



Fellowship Baptist Church

Joplin, Missouri

PREAMBLE

In order to fulfill our God-ordained purpose, and for the preservation and security of the principles of our Mission and Purpose, and Statement of Faith, we declare and establish this Constitution. This Constitution is intended to preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church, and the freedom of this body to act appropriately in its relationship with other churches of the same faith.

I. NAME AND LOCATION

This body shall be known as the FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH of Joplin, Missouri.

II. MISSION AND PURPOSE

Fellowship Baptist Church is organized for exclusively religious purposes (including charitable purposes common to pastoral ministry as defined by Scripture). Our purpose is to exalt God, edify the Body, and evangelize the lost. Our mission is found in Matthew 28:18-20 – “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” As commanded in Psalm 96:8, we are to “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.”

III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 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 Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

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

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

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

IV. Salvation

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

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall

into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

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

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

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

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

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

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

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

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

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 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.

IV. CHURCH COVENANT

Membership qualifications and processes are to be outlined in the Church By Laws. Each member of Fellowship Baptist Church, following the completion of their membership class, shall agree to the Church Covenant as outlined below:

1. Having, as I trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give myself to Him, and having been baptized by immersion following my profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, I do now, relying on His grace, solemnly and joyfully make this covenant with the members of Fellowship Baptist Church.
2. I will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace
3. I will walk with my brothers and sisters in brotherly love, as becomes a member of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over others and faithfully admonish and encourage them as occasion may require.
4. I will not forsake the assembling of the Body, nor neglect to pray for myself and others.
5. I will encourage those with whom I have influence to be faithful and obedient to the Holy Scriptures. I will strive to bring the gospel to those the Lord brings into my life.
6. I will rejoice at with other's happiness and bear their burdens and sorrows with tenderness and sympathy.
7. I will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as He who has called me is holy, so I am to be holy in all of my conduct.
8. I will work with my fellow members for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. I will

contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

9. I will, when I move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with another church of like faith and order where I can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

10. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with me. Amen.

Believing that the covenant of membership is a covenant between God, the members, and the leadership, the Leadership of the church will:

- Strive to encourage and catalyze the spiritual growth of the body.
- Facilitate the Exaltation of God through corporate worship services.
- Facilitate the Edification the Body through various ministries, programs, and activities.
- Be involved in the Evangelization of the lost not only leading by example but also equipping through education, exhortation, and encouragement.

V. RELATIONSHIPS

Fellowship Baptist Church church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing the benefits of cooperation with other churches in the fulfillment of its purposes, the church may voluntarily associate with other churches and conventions. In so far as is consistent with our Mission and Purpose and Statement of Faith, this church will cooperate with and support the association and state conventions affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

VI. BY-LAWS

The church shall adopt such by-laws as necessary to carry out the mission and purpose of the church.

VII. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution may be made by a three-quarters vote of members present and voting at a member's meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at a previous meeting and shall have been announced at a worship gathering for two successive Sundays prior to such vote. A revised version shall be made available to members for review.

By-Laws

I. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2 - Candidacy

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must give evidence of having repented of sin and trusted in Christ for salvation, been baptized following salvation, and wholeheartedly believe in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the church statement of faith and agree to keep the commitments in the Church Covenant as outlined in Section IV of the Church Constitution.

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church, at any regular church worship gathering (except in cases where physically unable to attend), in any of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and as a candidate for Baptism.
- B. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church.
- C. By statement of prior conversion experience and Scriptural baptism, which is:
 1. Believers baptism (following belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior)
 2. Full Immersion
 3. A non-efficacious testimony of salvation experience (baptism not being regarded as part of salvation, but as a public declaration and act of obedience to Christ's command).

All such candidates shall be presented to the church by one of the pastoral staff or their designee, at any regular church member's meeting, only after proper counseling and orientation by the pastoral staff as to the meaning of church membership. Candidates shall be published in the church bulletin for two weeks prior to voting. Any objection voiced prior to voting shall be referred to the deacons for investigation. Any objection voiced during the meeting will table the motion until the next meeting so that the deacons can investigate the matter. A majority vote is needed for election by those present and voting. All candidates then becoming members of the church shall be given the right hand of fellowship.

Section 3 - Responsibilities and Privileges of Membership

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 gifting, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those who are members in good standing of this congregation shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church. Non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis for the purpose of administration and professional consultation with the approval of the pastoral staff.

Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore it is the privilege and responsibility of each member to attend Member's Meetings and vote on matters that have been submitted to a vote. Every member of the church who is in good standing, not under any disciplinary action, has passed their 13th birthday, and is in attendance is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church body. Any absentee voting must be approved in advance by the deacons.

Section 4 - Member in Good Standing

All members shall strive to be members in good standing. A member in good standing shall abide by the church covenant, faithfully attend worship gatherings, contribute financially to the general budget of the church, and be involved in the life of the congregation through small group involvement (S.S. small groups, etc.), and participate in other ministries and activities.

Section 5 - Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways;

- A. Death
- B. Joining another Baptist Church
- C. Exclusion by action of the church
- D. Erasure upon affiliation with another faith or denomination
- E. Request of the member
- F. Becoming active in another church,
- G. Absent for an extended period of time as determined by the pastoral staff and affirmed by the deacons

When membership is terminated, the congregation shall be notified in the minutes of the next Member's Meeting.

Section 6 - Discipline

It shall be the basic purpose of the Fellowship Baptist Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem according to Matthew 18:15-17. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. Discipline can include admonition from the pastor, deacons, or congregation, suspension from the Lord's Supper for a definite period, removal from position, or

dismissal from membership. When the welfare of the church would best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action at a members meeting; and the church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has made it necessary for the church to exclude him may, upon his request, be restored to membership by a vote of the church upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

Any person who serves in a leadership position, who is under formal discipline as determined by the pastoral staff and deacons, will step away from their leadership duties until the discipline matter is resolved. The pastoral staff along with the deacons will oversee the disciplinary process.

The steps of the disciplinary process shall follow the process set forth in Matthew 18.

- A. It is the duty of every member of this church, who has knowledge of doctrinal error or unbiblical conduct of another member to warn and correct the erring member in private, seeking their repentance and restoration.
- B. If the member does not heed this warning, the member warning them shall go to them again, accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that there has been a refusal to repent. There is no specified time interval between the first and second step.
- C. If the erring member does not heed this warning, it shall be brought to the attention of the pastor(s) and/or deacons. If the pastor(s) and/or deacons determine, after thorough investigation, that there is evidence that the erring member continues to refuse to repent, they shall then inform the church body at a Member's Meeting in order that the church body may call the erring member to repentance and pray for them. If the erring member demonstrates repentance, notice to that effect will be made as soon as possible.
- D. If the erring member does not repent in response to a collective call to repentance, then following a vote of the congregation, the erring member shall be publicly dismissed from membership and/or excluded from participation in church worship services, ordinances, events, and activities.

II. CHURCH OFFICERS & PERSONNEL

Section 1 - Pastor

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks. He exercises supervisory authority over all staff in the employment of the church.

The pastor is the servant-leader of pastoral ministries in the church. He is to lead the church to carry out the mission and purpose of the church as defined in the Constitution. He works with the deacons and church staff to: 1) lead the church in performing its tasks, 2) lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application, 3) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and 4) care for the church's members and other persons in the community. He shall be an ex-officio member of all teams and committees.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, which has been announced from the pulpit and in the church bulletin.

A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the deacons and affirmed by the congregation to seek out a man who meets the Scriptural qualifications as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:6-9. Any member has the privilege of making a recommendation to the pulpit committee. Only a recommendation from the pulpit committee will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, an affirmative vote of three fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request (see personnel committee for additional policies). The pastor shall give at least a thirty (30) day notice at the time of the pastor's resignation. Any termination of services by the church shall be deemed immediately effective. The pastor and his wife (if married) shall be members of the church.

Section 2 - Associate Pastors

The church shall call or employ Associate Pastors as needed. A job description shall be written when the need is determined. An agreement in writing between any such staff member and the church shall be done before any staff member can be considered called or employed. This agreement shall include: salary, benefits, vacation, and all other agreements pertaining to a written contract. All Associate Pastors and their wives, if married, shall be members of the church.

Associate Pastors shall be recommended to the church by the Deacons and Personnel Committee and employed after affirmation by the congregation. At least two weeks notice at the time of resignation (see personnel committee for additional policies) shall be given in writing. Any termination of services by the church shall be deemed immediately effective.

Section 3 - Support & Administrative Personnel

The church shall employ such support staff as the church shall need. The pastoral staff, together with the Personnel Committee, determine support staff needs. A job description shall be written when the need for support staff arises. An agreement in writing between any such staff member and the church shall be completed before any staff member can be employed. This job description shall include: salary, benefits, vacation, and all other agreements pertaining to a written contract.

Support staff includes: secretaries, administrative assistants, receptionists, custodial staff, and interns. Support Staff are not Church Officers and not required to be members of Fellowship Baptist Church.

Support staff are hired by the Pastoral Staff with affirmation of the Personnel Committee (Finance Committee approval is necessary if the position is not already in the current approved budget). At least two weeks notice at the time of resignation shall be given in writing to either party. Any termination of services by the church shall be deemed immediately effective.

Section 4 - Deacons

The Office of Deacon is established and described in Acts 6:1-7, and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are set apart as servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the pastor and associate pastors as they care for the temporal needs of members, attend to accommodations of public worship (including assisting with the ordinances), promote unity in the body, support the pastor(s) in their ministry of the Word and prayer, and serve on the Church Council.

The church shall recognize men who are giving of themselves in service to the church and possess particular gifts, skills, and knowledge appropriate to their service. The staff and deacons shall continually seek to recognize those who are qualified and have demonstrated exceptional service to the church. Deacons are nominated by the deacons and shall be elected at any regular members meeting of the church. Before nomination, deacons are to be examined by a Qualification Committee to insure they meet the Scriptural qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Acts 6:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9. This Committee shall include the Pastor, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the deacons, and two others chosen by the deacons.

After having been qualified by the Qualification Committee, prospective deacons shall be presented to the congregation as deacon candidates at least 30 days before election. Those who have not been previously ordained shall be ordained after election and prior to installation. New deacons shall be installed in a worship gathering of the church. Any objections to a candidate shall be referred back to the Qualification Committee for further consideration.

Deacons shall be members in good standing and serve until they resign, terminate their membership, are unable to continue serving, or are removed. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the church from another church where he has served as deacon.

The deacons shall receive, hold, and disburse a benevolence fund, reporting to the church its total receipts and disbursements only.

The deacon body shall provide an Accountability Team of a minimum of two deacons for each member of the Pastoral Staff. Each Team shall ensure that their member of the Pastoral Staff is devoting adequate time to prayer, study, family, and ministry. They shall walk with him, making sure he is enjoying God in private devotions, are to be his advocates, and support team.

The Deacon Body shall also conduct an annual review and if necessary, a semi-annual review of all the Pastoral Staff of the church and shall make such recommendations to the Pastoral Staff as to the performance of their duties as the Deacon Body shall deem necessary and appropriate.

The resident church membership shall be divided as equally as possible among the deacons. This system, known as the 'flocking system,' shall give each deacon a responsibility for the membership families of the church. The purpose of this system is to provide a way that the deacons can minister to the spiritual and physical needs of the membership.

There shall be no less than eight (8) men serving as deacons. Deacons (and their wives, if married) shall be members in good standing of Fellowship Baptist Church.

Section 5 - Moderator

The church shall elect bi-annually a moderator and a vice moderator, who shall each serve a two year term. In the absence of the moderator, the vice moderator shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected to preside.

The Moderator shall serve as the president of the corporation and shall be a member in good standing.

Section 6 - Clerk

The church clerk shall be elected annually and shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communication and written official reports and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws.

The clerk shall serve as the historian of the church.

The clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church Secretary.

The clerk shall be a member in good standing of Fellowship Baptist Church.

All church records are church property and shall be filed in the church office when an office is maintained.

Section 7 - Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all moneys, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular members meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding period. The treasurer's report shall be reviewed bi-annually by an outside accounting company designated by the Finance Committee

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent record of the church.

The treasurer shall be a member in good standing of Fellowship and shall serve as the treasurer of the corporation.

III. COMMITTEES AND COORDINATING GROUPS

Section 1 - General

The church shall form such committees and teams as are necessary to carry out the purposes and programs of the church efficiently and effectively. Permanent committees shall be Church Council, Finance, Personnel, Maintenance, Nominating, and Building.

The pastor(s) or deacons can form teams or committees as needed to carry out specific tasks in fulfilling the purposes and programs of the church. A Committee is an official group, affirmed by the congregation to fulfill a defined purpose and function. They report to the congregation as to their ongoing progress. A committee can bring a formal motion to the Congregation related to their purpose. A team is group, typically formed for a defined period and a specific task, as assigned by the pastor(s) or deacons. A team works with the pastor(s) or deacons to accomplish their purpose in assisting them to lead the church to perform its task of worshiping, following, and sharing Jesus together. All committees and teams formed shall be given a "scope of responsibility and authority" to guide them in fulfilling their purpose.

Permanent committee members shall be members of the church in good standing, recommended by the nominating committee, and elected by the church. Members should not be a part of more than

one permanent committee unless necessary and approved by the pastor(s) & deacons.

The pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees and teams.

Section 2 - Church Council

The Church Council shall be comprised of the senior pastor, associate pastors, deacons, and ministry leaders of the church. This council, serving alongside the pastor, shall meet quarterly with the goal of communicating and carrying out the purpose and vision of the church. They review and coordinate programs, activities, and ministries of the church. The council shall also work together to assist in coordinating the purpose, vision, and goals of the church with each individual ministry. All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval. The pastor shall serve as the chairman of the church council. The council shall be organized with a secretary.

Section 3 - Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall be made up of the treasurer, assistant treasurer, counting committee chairman, chairman and vice-chairman of the deacons, and the pastoral staff. The Finance Committee, along with the Treasurer, shall be responsible for receipts and distribution of all funds. They shall put in place policies and procedures as necessary and safeguards surrounding the handling of church funds in order that the integrity of the church and its officers may be preserved. The committee shall render all possible assistance to the treasurer.

The fiscal year of the church shall run from January 1 through December 31.

The Finance Committee shall prepare for the church an annual budget after prayerfully considering requests for moneys from various program organizations and leaders. This budget shall be presented to the church for approval prior to the beginning of the church year. The budget shall be available in writing at least two weeks prior to voting in a special meeting called for that purpose.

The Finance Committee shall ensure that appropriate measures are taken to count and record the moneys received by the church by organizing a Counting Committee. The chairman of the Counting Committee shall be elected by the church annually. This chairman shall select, as needed, members of the congregation, approved by the Finance Committee, to assist in the counting and recording of all funds received by the church. Members of this committee must work with the strictness of confidence and there shall be a different team to count the offering each Sunday of the month.

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the counting committee and the records delivered to the church office. The church office will keep on file also a record of all offerings and receipts.

Section 4 - Nominating Committee

The task of the Nominating Committee shall be to assist every member of the church to find a place of service fitting to their gifts, passions, and abilities. The goal of the nominating committee is that the church functions in accordance with Ephesians 4:16 - *when each part is working properly, makes the body grow, so that it builds itself up in love.*

The Nominating Committee coordinates the staffing of all positions that are filled by volunteers. The

Nominating Committee shall seek out and present to the church persons qualified to serve in various roles, organizations, and committees.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least one person from the deacons and one person from the pastoral staff, along with six others who shall be selected by the deacons. Each member shall serve a three year term, adding two new members each year with two rotating off. The member of the pastoral staff shall be the chairman of the committee.

Section 5 - Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration. Its work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, personnel services, and the writing of job descriptions. The committee shall write the policies and procedures for the administration of personnel including vacation policies, sick policies, and other details surrounding the day-to-day operations of the church offices.

The Personnel Committee shall recommend to the Finance Committee the salary packages and pay for all paid staff members. Any changes to salary packages that impact the church budget must be approved by the congregation.

The Personnel Committee shall consist of five members in good standing who serve on a rotation basis with one person rotating off and one person rotating on the committee each year. The Personnel Committee shall select from their membership a chairman annually.

Support staff disciplinary matters are handled by the pastoral staff in consultation with the personnel committee. Termination of support staff shall be administered by the pastoral staff in consultation with the personnel committee and approval of the Deacons.

Any disciplinary action involving a pastoral staff member shall be referred to the Deacon Body for review and a recommendation to be brought to the congregation by the deacon body for approval or disapproval.

Section 6 - Maintenance Committee

The Maintenance Committee is responsible for maintaining the building, grounds, and property of the church.

The Maintenance Committee oversees all activities associated with the operation, maintenance, safety, and security of all buildings, grounds, furnishings, and equipment owned by the church, except items expressly the responsibility of another committee. As needed, the Building Committee shall assist the staff concerning matters related to the building, facilities, and grounds.

The Maintenance Committee shall consist of five members in good standing who serve on a rotation basis with one person rotating off and one person rotating on the committee each year. The Maintenance Committee shall select from their membership a chairman annually. The chairman of the Maintenance Committee or their designee shall serve as a member of the Building Committee.

Section 7 - Building Committee

The Building Committee is responsible for maintaining and executing a plan for any new construction,

or remodeling of the facilities. They shall oversee and manage the Building Fund according to building plans presented to and approved by the congregation.

The committee shall consist of a minimum of six members in good standing, one of said members shall be a member of the Deacon Body, and one of the pastoral staff. The committee shall select a chairman annually.

IV. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1 - Worship Gatherings

Worship Gatherings shall be held each Sunday and throughout the week as meets the needs of the congregation. Worship Gatherings are open to the entire membership of the church and for all who desire to come and worship Almighty God and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

Section 2 - Member's Meetings

All members are invited and encouraged to participate in the member meetings where the matters of our church are discussed. In every meeting together, members shall act in a spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Member's meetings shall be held quarterly at a time set by the Church Council. Notice of the meetings shall be given fourteen days prior to the meeting. The Church Council shall see that all necessary reports are submitted to the church for meetings.

At any regular or special member's meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Provided all other requirements have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present.

Special meetings may be called as needed to consider matters of significant nature. A notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be given for the special called meeting no later than seven days preceding the date of the meeting, unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical.

The Simplified Handbook of Parliamentary Procedure shall govern all proceedings, except when in conflict with these bylaws, in which event these bylaws shall govern.

IV. PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The church shall put in place programs and organizations to fulfill the purposes outlined in Section II of the constitution. All programs and organizations of the church shall be under church control, with all leaders being chosen by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

VI. ORDINANCES

Section 1 - Baptism

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

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- B. Baptism shall be administered by one of the pastoral staff or their designee.
- C. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship gathering.
- D. After baptism, a person shall be eligible for membership in the church.

Section 2 - The Lord's Supper

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

- A. The Lord's Supper shall be observed, at least quarterly, as scheduled by the pastoral staff.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed in a worship gathering of the church.
- C. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- D. In the absence of the pastor, the church may authorize any ordained minister to administer the Lord's Supper.
- E. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

VIII. MARRIAGE

Fellowship Baptist Church teaches and holds to the Biblical view on marriage. Marriage, according to the Holy Bible, is the exclusive, covenantal union of one man and one woman. Marriage was designed and defined by God in the very order of creation. **Genesis 2:24** states *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* In this passage, God clearly defines the marriage covenant as being between one male and one female. Man and woman were created to complement and complete each other.

The New Testament affirms this man-woman covenant in **Matthew 19:4-6**, where Jesus states, *"He answered, 'Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?'⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."*

Fellowship Baptist Church will faithfully follow this clear Biblical definition of marriage in all of the teachings and practices of this church.

Fellowship Baptist Church considers wedding ceremonies as public worship gatherings of the church. Therefore, Fellowship Baptist Church (including pastors, employees, and representatives) will not officiate, solemnize, perform, or host on or in church property or facilities a marriage, marriage-like ceremony, or any other exchange of vows, regardless of how such ceremony may be defined, involving anything other than the Biblically-defined union of one man with one woman as instituted by God.

Human Sexuality and Gender

Fellowship Baptist Church views sexual gender as a gift of God, assigned as God's will at the conception of every individual. Gender, the sex of an individual assigned at conception, is part of God's glory and creation. God created us male and female, in his image, and for his glory. Fellowship Baptist Church will apply these biblical views of creation, sexuality, and gender identity in making personnel, policy, facility use, and other decisions.

X. AMENDMENTS

Changes to these bylaws may be made at any regular member's meeting of the church, provided each amendment shall have been made available in writing at least 14 days prior to the meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment made available to each member present.

Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

END

ADOPTED September 1970

AMENDED August 1971, September 1972, April 2001, February 2008, and January 2014

REVISED AND UPDATED October 2018