness. On the other hand, if these first steps are not heeded, it constitutes a warning that further action will be taken and gives occasion for serious rebuke (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:12-14; Titus 2:15; 3:10).

(d) Seek reconciliation through the whole body. If further action is necessary, it is to be taken before the whole church (Matt. 18:17). This action would consist of a minimum of loss of voting privileges, but may result in more severe action. Any action taken must be approved by a congregational vote as outlined in Article X, Section F.

In essence then, this is the action of the Lord carrying out discipline through the action of the whole body through the Leadership Team or the spiritually mature (1 Cor. 5:4 “in the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled,... with the power of our Lord Jesus...”). Similar heavenly authority is seen in the ratification of this disciplinary action as spelled out in Matthew 18:18-19).



# ARTICLE XII

## FINANCES

Believers are to give financially from an attitude of commitment to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:1-6). It is the policy of First Baptist Church, Wentzville to keep the congregation informed of financial needs by means of the weekly bulletin, announcements from the pulpit, or other means as necessary. The purpose of this information is not to coerce or pressure anyone into giving, but rather to provide avenues for giving. Each believer is to give according to their ability with a cheerful heart (2 Cor. 9:7).

Each believer is to give as God provides from an attitude of cheerfulness and commitment to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:12-15; 9:7), recognizing that we are only stewards of what God already owns. Because giving is done unto the Lord, it is critical that the local church handles the finances given with care and wisdom both for the glory of the Lord and for the testimony of the church (2 Cor. 8:20-21). With this view in mind, the following outlines the policies of handling financial decisions:

(1) All paid staff shall be paid a salary commensurate to their duties and abilities (1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6-7; 1 Cor. 9:6-11).

(2) All gifts given as a designated gift will be used as designated so long as those designations are in accord with biblical principles. If any special gifts are given with the directions to use it in whatever area has the greatest need, the Leadership Team will decide how that gift will be used. All other gifts will go into the general fund.

(3) The local church has the privilege and responsibility to provide financial support for those in service for the Lord (missionaries, seminary students, etc. [Phil. 4:14-17; 2 Cor. 8:1-5]). First Baptist Church, Wentzville will support certain of those in service as the Lord leads and provides. All of these supported must hold a doctrinal view in agreement with the doctrinal statement presented in this Constitution.

(4) On an annual basis, during the fourth quarter of the year, the Lay Leadership Team will examine the salaries of all paid staff members, receiving recommendation from the Lay Leadership Team regarding the Senior Pastor and recommendation from the Senior Pastor regarding paid staff. The Leadership Team shall work together to ensure the budgeting process is completed before the beginning of each new fiscal year. Each ministry team, staff member, or organizational head that will require expenditures from the general fund shall present, no later than October 1, a proposed budget for their ministry team for the upcoming fiscal year. The Leadership Team will use this information and anticipated giving to develop a budget for the coming year to be presented to the congregation for approval at the annual budget ministry meeting. The final decisions made per this procedure will be recorded in the written minutes of the next Leadership Team meeting following the annual budget ministry meeting.

# EXPENDITURE AUTHORIZATION SCHEDULE

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- (1) All expenditures must be in accordance with the approved budget, unless approved otherwise by the Business Administrator in consultation with the Leadership Team. (Note: The budget is a guideline and not an authorization to spend.)
- (2) Expenditure authorization is to be obtained “before” an expense is incurred. An exception is made for regular monthly expenditures (e.g. utility and telephone bills).
- (3) A completed voucher is required before cash disbursement. (Vouchers are available in the church office.
- (4) All expenditures are to be supported by a receipt or appropriate documentation. Sign and date the voucher when submitting for payment approval. Be certain that the expense description is clear enough for a third party to understand (e.g. an auditor).
- (5) The Business Administrator is to approve the expenditure by signing and dating the voucher.
- (6) If in doubt about church expenditures, please ask for clarification from the church treasurer, or Business Administrator.
- (7) The Business Administrator shall make monthly reports to the Leadership Team.
- (8) It is the obligation of the Business Administrator to make all purchasing decisions in accordance with the policy and procedures manual.
- (9) In order to keep orderly records, a treasurer shall keep all necessary books, write necessary checks to pay bills, prepare monthly financial statements, and any other duties as prescribed by the Leadership Team.
- (10) A system of accounting and record keeping that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Business Administrator.
- (11) A group of church members will be appointed by the Business Administrator to count the church receipts and deposit them into appropriate bank accounts, according to “Guidelines for Counting” located in the church office.
- (12) When the Business Administrator initiates an expenditure from a ministry budget of which he oversees, he must have approval from a member of the Leadership Team.



## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Suggestions and proposals from the flock can be a vital and healthy avenue by which the Leadership Team may minister to the rest of the flock. When handled scripturally, this type of communication edifies the body, ministers to the needs of the flock, helps preserve and promote unity within the church, and brings glory to God.

Following the principles outlined above, any member of the flock who harbors a disagreement about any policy or procedure promoted by the church or its leadership, should, as a first step, prayerfully and privately approach the leadership. This may be done through informal consultation with a Leadership Team member, by means of a signed letter to the Leadership Team, or meeting with the Leadership Team at the church member's request. It is recognized that these steps should be taken prior to public discussion of any issue so as to help the leadership minister to the body more effectively and to help avoid discord and disunity within the flock (Prov. 13:3; 16:27-28; 17:4).

The church leadership should seek to prayerfully accept and address any complaint thus presented and seek to resolve all problems in a manner which best promotes those benefits mentioned above (Prov. 16:21-24).

When these policies are not followed, causing factions and strife, it will be necessary to exercise church discipline to deal with the offending member as per Article XI (Titus 2:10-11).

## **ARTICLE XIV**

### **AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended or replaced when the Leadership Team and the members of the church body recognize the need for change. At the time such need is believed to be present, the Leadership Team, after consultation with the body, shall make provisional modification in light of Scripture and all essential information on this matter shall be communicated to the congregation in written form, providing adequate time for study and response. A date will be proposed for acceptance of the revisions at a congregational meeting. The congregation will then vote to see if there is a unity of acceptance and understanding of the amendments according to Article X, Section F. If so, the amendments to the Constitution will become effective.

## **ARTICLE XV**

### **DISSOLUTION OF PROPERTY**

In the event this church body is dissolved, disbands or ceases to function as a church

for any reason, the title to all property both real and personal shall pass to and be vested in the Twin Rivers Baptist Association. The decision to dissolve or disband must be approved by two-thirds of the membership of the congregation by means of the procedure outlined in Article X, Section F.