

Constitution and Bylaws

of

Corinth, Texas

2016

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Constitution

First Baptist Church of Corinth
Corinth, Texas

Preamble

We, the members of First Baptist Church of Corinth, do ordain and establish the following constitution and bylaws, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves, to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to provide guidance to our membership on the governance and operation of First Baptist Church of Corinth in an orderly manner. We acknowledge that Jesus Christ alone is the head of the church. The ultimate authority for governance and operation of this Church is the Holy Word of God as revealed in Scripture. Should a conflict or ambiguity arise with regard to these Articles or Bylaws, deference is to be given to the biblical reference to resolve any perceived conflict or ambiguity. This document will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches. (1 Corinthians 14:40; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:23, 24; Colossians 1:18)

Article I. Name

The name of the church shall be First Baptist Church of Corinth, hereinafter referred to as the Church. We are an independent, autonomous, evangelical body of believers founded in November of the year of our Lord 1887 and incorporated in the State of Texas in 1991. The principal office of the Church shall be located in Corinth, Texas.

Article II. Affiliations

First Baptist Church of Corinth is an autonomous body of believers, subject to the Lordship of Christ. Cooperation with organizations composed of other autonomous local churches provides an avenue for reaching our community, our region, our country, and the world with the Good News of the Gospel.

Insofar as it is consistent with Article III of the Constitution, the Church does and shall continue to cooperate with and have representation in the denominational causes sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, and the Denton Baptist Association. Our participation will include voluntary contributions, sending messengers to conventions of these associations, and encouraging missions involvement through both prayer and direct participation. These are voluntary associations and in no way surrenders the Church to control of or by any other ecclesiastical body (Acts 11:29, 30; 15:22; Romans 10:15; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

Article III. Purpose Statement

We are motivated in all facets by our faith in Jesus Christ, attempting to serve as a reflection of God's unconditional love for all people.¹ We seek to honor the Lord in all that

¹ *Spencer v. World Vision, Inc.*, 633 F.3d 723, 735 (9th Cir. 2011).

we do by operating First Baptist Church of Corinth in a manner consistent with biblical principles.² Every activity and speech that the Church or its employees, representatives, volunteers, or members engage in shall be consistent with, and in furtherance of, the Church's religious purposes, both publically and privately.³

All activities in which the Church engages are for the religious purpose of furthering its Christian mission, message, and viewpoint. Whether the activity has an overt liturgical religious purpose (preaching, worship, Bible instruction, Lord's Supper, baptism) or a related non-liturgical religious purpose (e.g. athletic leagues and teams, social service activities, weddings, primary and secondary schools, or events), all activities of the Church are intended to glorify God (Colossians 3:17). The Church conducts all activities in a holistic manner in order to foster, repeat, advertise or express its Christian mission, message and viewpoint.⁴ In this way, every church activity itself is infused with a religious purpose, as an act of worship, intending to further the Church's religious beliefs and commitment to the faith.⁵

Conveying the Church's Christian message is at the heart of all that we do, in life, deed, word, and expression.⁶ The Church is dedicated to serving and providing for its community, not simply to engage in organized worship.⁷ Provision of charity and community services, including but not limited to care for children, widows, and those in need, as well as evangelism, strengthening Christian leadership, discipleship and biblical education, primary and secondary education, are means of fulfilling Christian duty and providing an example of the Christ-like way of life that the Church seeks to foster⁸ (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; James 1:27; Titus 1:7-9). Therefore, all behavior of members, representatives, and volunteers of the church is communicative in nature, exemplifying the faith. Associating with likeminded Christians reinforces the Church's Christian purpose and is vital to the faith's perpetuation⁹ (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Finally, the primary, exclusive, and only purposes for which the Church is organized are religious in nature, including but not limited to conducting missions and services. Likewise, the Church intends to disseminate, teach, and preach the Gospel and teachings of Jesus Christ, to encourage and aid the growth, nurture and spread of Christianity and to render Christian service.¹⁰ The recital of these purposes is intended to be exclusive of any and all other purposes, this Church being formed for religious and charitable purposes only.¹¹

² *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, 134 S.Ct. 2751, 2766 (2014).

³ See *World Vision*, 633 F.3d at 434; *Univ. of Great Falls v. NLRB*, 278 F.3d 1335, 1343 (D.C. Cir. 2002); *Universidad Cent. de Bayamon v. NLRB*, 793 F.2d 383, 399-400, 403 (1st Cir. 1985) (en banc) (Breyer, J.).

⁴ See *Hurley v. Irish-American Gay*, 515 U.S. 557, 581 (1995).

⁵ See *Corp. of Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. Amos*, 483 U.S. 327, 344 (1987) (Brennan, J., concurring).

⁶ See *World Vision*, 633 F.3d at 434.

⁷ See *Amos*, 483 U.S. at 344 (Brennan, J., concurring)

⁸ See *id.*

⁹ See *HEB Ministries, Inc. v. Tex. Higher Educ. Coordinating Bd.*, 235 S.W.3d 627, 659-660, (Tex. 2007)

¹⁰ See *World Vision*, 633 F.3d at 736.

¹¹ See *id.* at 726.; *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602, 628 (1971).

Article IV. Mission Statement

Section 1. Calling

We are called, by Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit, to challenge all people to be fully devoted followers of Christ. Our calling includes both introduction to and encouragement to remain in a life of full devotion to Jesus Christ. (Colossians 3:17.) We are charged with encouraging, equipping, serving and sustaining Christians. We do this by directly instilling our Christian philosophies, values, missions and goals in church members.¹² Liturgical religious activities (e.g. preaching, worship services, Bible instruction, Lord's Supper, baptism), as well as non-liturgical religious activities (e.g. athletic leagues or teams, mentorship, service opportunities, events, community involvement) all serve as methods that the Church utilizes to instill our religious values and beliefs, both expressly and by example.¹³

Section 2. Community

We believe that our religious activity and religious worship derives meaning in large measure from participation in a larger religious community. For this reason, individual members of our body play a large role in furthering our mission and viewpoint as a church.¹⁴ We exist to foster a Christ-like environment of persons subscribing to our religious beliefs and faith.¹⁵ The Church is dedicated to serving and providing for its community, not simply engaging in organized worship¹⁶ (Galatians 6:10).

Associating with likeminded Christians reinforces the Church's Christian purpose and is vital to our faith's perpetuation¹⁷ (1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 John 1:9-11). We are committed to being and making disciples who understand what it means to follow Jesus Christ into a life of worship, fellowship, sacrifice, service and being led by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; John 15:16; Acts 1:8).

Therefore, we are also called to enable and equip the uncommitted and opposed to be fully devoted followers of Christ (Psalm 96:3; Colossians 4:5, 6). Our mission as the body of Christ is to participate, share, and encourage each other toward spiritual growth (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Section 3. Expression of Faith

The Church intends to transmit our system of religious beliefs, tradition, Christian morals, reverence, and values.¹⁸ We do so by engaging in the community and individuals' lives, acts of worship, and through all activities in which we participate.¹⁹ Likewise, we believe that all behavior of members and representatives of the church is communicative in nature, exemplifying and expressing our faith, both publically and privately²⁰ (1 Peter 2:12). Any member or representative who propounds a point

¹² See *Circle Sch. v. Pappert*, 381 F.3d 172, 182 (3d Cir. 2004).

¹³ See *Boy Scouts of Am. v. Dale*, 530 U.S. 640, 655-656 (2000).

¹⁴ See *Corporation of Presiding Bishop of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. Amos*, 483 U.S. 327, 342 (1987) (Brennan, J., concurring in judgment); *Roberts v. United States Jaycees*, 468 U.S. 609, 622 (1984).

¹⁵ See *Boy Scouts of Am.*, 530 U.S. at 654.

¹⁶ See *Amos*, 483 U.S. at 344 (Brennan, J., concurring).

¹⁷ See *HEB Ministries, Inc. v. Tex. Higher Educ. Coordinating Bd.*, 235 S.W.3d 627, 659-660, (Tex. 2007).

¹⁸ See *Boy Scouts of Am.*, 530 U.S. at 655-56 (quoting *Roberts*, 468 U.S. at 636).

¹⁹ See *Boy Scouts of Am.*, 530 U.S. at 655-56.

²⁰ See *id.* at 648; *Spencer v. World Vision, Inc.*, 633 F.3d 723, 734 (9th Cir. 2011); *Univ. of Great Falls v. NLRB*, 278 F.3d 1335, 1343 (D.C. Cir. 2002); *Universidad Cent. de Bayamon v. NLRB*, 793 F.2d 383, 399-400 (1st Cir. 1985).

of view contrary to our beliefs as stated in our Purpose Statement, Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, Code of Conduct, and Statements of Faith, which are incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth herein, will impair the Church's integrity and ability to disseminate its religious views and message²¹ (James 4:4; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 12).

Section 4. Outreach of Ministries

We take very seriously the Church's charge to be a Christian presence in a secular world²² (Matthew 5:14-16). Therefore, all activities that the Church engages in are intended to further its religious purpose, as stated in our Purpose Statement. As such, all of our ministries are considered an outgrowth of the mission of the Church to preach, teach, evangelize and instill the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.²³

Article V. Statement of Faith

Section 1. The Scriptures

The Baptist Faith and Message²⁴ says, "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)

Section 2. God

The Baptist Faith and Message²⁵ says, "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.

²¹ See *Boy Scouts of Am.*, 530 U.S. at 643 (quoting *Hurley v. Irish-American Gay*, 515 U.S. 557, 576-577 (1995)).

²² See *Little v. Wuerl*, 929 F.2d 944, 945-46 (3d Cir. 1991).

²³ See *Hall v. Baptist Mem'l Health Care Corp.*, 215 F.3d 618, 622 (6th Cir. 2000); *Cline v. Catholic Diocese*, 206 F.3d 651, 655-56 (6th Cir. 1999).

²⁴ "The Scriptures," *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (Nashville: Executive Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000), Section I.

²⁵ "God," *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (Nashville: Executive Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000), Section II.

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)

Section 3. Salvation

The Baptist Faith and Message²⁶ says, “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

“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

“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

“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

“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;

²⁶ “Salvation,” *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (Nashville: Executive Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000), Section IV.

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)

Section 4. Religious Liberty

The Baptist Faith and Message²⁷ says, “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)

Section 5. Marriage, Human Sexuality, and Gender Identity

We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Since the Holy Bible does speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

We are committed to the home and family as set forth in Holy Scripture. We believe God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. The Bible sets forth specific home and family values, which include the distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace the unchanging and longstanding principles of scriptural truth.

Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the “Baptist Faith and Message” as well as the Southern Baptist Convention (“SBC”), we believe:

A. Marriage

The Baptist Faith and Message²⁸ says, “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

²⁷ “Religious Liberty,” *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (Nashville: Executive Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000), Section XVII.

²⁸ “The Family,” *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (Nashville: Executive Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000), Section XVIII.

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)

The SBC Resolution on Biblical Sexuality and Public Policy:²⁹

“WHEREAS, From the beginning, the Bible establishes the basis for sexuality by declaring that human beings are created in God’s image as ‘male and female’ and that ‘a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh’; and

“WHEREAS, Jesus answered questions about marriage by reaffirming this male/female and ‘one flesh’ creation pattern for sexuality; be it

“RESOLVED. That the messengers to the SBC meeting in Louisville, Kentucky. June 23-24, 2009, reaffirm our historic and consistent support of the biblical definition of marriage as the exclusive union of a man and a woman.”

B. Sexual Immorality

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. Sexual immorality, defined as any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly and expressly prohibited by God. Christians should oppose all forms of sexual immorality including but not limited to pornography, adultery, and homosexuality.

(Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7-23; Matthew 5:27, 28; 15:19; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; Hebrews 13:4)

²⁹ Resolution adopted at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 23-24, 2009.

The SBC Resolution on Biblical Sexuality³⁰:

“WHEREAS, Any sexual behavior outside of this husband/wife marriage relationship is sinful, including premarital sex, adultery, bestiality, and pornography (Hebrews 13:4, Galatians 5:19, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Leviticus 18:23).

“WHEREAS, Homosexual behavior is specifically prohibited and condemned in both the Old and New Testaments (Genesis 19:1-27, Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:18-25, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

“RESOLVED, That we encourage all Christians to be ‘salt and light’ on these issues by exemplifying sexual purity in our lifestyle, speaking prophetically to the culture, and acting redemptively towards individuals.”

We agree with the Southern Baptist Convention’s statement on homosexuality:

“Sexuality—We affirm God’s plan for marriage and sexual intimacy—one man, and one woman, for life. Homosexuality is not a ‘valid alternative lifestyle.’ The Bible condemns it as sin. It is not, however, unforgivable sin. The same redemption available to all sinners is available to homosexuals. They, too, may become new creations in Christ.”

(Leviticus 18:7-23; Leviticus 20:10-21; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 15:19; Matthew 5:27, 28; Matthew 15:19; Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17-19; Colossians 3:5).

C. Sexual Identity

The Baptist Faith and Message³¹ says, “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.”

The SBC Resolution on Transgender Identity:³²

“WHEREAS, God’s design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6) which designate the fundamental distinction that God has embedded in the very biology of the human race; and

“WHEREAS, The separation of one’s gender identity from the physical reality of biological birth sex poses the harmful effect of endangering an understanding of sexuality and personhood that is fluid; be it

“RESOLVED, That the messengers to the SBC meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, June 10-11, 2014, affirm God’s good design that gender identity is determined by biological sex and not by one’s self-perception—a perception which is often influenced by fallen human nature in ways contrary to God’s design (Ephesians 4:17, 18); and be it further

“RESOLVED, That we oppose efforts to alter one’s bodily identity (e.g., cross-sex hormone therapy, gender reassignment surgery) to refashion it to conform with one’s perceived gender identity.

³⁰ Resolution adopted at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

³¹ “Man,” *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (Nashville: Executive Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000), Section III.

³² Resolution adopted at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 10-11, 2014.

(Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:5-9; Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7-9; Revelation 21:2)

D. Sexual Redemption

Though sinful sexual expression is egregious (as is all sin), the gospel provides redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

The Church believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, baptism, and faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, the Church members must welcome and treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who experience same-sex attractions or confess sexually immoral acts but are committed to resisting sexual temptation, refraining from sexual immorality, and conforming their behavior to the Church's Statement of Faith.

(Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:14-16; Titus 3:3-7)

E. Celibacy

The Church believes that Holy Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for human sexual behavior: (1) the conjugal "one flesh" marital union of one man and one woman, and (2) celibacy. Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them. Celibacy and faithful singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed within the Church.

(Genesis 1:27, 28; 2:18, 21-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-8; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-8; Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13; Romans 12:10; 1 Timothy 5:1-2)

Section 6. Sanctity of Life

We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our inspired, infallible, and inerrant guide (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Because Holy Scripture speaks to creation and human life, it is imperative that we correctly understand, articulate, and abide by what Holy Scripture teaches on this matter.

We believe that God has created mankind in His image (*Imago Dei*) and that human life begins at fertilization. God, in his infinite sovereignty, uniquely formed human beings and gave them a special dignity, personal freedom, and individual accountability among all the works of creation. Human beings have been made for relationship with God and to be good and faithful stewards of creation. God created each person's inmost being, knitting each person together in his mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). As God's individualized and personal creation, each person is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). God has ordained all the days of each person's life before they came to be (Psalm 139:16).

Religious Beliefs

Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

- From the moment of fertilization until natural death, every human life is sacred because every human life has been created by God, in His image and likeness.
- From the moment of fertilization, every human life must be recognized, respected, and protected as having the rights of a person and the inviolable right to life.
- The right to life and physical integrity of every unborn human life is inviolable—it is not a concession made by society or the state, but is instead inherent to the unborn human life by virtue of its creation in the image of God.
- Because human life begins at the moment of fertilization, it is against our religious and moral conviction to formally or materially cooperate in the termination of unborn human life.
- We are strongly committed to the preservation and defense of unborn human life, which compels our religious, moral, and ethical duty to defend unborn human life from destruction, whether by surgical abortion or use of drugs, devices, or services that have the intent, design, effect, or risk of terminating unborn human life or preventing its implantation and growth post-fertilization.
- The Church and all her ministers and ministries should publicly witness to society and to the state regarding the intrinsic, inherent, and inviolable dignity of all human life, from fertilization to natural death.

(Genesis 1:26, 27; 25:21, 22; Exodus 20:13; Psalms 22:9, 10; 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:1, 2; 49:5; Job 10:8-12; Jeremiah 1:4, 5; Luke 1:39-45)

Resolution adopted at the Southern Baptist Convention:³³

“WHEREAS, The Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in New Orleans in June 1982, clearly stated its opposition to abortion and called upon Southern Baptists to work for appropriate legislation and/or constitutional amendment which will prohibit abortions except to save the physical life of the mother; and

“WHEREAS, In addition to legislative remedies for this national sin, it is incumbent that we encourage the woman who is considering abortion to think seriously about the grave significance of such action by presenting information to her about the unborn child in her womb, who is a living individual human being, and encourage her to consider alternatives to abortion; and

“WHEREAS, Christ-like love requires that such alternatives be made available.

“Therefore, be it RESOLVED, That the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, June 12-14, 1984, encourage all of its institutions, cooperating churches, and members to work diligently to provide counseling, housing, and adoption placement services for unwed mothers with the specific intent of bringing them into a relationship with Jesus Christ and/or a sense of Christian responsibility; and

“Be it further RESOLVED, That we deplore the practice of performing abortions, as well as dispensing to minors without parental consent or even notification, contraceptive medications which have potentially dangerous side effects, and deplore also the use of tax funds for such activities; and

³³ Resolution adopted at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 12-14, 1984.

“Be it further RESOLVED, That we call upon all Southern Baptists to renew their commitment to support and work for legislation and/or constitutional amendment which will prohibit abortion except to save the physical life of the mother; and

“Be it further RESOLVED, That we encourage Southern Baptists to inquire whether or not their physicians perform abortions on demand or give referrals for abortions, and that we commend those of the medical profession who abstain from performing abortions or making abortion referrals; and

“Be it finally RESOLVED, That we urge our agencies and institutions to provide leadership for our cooperating churches and members, by preparing literature to take a clear and strong stand against abortion, and to inform and motivate our members to action to eliminate abortion on demand.

Section 7. Women in Ministry

All believers have equal standing in the Body of Christ. (Galatians 3:28) Women participate equally with men in the family of God. Their role is crucial to the mission of the Church.

While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture (Baptist Faith and Message 2000) (1 Timothy 2:11-14).

In keeping with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and the Scriptural references concerning church offices, the Church will not ordain any woman for the office of pastor or deacon. The Church will not elect any woman to serve in the office of pastor or deacon. A woman may serve as an un-ordained minister on the ministerial staff.

Section 8. Application

We believe that God’s grace can wipe clean the slate of guilt and sin, though the consequences of sin may still be incurred.

The Church believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, church members must welcome and treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who have endured the tragedy of sin and its consequences but are sincerely and resolutely committed to conform their behavior to this church’s “Statement of Faith.”

Article VI. Church Ordinances

Section 1. Believer’s Baptism

Immersion of a believer in water is the New Testament form of baptism. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior. Jesus Christ commanded the ordinance to symbolize the believer’s death to sin, burial of the old life and resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a public testimony to the believer’s faith in the final resurrection of the dead.

This ordinance is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

(Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19, 20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22; Acts 2:41, 42; 8:12, 35-39; 9:17, 18; 10:47, 48; 16:30-33; Romans 6:3-6; Colossians 2:12)

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The elements (bread and fruit of the vine) are representative and symbolic of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ and remind us of His love and supreme sacrifice for us. We are also reminded and eagerly anticipate His Second Coming to gather His own. Participation in this celebration is for believers in Christ and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination.

(Matthew 24:30, 31; 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19, 20; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-29)

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby believers in Christ, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

1. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly in either the morning or the evening worship service.
2. The deacons shall assist the pastor in the administration of the Lord's Supper.
3. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

Bylaws

First Baptist Church of Corinth
Corinth, Texas

Article I. Church Governance

The government of this Church is vested solely in the body of the members who compose it, subject to the Lordship of Christ. As an autonomous, self-governing assembly, it shall be subject to control by no other ecclesiastical body.

The property of First Baptist Church of Corinth is owned by the Church. No person shall have individual right to any part of the property or any asset of the Church. No member of the Church may be held personally responsible for the corporate obligations of the Church.

Along with day-to-day oversight of the operation of the Church, the pastor and members of the ministerial staff are charged with the responsibility of directing the congregation in matters of Christian faith and practice. In the event that there is no pastor or ministerial staff present to serve as the designated authority, this duty will reside with the Deacon Body until such time as a pastoral and / or ministerial staff can be put in place.

In order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical example to Church members, regular attenders, and the community, all of our members, employees, and volunteers must affirm and abide by the articles of the Constitution and conduct themselves accordingly. This is necessary to accomplish our religious mission, goals and purpose. Behavior or counter-witnessing that does otherwise will impede our religious mission and will invite scandal upon the Church.

Section 1. Christ as Head

There can be no question regarding who is head over the church. Each member of the Church is accountable to Christ as Lord. We are the Body of Christ, built on the cornerstone of His grace. Jesus Christ is the only head of this body of believers. He is the Good Shepherd of this flock.

(Matthew 16:15-18; 21:42; Luke 20:17, 18; John 10:11, 14, 15; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 2:4-8).

Section 2. Biblical Authority

The final authority on earth in the local church is the Word of God. Holy Scripture is the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God, acting as the source of authority over morality, our beliefs, Christian lifestyle, and conduct.

Section 3. Congregational Authority

Much prayer, Bible study, and seeking of the Holy Spirit's direction are necessary to discern God's will for the Church. Matters requiring congregational approval will typically be resolved by vote. Guidelines for: (a) determining a quorum; and (b) required approval percentage are delineated within the framework of these Bylaws.

(2 Chronicles 7:14; Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:1-6; 15:6, 22; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Ephesians 2:18-22; 3:7-12; 1 Peter 2:5, 9, 10)

Article II. Church Membership

Membership in our church requires a tangible commitment to our beliefs, purposes, and mission as outlined in the Church's Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 1. Membership Defined

Church membership is a commitment to actively participate and function as a member of this local body of Christ, rather than merely seeking affiliation with an organization.

Membership in the Church is granted to anyone who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior for eternal salvation and has publicly affirmed his or her profession of faith.

(Acts 2:41-47; Romans 12:3-21; 1 Corinthians 12; Hebrews 10:24, 25)

Section 2. Affirmation of Conversion

A. Believer's Baptism

Any person who receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord shall be received for baptism.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or by an ordained person of like faith and order, approved by the pastor or the Church.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
4. A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor, ministerial staff, and/or deacons and encouraged to prayerfully consider following through with baptism.

B. Transfer of Church Membership Letter

FBC Corinth receives members by transfer of a church membership letter, per our request, from a sister Baptist church which is in harmony with our doctrinal position and practices. The person must have made public his / her profession of faith and must have been baptized by immersion after conversion.

C. Personal Statement of Conversion

Persons desiring membership by statement must affirm their acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior and must have been baptized by immersion after conversion. Responsibility for affirming the candidate for membership by statement will fall to the pastor or ministerial staff prior to presenting the candidate to the congregation.

Section 3. Assimilation into Church Membership

In addition to providing an affirmation of his or her personal conversion experience, each prospective member will be asked to complete the following steps prior to being granted membership at FBC Corinth:

- a. attend a prospective member orientation;
- b. acknowledge and accept the beliefs expressed within the Constitution and Bylaws of FBC Corinth; and
- c. receive affirmation by the church members in attendance at the worship service in which he/she is publicly presented.

Section 4. Membership Responsibilities

Having received Christ as our Lord and Savior and having been baptized as a public profession of this faith, we consider it our responsibility, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live and serve together as the people of God. (Ephesians 2:4, 5, 8; 5:15, 16)

Given this understanding, it is considered incumbent upon each member to consider the following:

- Maintaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (John 8:12; 1 John 1:6, 7).
- Recognizing God's holiness (Isaiah 6:1-3; 1 Peter 1:15, 16).
- Admonishing one another in prayer (Ephesians 6:18; James 5:16).
- Praying for the spiritual health and growth of the congregation (Isaiah 56:7; Colossians 4:2).
- Encouraging one another to become disciplined followers of Christ (1 Chronicles 28:9; Mark 12:30, 31; Acts 11:23).
- Refusing to gossip (Proverbs 26:20; Ephesians 4:29).
- Protecting the bond of peace that unites this assembly (Romans 12:18; 14:19; Ephesians 4:3).
- Honoring the authority of our leaders (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 13:17).
- Forgiving others as God in Christ has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).
- Being slow to take offense and remaining ready for reconciliation (James 1:19, 20).
- Sharing our joys and bearing one another's burdens and sorrows (Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2).
- Graciously reprimanding others and being willing to accept correction (Matthew 18:15; Psalm 139:23, 24; 1 John 3:5, 6).
- Attending faithfully the worship services, Bible studies, prayer meetings, fellowships and other activities (Psalm 122:1; Hebrews 10:24, 25).
- Giving of our means cheerfully and regularly to support the financial needs of this body (Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7).
- Abstaining from whatever is unbecoming a Christian, knowing that our bodies, minds and souls are God's living temple (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 1 Peter 1:13-16).
- Avoid becoming a stumbling block to others (Romans 14:13, 21).
- Honoring our families as the foundational institution of human society (Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:6, 7).
- Studying the Scriptures to grow and mature in our faith (2 Timothy 3:16).
- Discipling others in their daily walk (Proverbs 27:17; Matthew 28:19, 20).

- Sharing the gospel with family, friends, neighbors and acquaintances through Christian example and personal witness (Acts 1:8; Titus 2:7, 8).
- Discovering and using our spiritual gifts and talents (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:12; 1 Peter 4:10).

Section 5. Membership Privileges

The congregation at FBC Corinth seeks to actively serve its members (and non-members alike) with compassion and benevolence during times of spiritual, emotional and physical duress. The pastor, ministerial staff and deacons are available for counsel and spiritual guidance. The church also provides, on a limited basis, for the physical needs of members and non-members through its benevolence program.

In addition, members are afforded the following privileges:

- Participation in Congregational Decision Making
 - Corporate decisions and affirmations are to be made by the congregation. Every member of the Church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in any business meeting. No member may vote for or on behalf of another member. Members on the premises working in other areas and not able to attend the meeting will be permitted to vote by written ballot.
 - (Psalm 1:1-3; Proverbs 2:2-6; 3:5, 6; Isaiah 30:20, 21; Galatians 5:16-18)
- Holding Church Leadership Positions
 - Every Church member is eligible as a candidate for leadership positions in the Church subject to scriptural qualifications.
 - (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9).

Section 6. Termination of Membership

Membership in this Church may be terminated by any of the following methods:

- Upon death, the deceased member's name shall be removed from the Church membership roll.
- Upon written request from a sister Baptist church, a church membership transfer shall be granted for any member in the Church. In no case shall a blank letter be granted and given to an individual. The membership transfer letter shall be mailed directly to the requesting church. A church membership transfer is not individual property. It is a letter of recommendation from one church to another.
- Upon confirmation that a member of this Church has joined with another denomination or faith, the name of that member shall be removed from the Church roll.
- Upon written request by member(s) to be removed, the name(s) shall be removed from the Church roll.
- Pursuant to Church discipline as explained in Section 7, upon a majority vote of this congregation at properly scheduled business meeting, the name of the sinning member will be removed from the Church roll.

Section 7. Church Discipline

Church members who exhibit a continuing, unrepentant lifestyle of sin in regard to doctrine or conduct shall be dealt with according to the biblical prescription for church discipline. The goal is three-fold: (a) to restore the wayward member to proper Christian fellowship; (b) to insure the spiritual health and integrity of the congregation; and (c) to ultimately glorify God.

The first step in this process shall be for fervent, continual prayer to be made on behalf of the sinning member by the one who has knowledge of the sin (James 5:16-20).

It shall also be the responsibility of any member of the body who has knowledge of a sinning member's heresy or misconduct to reprove and seek correction and restore the sinning member in private (Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1). If the sinning member does not heed this reproof, then the reproving member shall again go to the sinning member accompanied by one or two witnesses to reprove, correct, and restore. If the sinning member refuses to heed this reproof, it shall be brought to the attention of the pastors and/or deacons of the Church (Hebrews 13:17).

If after reproof from the pastors and/or deacons of the Church, the sinning member fails to repent, the pastors/deacons may choose to make the offense known to the congregation (Matthew 18:17).

After all measures aimed at reproof and reconciliation have been exhausted, and after a reasonable period of time has elapsed, the sinning member's name will be removed from the church membership roll. Refer to Bylaws, Article II, Section 6 for more information regarding termination of church membership. (Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, and 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15)

If after removal of fellowship the sinning individual repents, he or she shall be joyfully restored back into fellowship (Luke 17:3, 4 and 2 Corinthians 2:6-9). However, the individual will be viewed as a new member and will be required to complete the steps prescribed within this document for assimilation into the membership of FBC Corinth.

If during the process of Christian discipline the member withdraws membership voluntarily but continues in the identified sin, the church shall still be responsible to privately seek the sinning individual's restoration through the process outlined in Scripture above. No attempt at public reproof shall be made.

The actions described in this section must at all times be carried out with a gentle, loving, and humble attitude with sensitivity to God's timing.

Article III. Church Officers

The officers of the Church shall be the Senior Pastor, the ministerial staff, the Deacons, and Trustees.

Section 1. Senior Pastor

A. Qualifications

1. The Senior Pastor shall possess the scriptural qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9.
2. The Senior Pastor shall be ordained by this Church or another cooperating member of the Southern Baptist Convention.

B. Duties

1. The Senior Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament church. The Senior Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, the ministerial staff, and the office staff to perform their tasks.

2. The Senior Pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such he works with the ministerial staff, the Deacons, and other Church leaders to:
 - a. lead the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, identification, discipleship, service, and missions;
 - b. conduct and/or arrange for all public and regular services of the Church;
 - c. proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers (Matthew 28:19); and
 - d. care for the Church's members and other persons within the community.
3. The Senior Pastor is expected to:
 - a. Affirm, abide by, and agree to the "Statement of Faith" as found in Article V of the Church Constitution.
 - b. Follow the job description as developed by the Personnel Committee.

C. Tenure

1. The Senior Pastor may relinquish the office as Senior Pastor by giving at least two weeks notice to the Church at the time of resignation.
2. The Church may declare the office of Senior Pastor to be vacant at a special called Church business meeting.
 - a. Prior to any public action, the steps outlined in the Bylaws Article II. Section 7. Church Discipline will be followed.
 - b. Such a special meeting may be called in the following manner:
 - i. By the agreement of two-thirds (67%) of the Deacon Body, or
 - ii. By a written petition signed by not less than 100 Church members of voting age.
 - c. Notice for the special called meeting along with the reason for the meeting will be publicized at least two weeks prior to the date.
 - d. The moderator for this meeting will be the Chairman of the Deacons.
 - e. The reason(s) for the proposed removal of the Senior Pastor will be clearly stated.
 - Adequate time for discussion will be provided during the meeting for all parties who wish to speak.
 - f. The vote to declare the office vacant will be by secret ballot.
 - i. The votes will be counted by at least three active Deacons.
 - ii. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (67%) of the Church members of voting age present and voting will be necessary to declare the office vacant.
 - g. The termination will be effective immediately.
3. In instances of gross misconduct by the Senior Pastor, the Senior Pastor will be immediately placed on administrative leave until such time as appropriate church action can be accomplished as outlined in Article III. Section 1. Paragraph C, Item 2 of the Church Bylaws.
 - a. Gross misconduct will be determined by an affirmative two-thirds (67%) vote of the Deacon Body.
 - b. In the interim period, the senior pastor duties will fall to the remaining ministerial staff and Deacon Body.
4. If the Church moves to declare the office of Senior Pastor vacant, the Church will compensate the Pastor with one-twelfth of his total annual compensation.
 - a. Such compensation will be rendered in not more than 30 days from the notice of termination.
 - b. Additional compensation can be approved by the Church in a business meeting.
 - c. In the instance of gross misconduct, no such compensation will be required.

D. Senior Pastor Vacancy

Upon a vacancy in the office of Senior Pastor, a Senior Pastor Search Committee shall be elected according to the Senior Pastor Search Committee Charter.

1. Pulpit Supply – Until such time as an interim pastor can be in position, the Deacon Chairman (in consultation with the remaining ministerial staff, the Denton Baptist Association, and/or the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention) will obtain suitable speakers for worship services.
 - The Finance Committee, in consultation with the chosen speaker, will determine a suitable honorarium.
2. Interim Pastor – The Deacon Body (in consultation with the resigning Senior Pastor, the remaining ministerial staff, the Denton Baptist Association, and/or the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention) will conduct the search for a suitable Interim Pastor.
 - a. The Deacon Body will work with the prospective Interim Pastor, the remaining ministerial staff, and the Personnel Committee to clearly define the anticipated duties of the Interim Pastor.
 - b. The Deacon Body will work with the Finance Committee to determine suitable compensation for the Interim Pastor.
 - c. Once a prospective Interim Pastor is found, he will be presented to the Church for approval.

Section 2. Ministerial Staff

Members of the ministerial staff shall be called as the Senior Pastor and the Personnel Committee determines the need for such offices.

A. Qualifications

Every individual on the Ministerial Staff should strive to the goal of the character defined of a pastor or deacon (1 Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9).

B. Duties

A job description shall be written based on the particular ministry requirement(s), as determined by the Senior Pastor and the Personnel Committee. All members of the ministerial staff must affirm, abide by, and agree to the “Statement of Faith” as found in Article V of the Church Constitution.

C. Selection

The Personnel Committee shall conduct an appropriate search for the prospective ministerial staff member. The search will be conducted according to the Ministerial Staff Search Committee Charter.

D. Tenure

1. A member of the ministerial staff may relinquish their office by giving at least two weeks notice to the Church at the time of resignation.
2. The Church may declare the office of any certain ministerial staff position to be vacant at a special called Church business meeting.
 - a. Prior to any public action, the steps outlined in the Bylaws Article II. Section 7. Church Discipline will be followed.
 - b. Such a special meeting may be called in the following manner:
 - i. By the agreement of two-thirds (67%) of the Deacon Body.
 - ii. By a written petition signed by not less than 100 Church members of voting age.
 - c. Notice for the special called meeting along with the reason for the meeting will be publicized at least two weeks prior to the date.
 - d. The moderator for this meeting will be the Senior Pastor.

- e. The reason(s) for the proposed removal of the ministerial staff member will be clearly stated.
 - Adequate time for discussion will be provided during the meeting for all parties who wish to speak.
 - f. The vote to declare the office vacant will be by secret ballot.
 - i. The votes will be counted by at least three active Deacons.
 - ii. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (67%) of the Church members of voting age present and voting will be necessary to declare the office vacant.
 - g. The termination will be effective immediately.
3. In instances of gross misconduct by a member of the ministerial staff, the staff member will be immediately placed on administrative leave until such time as appropriate Church action can be accomplished.
 - a. Gross misconduct will be determined by an affirmative two-thirds (67%) vote of the Deacon Body.
 - b. In the interim period, the staff member duties will fall to the remaining ministerial staff.
 4. If the Church moves to declare the office of any certain ministerial staff position vacant, the Church will compensate the Staff Member with not less than two weeks of his/her compensation.
 - a. Such compensation will be rendered in not more than 30 days from the notice of termination.
 - b. Additional compensation can be approved by the Church in a business meeting.
 - c. In the instance of gross misconduct, no such compensation will be required.

Section 3. Church Support Staff

The Personnel Committee, in cooperation with the Senior Pastor, shall employ support staff as needed. The support staff must affirm, abide by, and agree to the “Statement of Faith” as found in Article V of the Church Constitution. The Personnel Committee shall have the full authority to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members.

Part-time and/or temporary employees of the Church will be managed by the appropriate ministerial staff member. Such employees must also affirm, abide by, and agree to the “Statement of Faith” as found in Article V of the Church Constitution.

Section 4. Deacons

A. Definition and Purpose

In accordance with the meaning of the word “deacon” and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the Senior Pastor and ministerial staff in performing pastoral ministry tasks:

- proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers;
- care for church members and other persons in the community;
- lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, identification, discipleship, service, and missions as stated in Article IV of the Constitution; and
- lead the church in performing its task.

B. Qualifications and Expectations

A deacon candidate should be a male member of the Church who fully supports the mission and activities of the Church by giving both of his time and of his financial resources.

- The qualifications for deacons are given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- A detailed listing of the qualifications is provided in the Deacon Handbook.
- All Deacons will affirm, abide by, and agree to the “Statement of Faith” as found in Article V of the Church Constitution.

C. Deacon Selection Process

The selection of deacons will follow the process delineated in the Deacon Handbook. Successful candidates will be ordained and installed at a special service that follows the biblical example from Acts 6:6. The Ordination Council will consist of the active Deacons, the Senior Pastor, and ordained members of the ministerial staff. Previously ordained deacons may forego the ordination process.

D. Organization and Term of Service

On the first regular deacon meeting of the church year, the deacons will elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary who will serve for one year. Unless and until a term of service is established for deacons by the Church, deacons will continue to serve until led by the Holy Spirit to seek inactive status, or to resign.

E. Deacon Quorum

A simple majority of the active Deacon Body is required to conduct official business at a regular or called meeting.

F. Removal from Office

In the event of dereliction of duty, a Deacon may be removed from office by the following method:

1. Prior to any public action, the steps outlined in the Bylaws Article II. Section 7. Church Discipline will be followed.
2. At a regular Deacons’ Meeting or a special called meeting, the Deacon Chairman will present the reason(s) for the proposed removal of the Deacon.
 - a. If the Deacon Chairman is under consideration for removal, the Vice Chairman will preside.
 - b. Adequate time for discussion will be provided during the meeting for all parties who wish to speak.
3. The Deacon Chairman (or Vice Chairman) will call for a vote.
 - An affirmative vote of two-thirds (67%) of the active Deacons present and voting will be necessary to remove the Deacon from the Deacon Body.
4. In instances of gross misconduct by a Deacon, the Deacon will be immediately placed on inactive status until such time as appropriate church action can be accomplished.
 - Gross misconduct will be determined by an affirmative two-thirds (67%) vote of the remaining Deacon Body.

Section 5. Trustees

A. Definition and Purpose

The Church shall elect three (3) trustees to serve as legal officers for the Church. One will serve as the President, one as the Vice President, and one as the Secretary of the Church Corporation. All trustees will affirm, abide by, and agree to the “Statement of Faith” as found in Article V of the Church Constitution.

Trustees must be members of the Church. All trustees must be bondable. The Senior Pastor and ministerial staff are not eligible to be elected as Trustees. Upon a specific vote of the Church authorizing such action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any Church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to Church approved matters.

B. Term of Service

Unless and until a term of service is established for trustees by the Church, trustees will continue to serve until led by the Holy Spirit to resign. Should a vacancy arise, the Nominating Committee will recommend a replacement to the Church for election to the vacated office.

C. Removal from Office

1. The Church may declare the office of any certain trustee to be vacant at a special called Church business meeting.
 - a. Prior to any public action, the steps outlined in the Bylaws Article II. Section 7. Church Discipline will be followed.
 - b. Such a special meeting may be called in the following manner:
 - i. By the agreement of two-thirds (67%) of the Deacon Body.
 - ii. By a written petition signed by not less than 100 Church members of voting age.
 - c. Notice for the special called meeting along with the reason for the meeting will be publicized at least two weeks prior to the date.
 - d. The moderator for this meeting will be the Senior Pastor.
 - e. The reason(s) for the proposed removal of the trustee will be clearly stated.
 - Adequate time for discussion will be provided during the meeting for all parties who wish to speak.
 - f. The vote to declare the office vacant will be by secret ballot.
 - i. The votes will be counted by at least three active Deacons.
 - ii. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (67%) of the Church members of voting age present and voting will be necessary to declare the office vacant.
 - g. The termination will be effective immediately.
2. In instances of gross misconduct by a trustee, the trustee will be immediately placed on inactive status until such time as appropriate Church action can be accomplished.
 - Gross misconduct will be determined by an affirmative two-thirds (67%) vote of the Deacon Body.

Section 6. Licensure and Ordination

While all Christians are called to be ministers of God (2 Corinthians 5:17-20; 1 Peter 2:9), the Church recognizes that God calls certain people to Christian ministry (1 Timothy 3:1). This is a high and sacred call that must not be taken lightly. This is not a simple career path choice. It involves great responsibilities regarding public leadership in and of the church. The local church is charged with examining the calling of a candidate. This must be a careful process of spiritual discernment and examination by the local Body of believers (1 Timothy 5:22).

The candidate for ordination or licensure shall possess the Scriptural qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9. He must affirm, abide by, and agree to the "Statement of Faith" as found in Article V of the Church Constitution.

A. Licensure

Licensing is a way we as the Church recognize and affirm the candidate's gifts and abilities for ministry.

1. The person seeking licensure will make a public decision in the Church and express a felt call from God specifically calling him to ministry.
2. The candidate will request the Church grant him a license.
3. The candidate will be counseled by the Senior Pastor and/or ministerial staff.
4. A counselor from the Senior Pastor and/or ministerial staff will recommend the granting of a license for the candidate at a Church business meeting.
5. The Church will vote on the request to grant a license.
6. Upon an affirmative vote by the majority of the Church members present, a "Certificate of License for the Gospel Ministry" shall be issued from the Church.
7. Revocation of ministry license. In the event of dereliction of duty, the "Certificate of License for the Gospel Ministry" may be revoked by the following method:
 - a. Prior to any public action, the steps outlined in the Bylaws Article II. Section 7. Church Discipline will be followed.
 - b. At a regular Church business meeting or a special called meeting, the Senior Pastor will present the reason(s) for the proposed revocation of the License.
 - Adequate time for discussion will be provided during the meeting for all parties who wish to speak.
 - c. The Senior Pastor will call for a vote.
 - i. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (67%) of the Members present and voting will be necessary to revoke the License.
 - ii. In instances of gross misconduct by a Licensed Minister, the Minister will be immediately placed on inactive status until such time as appropriate church action can be accomplished.
 - iii. Gross misconduct will be determined by an affirmative two-thirds (67%) vote of the active Deacon Body.

B. Ordination

The authority of a pastor or other minister rests on God's call of the individual and the church's recognition of that call. Ordination is the church's recognition of God's call on the life of one of His servants to the gospel ministry. It is an act of setting apart a pastor or other minister for public ministry. It is not enough for a person to feel God's call. The local church must publicly recognize the validity of the call. Our Church will accomplish such recognition in the following manner:

1. The man seeking ordination will make a public decision in the Church and express a felt call from God specifically calling him to ministry.
2. The candidate will make a formal request at a business meeting asking the Church to ordain him.
3. Upon approval of the request, the Church will convene an Ordination Council.
 - a. The members of the Ordination Council will consist of the Senior Pastor, other ordained members of the ministerial staff, and the Deacon Body.

- b. Other ordained men from outside the Church may be invited to participate with the majority approval of the rest of the Ordination Council.
- 4. The Ordination Council will conduct a thorough examination of the candidate at least one week prior to any Ordination Service.
- 5. If the Council votes to recommend ordination, the Senior Pastor or Chairman of the Deacons will present the recommendation to the Church for approval during a business meeting.
- 6. If the Church approves the recommendation by at least three-quarters (75%) of the Members present, an Ordination Service will be scheduled.
- 7. Revocation of Ordination.
 - a. In the event of dereliction of duty, the "Ordination for the Gospel Ministry" may be revoked by the following method:
 - i. Prior to any public action, the steps outlined in the Bylaws Article II. Section 7. Church Discipline will be followed.
 - ii. At a Church business meeting, the Senior Pastor will present the reason(s) for the proposed revocation of the Ordination.
 - Adequate time for discussion will be provided during the meeting for all parties who wish to speak
 - iii. The Senior Pastor will call for a vote.
 - An affirmative vote of two-thirds (67%) of the Members present and voting will be necessary to revoke the Ordination.
 - b. In instances of gross misconduct by an Ordained Minister, the Minister will be immediately placed on inactive status until such time as appropriate church action can be accomplished.
 - Gross misconduct will be determined by an affirmative two-thirds (67%) vote of the active Deacon Body.

Article IV. Committees

Section 1. General

The role of committees in carrying out the work of FBC Corinth cannot be understated. Given its heavy dependence upon the contribution of volunteers, the church must rely upon a hierarchy of committees to insure its wide variety of ministries is adequately addressed.

Section 2. Creation/Disbanding of Committees

Committees shall be created upon recommendation by the pastor and/or ministerial staff as need arises.

Generally speaking, the church will employ two types of committees: (a) standing (or permanent) committees; and (b) *ad hoc* (or temporary) committees. Standing committees are ongoing while *ad hoc* committees are called to a finite period of service.

Each proposed committee charter will require ratification by vote of the congregation. Disbanding of a standing committee will also require approval by vote of the congregation. NOTE: Disbanding of an *ad hoc* committee is implied by virtue of the finite timeframe in which the *ad hoc* committee will be called to function and does not require further action by the congregation.

Section 3. The Committee Charter Document

It will be the practice of FBC Corinth to establish a written charter governing the activities of each committee. At a minimum, the committee charter will establish the following:

- a. Type of committee (standing or *ad hoc*)
- b. Scope of work/deliverable(s)
- c. Duration
 - i. Ongoing for standing committees
 - ii. Defined start / stop dates for *ad hoc* committees
- d. Number of members required
- e. Term of service for members

Section 4. Recruitment/Approval of Prospective Committee Members

All prospective committee members shall be vetted and subsequently recommended for approval by vote of the congregation at either a regular or special business meeting. Refer to the charter governing the role of the Nominating Committee for further information regarding the recruitment and vetting of prospective committee members.

Article V. Church Organizations and Outreach

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

The Church shall from time to time engage in specialized programs of outreach to the secular world. These programs may include but are not limited to educational programs, such as AWANA that seeks to educate all people as to the principles of the Christian Faith, and Kid's Day Out that provides primary education services from a Christian perspective. Outreach programs rooted in athletic competition such as the UPWARD Program may also be engaged in by the Church. In addition, the Church may engage in additional outreach programs that are consistent with the Church's Purpose Statement, Mission Statement, and Statement of Faith.

All behavior of members and representatives of the church is communicative in nature, exemplifying and expressing our faith, both publically and privately. Any member or representative who propounds a point of view contrary to our beliefs, either by word or by deed, will impair the Church's integrity and ability to disseminate its religious views and message. Therefore, all Church Organization members or volunteers and all Church Outreach Program leaders or volunteers must publicly and privately display a tangible commitment to our beliefs, purposes, and mission as outlined in the Church's Purpose Statement, Mission Statement and Statement of Faith.

Article VI. Church Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday and on Wednesday evenings for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and worship. These meetings shall be open to all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Senior Pastor or other person authorized by the church.

Section 2. Special Services

Revival services and any other Church meetings essential to the advancement of the mission of the Church shall be placed on the Church calendar.

Section 3. Regularly Scheduled Business Meetings

Regularly scheduled business meetings shall be held quarterly.

Section 4. Special Business Meetings

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

Section 5. Quorum

A quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting provided it is a regularly scheduled meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6. Voting Age

To be eligible to vote, a Church member must be at least 18 years of age.

Section 7. Moderator

The Senior Pastor shall be the moderator for church meetings unless the Church chooses to elect a moderator. In the absence of the moderator, the Chairman of Deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the Vice Chairman of Deacons shall preside.

Section 8. Parliamentary Rules

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

Article VII. Church Finances

Section 1. Budget

The budget is a comprehensive financial plan that reflects specific allocations from anticipated income for supporting the Church's ministries and related expenses. It forms the basis for reporting fiscal stewardship to the Church, and must be approved annually by the Church in a business meeting. At least two weeks prior to the business meeting at which the budget will be voted on, copies of the proposed budget will be made available to the congregation. A time for church-wide discussion of the budget will be arranged by the Finance Committee prior to the vote.

Each member and regular attendee of the Church is expected to give regularly toward a budget to meet all expenses and provide for the needs of the Church in all departments, organizations, and programs as specified in the budget. The Church Budget will be prepared by the Finance Committee in consultation with the appropriate ministerial staff member or Senior Pastor. Input will be solicited from the ministerial staff and other Church leaders.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

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

Section 3. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Section 4. Church Property

The property of First Baptist Church of Corinth is owned by the Church. No person shall have individual right to any part of the property or any asset of the Church. No member of the Church may be held personally responsible for the corporate obligations of the Church.

Article VIII. Amendments

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended in any business meeting of the Church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment furnished to each member present. A majority of affirmative votes of church members present is required for approval.

Article IX. Dissolution

This corporation may be dissolved, after all legal obligations have been met, at a special called business meeting. The vote to dissolve must be by a two-thirds majority vote of the active members present, provided a quorum is present. Upon dissolution, all assets of this corporation must be distributed to the Denton Baptist Association.