

**CONSTITUTION  
AND  
DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

**CHURCH COVENANT**

(No alterations at this time)

**ARTICLE I - ORGANIZATION**

This organization shall be known as the FERGUSON AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, INC. located at Savannah, Georgia, U.S.A.

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God, and to preach and teach the Word of God with the purpose of winning the lost and building up the saints in faith, and the support of the spreading of the gospel in all the earth.

**ARTICLE III-DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

(No alterations at this time)

**ARTICLE IV - BY-LAWS**

**A. MEMBERSHIP**

1. Any person who has repented of his sins and has received Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord, and who subscribes to the above doctrinal statement and who expresses a desire to make his life conform to God's Holy Word, is eligible for membership.

**PROPOSED CHANGES  
DRAFT**

NO CHANGE

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify God through; weekly worship and prayer, the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the regular administration of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, focused efforts to win the lost and building up the saints in faith, and supporting the spread of the gospel in all the earth.

1. To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

- a.) Those with no previous contact with the church who desire to unite with the church will be received as members after a personal interview with the pastor or the membership committee (which is composed of any three (3) active deacons/elders).
  - b.) Those with whom the church is acquainted and show fruits of being born again may be received as members of the church by letter from another New Testament church or by statement of faith with the approval of the congregation at any regular service.
2. It is expected that a member support the work of the church by prayers, loving fellowship and tithes and offerings as God prospers, and in reliance upon God and His Word, live in the spirit of the Doctrinal Statement.
  3. An un-baptized applicant for membership shall be required to be baptized by immersion before being given the right hand of fellowship. (see Article XIII Doctrinal Statement)
2. To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be ordinarily, but not necessarily, recommended by the elders for admission after their completion of the application and membership interview and must be accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.
  3. In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation. Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.
  4. Baptism will be administered to a candidate for membership who is recommended to the congregation and who meets the above qualifications for membership (excluding baptism). At any regular or special meeting of the church, a majority vote of the members present is required for a candidate to be admitted for baptism. The candidate will then be baptized at the church's earliest convenience and will become a member upon receiving baptism.

4. Any member falling into gross sin, or who seeks to injure another member, or who willfully disregards the Doctrinal Statement, or who goes contrary thereto after loving admonition and instruction by: 1) The Pastor, 2) The Pastor/Elder and/or deacon, 3) The Church Body; 4) after the above three steps have been taken, if, that member continues in sin or contrary belief, said member will be dropped from the membership. (Matthew 18:15-17)

5. Any member who does not attend the services and who does not contribute toward the support of the church for a period of one (1) year, unless showing sufficient reason therefore, will be automatically dropped from the membership after a letter has been sent.

6. A letter will be granted to any member united with another New Testament church upon request of said church. If a member unites with a church that is not a New Testament Church, that church will be notified the member has been dropped from our church roll.

5. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15-17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15-17; 1 Timothy 5: 19-20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4-5).

6. Any member who does not attend the services and who does not contribute toward the support of the church for a period of one (1) year, unless showing sufficient reason therefore will be subject to termination of membership by a 2/3 vote of the congregation.

7. The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and it shall also recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her self-professed apostasy as confirmed by congregational vote. Additionally, the church may recognize the termination of a person's membership after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

## B. GOVERNMENT

1. The government of this church, under God, shall be of a congregational type, i.e., that the autonomy of the local church shall be believed in and practiced, and that the local body of believers shall conduct its own internal affairs, carry on its own business and discipline its own members bowing to no other authority save God's Holy Word as led and directed by the Holy Spirit. This local church is an independent body, and will not be bound by any recommendation, or resolution handed down by any higher ecclesiastical authority.
2. The government of this church, under God, shall be committed to an official council of ordained elders and an official board of deacons serving for the local congregation, who qualify according to I Timothy 3, each of who shall be a member of this church and in complete accord with its doctrinal statement. **Both elders and deacons will rotate its members upon completing a specified term. An elder and/or deacon may be elected to succeed himself if no qualified person can be found.** Furthermore, those who are elected as elders or deacons should be spiritual men who maintain a good Christian testimony by **abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body and/or jeopardize their own or another's faith, and/or harm the testimony of the church.** Also, elders and deacons are expected to support the ministry of the church with his tithes. The **official** Elder Council and the Board of Deacons shall be a body of worth while, **trained** ordained **and lay workers**, led by the **pastor**, and, who, living with the remainder of the people, shall lead them to love one another, attending all services possible. Each elder and deacon should also make a diligent effort to support the ministries of FABC in a conspicuous and sacrificial Christian manner.

## 1. NO CHANGE

2. The government of this church, under God, shall be committed to an official council of ordained elders and an official board of ordained deacons serving for the local congregation, who qualify according to I Timothy 3, each of who shall be a member of this church and in complete accord with its doctrinal statement. Furthermore, those who are elected as elders or deacons should be spiritual men who maintain a good Christian testimony by refraining from sins such as drunkenness, violence, quarrels, and greed. Also, elders and deacons are expected to support the ministry of the church with his tithes/offering. The Elder Council and the Board of Deacons shall be a body of worthwhile, ordained men, led by the Holy Spirit, and, who, living with the remainder of the people, shall lead them to love one another, attending all services possible. Each elder and deacon should also make a diligent effort to support the ministries of FABC in a conspicuous and sacrificial Christian manner.

## Council of Elders

### 1. Duties of the Council of Elders shall be:

- a) The Elders are to give themselves over to prayer and the ministry of the Word.
- b) To watch over and care for the members of the Church, with special emphasis on their spiritual well-being but not neglecting the physical needs of the members.
- c) To supervise and coordinate the corporate worship of the church.
- d) To assist the pastor in the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.
- e) To recommend the receiving and dismissing of members to and from the Church.
- f) To create, oversee, and manage the ministries of the Church.

g) When deemed necessary to exercise church discipline according to Matt. 18:15-18.

### 2. Fifty percent (50%) plus one, of the Elder Council must be present for the transaction of its business.

- a) The Council of Elders shall not meet without the Pastor unless mutually agreed upon beforehand by both parties, or when the church is in the process of obtaining a new pastor.
- b) Any vacancies that may occur during the year shall continue until the next Yearly Conference, unless otherwise deemed necessary by the Council.
- c) The Elder Council shall elect from among themselves and Deacon Board a Nominating Committee for the election of church officers, teachers, sponsors, and the like, and for the appointment of committees deemed necessary for the program of the church.

f) To oversee the public teaching of the Word and the existing ministries of the church and to encourage the creation of new ministries.

### 2. Fifty percent (50%) plus one, of the Elder Council must be present for the transaction of all official business.

b) UNNECESSARY

c) UNNECESSARY

- d) The Elder Council shall be responsible to the congregation and all of the Council's recommendations shall be presented to the congregation for approval.

#### The Board of Deacons

The duties of the Deacon Board shall be:

1. To assist the Elder leadership in the caring for the members of the church, both spiritually and physically.
2. To oversee the maintaining of the physical plant (all buildings and grounds) which, is to include all repairs, renovations and/or new building projects.
3. To assist the Elders in creating, overseeing and managing of the various ministries of the Church.
4. To assist the pastor and elders in the administration of the ordinances of the church.
5. To perform other duties as assigned by the Elders.
6. The Deaconø shall be allowed to spend up to but not exceeding \$5,000.00 for any alteration, modification and improvement of all church property **during any two-month period.**

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A Board of Trustees shall be elected according to the laws of the State of Georgia, I Timothy 3, and shall be custodians of all church properties, both real and personal, with the exception of monies deposited in banks by various treasurers. Their work shall be under the direction of the congregation.

When authorized by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a congregational meeting, the Trustees shall have power:

1. To take and hold by lease, gifts, purchase, grant, devise or bequest, any property, real or personal, necessary or desirable

- d) The Elder Council shall be responsible to the congregation and regularly provide reports to the congregation. All of the councilø recommendations regarding membership shall be presented to the congregation for approval.

2. To maintain the physical plant (all buildings and grounds) which, is to include all repairs, renovations and/or new building projects.
3. To assist the Elders with the ministries of the church.
6. The Deaconø shall be allowed to spend up to but not exceeding \$5,000 for any one action that includes alteration, modification, and improvement of all church property. *(What ought the cap to be? \$5000/month? 10,000/two months?)*

for attaining the objects and carrying into effect the purpose of the Church Corporation, subject, however, to any alternation or modification made by general law of the State of Georgia, the amount of real and personal property to be held by the Corporation.

2. To transfer and convey its real and personal property.
3. To borrow money for the purpose of the Church Corporation and issue bonds, therefore, and execute the same by mortgage.

The Board of Trustees shall be allowed to spend up to but not exceeding \$200.00 per quarter for alteration, modification and improvement of all church property. An expenditure exceeding \$200.00 must be cleared through the Elder Council and/or Board of Deacons, and passed on by the Congregation.

Any recommendation of major importance suggested by the Board of Trustees shall be presented to the Elders & Deacons for consultation, before it is presented to the Congregation for final action.

#### CHURCH OFFICERS

1. CLERK - The Clerk shall serve for the Church and shall keep complete and accurate minutes properly indexed of all business proceedings of this body.
2. TREASURER - The Treasurer shall keep full and accurate accounts of general receipts and disbursements and shall deposit all monies in the name and to the credit of the church and in such depositories as may be designated by the Council of Elders, Deacon Board and the Congregation. Disbursements of all funds shall be made as ordered by the Congregation. Accounting shall be rendered to the Council of Elders and Deacon Board monthly and whenever required, of all his transactions as Treasurer; these shall be subject to yearly audit. The duties applicable to the church Treasurer

shall apply to anyone elected as treasurer for a special account when deemed necessary by the church.

The records and books kept by the above officers shall be considered church property. These records, with the exception of those for personal envelope posting, shall be available for inspection by any church member.

## CONGREGATION

1. The voting membership of the Church (i.e., those eighteen (18) years of age and older), hereafter referred to as the Congregation, shall meet once each quarter on the third Sunday afternoon of each January, April, July, and October (each meeting shall begin at 5:00 pm, or no later than 5:30 pm) for the purpose of transacting any necessary business and recommendations brought by the Elders and/or Deacons. The necessary reports of the various departments of the Church shall also be heard.
2. The Council of Elders, and/or Deacon Board may call special business meetings of the Congregation if, and when necessary. A week's notice shall be given to the Congregation. Special called business meetings are limited to the stated purpose for which the meeting was called. This purpose must be given to the congregation in written form when notification of meeting is given.
3. The Congregation present at a duly called business meeting shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of those present shall be required to pass any motion.
4. The Congregational meeting shall be chaired by the church moderator, who will be chosen by a joint decision of the Elder Council and Board of deacons. This person shall serve for one year, and may serve for no more than 3 consecutive years.

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2. The Council of Elders, and/or Deacon Board may call special meetings of the Congregation if, and when necessary. A week's notice shall be given to the Congregation. Special called meetings are limited to the stated purpose for which the meeting was called. This purpose must be given to the congregation in written form when notification of meeting is given.
3. The Congregation present at a duly called business meeting shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of those present shall be required to pass any motion pertaining to the admission of new members, physical properties of the church or expenditure of church funds. A 2/3 vote of those present shall be required to terminate membership, to affirm new deacons and elders, and to hire new pastors.
4. The congregational meeting shall be chaired by a moderator chosen by a joint decision of the Elder Council and Board of Deacons, usually, but not necessarily the chairman of the deacons.

The person chosen shall meet the biblical qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3, but this position does not make the individual a deacon. This position may be filled by (but is not limited to) the current Deacon chairman, deacon vice-chairman, or any current elder except the Pastor.

## COMMITTEES

The Church may maintain active committees. These committees shall carry on their own work, manage their own affairs, and elect their own officers. They are, however, subordinate to the Official Board of Elders and/or their designate and shall be expected to work in harmony with the overall program of the Church and in full accord with its doctrinal statement.

## PASTORAL RELATIONS

1. The Pastor is the under shepherd of the flock and shall teach and train other officers as well as the **general laity**. He shall not be the servant of the Elder Council or the boss of the same, but its leader. As leader of the church, his position of leadership shall be assured unless there is sufficient reason to alter this position as leader.
2. To call a pastor to serve the Church, a Pulpit Committee shall be appointed **consisting of at least one of the Elders who will serve as Chairman, three (3) Deacon Board members (elected by the Deacon Board), and (3) members from the congregation (as elected by the congregation)**. The Pulpit Committee shall select candidates for presentation to the Elder Council, Deacon Board and the Congregation. If approved by the Elder Council and Deacon Board, the candidate shall be presented to the Congregation for action. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting membership present shall be required to appoint a pastor.
3. The Pastor shall have a spiritual oversight of the Church. All questions regarding the Pastor's relationship to the Church

(Change "Official Board of Elders" to "Council of Elders" for the sake of consistency)

1. The Senior Pastor is the under shepherd of the flock and shall teach and train the congregation as well as other officers. He shall not be the servant of the Elder Council or the boss of the same, but its leader. As leader of the church, his position of leadership shall be assured unless there is sufficient reason to alter this position as leader.
2. To call a pastor to serve the Church, a Pulpit Committee shall be led and appointed by the elders and shall include members of the Deacon Board and congregation. The Pulpit Committee shall select candidates for presentation to the Elder Council, Deacon Board and the Congregation. If approved by the Elder Council and Deacon Board, the candidate shall be presented to the Congregation for action. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting membership present shall be required to appoint a pastor.
3. NO CHANGE (except perhaps to note Senior Pastor, if necessary)

shall be decided by the Council of Elders and, if necessary, brought before the Congregation. The Pulpit shall be under the care of the Pastor, who shall recommend guest speakers and evangelists as the need may arise, and who shall be given the liberty to share the pulpit from time to time with visiting preachers, missionaries, and Christian workers with consent from the Elder Council when it will be spiritually profitable for the Congregation. The Pastor shall at no time give the Pulpit over to anyone who is unsound in doctrine as related to the doctrinal statement, or who is not in sympathy with the beliefs and practices. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees within the framework of the Church.

4. A pastor's services may be terminated by either party (pastor or church) subject to thirty (30) days notice or compensation. Any action concerning the termination of the pastor's services shall come through the Council of Elders and/or Deacon Board, in turn passed to the Congregation for final action.
5. The Pastor shall be entitled to two (2) weeks vacation annually with pay.

4. A pastor's services may be terminated by either party (pastor or church) subject to thirty (30) days notice or compensation. Any action concerning the termination of the pastor's services shall come through the Council of Elders and Deacon Board, in turn passed to the Congregation for final action.
5. COVERED IN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK
6. The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out for elders. He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time, the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

## ARTICLE V – Election Procedures

Procedure for election of Elders and Deacons:

1. Church body will pray before considering anyone.
  2. **The longest serving one-third (1/3) of each council/board will be rotated off the active body every year. New Elder/Deacon elections will occur yearly.**
  3. Church body will turn names of men they believe qualified to the Elder Council.
  4. Elders will pray and interview each man to ensure that he is qualified according to I Timothy.
  5. After prayerful consideration the active Elders would present to the church a list of spiritually qualified men who have been contacted, interviewed and have agreed to serve (if elected).
  6. These names would be presented at the October quarterly church meeting (or Special Called meeting). If there are no objections from the church body there will be a called meeting one-month later to vote on and pass these recommendations.
  7. **If more men are qualified and agree to serve than are needed to fill the vacancies on the active board, a ballot will be taken to determine those who will serve. If sufficient number of qualified men are not found the board will operate with only those qualified.**
  8. **If at all possible, the board of Elders will have at least 2 men and no more than seven (7) besides the pastoral staff, the Board of Deacons will have at least five (5) and no more than twelve (12) active members.**
2. Elder/Deacon terms will last for 3 years with an option to succeed themselves for one consecutive term if nominated and reaffirmed by the congregation. After an Elder/Deacon has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office after at least a one-year hiatus.
  7. *UNNECESSARY ó If there are qualified/willing men, they ought to be encouraged to serve, even if the Board grows by a member or two.*
  8. *UNNECESSARY ó Minimum numbers mean nothing and are unenforceable, maximum numbers should not be a problem for the foreseeable future.*

## ARTICLE VI

By-law amendments or changes can come only after all active members have been notified by letter of the proposed change and the date of the meeting at which the vote to adopt said change will take place. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present is necessary to pass any proposed change.

Approved by congregation 11-17-04