

Constitution and By-laws

**First Baptist Church
103 W. Sangamon Avenue
Petersburg, IL 62675**

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CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

In order to preserve the principles of our faith and to govern ourselves in an orderly manner consistent with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, we declare and establish this Constitution and By-laws.

ARTICLE I: NAME AND INCORPORATION

Section 1: This body shall be known as First Baptist Church, located at 103 W. Sangamon Avenue, in Petersburg, the County of Menard and the State of Illinois.

Section 2: The Church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois governing religious bodies, and the handling of property shall be in accordance with such laws (Articles of Incorporation on file in church office). Process may be served upon the Pastor or any officer of the Church.

ARTICLE II: VISION AND MISSION

Our vision is to see God glorified as people from Petersburg and every nation under heaven become fully devoted followers of Christ Jesus.

Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by worshiping the Lord Jesus, building up the Body of Christ, and shining the light of Jesus into our neighborhoods and the nations.

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe that the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for our statement of faith. The Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of “The Baptist Faith & Message” as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. See Appendix 1.

ARTICLE IV: AFFILIATION

The government of this Church is vested in its members under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ at the leading of the Holy Spirit according to the authority of the Word of God. The Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. The Church also recognizes and values the benefits of cooperation with other churches and gladly affiliates in partnership with the Heartland Baptist Network, the Illinois Baptist State Association, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: General Principles

The membership of the Church shall be those who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have been scripturally baptized, and who willingly unite together in faith and practice to carry out our mission.

Section 2: Admission

Persons may be received as candidates for membership in the following ways:

1. Profession of faith and baptism. The Church shall receive as candidates for membership any person who repents of sin, confesses faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, and follows in believer's baptism.
2. Transfer of membership. The Church shall receive as candidates for membership those who desire to transfer their membership from a church of like faith and order. The Church shall seek to obtain a letter of recommendation from their previous church. When a letter is unobtainable, the candidate shall be received upon his or her statement of faith and baptism.
3. Restoration. The Church shall receive as candidates for membership those who have been previous members of this Church or another church of like faith and order, but who have been removed from membership because of church discipline, and who express their repentance and renewal of faith. In such a case, the Church shall restore Christian fellowship and unity to the brother or sister.

For candidates to be received into membership, they must:

1. Complete an orientation of our faith and practices and affirm our Church Covenant and Church Statement of Faith.
2. Receive approval by the Church in Business Meeting of three-fourths (3/4) of eligible church members present and voting.

Section 3: Non-Resident Members

Non-resident membership will be granted to those members who move to another community at sufficient distance to render him/her incapable of active support of this Church. He or she will be encouraged to find a church in that community in which he/she may actively worship and serve the Lord.

Section 4: Church Covenant

The expectations of church membership are outlined in our Church Covenant. The Church Covenant is reviewed and affirmed as part of the membership process. See Appendix 2.

Section 5: Church Discipline

The Church Discipline process is always one in which the goal is the repentance, redemption, and restoration of its troubled members. The Church will offer counsel, guidance, prayer, and whatever other reasonable measure of help may be necessary to assist a brother or sister who has fallen into sin and/or has neglected active participation in the mission and ministry of the Church.

However, should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a significant hindrance to the general welfare and witness of the Church, and after applying biblical principles seeking to restore the individual without success, the Church may find it necessary to dismiss the individual from its membership. Such action would require a three-fourths (3/4) vote from eligible members present and voting at a regular business meeting.

Section 6: Termination

Membership in this Church shall be terminated when a member unites in membership with another church, personally requests a termination of membership, is dismissed by action of the Church according to the church discipline process (see Section 5 above), or dies.

ARTICLE II: PASTOR, MINISTRY STAFF, AND DEACONS

Section 1: Pastor

The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church. He shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the Church, and he shall promote the Church's programs in all its phases. He shall be ex-officio member of all church organizations and committees, and shall preside at all meetings of the Church, except as hereinafter provided. He shall conduct religious services on stated and special occasions, administer the ordinances, minister to members of the Church and community, and perform other duties that pertain to his office. The Pastor shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the Church, preaching at the stated times agreed upon by the Church and in cooperation with the deacons, provide for pulpit supply when he is absent and arrange for workers to assist in revival meetings and other special services.

The Pastor's length of service shall be for an indefinite period of time. He shall give his full-time to the work of the Church, with such exceptions as may be agreeable to the Church. The relationship may be dissolved at the request of either the Pastor or the Church. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of eligible members present and voting is necessary. The Pastor shall give the Church a written notice advising the Church of his intention of terminating his duties as Pastor. The Church shall give the Pastor a written notice prepared by the clerk advising him of the intention of the Church to terminate the services of the Pastor. In either case, at least thirty (30) days notice shall be given unless the time should be shortened by mutual consent.

Section 2: In the Absence of a Pastor

1. Pastor Search Committee. A Pastor Search Committee will be elected by the Church to seek out a suitable pastor whenever a vacancy occurs, and its recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee will accept recommendations for nominations from any member of the Church for their consideration. The committee shall bring only one (1) name at a time to the consideration of the Church. The election and call of a pastor shall take place at a meeting especially called for that purpose. Election shall be by ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those eligible members present and voting necessary for a call. Should the one recommended by the committee fail to receive a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote, the meeting shall be adjourned without debate and the committee will continue to seek out a suitable pastor.
2. Chairman of Deacons. In the absence of a pastor, the Chairman of Deacons shall be designated with the authority to serve by leading the Church to continue its mission. In consultation with the Deacon Body, the Chairman of Deacons shall have the responsibility for providing pulpit supply, nominating an Interim Pastor as necessary, and overseeing matters of the Church.
3. Interim Pastor. Upon recommendation of the Chairman of Deacons, an Interim Pastor may be elected to serve the pastoral role in interim. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of eligible church members present and voting at a regular or special-called business meeting shall be required.

Section 3: Ministry Staff

The Church shall employ staff members as the Church needs. A job description shall be written by the Personnel Committee and approved by the Church when need for additional staff is determined. Ministerial staff members shall be recommended to the Church by a search committee and employed by church action. Recommendations, election, length of service, and termination of duties shall be in accordance with Article II, Section 1, Paragraph 2.

All ministry staff members shall be responsible to the Pastor. They shall be responsible to the Personnel Committee if the Church is without a pastor or the pastor is incapacitated.

Section 4: Deacons

In accordance with the meaning of the work and practice of the New Testament, Deacons are to be ordained servants of the Church. Deacons are called to serve alongside the Pastor to help carry out the mission of the Church, with special emphasis on extending the pastoral shepherding ministry. As such, primary responsibilities include building up the Body of Christ by serving one another in love, encouraging one another in the faith, caring for one another's needs, promoting unity within the fellowship, praying for one another, showing hospitality, and strengthening one another in the grace of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Deacon Body shall be composed of as many members as deemed necessary to serve the Church properly. The Deacons shall elect a chairman and a secretary each year. They shall be elected by the Deacons themselves. Regular meetings shall be scheduled and responsibilities allotted as are necessary to the discharge of their duties.

The biblical qualifications of a Deacon rest upon the characteristics outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. He must also be a member of this Church and faithfully seek to advance the mission of the Church.

Upon his request or as a result of action by the Church, he may be placed on an inactive list and may be reinstated as an active deacon one (1) or more years later by action of the Church. Upon request, a new member deacon from another Southern Baptist Church may be placed on an inactive list until recommended by our deacons and a vote of the Church.

The candidates for election to the office of Deacon will be selected by the active deacons, or in an event of their failure to act, the Church may instruct the Nominating Committee to seek out those candidates qualified for this office of service. Upon a person's election as a Deacon by the Church, the Church will call for his ordination as soon as convenient.

ARTICLE III: OTHER CHURCH EMPLOYEES

Section 1: Ministry Assistant/Secretary

The Ministry Assistant/Secretary shall be employed as a result of a positive majority vote of eligible members present and voting at a regularly scheduled business meeting, upon a recommendation from the Pastor. This position shall be responsible to the Pastor in the performance of his or her duties, and may be terminated by the Pastor. He or she shall be responsible to the Personnel Committee if the Church is without a Pastor or if the Pastor is incapacitated.

Section 2: Custodian

The Custodian shall be employed as a result of a positive majority vote of eligible members present and voting at a regularly scheduled business meeting, upon a recommendation from the Personnel Committee. The Custodian shall be responsible to the Trustees, supervised by the chairperson of the Trustees, and may be terminated by the Trustees.

Section 3: Additional Church Employees

As may be necessary, additional positions may be recommended by the Pastor and/or Personnel Committee for employment. A positive majority vote of eligible members present and voting at a regularly scheduled business meeting would be needed for employment.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1: Moderator

The Moderator shall be the Pastor, unless he desires not to be. In the absence of a Moderator, the Chairman of Deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the Church Clerk shall call the Church to order and a Moderator Pro Tem shall be elected.

Section 2: Church Clerk

A Church Clerk shall be elected annually, who shall attend, or be represented at all Church business meetings. The Clerk shall keep a record of all the actions of the Church. The Clerk is responsible for keeping a register of all the names of members, with date of birth, admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptism. The Clerk shall issue letters of transfer voted by the Church, preserve on file all official communications and reports, and give notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these by-laws. The church records are church property and should be filed in the church office.

Section 3: Treasurer

The Church shall annually elect a Treasurer. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive a record of all money deposited, and pay out (by check) all money, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements as allowed in the budget or otherwise so ordered by the Church in business session. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the Church at each regular business meeting a written report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month(s). The Treasurer's books shall be audited annually by an Auditing Committee.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the Church, the report shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Church Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the Church. When a successor is elected, the Treasurer shall promptly deliver all books, records, and accounts pertaining to the office, properly audited.

Section 4: Financial Secretary

A Financial Secretary shall be elected annually, who is to receive the empty offering envelopes after the money has been counted by the proper persons. The Financial Secretary is to give each contributor credit in the record system approved by the Church, is to keep the envelopes on file for one (1) year as a means of reference, is to prepare regular statements of contributions upon request, and maintain records of all receipts from envelopes and other offerings. The Financial Secretary's records are confidential and are not open for examination. However, a contributor may see his own records upon request.

Section 5: Historian

The Historian is to preserve and use the historical records of the Church. Responsibilities include gathering and preserving available church records to help members understand and appreciate their heritage and mission. He or she shall be selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by the congregation for a term of three (3) years, with the option to be re-elected for another three (3) year term.

ARTICLE V: ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

Section 1: General

The following committees will be considered standing committees: Nominating, Stewardship, Personnel, Audit, and Trustees. Members of these committees must be active members of the Church. Members serving on these committees will be eligible for serving two (2) consecutive terms, at which time they will rotate off for at least one year before being eligible for nomination again. The church year begins September 1 and ends August 31.

Section 2: Nominating Committee

The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to serve the Church by seeking and recommending individuals to serve as church officers, on committees, and ministry teams.

The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Moderator at least four (4) months prior to the close of the church year. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Sunday School Director and (3) members appointed by the Moderator, who shall serve for a one (1) year term.

Section 3: Stewardship Committee

The purpose of the Stewardship Committee is to serve the Church in matters related to the finances of the Church. Responsibilities include: recommendation of the annual budget and, when approved, seeing that ministry teams operate within the limits of the budget; leading the Church in stewardship education; and encouraging increased mission giving. They shall also work together with the Personnel Committee to review salary structures for staff and employees.

The members of the Stewardship Committee shall be the Treasurer, Chairman of Deacons, Personnel Committee Chairman, and three (3) other members of the Church who will serve on a three (3) year rotational basis.

Section 4: Personnel Committee

The purpose of the Personnel Committee is to serve the Church in matters related to personnel administration. They shall have the responsibility of recruiting, interviewing, and recommending to the Church all non-ministerial staff employees and preparing such job descriptions. This committee will work together with the Stewardship Committee to

review salary structures for staff and employees annually. They shall be responsible for initiating the Christmas love offering for the staff.

The Personnel Committee shall consist of three (3) members who will serve on a three (3) year rotational basis.

Section 5: Trustees

The purpose of the Trustees is to serve the Church in matters related to property and maintenance. They shall hold in trust the property of the Church. They shall oversee the care of all real estate belonging to the Church. They shall be charged with keeping the church building and parsonage, etc., in repair. They shall have authority to spend within the parameters of their budget, with the exception for emergency situations which call for immediate action.

It shall be the function of the Trustees to affix their signatures to all legal documents where signatures are required. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the Church without a specific vote of the Church authorizing such action.

Trustees shall consist of six (6) members who will serve on a three (3) year rotational basis.

Section 6: Auditing Committee

The purpose of the Auditing Committee is to serve the Church in matters related to her financial integrity. This committee shall audit the Treasurer's books annually and report to the Church. The audit shall be completed during the first quarter of the fiscal year. All committee members and the church Treasurer shall be present for the annual audit.

The Audit Committee shall consist of three (3) members who will serve on a three (3) year rotational basis.

ARTICLE VI: MINISTRY & MISSION TEAMS

Section 1: General

Ministry and Mission Teams shall be approved and authorized as needed by the Church to carry out the church's mission to make disciples of all nations. All such teams will operate within the framework of the church's structure and purpose. A listing of all active Ministry and Mission Teams shall be kept in the church office.

Section 2: Ministry Leadership Team

The Ministry Leadership Team shall be composed of church officers, committee chairpersons, and ministry and mission team leaders. The primary purpose of the Ministry Leadership Team is to help promote, coordinate, evaluate, and align the church's ministries and activities with our vision and mission.

The Ministry Leadership Team shall meet as often as deemed necessary. All matters agreed upon by the team not already approved by the Church shall be recommended to the Church for adoption.

ARTICLE VII: CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1: Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and worship of Almighty God, and on Wednesday evening for Bible study and prayer. These services shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor.

Section 2: Sunday School/Small Groups

The Church shall have a Sunday School and additional Small Groups as needed, under the leadership of the Sunday School Director, for the purpose of making disciples of Christ Jesus. Included in the functions of Sunday School/Small Groups would be: the teaching of God's Word for obedience to Christ; fellowship with and encouragement of one another in Christian community; serving and evangelizing in the name of Jesus.

Section 3: Special Services

Revival services and all other church meetings which are essential in promoting the mission of the Church shall be placed on the church calendar. The Pastor will select the evangelist and other special services personnel with church approval.

Section 4: Regular Business Meetings

The regular church Business Meetings shall be held the second Sunday of every other month at 7:00 p.m.

Section 5: Special Business Meetings

A Special Business Meeting may be called by the Pastor or Chairman of Deacons provided notice of the reason has been given from the pulpit during two (2) regular services preceding the called meeting. This meeting cannot be held on the same day the second notice is given.

Section 6: Quorum

The quorum consists of five (5) percent of the adult resident membership, provided it is a regular meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 7: Voting Rights

Each active member of the church 18 years of age or older may vote during business meetings.

Section 8: Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church, except when in conflict with this Constitution and By-laws.

ARTICLE VIII: ORDINANCES

Section 1: Baptism

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith and indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord shall be received for baptism.

Baptism shall be by immersion in water and shall be administered by the Pastor or whomever the Church shall authorize. The Baptism Ministry Team shall assist in the observance. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.

Section 2: Lord's Supper

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

The Lord's Supper shall be observed monthly, preferably the first Sunday of each month, or as otherwise scheduled. This service shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor. The Lord's Supper Ministry Team shall be responsible for the physical preparation of the observance.

ARTICLE IX: CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1: General

Church members shall be taught the scriptural principle of bringing tithes and offerings to the Lord through the Church as our plan for financing the mission and ministries of the Church. Any other means of raising funds for special missions projects or requests for special offerings not already established must be approved by the Pastor in consultation with the Stewardship Committee.

Section 2: Budget

The Stewardship Committee shall prepare and recommend to the Church for approval an inclusive budget indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local expenses and world-wide mission efforts. The proposed budget shall be made available to the Church at least two (2) weeks prior to voting on it, and the budget shall be approved by the Church prior to the new fiscal year. Members shall be encouraged to support the budget with tithes and offerings. Individual church offering envelopes shall be available to each member of the Church and Sunday School.

Section 3: Accounting Procedures

All funds for any and all purposes shall be properly recorded in the permanent records of the Church. All money shall be deposited in a bank designated by the Church, and disbursements shall be by check signed by the Treasurer or other authorized persons.

All funds received on Sunday morning shall pass through the hands of the Offering Counters. All other monies shall be handled by the Church Secretary and properly recorded.

Section 4: Fiscal Year

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

ARTICLE X: LICENSING AND ORDINATION

Section 1: Licensing

A license to preach the gospel may be given by vote of the Church to any member who announces his call to that ministry. The Church shall first examine the candidate as to his Christian conversion, convictions, and consecration. The license is an acknowledgement of his call to the ministry and the church's encouragement to make preparations for it. The Church Clerk shall furnish the licensee with a copy of their certificate of license as their credential. The performance of civil duties by the member shall be governed by state law.

Section 2: Ordination

Ordination to the gospel ministry may be given to a member who has been called as pastor of a church of like faith and order. Formal request must be made by the sister church, and the vote taken at any regular business meeting of the Church. Ordained representatives from neighboring churches of like faith and order shall be invited to form a council for the examination of the candidate. If the council considers him fit for the ministry, the Church shall proceed with the ordination.

ARTICLE XI: STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE

We believe in the sanctity of marriage as described in the Bible. God created and ordained marriage as a lifelong covenant relationship between one man and one woman. This sacred union provides the context for intimate, loving companionship and the means for the procreation of the human race. The biblical marriage relationship further serves to illustrate God's own covenant commitment to His people, and ultimately pictures the relationship between Christ Jesus and His bride, the church. Jesus affirmed this definition of marriage in His teaching, and several New Testament epistles provide clear instructions for husbands and wives concerning their marriage relationship responsibilities. (*Genesis 2:15-24; Matthew 19:4-12; 1 Corinthians 7:1-2; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7*)

This Church adheres to the biblical standard for marriage, regardless of any legal definitions or court actions that attempt to redefine marriage. Therefore, this Church affirms that all marriage ceremonies performed in the name of this Church be conducted in agreement with our stated beliefs. Additionally, any related celebrations or activities allowed in our facilities shall be for unions that meet the standards named in this statement. Furthermore, all church ministers or staff will engage only in marriage ceremonies in keeping with the biblical definition of marriage.

ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and By-laws may only be amended, altered or repealed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of eligible members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting of the Church, provided that the proposed amendment, alteration or repeal is submitted in writing to the Church twenty-eight (28) days in advance.

A copy of this document shall be kept permanently in the church clerk's records, and other copies shall be available in the church office. All amendments and revision to this document shall, after approval by the Church, be kept on record. In addition, copies of such changes shall be made available to the membership.

ARTICLE XIII: DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS UPON DISSOLUTION OR DIVISION

In the event of the dissolution by vote of the membership of the Church, assets of the Church shall first be used to pay any outstanding debts. After this, remaining assets shall be given to the Baptist Foundation of Illinois, a member organization of the Illinois Baptist State Association, and designated for its Church Legacy Program. Actions required to carry out the dissolution shall be performed by the Trustees.

In the event of a division within the Church, in which one group no longer adheres to the Statement of Faith contained within this Constitution and By-laws and/or desires to leave the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), all property and assets shall belong to the group which remains loyal to the Statement of Faith and the SBC, provided that the SBC itself continues to operate under biblical principles.

Appendix 1

PETERSBURG FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH STATEMENT OF FAITH

Adapted from The Baptist Faith & Message, 2000

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.

God

There is one and only one living and true God. 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.

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. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

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. 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.

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Man

Man is the special creation of God, in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. 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 dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

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.

God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. 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.

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.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water. 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.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations, 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.

The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion.

Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell. The righteous will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Education

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence; there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. 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.

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.

Cooperation

Christ's people should 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. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations.

The Christian and Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. 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.

Religious Liberty

Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal.

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. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. 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.

Appendix 2

PETERSBURG FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CHURCH COVENANT

By God's grace we unite in this covenant to embrace our mission.

We will live our lives for the honor, glory and worship of Almighty God

1. By loving the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength
2. By abiding in Christ Jesus and walking in step with the Holy Spirit according to the Word of God
3. By striving to please the Lord in faith and holiness, while renouncing ungodliness and worldly passions
4. By enduring in faith, even through suffering, for the sake of Christ

[Matthew 5:10-12; 6:33; 10:16-42; Mark 12:30; Luke 9:23; John 15:1-11,18-16:4; Romans 8; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 15; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-25; Ephesians 5:1-20; Philippians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 10:32-39; 11:6; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 4:12-19]

We will build up the Body of Christ in love

1. By praying for, caring for, and serving one another in love
2. By encouraging and strengthening one another in the faith
3. By teaching and admonishing one another in wisdom, grace, and truth
4. By meeting together faithfully, showing hospitality generously, forgiving one another freely, and promoting unity within the church

[Matthew 22:39; John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:3-21; 1 Corinthians 12:24-26; Galatians 5:13; 6:2; Ephesians 4:11-16; 25-32; Philippians 2:1-11; Colossians 1:9-14; 3:13-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 2 Timothy 2:1-2; 4:2; Titus 2:1-8; Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:24-25; 13:1-3; James 5:16; 1 Peter 4:8-11; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 John 4:7-11]

We will shine the light of Jesus into our neighborhoods and to the nations

1. By praying fervently and faithfully in seeking the salvation of the lost
2. By compassionately and boldly sharing the gospel message
3. By being zealous for good works that point to the glory of God
4. By giving obediently, cheerfully, and sacrificially to the work of the Lord through the church

[Malachi 3:6-12; Matthew 5:14-16; 6:2-4, 9-10; 9:35-38; 28:19-20; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 19:1-10; 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:1; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; 9:6-15; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 4:2-4; Titus 2:11-14; James 1:27; 1 Peter 2:11-12]