

SOUTH FORK BAPTIST CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

**Adopted May 6, 2001
Amended January 26, 2014**

Preamble

With a firm conviction that we are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and with a desire to serve Him better and advance His Kingdom on earth, we declare and establish this Constitution and Bylaws for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner, so as to preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body in relation to others.

Article I Name

This body shall be known as the South Fork Baptist Church, Incorporated, located at 4915 New Jackson Highway, Hodgenville, KY 42748.

Article II Statement of Faith

General: This church accepts as its Statement of Faith THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE, which was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963, along with any updated revisions. On June 14, 2000, the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a revised summary of the Southern Baptist faith. The report (seen in its entirety below) seeks to "identify and affirm certain definite doctrines that Baptists believe, cherish, and with which they have been ... closely identified."

The Baptist Faith and Message

I. 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; 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.

II. 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 perfection. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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; 53; 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.

C. 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 Savior, 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.

III. 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 inherits 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.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, 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.

A. 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 Savior.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

V. 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.

VI. 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 scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor 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.

VII. 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 Savior, 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.

VIII. 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.

IX. 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.

X. 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.

XI. 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.

XII. 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 coordinate 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.

XIII. 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.

XIV. 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.

XV. 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.

XVI. 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; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. 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; Philipians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. 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; 127; 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.

Article III Church Covenant

I, _____, under the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Holy Scriptures, unite in covenant to serve God together with my brothers and sisters in Christ at South Fork Baptist Church.

1. I am a Christian, a follower of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, repenting from sin and believing in Jesus' death on the Cross and resurrection from the grave. (Romans 10:9-10)
2. I have been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as a biblical demonstration and witness of my faith. (1 Peter 3:18-22)
3. I will celebrate the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of Jesus Christ and as a proclamation of His death and sacrifice for sin. (1 Corinthians 11:17-34)
4. I will worship God in spirit and truth, treasuring and responding to His glory. (Colossians 3:15-17, John 4:23-24)
5. I will follow Christ faithfully, living a life that is defined by an increasing repentance of sin and a daily drawing near to Christ. (James 4:8-9)
6. I will put on the full armor of God, remembering my enemies in Satan, the world, and my flesh, but realizing my strength and power in Christ. (Ephesians 6:10-20)
7. I will commit to being a functioning member, not taking my church family or membership for granted. (Hebrews 10:23-25)
8. I will pray for and submit to the biblical leadership of our church, making their soul-watching efforts a joy. (Hebrews 13:17-18, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5)
9. I will minister to other members, lovingly serving and praying for them. (1 Peter 4:8-10)
10. I will be a peacemaking, unifying member of the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:1-16; Matthew 18:15-20)
11. I will serve and give sacrificially, generously using my time, talents, and treasures to show Christ's love in tangible ways to others. (1 Corinthians 12)
12. I will bear witness, in my words and life, of the Good News of Christ to my family, friends, and to the Ends of the Earth. (Romans 6:23; Acts 1:8)
13. I will be a disciple who makes disciples who love and obey Christ. (Matthew 28:17-20; Deuteronomy 6:7; 2 Timothy 2:2)
14. If the Lord leads me to leave this church family, I will do so peacefully, committing to unite with another biblically faithful church. (Hebrews 10:23-25)

As a member of South Fork Baptist Church, I am in agreement with our Statement of Faith (Baptist Faith and Message, 2000) and through the Lord's help will serve Him by striving to live in accordance with our Church Covenant. (Joshua 24:14-28)

Article IV Character

- Section 1 Nature: This church is a divine institution, the body of Christ, composed of children of God, banded together in fellowship as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Section 2 Purpose: This church is to provide a means of training and fellowship for believers, through which they can serve God and continue the work of Christ on earth until He comes again.
- Section 3 Function: This church is to worship God, proclaim His Truth, and provide religious education, and minister to the needs of mankind in the name of Jesus Christ.

- Section 4 Objectives:
- (1) A fellowship in Christ and ministering in His name (Matthew 18:19-20; Matthew 24:14; Luke 6:12-16; Romans 12:9-10)
 - (2) A fellowship loving one another (John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-12, 16)
 - (3) A fellowship bringing men to God through Christ (Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20-21)
 - (4) A fellowship making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:46-48; John 3:16)
 - (5) A fellowship to guide Christians in growing toward Christ-likeness (Matthew 28:20; Matthew 11:28-30; Ephesians 4:1-3, 11-15; 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12)

Article V Church Structure

- Section 1 Authority: This church is authorized under warrant of the Holy Scriptures and accepts the Scriptures as its complete authority in all matters of both faith and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Section 2 Government: The government of this church is vested in its membership, under the conscious lordship of Christ. As a democracy, all members are equal in rank and privilege.
- Section 3 Affiliations: This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Southern Baptist Churches. This church will cooperate with and support the Lynn Baptist Association of Southern Baptists, the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.
- Section 4 Incorporation: This church is incorporated according to the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, as a non-profit corporation. It may hold, purchase, acquire, sell, convey, lease, mortgage, and dispose of properties, both real and personal, tangible and intangible; and it may enter into any legal agreements or contracts which are in keeping with its purpose.

Article VI Amendments

This constitution may be amended or changed, except Article V, Section 1, at a regular business meeting of the church by a three-fourths (3/4) ballot vote of the members present and voting, provided such amendments have been written and read at the previous business meeting of the church and distributed among the membership in printed form.

SOUTH FORK BAPTIST CHURCH

BYLAWS

Article I Membership

- Section 1 General:
- (1) As a sovereign and democratic Baptist church, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the membership reserves the right to determine the qualifications for membership.
 - (2) Any person may request membership in this church.
 - (3) All such requests shall be presented to the church at any worship service.
- Section 2 Qualifications:
- (1) The membership shall consist of baptized believers in Christ who are in agreement with our Statement of Faith and are striving to live in accordance with our Church Covenant.
 - (2) Any person professing to have been born again through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ may request membership in this church. The request shall be considered on the basis of the person's spiritual qualifications without regard to social standing, financial status, nationality, or race.
- Section 3 Requests:
- Any person may request membership by presenting him or herself publicly at a worship service in one of the following ways:
- (1) By profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and for baptism by immersion;
 - (2) By letter from another Baptist church;
 - (3) By restoration to membership after having been removed from the roll of this church.
 - (4) Persons coming from another denomination shall be considered individually with reference to their Christian experience and baptism. It is understood that baptism is by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because the candidate has experienced saving grace.
 - (5) Should there be any objection to any person requesting membership, reasons for the objection must be stated. The matter will then be referred to the pastor and deacons for prayerful consideration of the matter, and they shall make a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. The church will make disposition of the matter. A three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of those members present and voting shall be required to receive such person into the membership.
 - (6) A person requesting membership, upon completion of an above stated request, will be presented and voted on at the next regular business meeting and will be received by a majority vote.

- (7) A person who is physically impaired in a manner such that baptism by immersion is not feasible, can be voted as a member based on their profession of faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior.
- (8) Watch care membership can be bestowed on individuals who have temporary church attendance (i.e. missionaries on furlough, interim pastors). These individuals will have the full spiritual nurturing of the church without full membership privileges (i.e. voting).

Section 4 Duties:

Members are expected:

- (1) To live the Christian life so as to honor Christ and His church;
- (2) To attend the services of the church;
- (3) To participate in the work of the church and its organizations;
- (4) To tithe regularly for the support of the church and its causes;
- (5) To support its elected leadership;
- (6) To pray earnestly for the church's ministry.

Section 5 Rights:

- (1) All members are equal.
- (2) Members in full and regular standing may act and vote on all business transactions of the church, provided the member is present. Church members who cannot be present at the business meeting (by prevention of work, missions, or travel situations) may request, in person, an absentee ballot at the church office. Homebound or hospitalized church members of sound mind may personally request (to the church office) that a deacon deliver an absentee ballot. Absentee ballots will only be available and cast during the week immediately prior to the vote. Properly cast absentee ballots shall be considered 'present' in calculating percentages in votes.

Section 6 Discipline:

- (1) In cases of differences between members or broken fellowship with the church, reconciliation rather than punishment shall be the objective, which governs the attitude of one toward another. It is our purpose to pursue every reasonable measure to assist any troubled member. The pastor, staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance.
- (2) Should any unhappy difference arise between members, the aggrieved member shall follow in a tender spirit the rules of Christ given in Matthew 18:15-22, in an effort to settle the difficulty.
- (3) Should a member repeatedly become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, public scandal, persistent breach of our Church Covenant, or undermine the mission of the church, the deacons with the counsel of the pastor, following the Matthew 18: 15-22, shall attempt to correct the offense; and if such an effort fails, they shall report the case to the church.

- (4) In case of grave difficulty, the church may request the advice of an acceptable council of brethren from churches of like faith and order.
- (5) In such cases the church may withdraw church membership by a three-fourths (3/4) majority ballot vote of those members present and voting, but only after notice and hearing and faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and reconciliation.

Section 7 Non-resident Members and Inactive Members:

- (1) Any member moving away from South Fork Baptist Church shall be placed in the non-resident file and urged to transfer his or her membership to a church of like faith and order near where he or she lives.
- (2) Non-resident members who do not transfer their membership within twelve months, and who do not make any contact with the church personally or by mail, shall be placed on an inactive roll.
- (3) Non-resident members whose whereabouts are unknown are to be placed on the inactive roll.
- (4) Any resident member who does not make contact with the church personally or by mail within 12 months shall be placed on the inactive roll.
- (5) The inactive roll is not to be included in the report to the annual meeting of the local association.

Section 8 Restoration:

- (1) Any person whose membership has been terminated by exclusion (as outlined in Section 6 above), upon evidence of his or her repentance and reformation of life, may be restored to fellowship by a three-fourths (3/4) majority ballot vote of those members present and voting.
- (2) If any person whose name has been placed on the inactive roll should again become active in the church, his or her name shall automatically be restored to the active roll.
- (3) Should another church of like faith and order request a letter for a member whose name has been placed on the inactive roll, that member shall be restored to the active roll, and the letter granted.

Section 9 Termination:

Membership may be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) By death of the member;
- (2) By letter of transfer to another Baptist church of like faith and order; (No letter shall be granted to an individual.)
- (3) By deletion from the roll when joining a church of another denomination;
- (4) By withdrawing church membership as set forth in Bylaws Article I, Section 6, Paragraph (5)
- (5) By the member's request to be released from his or her Church Covenant obligation provided the request is made personally or in writing, and after the church has patiently sought to secure the member's continuance in its fellowship.

Article II Meetings

- Section 1 **Worship Services:**
The church shall meet regularly to worship God.
- Section 2 **Business:**
- (1) The regular business meeting shall be held quarterly unless otherwise changed by a majority vote at a previous business meeting.
 - (2) The church may, at regular business meetings, receive members, dismiss members by letter to sister churches or appoint messengers to conventions or councils.
 - (3) A special business meeting may be called by the moderator, pastor, or chairman of deacons. The notice and purpose of the meeting shall be given at least two (2) weeks before the meeting is held.
 - (4) A quorum shall be those members present.
 - (5) The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority for Parliamentary procedures.
 - (6) Any new business shall be presented in person or in writing to the pastor, moderator, or chairman of the deacons at least two (2) weeks before the meeting is held.
- Section 3 **Organizational:**
There shall be multiple avenues for disciple-making. Scripture is our guide for disciple-making and includes examples such as fellowship, service, worship, evangelism, prayer, Bible study, and missions.
- Section 4 **Special:**
- (1) Revival meetings may be held annually.
 - (2) Other church meetings, such as clinics, training schools and special events essential to the promotion of church objectives, are to be approved by the church leadership and listed in the church calendar.
 - (3) No organization or group shall hold meetings that would inhibit or contradict the work of the Gospel of Christ and the New Testament in the buildings of the church.
- Section 5 **Incorporation meetings:**
South Fork Baptist Church was incorporated in October, 1995 with a board of three (3) directors elected by the church membership. The board of directors now consists of the elected trustees of the church (Article 6, Section 5). A copy of the incorporation papers will be kept on file in the Church Office.

Article III Ordinances

- Section 1 Baptism:
A person authorized by the church may administer baptism by immersion in any of the public worship services.
- Section 2 Lord's Supper:
The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once quarterly as decided by the Pastor and deacons.

Article IV Church Staff

- Section 1 Pastor:
(1) Call
- a. Whenever the church is without a pastor, a Pastor Search committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor. This committee shall contain 5 people: 3 men and 2 women. These people will be elected by secret ballot at a designated church service.
 - b. The Pastor Search committee shall have the following responsibilities and authority:
 1. To recommend to the church a qualified, ordained minister to be called as Pastor who is in agreement with the Constitution and By-Laws of our church including *The Baptist Faith and Message*.
 2. During the interim period when there is not a Pastor on the field, the Pastor Search committee shall work in cooperation with the church staff to make appropriate arrangements for the continuation of uninterrupted ministries such as preaching, baptizing, weddings, funerals and other ministries normally performed by a Pastor. However, should the committee choose to recommend that an Interim Pastor be called for either a definite or indefinite period of time, then the committee must obtain prior approval of the church before making such arrangements. The Pastor Search committee may, if they desire, request the church to elect an Interim Pastor Search committee to assist them in discharging these responsibilities.
 3. To report to the church on a regular basis concerning the progress of the committee.
 4. To consult at appropriate times with officers and committees of the church, such as deacons, staff members, finance committee, personnel committee or others whose responsibilities are closely affected by their relationship to a Pastor.
 5. To be reimbursed by the church for all reasonable expenses that may be incurred for travel, lodging, meals, telephone calls, correspondence or other items that are appropriate in order for the committee to carry on its responsibilities. Reimbursement shall be accomplished in a manner consistent with the policies of the church governing similar matters for the church staff.

6. The Pastor Search committee shall, to the greatest extent possible, accept suggestions from church members of men who should be considered for a call as Pastor. The committee shall prayerfully seek God's direction, receive recommendations, and take the initiative to discover the man God has for this pastorate.
7. The church shall not be asked to consider for a call but one man at any one time, and until the church shall make a decision concerning a proposed call, no other call may be considered.
 - A.) Salary and Benefits: All necessary and appropriate matters concerning the proposed Pastor such as salary, benefits and allowances, vacation, sabbaticals, and other times away, moving and other reimbursable expenses, responsibilities and authority, shall be determined according to the budget and policies of the church in consultation with the Personnel and Finance committees of the church.
 - B.) Presentation to the church: The prospective Pastor shall be invited to come before the church in view of a call to the pastorate. An opportunity for the church to meet with him and his family in informal fellowship will be provided on the weekend when he is to be presented to the church. He shall preach for the church at a Sunday morning worship service and at the Sunday evening service if possible. The election of a Pastor shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least two week's public notice has been given. Voting shall be by ballot. An affirmative vote of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of those present and voting shall be necessary for a call.
 - C.) Transition: If the prospective Pastor accepts the call of the church, the Pastor Search committee shall continue its responsibilities by coordinating the church's welcome of the new Pastor on the field. The committee shall make sure the agreements between the Pastor and committee are initiated. The committee shall be dismissed from any further labors thirty days following the new Pastor's moving to the field.
 - D.) The Pastor, thus called, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The Pastor shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as Pastor.

(2) Duties

- A. Basic Function: The Pastor is the spiritual, shepherding, evangelistic and administrative leader of the church (Acts 10:17&28; 1 Peter 5:1-3). He will lead the church to determine its vision and mission and to strategically move towards the attainment of that mission by using his gifts and skills of proclamation, leadership, and ministry to equip the body of members for ministry and witness.
- B. Organizational Relationship: The Pastor is accountable directly to the church. The sole procedure for addressing serious questions concerning the pastor's leadership will be the following scriptural steps: (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:19; Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:29).
 - a. The Pastor shall meet with the deacon officers and seek a Holy Spirit directed solution.
 - b. If the situation is not resolved by the meeting of the deacon officers and Pastor, it will be brought to the full deacon body to seek resolution.
 - c. If the situation continues to be unresolved, by a simple majority vote of all active deacons it may be brought before the church in a special duly called business meeting with the purpose along with the notice of the meeting being specified.

- d. If resolution and reconciliation is not achieved through the meeting of the church, the pulpit may be declared vacant by the vote of 60% of members present and voting at a duly called business meeting with the purpose, along with the notice of the meeting being specified.
- e. In such case the Personnel Committee will negotiate a severance package with the Pastor.

Matthew 18:15-17 - "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that 'by mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector."

I Thessalonians 5:12-13 - "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves."

I Timothy 5:19 - "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses."

Romans 14:19 - "Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another."

Ephesians 4:29 - "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

South Fork Baptist Church as a body and as individual members will follow these scriptural principles in the pursuit of peace and a Christ-like fellowship. When conflict arises within the church, these guidelines will be adhered to thus promoting harmony within the fellowship.

C. Spiritual Qualifications: The Pastor must be a 1 Timothy 3 man:

I Timothy 3:1-7 - "This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Vs. 2, 4, and 5: His character must be unassailable. He should lead his family well so as to develop stability, his judgment sound, not an extremist, but balanced in his physical, moral and mental tastes and habits. He must exercise self-control and discipline, be caring toward others opening the door of his heart and home to those in need and be prepared to teach others.

Vs. 3: He abstains from the sale and use of alcoholic beverages and illicit drugs. He shall not be abusive toward others either physically or verbally, but shall exercise patience. He shall not be motivated by greed. He shall practice the discipline of tithing through this church.

Vs. 6-7: He must be mature, not a beginner in the Faith. He must maintain a wholesome reputation in the community.

The Pastor and pastoral staff shall be spiritual role models with stable, Godly homes and shall give evidence of exemplary lifestyles within the church and within the community at large. They shall give evidence of a spirit of generosity in giving (2 Corinthians 9: 6-8). They shall be committed and consistent tithers who practice “storehouse tithing” through their local church (Malachi 3:10; Hebrews 7:8).

D. Specific Responsibilities:

1. Serve as spiritual and administrative leader of the church, its staff, and organizations.
2. Proclaim the gospel and lead church members to witness and saturate the community with the gospel.
3. Lead the staff and church members in a caring ministry for persons in the church and community.
4. Provide leadership for congregational services and lead in conducting the church ordinances.
5. Preach at all worship services or arrange for someone else to preach.
6. May serve as moderator of the church in the absence of the moderator and assistant moderator.
7. Recommend all ministerial staff members to the church in consultation with and concurrence of the Personnel Committee. He shall assign ministerial staff duties. All staff shall be accountable to the Pastor. He may delegate the supervision of any staff to another person. The Pastor shall have the authority to terminate staff in consultation with the Personnel Committee. He shall enlist the assistance of the church Personnel Committee, as needed, and the church Personnel Committee shall offer counsel to the Pastor as needed.
8. Conduct funeral services and wedding ceremonies, as he is able, sharing and delegating to other staff responsibilities in this area.
9. Counsel with and assist in training deacons and other key leaders for their responsibilities.

(3) Privileges

A. He shall be privileged to attend the meetings of the State Evangelistic Conference or the Kentucky Baptist Convention; the expense for attending such to be defrayed by the church. He may also attend other conventions or conferences held by the denomination, with the church paying his expenses for such, if approved by the church.

B. He shall be allowed time off each year for rest and vacation with full pay. The length of vacation time shall be two weeks. After 5 years, the length of vacation time shall be three weeks.

C. He shall be allowed to hold two one-week revivals away from the church each year.

D. The pulpit supply shall be paid by the church when the pastor is on vacation, attending authorized conventions, away holding revival meetings, or ill and unable to do his work for a reasonable period.

E. Be full time with no outside employment.

F. The church will provide adequate salary so as to not create financial hardship on the Pastor requiring him to seek other income.

Other Staff Members:

- (1) The church shall call or employ such staff members as may be needed. A job description shall be written by the Personnel Committee and approved by the church for each staff position. The terms of the call or employment shall be clearly defined. All staff members shall be called or employed for an indefinite period, unless otherwise stated.
- (2) Vocational and secretarial staff members, other than the Pastor, shall be recommended by the Personnel Committee and called by majority ballot vote of the church.
- (3) Other workers shall be recommended by the appropriate committee to the Personnel Committee and employed by majority ballot vote of the church.
- (4) All church employees will be subject to an annual review by the Personnel Committee.

Article V Deacons

(1) Qualifications

- a. The church shall be diligent to choose deacons whose lives conform as fully as possible to the principles set forth in Acts 6:3-5 and 1 Timothy 3:8-16.
- b. They shall support the total program of the church, be strong adherents to Baptist doctrine, subscribe to the church's Statement of Faith and Covenant, tithe, and manifest a spirit of cooperation conducive to Christian fellowship.
- c. Their home shall be thoroughly Christian. If married, their wives shall also adhere to the principles outlined in 1 Timothy 3:11.
- d. Their business and/or work shall be thoroughly Christian.

(2) Duties

In accordance with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ and His church.

- a. They are to be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit with the church in the bonds of peace.
- b. They shall serve as a council of advice, and conference with the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. With the Pastor, they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of Christians, and the extension and growth of the kingdom of God.
- c. The task of deacons is to assist the pastoral staff in performing pastoral responsibilities when requested.
- d. In counsel with the Pastor, and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct in accordance with the New Testament teachings, they are to oversee the discipline of the church. In such matters they are to be guided by the principles set forth in Matthew 18: 15-23; 1 Corinthians 5: 9-10; and 1 Thessalonians 5: 12-14.

- e. They shall assist the Pastor in administering the church ordinances of The Lord's Supper and Baptism.
- f. They shall meet regularly, and at special times as necessary. They shall attend every meeting of the deacons possible.
- g. The deacon body will practice accountability among themselves with respect to the duties listed above.

(3) Categories

All ordained deacons, recognized by the church, shall be in one of the following categories:

Active Deacons: These shall be deacons who are elected by the church and are currently serving in the responsibilities mentioned above.

Inactive Deacons: These shall include those men who have served in this church as a deacon and may in the future be considered for election as an active deacon.

Emeritus Deacons: These shall have served faithfully as active deacons, but because of age or declining health, are unable to continue to do so. When the Pastor or a committee of deacons note they may suggest to such deacon that he be made Deacon Emeritus; and with the consent of that deacon, it shall be presented to the church. If approved, he shall be recognized as Deacon Emeritus. He shall have an open invitation to attend and fully participate in all deacons' meetings.

(4) Terms

a. The church shall have up to twenty (20) active deacons. The actual number shall be based on pastoral needs and qualified candidates. Deacons shall serve on a three-year rotating basis. They shall serve for three years in an active roll before rotating off for at least one year of inactive status. Inactive deacons shall be eligible for activation by election in the subsequent year's deacon election process.

b. In case of death, removal, resignation or incapacity to serve, the deacon body may elect someone from the inactive deacon list to fill the remaining term.

c. There is no obligation to accept as an active deacon a person who comes into the church from another church where he has served as a deacon.

(5) Election

a. During a two-week period covering two consecutive Sundays, congregation members shall have opportunity to submit written nominations to be considered by the Deacons. Any man considered must have been a member of South Fork Baptist Church for at least one year.

b. The suggestions from the congregation shall be considered by the Deacons according to the scriptural qualifications and standards of this church.

c. When the Deacons have agreed upon men to be nominated, they will then approach each man, discuss the qualifications, and ascertain whether or not each is willing to serve if elected by the church.

d. The Deacons will then present the nominations at a business meeting.

e. The church will elect deacons by individual ballot. Each ballot will contain one name and a yes or no acceptance box. A 2/3 majority of members present and voting is required for approval of each separate deacon.

Article VI Organizational Officers

Section 1 General:

All organizations of the church are under the control of the church. Organizational officers to be elected by the church shall be members of the church and shall be nominated by the Church Nominating Committee.

Section 2 Moderator and Assistants:

(1) A moderator and one assistant shall be elected annually. The Pastor shall serve as the second assistant.

(2) The moderator or an assistant shall preside over all business meetings of the church. In the absence of the moderator and both assistants, the clerk shall call the meeting to order, and a moderator pre tem shall be elected for that meeting.

(3) In receiving members into the fellowship, the Pastor shall preside. In his absence, someone designated by the Pastor shall receive and present such persons to the church.

Section 3 Clerk and Assistant:

(1) A clerk and an assistant shall be elected annually.

(2) The clerk shall be responsible for keeping full minutes of all transactions of the church in its business meetings and entering in the minutes all reports accepted by the church (including financial statements). All such records shall be kept permanently as the property of the church.

(3) This officer and his assistant shall attend to all matters which are normally the responsibility of a clerk.

(4) The clerk shall maintain accurate membership roles of the church and certify church letters as provided for under these by-laws.

Section 4 Treasurer and Assistant:

(1) An assistant treasurer shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The elected individual shall have a term of three (3) years. In year one, the individual shall serve as assistant treasurer. In year two, the individual shall serve as treasurer. In year three, the individual shall serve as advisor-treasurer. After completion of the three year term, the individual shall be inactive for one year. This individual shall then be eligible for reelection as assistant treasurer.

(2) It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive a statement of deposits from the Counting Committee. He/she shall preserve and pay out all monies according to the church budget, proper purchase orders, and the instructions of the church.

(3) The treasurer shall keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Designated monies must be disbursed according to the designation. An itemized financial report must be rendered monthly. Any department that is running over budget or will be over budget by year-end shall be notified immediately upon such determination. An annual report shall also be prepared and presented to the church.

(4) All checks shall be signed by the treasurer or assistant treasurer.

(5) All books, records and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered the property of the church and shall be kept at least five years. These items shall be available for reviewing by request of the treasurer or assistant treasurer at any time.

(6) The assistant treasurer, treasurer, and advisor-treasurer shall serve as voting members of the finance committee.

Section 5 Trustees:

The trustees serve as legal representatives in all transactions related to the church. They sign all documents related to the purchase, sale, mortgaging or rental of church property after approval by the church in a business session. Trustees shall be elected from the membership of the church. There shall be three trustees who shall be elected to three-year terms, with the exception of the initial election which shall consist of three trustees elected to terms of one, two and three-year terms. The trustees shall serve on a rotation system with one trustee being elected each year. The trustee who is in their third year of service shall serve as chairman. The church legal counsel will serve as an ex-officio member. A minimum of two trustees is required to execute all documents.

Duties:

(1) Act as legal agents as directed by the church. Trustees can never act independently of the church. They will act only as directed by the church in a regularly or specially called business session.

(2) Sign all legal documents involving church property as directed by the church in regular or duly called special business sessions.

(3) Maintain an up-to-date inventory of all church property, both real and personal; the trustees shall have the right to designate an individual(s) to carry out this duty.

(4) Periodically audit the insurance program so that adequate coverage will be maintained as the inventory changes; the trustees shall have the right to designate an individual(s) to carry out this duty.

(5) They shall also serve as a Buildings and Grounds Committee, having general charge of the administration, appearance, and upkeep of the buildings, grounds, and furnishings. They are to recommend major needs to the church for authorization. Smaller routine repairs and purchases provided for in the budget are to be attended to without specific action of the church. In case of an emergency, the trustees shall act in the best interest of the church.

Article VII Other Organizations and Officers

- Section 1 Other Organizations:
Any new organization or radical change of any present church-sponsored organization must have the approval and authorization of the church.

Article VIII Standing Committees

- Section 1 General:
(1) A committee is a body of one or more persons elected or appointed by (or by direction of) the church, to consider, investigate, or take action on certain matters that cannot be done effectively by the entire membership or by one of the organizations.
(2) Each committee established by the church is responsible to report to the church regularly.

- Section 2 Finance Committee:
(1) The Finance Committee shall consist of three (3) adults, in addition to the assistant treasurer, treasurer, and advisor-treasurer. Committee members shall be nominated by the nomination committee and elected by the membership of the church. They shall serve for three-year terms on a rotation system with one new committee member being elected each year. After completion of the three-year term, individuals shall be inactive for one year before becoming eligible for reelection.
(2) They shall prepare the annual church budget and present it to the church for approval.
(3) They shall promote budget giving and special emphases throughout the budget year.
(4) They shall study budget expenditures throughout the year and recommend any necessary adjustments in the budget.

- Section 3 Church Nominating Committee:
(1) The Church Nominating Committee shall consist of six (6) adults. This committee shall nominate all organizational officers and committee members of the church. Nominating committee members shall be nominated and elected by the membership of the church. They shall serve for three-year terms on a rotation system with two new committee members being elected each year. After completion of the three year term, individuals shall be inactive for one year before becoming eligible for reelection.

- Section 4 Personnel Committee:
(1) The Personnel Committee shall consist of six (6) adults. Committee members shall be nominated by the nomination committee and elected by the membership of the church. They shall serve for three-year terms on a rotation system with two new committee members being elected each year. After completion of the three year term, individuals shall be inactive for one year before becoming eligible for reelection.
(2) They shall assist the Pastor in matters relating to personnel administration and management.
(3) They shall prepare job descriptions for staff positions. These job descriptions will be kept by the church secretary and available for church members to view.

(4) They shall recommend persons for non-pastoral staff positions to the congregation, and establish, with the Finance Committee, staff salaries and benefits.

(5) They shall conduct annual performance evaluations of non-pastoral staff within one month of that person's hired anniversary date.

Section 5 Cemetery Committee:

The South Fork Cemetery Memorial Fund, Incorporated was incorporated in December, 1974. A copy of the incorporation papers will be kept in the Church Office.

(1) The Cemetery Committee shall consist of three (3) members who are interested in the upkeep and sanctity of the Cemetery. Committee members shall be nominated by the nomination committee and elected by the membership of the church. They shall serve for three-year terms on a rotation system with one new committee member being elected each year. After completion of the three year term, individuals shall be inactive for one year before becoming eligible for reelection.

(2) They will be responsible for keeping accurate records of burial sites.

(3) They shall be responsible for the sale and collection of proceeds of available burial plots.

(4) They shall arrange and supervise the maintenance of the cemetery.

(5) They shall report to the church regularly at the quarterly business meeting concerning the status of the cemetery in reference to financing and administration.

Article IX Other Committees

Section 1 Other Standing Committees may be authorized by the church when the need arises. The church may abolish any standing committee.

Section 2 Special Committees, when authorized by the church, may be appointed by the moderator, or elected by the church for a specific purpose not otherwise provide for in these Bylaws. Such committees shall serve until their purpose has been fulfilled, at which time they shall be automatically dissolved.

Article X Church Finances

Section 1 Method of Support:

(1) The church shall be supported by free-will gifts of tithes and offerings from members and friends of the church.

(2) The church, believing that the Bible teaches tithing, will promote the tithe as the minimum, and encourage all members to give liberally and regularly to its support.

- Section 2 Budget:
- (1) The church shall adopt annually, an all-inclusive detailed budget, embracing world missions and local expense.
 - (2) All receipts from all sources shall be channeled into the church's financial accounts.
 - (3) Monies designated by special offerings, or give for specific purposes by individuals, will not be used for any purpose other than that designated.

- Section 3 Records:
- (1) Accurate records of all receipts and disbursements will be kept by the treasurer and financial secretary, with monthly and annual reports made to the church.
 - (2) Careful and confidential records will be kept of individual gifts given through the church envelope system. An annual report will be given to the individual.

- Section 4 Receipts and Disbursements:
- (1) All monies are to be deposited, counted, and the record of deposit turned over to the treasurer.
 - (2) Disbursements are to be made by the treasurer or assistant-treasurer in accord with the church budget, with proper bills and purchase orders in hand, or on the authority of church action.
 - (3) Individuals and/or groups must obtain prior church approval before spending non-budgeted monies.

Article XI Licensing and Ordaining Ministers

- Section 1 Licensing:
- Any male member, who by his zeal, devotion, and willingness to teach, gives evidence that he is called of God to the work of the ministry, may be duly licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, provided three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting at any regular church service shall agree thereto.

- Section 2 Ordaining:
- (1) When a church of like faith and order shall have called as its Pastor a member of this church, or one who was called into the ministry while a member of this church, who possesses the scriptural qualifications for ordination to the work of the Gospel Ministry, and shall request in writing that he be ordained, this church shall consider such a request.
 - (2) If the church, by vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting at a regular business meeting, approves such a request, a council of ministers from sister churches shall be called to examine the qualifications of the candidate. If, in their judgment, the candidate is a fit subject for ordination, the church shall then proceed to ordain the candidate, setting him apart to the Gospel Ministry.
 - (3) Should any minister, ordained by this church, later become the victim of moral and/or doctrinal departures from biblical truth, the church may revoke his ordination and declare it null and void.

Article XII Disruption of Fellowship

Properties: Should the fellowship of this church become disrupted to the extent of causing a division of the body into two or more groups, all properties of this church shall belong to the group, however small, who adheres to the principles herein stated and embodied in this constitution.

Article XIII Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended or changed at a regular business meeting of the church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting, provided such amendments have been written and read at the previous regular business meeting of the church, and distributed among the membership in printed form.