

FBN

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

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CONSTITUTION

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DECLARATION OF FAITH

1. About The Bible...

We believe that the Bible (the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament) is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and life. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pt. 1:20, 21; Mk. 13:31; Jn. 8:31, 32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

2. About The Trinity...

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. Gen. 1:1, 26; Jn. 1:1, 3; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 1:19, 20; Eph. 4:5,6

3. About God The Father...

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and spiritual death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Lk. 10:21, 22; Matt. 23:9; Jn. 3:16; 6:27; Rom. 1:7; 1 Tim. 1:1, 2; 2:5, 6; 1 Pt. 1:3; Rev. 1:6

4. About Jesus Christ...

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, eternally existing, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. Matt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-38; Jn. 1:1; 20:28; Rom. 8:46; 9:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pt. 2:21-23; Jn. 20:30, 31; Matt. 20:28; Eph. 1:4; Acts 1:11; Rom. 5:6-10; Heb. 7:25; 9:28; 1 Tim. 3:16

5. About The Holy Spirit...

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son. He came to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide. Jn. 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26, 27; Jn. 16:9-14; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Gal. 5:22-26

6. About Salvation...

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual, and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. Salvation is a free gift from God to man. Man can never make up for his sin by self-improvement or good works. We believe that those who repent and trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. Gen. 1:26; 5:2; Gen. 3; Gen. 2:17; 3:19; Eccl.2:11; Jn. 3:14; 5:24; Jn. 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Rom. 9:22; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 19:3, 20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:18; Ps. 51:7; Jer. 17:9; Js. 1:14; Rom. 3:19; Prov. 28:13; 1 Jn. 1:9; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 1:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:1; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9; Jn. 14:6; 1:12; Titus 3:5; Gal. 3:26; Rom. 5:1

7. About Grace...

We believe our salvation rests upon the gift that God has given us in the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the sealing and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit that gives us this security. There is a falling away of some believers, but if it persists; it shows that their faith was not genuine and they were not born of God. Jn. 10:29-30; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 7:25, 10:10-14; 1 Pt. 1:3-5; Rom. 8:38-39, 11:29; Eph. 1:13-14; 1 Jn. 2:19; Lk. 8:9-14

8. About Eternity...

We believe man was created to exist forever. He will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are places of eternal existence. Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 2:25; 5:11-13; Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:15

9. About The Church...

We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, good works, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Eph. 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Eph. 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:23-25

10. About Christian Maturity...

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. 1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 12:1-3; Heb. 12:1-2; Jn. 14:15, 23-24; 2 Cor. 9:6-9; 1 Cor. 1:9-10

11. About Church Ordinances...

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion of the believer in the water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 11:23-26

12. About Last Things...

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. Matt. 16:27; Mk. 14:62; Jn. 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:1; Titus 2:13

13. About Marriage...

We believe that marriage is a sacred relationship between one man and one woman. God's intentions for marriage are outlined for us in the Bible. The marriage relationship is to function as a picture of God's grace-filled covenant relationship with His church. We believe that all sexual intimacy outside the context of marriage between one man and one woman is in direct violation of God's Word. Gen. 2:20-25; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; Eph. 5:21-33; Col. 3:18,19; Heb. 13:4;

COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP

Having repented of my sins and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior, and having followed Him in believer's baptism in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, I now covenant the following as a member of First Baptist North:

1. I will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, promote Christian love and unity within the body of Christ, being quick to forgive and slow to get offended as I do life in church with other sinners.
2. I will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, serve the church with my God-given spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities.
3. I will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, support the work of the church by worshipping God with my finances, giving to His kingdom in a Biblical way.
4. I will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, invest in my personal relationship with Jesus, maintaining quiet times in the Word, in prayer, and in other acts of spiritual disciplines.
5. I will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, carry on the greatest mission of the church: making disciples. I will pray for the non-believers in my life, share the good news of Jesus with them, and be a part of growing God's Kingdom.
6. I will recognize the ultimate authority the Word of God has over my life, particularly when culture declares otherwise.

7. I will, when God moves me (and my family) to another place, expediently find another church to enter into covenant membership with where we can carry out the mission of the church where God has us.

CONSTITUTION OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF NORTH TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA, INC.

ARTICLE I NAME

Section 1 The legal name of this church shall be: The First Baptist Church of North Terre Haute. We shall also be known as First Baptist North (FBN).

Section 2 The purpose of this church is the advancement of the kingdom of God. We will pursue this by a commitment to God's Word, the public worship of God, the proclaiming of the Gospel and the Bible, consistent Christian living by our members, personal evangelism, missionary endeavors, and training of our members in the Bible and Christian living.

ARTICLE II DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

First Baptist North is a local, independent Baptist Church, adhering to the Word of God alone for our beliefs and practices.

ARTICLE III DECLARATION OF DOCTRINE AND PRINCIPLES

We recognize and believe the Holy Bible as completely sufficient for determining doctrine and practice. Therefore, we recognize it as the ultimate authority on this matter.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Definition of Membership: The membership of First Baptist North shall consist of those who have agreed to the membership covenant and who by their attendance, support, and service of the church, maintain an active membership. Membership carries with it voting rights. All members 16 years and older will have voting rights.

Section 2 Becoming a Member: Anyone desiring to become a member of First Baptist North must a) Repent of their sins and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, b) follow Him in believer's baptism, c) attend a membership orientation led by the pastoral staff and/or other lay leaders of the church, d) agree to a membership covenant.

Section 3 Receiving New Members: New members will be presented publicly in any number of ways (during a business meeting, worship service, or public notification) in order for the church to celebrate the wonderful work of Christ in bringing new members to our congregation.

Section 4 Change of Membership

- A. Any member who fails to participate in corporate worship or serve the church for one year or more, following an examination by the Board of Elders, may have their name dropped from the membership roll.
- B. In the matters of church discipline, including immoral conduct, heresy, and divisiveness, the church shall follow the pattern laid forth in Matthew 18 by Jesus Himself. First, the covenant member will be approached by one or 2 to address the concerns. After that, he/she will appear before the Board of Elders of the church. If after both steps are taken, a member is unrepentant of their sin, they will be removed from covenant membership of the church.
- C. Anyone removed from membership may be restored to covenant membership in the church if they express repentance, actively avoid the offending sin, and walk in humility before the Lord.

Section 5 Termination of Membership

- A. Any covenant member who moves and unites with another congregation by which they may serve the Kingdom of God will be granted a letter of dismissal, if requested. First Baptist North wants all covenant members to serve God's Kingdom wherever He leads them.
- B. Following death the name of the member will be removed from the membership roll.

Section 6 Duties of Members

The duties of the members of First Baptist North are found in the Bible. Members are expected to make corporate worship a priority, to align their lives under the authority of the Bible, to serve the church with their giftedness, to support the church with their resources, and to advance God's Kingdom by sharing their faith. A more detailed explanation of expectations on members can be found in the Membership Covenant.

ARTICLE V CHURCH OFFICIALS

Section 1 The official capacities of the church will be either elected or appointed.

- A. Qualifications: Qualifications for all church officials will be drawn from the Scriptural mandates given to us in the New Testament.
- B. All officers will assume their roles on the first day of the fiscal year, unless otherwise indicated.
- C. The general officers of the church are: Pastor, Associate Pastor, Elders, Deacons (including Head Treasurer and Head Trustee)

Section 2 Church officers and prescribed duties

- A. Pastor The pastor of this church will maintain a relationship with the people as that of a under-shepherd to its flock
 - a. Duties
 - i. To preach and teach the Word of God as God gives Him ability

- ii. To herald a God-given vision for the mission of the church, as revealed in the Scriptures
 - iii. To provide pastoral care whenever possible (visiting/praying for the sick, counsel, advice, encouragement, rebuke)
 - iv. To care for the spiritual health and well-being of the body of Christ
 - b. Selection and call
 - i. The selection of a pastor will occur at a business meeting, announced from the pulpit 2 Sundays in advance, with the purpose of the meeting stated.
 - ii. The vote will be by written ballot, and a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority is required from all voting members present at the meeting. Voting members who will be absent on the day of the vote may request an absentee ballot.
 - iii. The financial agreement will be what the pastor and church agree upon. All subsequent agreements will be by the recommendation of the Finance Team, presented to the congregation for approval at a business meeting.
 - c. Dismissal
 - i. The pastor shall give a minimum of thirty days' notice in the case of resignation.
 - ii. The pastoral relationship may be terminated at a business meeting announced from the pulpit 2 Sundays prior, which the object of meeting being made known. A majority vote of voting members present at the meeting shall decide the issue.
 - iii. In the event the pastoral relationship is terminated by a majority vote of the voting members present at the prescribed meeting, the financial agreement shall continue for 30 days.
- B. Staff Members The office and position of staff members is to be such that they will work in conjunction with the pastor and elders under their direction and not independent of them.
 - a. Anyone being hired as a full-time associate pastor must be ordained, and appointed by the Board of Elders.
 - b. All other staff positions at the church shall be filled by the Board of Elders.
 - c. The dismissal of any staff member, other than the pastor, will be governed by the Board of Elders.
- C. The Board of Elders
 - a. Scriptural qualifications for elders are found in Titus 1: 6-9 and 1Timothy 3: 1-7.
 - b. The Board of Elders should consist of at least 3 men elected by the congregation, the senior pastor and all full-time pastors
 - c. Election
 - i. Candidates for the office of elder will be prayerfully recommended by the current board of elders
 - ii. Elders are confirmed by the congregation by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority written vote at a business meeting
 - iii. All elected elders will then be ordained by the church. An elder's term is 5 years. He may be elected to serve unlimited consecutive terms.

- iv. Any active elder, who by consistent absence, failure to support the church activities, or who by his life brings discredit to the name of Christ, may be removed from office by consensus of the rest of the elder board.
 - d. Duties
 - i. The Board of Elders shall serve the congregation with care and love, as expressed in the Word of God
 - ii. They will be responsible for the spiritual direction of the church (1 Peter 5: 2)
 - iii. They will guard sound doctrine and protect the church from false teaching (Titus 1: 9, 2: 1-7)
 - iv. They will be responsible for church discipline when needed (1 Thess 5: 14, 2 Timothy 4: 2, Titus 1:13, 3: 10)
 - v. When the church is without a senior pastor the Board of Elders shall care for the supply of the pulpit until a new senior pastor is hired.
 - e. Meetings The Board of Elders will hold regular meetings at a time suitable for them.
 - f. Vacancies If the office of elder becomes vacant, the remaining elders will appoint a new candidate(s) to the congregation for election as the Spirit leads.
- D. The Board of Deacons
- a. Scriptural qualifications for deacons in listed in 1 Timothy 3: 8-13.
 - b. The role of deacon is to provide logistical and material support so the elders can focus on the Word of God, prayer, and the spiritual environment of the church (Acts 6: 1-7)
 - c. Election: All deacons will be prayerfully nominated by the Board of Elders and then approved by a majority vote at the any business meeting with 3-year terms.
 - d. Roles of the deacons include:
 - i. Facilities: Maintaining and caring for the church building and grounds
 - ii. Benevolence: Assessing needs of the needy who call on the church for assistance and maintaining the benevolence fund
 - iii. Finances: Collecting and recording offerings, helping set a church budget, tracking financial records.
 - iv. Logistics: Deacons should be willing to help in a variety of ways
 - v. Clerk: Keeping notes at church business meetings
 - e. The Board of deacons will consist of the Head Treasurer, the Head Trustee, and at least 3 more individuals who meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3
- E. The Board of Trustees
- a. The Board of Trustees shall maintain the church property through construction, lawn care, cleaning, repair, and maintenance, or shall oversee such work.
 - b. The remaining members of the board will be selected and asked by the Board of Deacons to serve.
- F. Treasurer
- a. The office of treasurer will serve as the financial voice of the church
 - b. Qualifications: A candidate for treasurer must display a love for Christ and a faith in God's provision and authority over the work of the church. The candidate must also display Christ-like humility.

- c. In the event the office of treasurer becomes vacant, the assistant treasurers will serve in that role together until the position is filled.
- d. Assistant treasurers
 - i. Assistant treasurers will assist the treasurer in the weekly functions of counting and recording offerings, bill pay, and more as well as helping to form a yearly budget for the church
 - ii. Assistant treasurers will be recommended by the Head Treasurer and Board of Elders and approved by a majority vote at any congregational business meeting with two-year terms.

ARTICLE VI MINISTRY TEAMS

Section 1 Pulpit Team

- A. The Pulpit Team will be responsible for researching, interviewing, and extending an invitation for candidates for the office of senior pastor to appear before the church.
- B. This team will consist of the Board of Elders, the Head Treasurer, a Sunday School teacher, a voting member of the church who is under the age of 18, and one woman. The Board of Elders will lead this team.
- C. The congregational members of the team will be elected at a business meeting by a majority vote of the congregation. This team should be formed as quickly as possible after the need to hire a pastor is made known to the congregation.

Section 2 Missions Team

- A. The Missions Team will oversee, interact with, and coordinate the church's relationship with all of the Missionaries FBN supports.
- B. This team will be made up of a Missions Coordinator (selected by the Board of Elders) and at least 5 other individuals, male and female, who have a heart for those who take the gospel to the entire world. The members of this team will be chosen by the Missions Coordinator in conjunction with the Board of Elders

Section 3 Christian Education Coordinator

- A. The Christian Education Coordinator will be responsible for assisting Sunday School teachers by making sure each class has a teacher or rotation of teachers, ordering books and supplies when needed, and coordinating for other various needs.
- B. The Coordinator will be a willing volunteer from either the Board of Elders or Board of Deacons

ARTICLE VII MEETINGS

Section 1. An annual business meeting of the church must be held around the time of the end of the fiscal year to approve of the yearly projected church budget and vote on any positions required.

Section 2. The Board of Elders reserve the right to call a church business meeting at any time should a need arise, given that they provide the congregation with at least one week's notice.

Section 3. An official vote at any called business meeting requires the presence of at least 25 voting members.

ARTICLE VIII REVISIONS

- A. This Constitution may be revised at the annual business meeting of the church.
- B. The proposed revisions shall be presented at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting in which they are being acted upon.
- C. All revisions require a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of voting members present at the business meeting.

ARTICLE IX DISSOLUTION OF CORPORATION

In the event a decision is made to dissolve this corporation by $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the church, all assets must be assigned to one or more churches, missions, or other non-profit organizations.