

Constitution and Bylaws of First Baptist Church of Lindale

Adopted
January 28, 2024

**CONSTITUTION OF
First Baptist Church of Lindale**

ARTICLE I

This congregation will be known as the “First Baptist Church of Lindale, Inc.” located at 9 Park Avenue, Lindale, Georgia 30147 according to the law of the State of Georgia and will hereafter be referred to in this constitution as the “Church”.

Our mission is to exalt the Lord, Jesus Christ, to evangelize the unchurched, to encourage believers, to equip church members and to experience a life of faith.

**ARTICLE II
DECLARATION**

SECTION 1. This Church is a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ; united by covenant for the worship of Almighty God; associated in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel to practice its precepts, to recognize and receive Jesus Christ as Savior as the virgin-born, crucified, buried, risen, ascended Son of God, and their Supreme Law Giver and Ruler. This Church accepts the Bible and the Bible alone as its standard of all matters of belief and conduct.

SECTION 2. This Church accepts The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 of the Southern Baptist Convention as a statement of its belief and is attached as Exhibit A to this constitution.

SECTION 3. This Church holds a denominational affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention, Georgia Baptist Convention, and Floyd County Baptist Association.

**ARTICLE III
STATEMENT ON SEXUALITY**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

**ARTICLE IV
STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE**

We believe the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that marriage between one man and one woman, for life, uniquely reflects Christ’s relationship with His Church (Ephesians 5:21-33). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, cohabitation, homosexual behavior, rejection of one’s biological sex or use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of First Baptist Church of Lindale.

ARTICLE V

STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

ARTICLE VI

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

SECTION 1. This constitution will be approved for adoption by a 2/3 majority vote. Quorum must consist of at least 50 Church members present at the conference.

SECTION 2. This constitution will supersede and repeal all previous rules which have been adopted in prior Constitutions.

SECTION 3. Amendments to the constitution will be considered for adoption after Church members are properly notified during all Sunday morning worship services via in-person announcement. Additional communication regarding amendments can be sent in writing, published on the church website, and/or sent via electronic mail for a period of two weeks prior to the vote of any change. This vote should occur during all Sunday morning worship services.

SECTION 4. A copy of the Constitution will be kept at all times with the records of the Church Clerk. Any amendments or revisions, after passage by the Church, will be typewritten and attached as part of the clerk's permanent copy. A copy along with amendments will also be kept on file in the church office and available on church website.

**BYLAWS OF
First Baptist Church of Lindale**

1. Members

a. Reception

By majority approval of the church members present at any worship gathering or business meeting, any person may be received as a member of First Baptist Church of Lindale with all privileges and responsibilities implied by membership in any of the following ways:

- i. Any person responding in repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord may be received as a candidate for baptism and church membership
- ii. By transfer of Church letter from another Baptist church
- iii. By a statement of faith of their prior experience of conversion and scriptural baptism in another evangelical church of like faith and practice
 1. Scriptural baptism
 - a. By Immersion (John 3:23; Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:38, Romans 6:4-5)
 - b. Act of obedience after salvation (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 8:35-38)
 - c. Not essential for salvation (John 3:36; Ephesians 2:8)
- iv. By restoration to the church membership after having been excluded through the process of church discipline.

b. Dismissal

Any member may be removed from the membership of First Baptist Church of Lindale in any of the following ways:

- i. Death of the member
- ii. Transfer of membership in good standing to another Baptist church of like faith and practice.
- iii. Upon request in writing or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.
- iv. If an officer of the church is notified by the individual of their faithful attendance or membership at another church.
- v. Church Discipline: The purpose of Church Discipline will be for (1) the restoration of the member back into right fellowship with God and the church (Galatians 6:1-3; Ephesians 4:29-32) and (2) for protecting the purity and unity of the church. (1 Corinthians 1:10). The process of such dismissal will be consistent with the biblical instructions given by Christ in Matthew 18:15-17 and by example of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13.
 1. Private correction (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1): According to Eph. 4:29-32, a believer should only speak about his/her brother/sister in a way that builds up his/her faith and character. Gossip kills proper church discipline. This step is a private exchange between two people. This is to be done with childlike humility, concern for holiness, grace, and love.
 2. Small group clarification (Matt. 18:16; Deut. 19:15): If the person confronted privately is still unrepentant, continuing in sin, then we are to take "one or two" others along (v. 16). This step will include the Pastor. The goal is not to gang up on this person but to express love and care in the Spirit of Christ for their restoration.
 3. Church admonition (Matt. 18:17): If the person refuses to repent in light of small group clarification, then the third step is church admonition. Jesus says to "tell it to the church" (v. 17). Public shame is not the goal. Admonition is the unified effort of the entire church body pursuing the unrepentant member in love with the goal of restoration.

4. Church Exclusion (Matt. 18:17): If the person continues in unrepentant sin, even after church admonition, Jesus says to treat him/her as a “Gentile and tax collector” (v. 17). In other words, he/she is no longer treated as a member of FBC Lindale and his/her names will be removed from the church’s membership. This is church exclusion.

After all these biblical steps have been taken, a member or members can be withdrawn from the membership of FBC Lindale upon the recommendation of the Pastor and active Deacons and a vote of $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of church members present at the time the recommendation is made. All recommendations will be supported with documented evidence of the process described above which led to the recommendation.

2. Governance

The Church is a member-led congregation. The Biblical officers will be the Pastor, Pastoral Staff, and Deacons. The Trustees will be President, Vice-President, Chief Financial Officer, Church Clerk and Properties Committee Chairman.

a. Pastoral

i. Pastor

1. Qualifications

The Pastor of FBC Lindale will meet the biblical qualifications and seek to lead in accordance with the biblical instructions given by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 as well as by Peter in 1 Peter 5:1-5. This includes but is not limited to:

- a. He will give himself to the regular preaching and teaching of God’s Word, and to the servant leadership of the congregation.
- b. He will be moderator of all meetings for the transaction of business,
- c. He will have general supervision over all ministries of the Church, and
- d. He will be ex-officio member of all committees.
- e. He will counsel candidates as to the reality of their conversion experience
- f. He will engage all prospective and new members in the ongoing education of the biblical roles of church membership
- g. He will visit the sick and offer Pastoral counsel to those who may be in need to the best of his ability
- h. He will strive for the spiritual development of the entire membership of the church.
- i. Be responsible for the supervision of all staff members and will set up, file, maintain personnel records, and perform annual evaluations of all staff members.
- j. If the Pastor is unable to fulfill his duties for an extended period of time, he will inform the Deacons who will provide support and direction.

2. Election

In the vacancy of the Pastor, the deacons will select an interim Pastor to serve until a new Pastor is selected and approved. When it is necessary for the Church to secure a Pastor, a Pastor Search Committee of seven (7) members (and two (2) alternate members without voting privileges) will be elected by the Church. The Pastor Search Committee will work in cooperation with the Finance Committee in determining the Pastor’s compensation. The active deacons will select and present nominees for this committee to the Church.

The deacons will use the following procedure in selecting nominees:

- a. an active deacon will be selected as the chairman of the Pastor Search Committee by a majority vote on a written ballot of those deacons present.
- b. the remaining six (6) nominees will then be selected by a majority vote on a written ballot.
- c. the seven (7) nominees are presented to the church for approval by majority vote at the following monthly business meeting
- d. no two members of an immediate family will serve at the same time on this committee.

In the election of a Pastor, the Pastor Search Committee will proceed to select some minister of the Gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office of Pastor of this church. Once the committee has made its choice, the committee will give at least one (1) week's notice to the church of the Sunday on which the committee will give its report and the candidate will be heard by the church. At any meeting held for the election of a Pastor, no name will be considered nor will any nomination be made, except that presented by the committee. The vote will be on the adoption of the report of the committee and the question to be voted on will be, "Will the report of the committee be received and its recommendation adopted?" If three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting, by written ballot, approve the committee's report and recommendations, the nominee will be considered elected. The moderator will declare the nominee elected. Should the committee's report fail to receive the necessary three-fourths (3/4) vote, the nominee will be declared not elected and the matter will be returned to the Pastor Search Committee for further consideration. The meeting will adjourn without debate.

3. Resignation

The elected Pastor is called to serve for an indefinite period. At any point during his service, he is at liberty to resign giving at least two weeks' notice in writing. If the Pastor is unable to fulfill his duties due to illness or disability, the deacons will review and provide a recommendation for final compensation pending church approval.

The two weeks' notice may be waived at the request of the Pastor or the Church with the Pastor's pay ending upon this request.

4. Termination

The Church has the right to terminate the services of the Pastor at any point during his service. A request by any church member for the Pastor to resign will follow the steps below.

- a. It is required for the member to discuss their concerns with the Pastor through private consultation (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-17).
- b. If a resolution is not met between the member and the Pastor, the member will then contact the Chairman of the Deacons.
- c. The Chairman of the Deacons will discuss the request with the deacons at the following deacon's meeting or a called deacon's meeting, if necessary.

- d. If the deacons determine that the request is valid, the member will attend a called deacon's meeting to make their request and provide justification for their request and should be prepared to answer questions and concerns from the deacons.
- e. A three-fourths (3/4) standing vote of the deacons at a called deacon's meeting must be obtained before a recommendation may be brought to the church requesting the resignation of the Pastor.
- f. A called meeting for receiving a recommendation from the deacons for the Pastor to resign, will be announced from the pulpit on a Sunday morning one (1) week before such called meeting.
- g. This recommendation must be voted on, by written ballot, at a regular Sunday morning service and must be carried by three-fourths (3/4) majority of the members of the Church present.
- h. If termination is approved, the deacons will review and provide a recommendation for final compensation and benefits pending church approval.

ii. Student Minister

The Student Minister will plan, coordinate, and supervise the Student Ministry. They will work in collaboration with the Pastor and Children's Minister in order to effectively minister to the entire family as well as ensuring a smooth transition from Children's Ministry, to Student Ministry, and to Adult Ministries within the Church. As Jesus, our example and our Savior, modeled growth and maturing during His life, the Student Minister should encourage and foster our young people to "increase in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). The Student Minister will report to the Pastor with the support of the Personnel Committee and participate in general Pastoral duties.

iii. Children's Minister

The role of the Children's Minister will articulate a vision for dynamic, life-changing ministry to children. They will partner with parents to come alongside them to help provide tools and opportunities to help their kids understand the great love and future God has for each of them. They will communicate consistently with parents the vision of the children's ministry and provide resources and support that encourage parents to facilitate their children's spiritual growth with the partnership of the church. They will work together with the Student Minister to build a successful bridge between the Children's and Student Ministries. The Children's Minister will report to the Pastor with the support of the Personnel Committee and participate in general Pastoral duties.

iv. Music Minister

The Music Minister is called upon to focus and unify the ministry in worship to God (Romans 15: 5-6), confirming that all music is in agreement to God's Word and to be understandable to all (1 Corinthians 14:15). They will direct and supervise all musical organizations and events based upon the church's purpose and vision while serving the church with love and obedience in accordance with a ministerial call. They will seek to foster the growth of discipleship within leaders of the church music ministry and administer proper management of all musical materials and equipment provided to enhance worship. The Music Minister will report to the Pastor with the support of the Personnel Committee and participate in general Pastoral duties.

b. Deacons

The deacons are servants and officers of the church. They originated in the early church to help other biblical leaders to provide for the needs of the early church (Acts 6:1-6). They were servant leaders. In the book of 1 Timothy, Paul listed some qualifications for men who were selected to be deacons. First Baptist Church of Lindale has followed that instruction in the selection of deacons.

1. Qualifications

- a. Prior to selection, a deacon must have proven himself by being faithful in his work in previous church ministries. (1 Timothy 3:9-10; Luke 16:10-12)
- b. He must have proven himself in the management of his home. (1 Timothy 3:11-13)
- c. He must exhibit Christian character in his business and social activities. (1 Timothy 3:8)
- d. He must have been a Christian at least two (2) years. (1 Timothy 3:10)
- e. he must be at least twenty-one (21) years old, *
- f. a member of First Baptist Church of Lindale for at least one (1) year, and*
- g. he must be a regular tither. *

**in addition to Biblical requirements*

2. Election

- a. The Pastor and the current chairman of deacons will appoint a deacon nominating committee by April 1st each year.
- b. The nominating committee will consist of those deacons who are due to be placed on inactive status for the upcoming year.
- c. Other church members may serve on this nominating committee if they are selected by the Pastor and chairman of deacons and are approved by the church at a regular business meeting.
- d. The deacon nominating committee will present candidates for upcoming year to the regular church conference in August.
- e. The deacons and Pastor will arrange an ordination service.
- f. Deacons will be selected for a three (3) year team. After serving for 3 years, they will be placed on the inactive status for at least one (1) year before being eligible to return to active status.
- g. If a vacancy should occur, the deacons may ask the deacon nominating committee to present a replacement candidate to the church for consideration at any time throughout the year at any regular business meeting.

3. Duties (Acts 6:1-6)

- a. Maintaining loyalty and unity with the Pastor and Ministerial Staff.
- b. Guarding the unity and peace of the fellowship of the church.
- c. Faithful attendance to small groups and services of the church.
- d. Encouragement of and participation in the organizational ministries of the church (Sunday Bible Study, Discipleship, Music, Outreach, Special Events, Youth, Children, etc.)
- e. Personal evangelism in the community.

- f. Maintaining relationships and ministry to specific families as assigned through the Deacon Family Ministry. This includes assisting the Pastor & staff in the visitation of the sick & shut-ins of the membership as well as in the assimilation of new members.
- g. Service of the Lord's Supper.
- h. Assisting in security and surveillance during church services.
- i. Recommend members to serve on the Nominating Committee to the church during September Church Conference.
- j. Provide support and direction in the event that the Pastor is unable to fulfill his duties for an extended period of time.

4. Deacon Meetings

- a. The active deacons will meet once a month for the consideration of their specific duties and the general welfare of the church and to make needed recommendations to the church.
- b. No meeting will take place until all deacons and the pastor have been notified.
- c. A portion of each regular meeting should be devoted to reports from the deacons about their deacon family group.
- d. A quorum at any meeting will be established by the majority of the active deacons.
- e. The August meeting will be considered as the annual meeting where the election of officers for deacons will occur. This meeting will include the active deacons and the newly elected deacons will be the only eligible voters.
- f. The officers to be elected will be the chairman, vice chairman, secretary and other officers as needed.
- g. The chairman, vice chairman and secretary will be elected by a majority vote by written ballot.
- h. The chairman, or vice chairman in the chairman's absence, will preside at all meetings of the deacons.
- i. Meetings will be conducted in general as outlined by "Roberts Rules of Order".
- j. The secretary will keep a record of all meetings and will submit any recommendations from the deacons to the church.

c. Paid Support Staff

- i. Any staff member that is not designated as Pastoral Staff will be designated as Support Staff.
- ii. For Support Staff qualifications, selection of and dismissal please refer to the Personnel Policy Manual

d. Trustees

The Trustees will act on the authority of the Church to fulfill the requirements of the corporation chartered by the State of Georgia but will have no more authority than any other church member. Any decisions made by the Trustees will be reported and discussed at the monthly Church business meeting.

i. Duties

1. Five (5) Trustees, elected by the church, will serve as corporate officers of the church. They will hold in trust the church property. They will have no power to negotiate, buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It will be the function of the Trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents on behalf of First Baptist Church of Lindale involving the purchase, sale, mortgage, rental, or transfer of property, or to other legal documents where the signatures of Trustees are required.

2. Selection

- a. The following five (5) elected church officers will also serve as the Trustees and will serve a one-year term upon their election to each of their positions by the Nominating Committee.
 - i. President – Vice - Chairman of Deacons
 - ii. Vice President – Chairman of Deacons
 - iii. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) – Treasurer
 - iv. Secretary - Church Clerk
 - v. Properties Committee Chairman

e. Church Staff Employment

When deemed necessary, the Church will employ pastoral and paid support staff. The Personnel Committee will oversee the process by receiving applications, interviewing candidates, obtaining references, and presenting a recommendation to the Church for any person to be employed by the Church, excluding the Pastor. The committee may invite the participation of additional church members in the selection process. The Personnel Committee will have authority to determine the person best qualified for employment.

The Personnel Committee has the authority to recommend to the Church the termination of employment of any employee of the Church (except the Pastor) in accordance with regulations specified in job classifications. The Pastor will be fully involved in any recommendations to be made by this committee.

No church member (First Baptist Lindale) will be hired as Paid Support Staff.

3. Church Operations

a. Meetings

The church will meet on a regular basis for the purposes of corporate worship, discipleship, fellowship, missions, and personal ministry. (Hebrews 10:23-25)

- i. Worship Opportunities (additional services may be added as needed at the discretion of church leadership):

1. Weekly worship on Sunday mornings
2. Sunday Morning Small Groups/Sunday School

3. Midweek music sessions will be conducted for worship and practice to lead Sunday morning worship
4. Lord's Supper will be observed quarterly during corporate worship
5. Other worship and small group opportunities may be offered as needed
6. Under special circumstances, the Pastor and church leadership may decide to conduct worship using virtual platforms.

b. Conducting Business

- i. The business meeting of the Church will be at such times as the Church will set, upon recommendation of Pastor and Deacons. The Pastor will act as moderator in all meetings for the transaction of business. If the Pastor is absent, the Chairman of the Deacons will act as moderator. In the absence of both the Pastor and chairman of the Deacons, the vice-chairman of the Deacons will act as moderator. Should none of the above be present, the majority of those present will elect a temporary moderator. It will be the duty of the moderator to keep order, to state and explain all propositions offered, and to take votes and announce the results.
- ii. The business of the Church will be conducted according to "Roberts Rules of Order", except in instances where they conflict with the provisions of this Constitution and by-laws, in which cases the latter will prevail.
- iii. Twenty members will constitute a quorum at any business meeting. In the absence of a quorum the assembly will have the power to adjourn to a date set by the said assembly.
- iv. The Pastor and Deacons will call for a special business meeting whenever they deem it expedient. Any member of the Church may request a special business meeting through the Pastor and Chairman of the Deacons. The Pastor and Deacons will judge the urgency of the request and make recommendations to the church. At least one public notice on Sunday must be given prior to all special meetings and will clearly state the purpose of the special meeting.
- v. The church, when assembled at any regular worship service, may conduct business without discussion provided that an opportunity was previously given for discussion and questions this is to protect the sacredness of worship.
- vi. Under matters of public safety, the Pastor and church leadership may decide to conduct business meetings using virtual platforms. Any digital platform may be used that enables the secure registration of participating members and recording of votes.
- vii. The session will observe the following order of business, opening and closing with prayer:
 1. reading of minutes
 2. report of general church officers
 3. report of committees
 4. unfinished business
 5. new business
 6. granting of Church letters.

c. Church Clerk and Assistant Church Clerk

The clerk will keep a record of the proceedings of the church in all business meetings, will maintain a record of the names and addresses of all members, will be custodian of the records and documents of the church, and will present all requests for letters of dismissal to the Church. An electronic copy of all minutes of the business meetings will be kept. The church clerk will be nominated by the Church Nominating Committee and elected by the church.

4. Facilities

- a. Special Events with Fee
 - i. Special events, where an admission fee is charged for cost recovery only, will be allowed on the church campus but must receive church approval.
- b. Fundraising and Special Collections
 - i. Any fundraising project or special collection must be approved by a majority vote of the Church prior to the execution of the proposed project.
- c. Use of Facilities
 - i. The church facilities will be used according to the policies/fees set forth in the Facility Use Policy. This policy is in the church office and is available upon request. Revisions will be recommended to the Church at any regular business meeting.

5. Committees

- a. Standing Committees
 - i. The standing committees of FBC Lindale will maintain the governance and administration of the life and ministry of FBC Lindale. These are essential to the church's organizational structure. Committee members must be a member of First Baptist Church Lindale.
 - 1. All new members of standing committees will be presented by the Nominating Committee and will be elected by the church annually.
 - 2. Elected members of these committees will serve a 3-year term. At the end of their term, they will rotate out of service for a period of at least one year. After one year, they will be eligible for nomination to serve an additional 3-year term.
 - 3. No one may serve on a standing committee at the same time as their spouse.
 - 4. No one may serve on more than one standing committee at a time.

The standing committees of FBC Lindale will be:

- a. Budget Planning Committee

The committee will consist of the following members: Pastor, Sunday School Director, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Treasurer, Chairman of the Deacons, Minister of Music, Minister of Students, Minister of Children, Church Clerk, Chairman of Properties Committee, and Chairman of Personnel Committee. Any person with a budget line-item responsibility not listed in the preceding list may participate in budget planning sessions if they desire since they will be asked for their estimated budget requirements during these planning sessions.

This committee will plan and submit a proposed budget for the church fiscal year to the Deacons not later than the November Deacon's meeting each year. Preparation of the budget will begin no later than the second Sunday in October. The Budget Planning Committee will receive recommendations from the Personnel Committee for salary considerations for the staff over which this committee has jurisdiction and from the Deacons for salary considerations for the Pastor. During the portion of the meeting that these salary recommendations are discussed, staff persons, whether employees or self-employed, will be excused from the deliberation.

After consideration by the Deacons, the budget will be presented as a joint recommendation to the Church for consideration and adoption. The chairman of the Finance Committee will be the chairman of this committee.

b. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will consist of five (5) members, including the Church treasurer, and will be responsible for the budget and oversight of the financial affairs of the Church.

They will be responsible for counting and preparing deposits of all receipts coming to the Church during Sunday worship opportunities. At least two church members of no relation, one (1) being a member of the Finance Committee, will be present and responsible each Sunday to ensure that all deposits are accurately recorded. The committee may enlist church members to assist in this process. At least two (2) people will accompany the money when it is carried to the bank. The Finance Committee will be responsible for securely preparing each week's receipts for deposit. Receipts submitted to the church office throughout the week will be received and processed by the Church's Financial Secretary.

The annual budget approved by the church will be the authority for payment of invoices or bills. Two authorized signatures will be required on any check issued on behalf of the Church against the Church budget and the five (5) members of the Finance Committee will be authorized to sign checks for the purpose of paying invoices and bills. The Finance Committee will maintain a file of all paid and unpaid bills in the Church office. This file will be open to any Church member.

The Finance Committee may authorize an over expenditure of a budget item up to 1% without the Church's approval. Officers or chairpersons will be authorized to make charges only against those items of the budget which pertain to their departments or committees. Any expenditure over 1% of the budget item will be referred to the Deacons and Church.

Any proposal to increase, decrease, or change a budgeted item will be first referred to the Finance Committee for study. The committee will present its recommendation to the Church.

The purchase of any items which is not covered by a budget allocation will be referred to the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee will make its records available to the Budget Planning Committee to assist in compiling the new budget.

The Finance Committee will review the monthly audit conducted by the Church's CPA and the financial report prepared by the Financial Secretary.

c. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will consist of seven (7) members, including the Sunday School Director. They are responsible for selecting church members to serve as Chairs of standing committees, members of standing committees and leaders of ministry teams. Preparation of the nominating committee report will begin no later than the second Sunday in May. The committee will contact and confirm the church members agreement to serve and present recommendations to the church for approval or rejection during the August church conference meeting. The committee will also be responsible for selecting and recommending members for special committees, as needed.

d. Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee will be responsible for selecting and recommending staff members to the Church (except the Pastor). For the purpose of defining the responsibilities and limits of the duties of the Personnel Committee, the following will apply to all staff members except the Pastor:

- It is the duty of the Personnel committee and Pastor to investigate any problem concerning any staff member, to solve the problems if possible, or if further action is necessary to make recommendations to the church.
- Outline all job duties periodically and make changes, if necessary, ensure that each employee is thoroughly informed as to his or her duties. When a new person is employed, job duties should be explained in advance in order to eliminate later misunderstanding.
- Review job duties annually and make changes if necessary.
- The committee and the Pastor will be responsible for decisions pertaining to the workday and week. Please refer to the Personnel Policy Manual for details.
- The committee will make recommendations to the Church through the Finance Committee concerning any change in salary and benefits that might be necessary or advisable.
- The committee will make recommendations concerning the following: vacation pay, length of vacation, holidays, sick pay, social security or retirement, for each staff member. The expenses to meet these items will be in the annual budget. Policies pertaining to the above items will be published and made available to all church members.
- It will be the duty of the personnel committee to work closely with the Pastor and all staff members to promote a spirit of harmony and cooperation.

e. Properties Committee

The Properties Committee will consist of at least three (3) members. The committee will be responsible for the care, repair and maintenance of all church buildings, equipment, and grounds including the repair and maintenance of the grounds.

The committee will purchase or authorize the purchase of new equipment which has been authorized by the budget and approved by the Church. At least two (2) bids or quotations will be received on all major repairs or large purchases if the repairs or purchases exceed \$5000 per repair. The committee will dispose of all surplus or used equipment. The committee will set up a maintenance and painting schedule covering approximately one-fourth (1/4) of the building each year.

- The Chairman will preside over the care, repair and maintenance of all church buildings, equipment, and grounds.

6. Ministry Teams

- a. The ministry teams of FBC Lindale will function as to provide opportunity for involvement in ministry inside and outside the church.
 - i. Leaders of ministry teams will be presented by the Nominating Committee and will be elected by the church annually.
 - ii. Leaders will be free to enlist volunteer members to their team under the advisement of the Pastor and Staff.
 - iii. Ministry Team Leaders and members may serve with no term lengths.
 - iv. Ministry Teams can be formed or dissolved based on the changing ministry needs of the church and under the advisement of the Pastor and Staff.
- b. Examples of Ministry Teams include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Hospitality
 - ii. Baptismal
 - iii. Lord's Supper
 - iv. Decorating
 - v. Men's Ministry
 - vi. Ladies' Connection
 - vii. Community Outreach
 - viii. Community Food Pantry
 - ix. Community Clothes Closet
 - x. Security

7. Adoption and Updates

- a. The Church may adopt such Bylaws by a two-thirds (2/3) vote during Sunday Morning Worship. The Church will be provided an opportunity to ask questions regarding the document prior to adoption.
- b. Updates to Bylaws will be voted on by at least 20 church members during a regular business meeting.

**CONSTITUTION OF
First Baptist Church of Lindale**

EXHIBIT A

Baptist Faith & Message 2000

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; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

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 perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

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

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 Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

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

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 inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

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

IV. Salvation

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

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 Saviour.

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 two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

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

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

****Note:** This article was amended June 14, 2023, by action of the 2023 Southern Baptist Convention**

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 Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

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

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

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; 1 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 co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

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

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

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; Philippians 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; Psalms 127; Psalms 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.