

**CONSTITUTION for  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
GRAPEVINE, TEXAS**

**Preamble**

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

**Article I. Name**

The name of the church shall be The First Baptist Church of Grapevine, Texas, hereinafter referred to as the **Church**.

**Article II. Objectives**

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

To be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person and responding in obedience to His leadership.

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

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and humankind.

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

To be a church whose purpose is for its members to be Christ-like in their daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

**Article III. Statement of Faith**

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

**Article IV. Policy**

The government of the Church is vested solely in the body of the members who compose it, subject to the Lordship of Christ. It shall be subject to control by no other ecclesiastical body. Insofar as it is consistent with Article III of this Constitution, the Church does and shall continue to cooperate with and have representation in the denominational causes sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the Tarrant Baptist Association.

**Article V. Church Covenant**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized 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, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spiritually; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

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

**BYLAWS  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
GRAPEVINE, TEXAS**

**Article I. Church Membership**

**Section I. Receiving Members:** Persons desiring membership in the Church must qualify in one of following manners and must be favorably received by a majority vote of the Church members assembled for a worship service.

- A. **Baptism:** Upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and after baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The ordinance of baptism shall be performed by the Pastor of the Church or by an ordained person of like faith and order, approved by the Pastor or the Church to administer the ordinance of baptism.
- B. **Letter:** Upon receipt of a letter of recommendation from a church of like faith and order as set forth in the Statement of Faith adopted by the Church.
- C. **Statement:** Persons desiring membership by statement must affirm their acceptance of Christ as personal Saviour and must have been baptized by immersion, as stated in the Bylaws, Article I, Section IA. Admission by statement shall apply only where no letter of dismissal can be obtained because of unusual circumstances.
- D. **Restoration:** Any person whose membership has been terminated by withdrawal of fellowship, either in this Church or in a church of like faith and order, may be restored into Church fellowship upon expression and demonstration of repentance or satisfactory explanation.
- E. **Proxy:** Upon the presentation by the Pastor or Membership Committee to the Church of the name of the candidate for membership by letter, statement, or restoration, in cases where health would prevent the personal appearance of the candidate. No person may be accepted for membership in the Church by proxy until he has been baptized as stated in the Bylaws, Article I, Section IA.
- F. **Membership Committee:** The Pastor may refer a candidate to the Membership Committee prior to submitting the name for membership in the Church. The Membership Committee shall make a recommendation to the Church within thirty (30) days. The Membership Committee shall be an *ad hoc* committee composed of the current deacon officers.

**Section 2. New Member Orientation:** New church members will be encouraged to participate in the Church's new member orientation.

**Section 3. Voting Rights of Members:** Every member of the Church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church in conference.

**Section 4. Termination of Membership:** Membership in this Church shall be terminated in one of the following manners (except in cases of death, all terminations of membership shall be by a majority vote of the Church assembled at a regular or called conference):

- A. Upon death, the member's name shall be removed from the Church roll.
- B. Upon proper request of another church of like faith and order, a letter shall be granted for any member who is in good standing in the Church. In no case shall a blank letter be granted and given to an individual; it shall be mailed directly to the church requesting it. A church letter is not individual property; it is a letter of recommendation from one church to another.
- C. Upon satisfactory evidence that a member of this Church has joined with another denomination or faith, the name of that member shall be removed from the Church roll.
- D. If any person whose name appears on the Church roll shall personally declare to the Pastor, the Membership Committee or the Church that he or she is not a regenerated child of God and has no desire to be, the error will be corrected by removing that name from the Church roll.

- E. Should some serious conditions exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the Pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But finding that the welfare of the Church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the Church may take this action by majority vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose; and the Church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the Church.

## **Article II. Church Officers**

The officers of the Church shall be the Pastor, the ministerial staff, the deacons, a moderator, a parliamentarian, a clerk, and trustees.

### **Section I. The Pastor:**

- A. **Qualifications:** The Pastor shall possess the scriptural qualifications found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9.
- B. **Duties:**
  - 1. The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, the ministerial staff, and the office staff to perform their tasks.
  - 2. The Pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such he works with the ministerial staff, the deacons, and other church leaders to:
    - 1. Lead the Church in the achievement of its mission,
    - 2. Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and
    - 3. Care for the Church's members and other persons in the community.
- C. **Election of a Pastor Search Committee:** Upon a vacancy in the office of pastor, a Pastor Search Committee composed of three men and two women shall be elected in the following manner:
  - 1. The chairman of the deacons shall set a date for the election of a Pastor Search Committee.
  - 2. The date of election, which is to take place during a Sunday morning worship service, shall be announced publicly at all services of the Church on the Sunday preceding the election and shall be published in the then-employed manner for general circulation among the Church members.
  - 3. A ballot shall be prepared containing the names of six men and four women nominated by the deacons.
  - 4. Each Church member present at the election shall receive a ballot and shall check the names of no more than three men and no more than two women.
  - 5. The three men receiving the greatest number of votes and the two women receiving the greatest number of votes shall constitute the Pastor Search Committee.
- D. **Functions of the Pastor Search Committee:**
  - 1. To investigate prospective pastors.
  - 2. To recommend to the Church the name of prospective pastor.
  - 3. To select an interim pastor to fill the pulpit.
  - 4. To authorize expenditure of moving expenses incurred by the recently called pastor.
- E. **Procedures for Calling a Pastor:**
  - 1. Only person recommended by the Pastor Search Committee shall be considered.

2. Only one prospective pastor shall be recommended to the Church at a time.
3. The Church congregation shall be notified in all publicity and at all Sunday worship services preceding the committee's presentation that on the following Sunday morning a prospective pastor will be present.
4. On the designated Sunday, at the close of the regularly scheduled morning worship service, the recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee shall be received. The recommendation shall contain an agreement between the prospective pastor and the Pastor Search Committee regarding salary, and benefits.
5. Following the recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee, a motion shall be made and seconded that the recommended person be called as pastor, and after a full discussion, a vote shall be taken by secret ballot.
  - a). If a simple majority of the Church members present and voting shall cast their votes in favor of calling the person recommended, a call to the recommended person shall be extended forthwith by the Pastor Search Committee.
  - b). If a call is not extended by the Church to the person recommended or if the person called declines such call, the Pastor Search Committee shall renew its investigation and come before the Church in the same manner until a pastor has been secured.
6. The Church shall allow the called person reasonable time to accept or decline.
7. The Church shall pay all reasonably incurred expenses of the Pastor Search Committee in its investigation of prospective pastors.
8. The Church shall pay, as authorized by the Pastor Search Committee, all reasonable expenses incurred by the prospective pastor, including but not limited to honorarium, pulpit supply, travel expense, etc.

F. **Tenure:** The Pastor shall serve at the pleasure of the Church.

## **Article II. Church Officers**

### **Section 2. Ministerial Staff**

A. Members of the ministerial staff shall be called as the Church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written once such a need has been determined.

B. Election of a Search Committee:

The Pastor is responsible to God for the overall leadership and direction of the church. (1 Corinthians 4:1-5) The Ministerial Search process of this church empowers the Pastor to find and select those candidates that he believes will be effective team members and use the collective wisdom of the Search Committee to assist the pastor in making a final selection. To that end, the following process shall be used:

1. The Church shall elect a committee to search for any ministerial staff member. This committee shall include the Pastor, the Personnel Committee and two additional individuals who have knowledge of the area in which the new staff member will minister.
2. The active deacons shall bring a minimum of five nominees to the Church for consideration as the two at-large members of the committee. These nominees shall be church members who represent the area of ministry involved. The Church will elect two of the nominees who will join the Pastor and Personnel Committee to form the Search Committee. The election shall be by secret ballot. The Pastor shall act as chairman of the Search Committee.

3. The Pastor will prayerfully review and evaluate prospective candidates to narrow the field to his top choices that have the experience, education, and gifts to fill the position.
4. After the field has been narrowed, the Search Committee will work closely with the Pastor to check references, make inquiries and interview the candidates being considered.
5. After the interview process is complete, the Search Committee will work closely with the Pastor to identify the candidate they believe is God's person to fill the position.
6. The Search Committee will work with the Finance Committee regarding salary, benefits and moving expenses.
7. The Search Committee shall bring its recommendation to the Church for its consideration and vote. The voting shall be done by secret ballot. If a simple majority of the church members present and voting approve the recommendation, a call to the recommended person shall be extended.

**C. Functions of the Search Committee:**

1. To investigate a prospective minister.
2. To recommend to the Church the name of a prospective minister.
3. To authorize expenditure of moving expenses incurred by the recently called minister.

**Section 3. Deacons**

**A. Qualifications:**

1. A candidate for the office of deacon must fulfill the qualifications of I Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:3, and other related scriptures.
2. A candidate for the office of deacon must have been a Christian and a member of a Southern Baptist church for at least two years and must have been a member of this Church for at least six months.

**B. Deacon Election:**

1. The Church shall elect deacons by ballot at a business meeting of the church.
2. In as much as qualified men are available and willing to serve, there shall be one deacon elected to the active deacon body for every fifteen (15) church families.
3. Candidates for the active deacon body shall be nominated by the Church. The Deacon Review Committee, appointed annually by the chairman of the deacons, will consider these candidates. Following this review, the deacon body will select candidates for the church ballot.
4. In case of a deacon's death or removal or incapacity to serve, the Church may hold an election to fill the unexpired term.

**C. Tenure of Office:**

1. Each year, one fourth (1/4) of the active deacons as of January 1st will rotate off. Those rotating off will consist of the deacons who became inactive during the year, and then those with the longest continuous service. An election shall be held to fill vacancies and to add to the deacon body such numbers as the church size warrants.
2. When a deacon rotates off the active deacon body, he becomes eligible for re-election to this body after the passage of one year.
3. Deacons are ordained for a life-time ministry of service. Rotating off the active deacon body does not void a deacon's ordination.

**D. Deacon Officers:**

The deacons shall elect the following officers at their last regular meeting prior to the new Church year: chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. These officers shall serve as the Deacon Steering Committee.

**E. Functions of the Active Deacon Body:**

In accordance with New Testament practice, deacons are to be servants of the Church. As such, they shall:

1. Cooperate with and assist the Pastor in promotion of all the interests of the Church.
2. Act as an advisory body for the Pastor, the ministerial staff, Church committees, and the membership at large, and shall bring recommendations to the Church as needed.
3. Assist the Pastor in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
4. Administer the program of a Benevolence Committee.

**F. Meetings:** The deacons shall meet in regular business session once each month.

1. The date and time of all regular meetings shall be specified by the chairman after due consideration of all deacons as to their ability to attend. If possible, meetings shall be held prior to the regular monthly Church conference.
2. Special meetings may be called by the chairman, the vice-chairman, or the pastor, in that order.
  - a). Any meeting other than a regular monthly meeting shall be designated a special "called" meeting.
  - b). Deacons shall be notified of called meetings as soon as possible.
  - c). The notice shall specify the date and time of the "called" meeting and the purpose for the meeting.
3. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the active deacons shall constitute a quorum at all meetings, and no business of record shall be conducted at a meeting with less than this number attending.
4. Each meeting shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, Revised except where the Church Bylaws establish the procedure to be followed.

**Section 4. Moderator:** The Pastor shall be the moderator. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the Church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

**Section 5. Parliamentarian:** The Church shall elect a parliamentarian annually at the first church conference of the new church year. The parliamentarian is the authority for monitoring rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church, based on *Robert's Rules of Order*, Revised.

**Section 6. Clerk:** The Church shall elect a clerk annually to serve as its clerical officer. The clerk shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the Church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk shall keep a current copy of the Constitution and Bylaws. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of baptism, admission, dismissal, or death. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these Bylaws. The Church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All Church records are Church property and shall be filed in the Church office.

**Section 8. Trustees:** The Church shall elect six (6) trustees to serve as legal officers for the Church. Upon a specific vote of the Church authorizing such action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any Church real property. When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of real property, or other legal documents related to Church approved matters. In the event all six (6) trustees are not available to sign, so long as a minimum for four (4) trustees are available, such signatures of the four (4) trustees shall have the same binding effect of the Church as if all six (6) trustees had signed. Trustees shall serve terms of three (3) years, with two new trustees being elected each year to replace the two rotating off.

Whenever a document requires the signature of an officer position which the church does not utilize, the trustees shall designate one or more of the trustees to sign on behalf of the church as such officer or officers.

The Church trustees are granted authorization to sign Corporate Resolution documents.

### **Article III. Church Vocational Staff**

**Section 1. Professional Staff:** Professional staff members shall be recommended to the Church by the Personnel Committee in cooperation with the Pastor and employed by Church action.

**Section 2. Support Staff:** Support Staff shall be employed by the Personnel Committee in cooperation with the Pastor. New positions must be recommended by the Personnel Committee and approved by the Church.

### **Article IV. Committees**

**Section 1. General:** All Church committees with the exception of the Committee on Committees shall be recommended by the Committee on Committees and elected by the Church. All committee members with the exception of the Long Range Planning Committee shall serve on a three-year rotation system with one-third (1/3) to be elected each year. Members of the Long Range Planning committee shall serve six (6) years. The committees and their functions shall be as outlined in the Church Operations Manual.

**Section 2. Committee on Committees:** Nominations for members of the Committee on Committees may be submitted in writing to the church clerk at the October business meeting. This list of nominees shall be published in the Church newsletter and voted on by secret ballot at the November business meeting. The two individuals gaining the most votes shall serve three-year-term beginning in January. Should a vacancy occur on this committee during the calendar year, the individual receiving the next highest number of votes shall fill it.

**Section 3. Changes:** Committees function at the pleasure of the Church and must bring recommendations regarding changes in policy or expenditures to the Church for approval.

### **Article V. Church Organizations**

The Church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching; church member training, church leader training, new member orientation; mission education, action, and support; music education, training, and performance; and weekday educational programs. All organizations related to the Church programs shall be under Church control, all officers being elected by the Church and reporting regularly to the Church, and all program activities are subject to Church coordination and approval. The Church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

## Article VI. Ordinances

**Section 1. Baptism:** A person who receives Jesus Christ as Saviour by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord shall be received for baptism.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- B. Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor or by an ordained person of like faith and order, approved by the Pastor or the Church. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for and the observance of baptism.
- C. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
- D. The Pastor and/or ministerial staff and deacons shall counsel a person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time. If negative interest is ascertained, the candidate shall be deleted from the list of those awaiting baptism.

**Section 2. Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ anticipate His second coming.

- A. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed in either the morning or the evening worship service.
- C. The deacons shall assist the Pastor in the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- D. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

## Article VII. Church Meetings

**Section 1. Worship Services:** The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and worship of Almighty God. These meetings shall be open for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor.

**Section 2. Special Services:** Revival services and any other Church meetings essential to the advancement of the mission of the Church shall be placed on the Church calendar.

### **Section 3. Regular Business Meetings:**

- A. Regular business meetings shall be held quarterly. The format of that evening service will be a time of music and praise followed by the church conference time.
- B. An agenda shall be published in the bulletin one week prior to the meeting. The agenda shall include but not be limited to the following: committee reports, committee recommendations, and motions to be offered by individuals. Only those items, which appear on the published agenda, will be considered at the business meeting. Individuals who wish to put an item on the agenda must notify the moderator no later than the Wednesday prior to the second Sunday of the month. For an item to be considered, it must be in writing and must be signed by a member of the Church.

**Section 4. Special Business Meetings:** The Church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-week notice must be given unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice must include the subject, the date, time, and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting.

**Section 5. Quorum:** The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting provided it is a regularly scheduled meeting or one that has been properly called.

**Section 6. Parliamentary Rules:** *Robert's Rules of Order*, Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church.

### **Article VIII. Church Finances**

**Section 1. Budget:** The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and world-wide expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for each member's use. It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts.

**Section 2. Accounting Procedures:** All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the Church financial secretary and be properly recorded on the books of the Church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

**Section 3. Fiscal Year:** The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on October 1 and end on September 30.

### **Article IX. Church Operations Manual**

**Section 1. Organizational Chart:** The Personnel Committee shall prepare an organizational chart which will depict lines of responsibility in the administration of the Church. A copy shall be included in the Church Operations Manual.

**Section 2. Policies and Procedures:** Church policies and procedures shall be described in the Church Operations Manual. The Manual shall be kept in the Church office and made available to any member of the Church. Policies and procedures must be approved by a simple majority of the Church members present and voting.

### **Article X. Amendments**

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended in any regular business meeting of the Church only when such change has been read and presented in writing at the previous regular business meeting of the Church one month before such change is voted upon. Notice that a proposed change will be presented at the next Church conference shall be included in a regular Church publication. Such change may be made only by a simple majority vote of the Church members present and voting. Because the Church Operations Manual and the Committee Handbook are part of the Bylaws, they must be amended in the manner described in this Article.

### **Article XI. Order of Precedence**

Should any conflict or discrepancy arise between the Constitution and Bylaws and the Church Operations Manual and the Committee Handbook, the Constitution and Bylaws shall take precedence.