

**CONSTITUTION
OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**
1100 Malone Street
Denton, Texas
76201-2799

ARTICLE I

CHURCH STRUCTURE

- A. NAME. The name of this church shall be the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DENTON, TEXAS (the “church”). It is a nonprofit organization, incorporated under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Texas.
- B. ORGANIZATION. We, the members of this church, affirm the following principles of organization:
1. We are a body of baptized believers, recognizing the Lord Jesus Christ as our sole authority.
 2. All authority for decisions and actions rests in the hands of the membership, although authority is delegated to committees, church staff, or other individuals for specific decisions or actions as set forth in the church’s Bylaws.
- C. PURPOSE. Recognizing the Bible as the sole guide for its ministry, the church continually seeks to do God’s will by following the Holy Spirit’s leadership in:
1. Evangelizing through witnessing to the unsaved locally, statewide, nationally, and worldwide;
 2. Encouraging and assisting in the worship of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit by:
 - a. Providing opportunities for worship through regularly scheduled and special services, including the observance of the ordinances as delineated in Article IV; and
 - b. Endeavoring to encourage and facilitate worship by individuals and families;
 3. Providing for and promoting the systematic study and application of the teachings of the Bible concerning every aspect of the Christian life; and

4. Functioning as a part of the body of Christ and as the family of God, and within this context to love, support, and minister to each other as well as persons living in our community and elsewhere.

D. BELIEFS.

God: There is only one true God who is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. God exists eternally as three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Jeremiah 10:10; Exodus 20:1-3; Acts 17:24-36.*

God the Father: He is the one and only true God, the provider of everything. He relates to His people as Father and is the redeemer of mankind. *Matthew 6:26; John 17*

God the Son: Jesus Christ, God's only Son, was and is fully God in human flesh. He was crucified for our sins, despite being sinless, and was resurrected to change the world. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return to earth to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. *John 1:1-14, 3:16,17, John 17; Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 9:28.*

God the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit convicts the unsaved. He also empowers the believer from the moment of salvation. The Christian seeks to be filled with the Holy Spirit daily. *Genesis 1:1-2, Deuteronomy 6:4, Psalm 4:1, Jeremiah 10:10, Matthew 1:23, John 1:1-2, 14, 16:8, Hebrews 1:1-3.*

The Bible: The Bible is God's Word to all men. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because it is inspired by God it is truth without any mixture of error. The Bible is the foundation of faith and practice for the First Baptist Church of Denton. *II Timothy 3:14-4:2, John 17:17, 1 Peter 1:23, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Psalm 119:105*

Salvation: Salvation is a free gift from God to us. Salvation is only by faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can never make up for our own sins. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior can we be saved from sin's penalty. Once a person has received God's free gift, it can never be taken away. *Matthew 7:13, John 3:3,16; 10:28-29; 14:6, Acts 2:21, 4:8-12, Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8-10*

Eternity: We were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God in Hell or in the presence of God in Heaven. Both Heaven and Hell are places of eternal existence. *John 3:16, Romans 6:23, 1 John 2:25, 5:11-13, Revelation 20:15*

The Church: The church is composed of all believers of all the ages. There is the universal church and the local church. The local church is a body of baptized believers joined together to do the work of Jesus Christ here on this earth and to

encourage one another. There are five purposes of the church: Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Fellowship and Ministry. *Matthew 16:18, Matthew 20:26-28, 28:19-20, John 4:19-24, Acts 2:42, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, Colossians 1:14-19*

Baptism and the Lord's Supper: Baptism is an act of obedience and worship that demonstrates a person's decision to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. In following Christ's example, this church will practice baptism by immersion which symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The Lord's Supper is an act of obedience and worship that serves as a reminder of Christ's sacrificial death for our sins. *Mark 1:9-11, Acts 8:35-38, Matthew 26:26-29; 28:19-20, Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

Spiritual Gifts: Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities for service. Every believer has at least one gift and no believer has all the gifts. All the gifts work together and are for the benefit of the entire body of Christ. *Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Peter 4:11*

Biblical Marriage: Marriage is a Biblical institution established by God as described in Scripture. We believe Biblical marriage can only occur between one man and one woman. This church recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment. *Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:24, Hebrews 13:4, Ephesians 5:22-33*

E. COVENANT. The following covenant expresses the commitment of the members to these purposes:

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and, on the public profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter this covenant with one another as one body in Christ. We commit, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love (*1 John 3:16*), to faithfully attend worship services (*Heb. 10: 24, 25*), to contribute cheerfully and consistently (*2 Cor. 9: 6, 7*), and to regularly support the mission of the church (*Matt. 28: 19, 20*).

We commit to watch over one another in brotherly love (*Jn. 15:17*); to remember one another in prayer (*James 5:16*); to aid each other in sickness and distress (*James 5:13-15*); to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech (*Col. 3:15-17*); to be slow to take offense (*James 1:19*); to be ready for reconciliation (*Eph. 4:32*); and, to seek to obey the teachings of our Savior found in God's written Word, the Bible (*Jn. 14:23, James 1:22, Luke 10:27*). We promise to forgive and give grace as we have been forgiven and have received grace (*Matt. 22: 39, 40; Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32*). We also pledge as a church and to each other to take stand against actions and attitudes that are contrary to

Scriptural teaching (*James 4:7, Luke 9:23*) and to live according to the fruit of the Spirit. We will be led by the Spirit and be filled by the Spirit according to *Galatians 5: 19-26* and *Ephesians 5:18*.

We further commit to connect to the lost through personal evangelism and world missions, to connect to ministry by discovering and using our spiritual gifts, and to serve others within the body of Christ and our community at large.

We also commit to support the Constitution and Bylaws of the First Baptist Church of Denton as statements of what we believe and how we organize and function to minister to a lost world.

We moreover commit 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, the Bible.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church will consist of persons who have made public professions of faith in Christ as Savior and Lord; who desire to be numbered among His disciples; who are in sympathy with and subscribe to the beliefs and practices of this church; and who have been baptized by immersion by this church or by another church whose belief is that salvation results from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This church will have the sole right to determine who is a member of the church and to discipline its members. Membership rights and responsibilities and methods of admission and dismissal are described in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE III

THE SCRIPTURAL LEADERS

The Bible declares that Christ is the head of his church and the shepherd of his flock.

A. THE PASTOR.

1. Qualifications. The pastor must be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, called by God to be Christ's undershepherd. He must be duly ordained by this church or a Baptist church whose beliefs are the same as this church, and he must meet the qualifications specified in *1 Timothy 3:2-7*.

2. Role. As Christ's undershepherd, and under the Holy Spirit's leading, the pastor is the leader of all church ministries. His responsibilities include coordination of the work of the church in consultation with the church staff, deacons, elected leaders, and other church members.
3. Duties. The pastor's duties are summarized in the Bylaws.
4. Call. The procedures for calling a pastor are specified in the Bylaws.

B. THE DEACONS.

1. Qualifications. Each person ordained as deacon must meet the qualifications for all Christians as specified in the New Testament, as well as the special requirements for deacons stated in *1 Timothy 3:8-13* and other qualifications established by the church.
2. Role. The role of deacon is a holy one that acquires its honor from service rather than position. Deacons assist the pastor in his work, and also serve and minister to the church membership. Deacons prayerfully watch the ongoing affairs of the church and offer counsel as appropriate.
3. Organization and Duties. The organization and duties of the deacons are summarized by the Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV

ORDINANCES

As set forth in the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's Supper are the ordinances of this church.

- A. BAPTISM. Baptism is an act of obedience and worship that demonstrates a person's decision to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. In following Christ's example, this church will practice baptism by immersion which symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. (*Mark 1:9-11; Acts 8:35-38*)
- B. THE LORD'S SUPPER. The Lord's Supper is an act of obedience and worship that serves as a reminder of Christ's sacrificial death for our sins. (*Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*)

ARTICLE V

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

Marriage is a Biblical institution established by God as described in Scripture. We believe Biblical marriage can only occur between one man and one woman. This church recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment. Accordingly, this church's pastors and staff will not officiate in any type of marriage or union that does not meet this Biblical definition, nor will its property or resources be used for such purposes.

ARTICLE VI

MEETINGS

- A. The regular meetings of the church will be as follows:
 - 1. Regular weekly worship services (normally Sunday mornings),
 - 2. Weekly Bible study and Christian development programs, and
 - 3. Regular business meetings as specified in the Bylaws.
- B. Other meetings of the church will be as follows:
 - 1. Revival services and special worship services,
 - 2. Other organizational meetings for the purpose of worship, Bible study, or fellowship, and
 - 3. Special business meetings as authorized in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE VII

DENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION

Recognizing no higher authority than the Lord Jesus Christ, this church seeks to carry out the Great Commission through cooperation with churches of like faith and order in the Denton Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE VIII

FINANCIAL POLICY

The church recognizes God's plan as outlined in the scriptures to be the basic method for financing the program of the church; that is, the tithes rightfully belong to God and that members should tithe regularly. Members also give additional offerings as led by the Lord.

ARTICLE IX

AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended at any regular business meeting of the church by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting if the number of members present is at least ten percent of the resident membership of the church. The proposed amendment must be presented to the church in a regular or called business meeting at least thirty days before the vote. Written notice of the proposed action of the constitutional amendment will be provided in the church newsletter and the church's Sunday service program at least two weeks before the business meeting at which the amendment is to be considered.

This Constitution was adopted by the church in a regular Business Meeting on December 4, 2016.

Pastor: Dr. Jeff Williams

The Ad-Hoc Constitution and Bylaws Revision Committee was created 4/16/15 by church vote and given the responsibility to recommend revisions to the church Constitution and Bylaws. The committee was composed of the following church members:

Greg Naugher, Chair
John Pearce
James Earp
Leigh Hilton
Meatha Southern
Steve McClanahan
Jeremy Labelle