

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION

## PREAMBLE

So that things may be done decently and in order in accordance with the accepted tenets of other churches of like precious faith, and that we may more readily help each other in our Christian service, we declare and establish this constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

## ARTICLE I

### NAME AND PURPOSE

#### SECTION 1 - NAME:

This congregation of believers shall be known as the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF EASTON PA

#### SECTION 2 - PURPOSE:

(A) This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, day care centers, camps, nursing homes, and cemeteries, and any other ministries that the Church may be led of God to establish.

(B) The Church shall also ordain and license men of the Gospel ministry; evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scriptures, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; maintain missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country; and engage in any other ministry that the Church may decide, from time to time, to pursue in obedience to the will of God.

## ARTICLE II

### STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

#### SECTION 1 - STATEMENT OF FAITH:

##### (A) The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are

the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official and only translation used by the Church (**2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 12:6,7; Prov. 30:5,6**).

### **(B) Dispensationalism**

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations--the age of law, the age of the Church, and the age of the kingdom--are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture (**Gen. 1:28; I Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25,27; Rev. 20:2-6**).

### **(C) The Godhead**

We believe there is one and only living and true God, an infinite Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love.

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (**Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:10,26; Exodus 20:2,3; I Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11; I John 5:7**).

### **(D) The Person and Work of Christ**

(1) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (**Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2,14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8**).

(2) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (**Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; I Peter 2:24; Eph. 1:7; I Peter 1:3-5**).

(3) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (**Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34, I John 2:1-2**).

### **(E) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit**

(1) We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person Who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (**John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14**).

(2) We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all saved to be filled with the Spirit (**Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; I John 2:20,27**).

(3) We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly

in order that they can do the work of the ministry (**Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:4-11,28; Eph. 4:7-12**).

(4) We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing (**I Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22**).

#### **(F) The Total Depravity of Man**

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (**Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19**).

#### **(G) Salvation**

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (**John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; I Peter 1:18-19**).

#### **Justification**

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; (a) that Justification includes the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life, on principles of righteousness (b) that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed to us (**Acts 13:39; Isaiah 53:11; Zech. 13:1; Rom. 8:1; 5:8; 5:1**).

#### **(H) The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers**

(1) We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (**John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; I Cor. 1:4-8; I Peter 1:4-5**).

(2) We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh (**Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15**).

#### **(I) The Church**

(1) We believe that the invisible church, which is the "body of Christ" and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again persons (**I Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27**).

(2) We believe that a local church is a congregation of immersed believers; associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are pastors and deacons with qualifications, whose claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures; we believe the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that is

scriptural for true churches to cooperate for the furtherance of the Gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final. (**Acts 2:41,42; I Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22,23; Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:17-28; I Tim. 3:17; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23,24; Acts 15:13-18**).

(3) We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (**Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11**).

(4) We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control (**Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1,4; I Cor. 3:9,16; 5:4-7,13; I Peter 5:1-4**).

(5) We recognize water baptism and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the Church in this age (**Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; I Cor. 11:23-26**).

#### **(J) Separation**

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God (**Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11**).

#### **(K) The Second Advent of Christ**

We believe in that "blessed hope", the personal, imminent return of Christ Who will rapture His Church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation Christ will **personally** and visibly return, with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the Nation of Israel (**Psalms 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; I Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6**).

#### **(L) The Eternal State**

(1) We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (**Matt. 25:46; John 5:28,29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13**).

(2) We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (**Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; I Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6**).

(3) We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment (**Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15**).

#### **(M) The Personality of Satan**

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (**Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10**).

## **(N) Creation and Fall of Man**

(1) We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24 hour periods. We reject evolution, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin (**Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11; Col. 1:16,17; John 1:1-3**).

(2) We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but by choice, and, therefore, under just condemnation without defense or excuse (**Gen. 3:1-6, 24; Rom. 5:10-19; Rom. 1:18,32**).

## **(O) Civil Government**

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home; 2) the Church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the Church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God (**Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; I Peter 2:13-14; Acts 5:29**).

## **(P) Human Sexuality**

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (**Gen. 2:24; 19:5,13; 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; I Cor. 5:1; 6:9; I Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4**).

## **(Q) Divorce and Remarriage**

We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service (to be defined by the Pastor and Deacons) in the Church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon (**Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; I Tim. 3:2,12; Titus 1:6**).

## **(R) Abortion**

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother is acceptable (**Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1,5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44**).

## **(S) Missions**

We believe that God has given the Church a Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the lost at home and abroad and not wait for them to come to us (**Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20**).

## **(T) Lawsuits Between Believers**

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the Church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (**I Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32**).

## **(U) Giving**

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that **God** has established the tithe as a basis for giving but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the Church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once they have been made love gifts, however, may be designated (**Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:17-18; I John 3:17**).

## **SECTION 2 - AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH:**

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore, is binding upon all members.

## **SECTION 3 - COVENANT:**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the Name of our Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to 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.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from worldly amusements such as movie attendance, gambling, rock music, and dancing; to be free from all oath bound secret societies and partnerships with believers or unbelievers; to abstain from the sale or use of tobacco in any form, non-prescribed drugs, or intoxicating drink as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy of speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to secure reconciliation without delay.

We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible, unite with some other Church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **SECTION 1 - QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:**

Upon a majority vote of the members present at any Church service or meeting, membership shall be extended to all who have had and whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; who renounce sin; who endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord; who fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith contained herein; and who enter into the Church covenant contained herein; and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:

- (A) By baptism (immersion) as a true believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
- (B) By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith;
- (C) By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion; or
- (D) By restoration, if having been removed from membership, upon majority vote of the congregation after confession is made publicly before the Church membership of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the Pastor (or the Deacons if the office of Pastor is vacant).

#### **SECTION 2 - DUTIES OF A MEMBER:**

On becoming a member of this Church, in addition to the covenant contained in Article II, Section 3, each one further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the Pastor; to pray for him; and to recognize his authority in spiritual affairs of the Church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the Church; to support the Church in prayer, tithes, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands to support through a lifestyle, walk and affirmation of the beliefs and practices of the Church.

#### **SECTION 3 - PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP:**

This congregation functions, not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the Pastor as the undershepherd with the counsel of the Deacons. Membership in this Church does not afford those individuals with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Determination of the internal affairs of this Church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the Church's own rules and procedures. The Pastor shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this Church. The Deacons shall give counsel and assistance to the Pastor as requested by him. The membership of the Church has certain limited areas of exercising a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any Church action, but rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the Church as determined by the Pastor.

**BUSINESS (ELIGIBLE VOTERS):** Only members in good standing, eighteen (18) and above years of age, shall be entitled to the right to speak or vote at any of the church's business meetings.

#### **SECTION 4 - DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER:**

(A) There shall be a Discipline Committee consisting of the Pastor and the Deacons. These men shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith and violations of the Church Covenant. If the Pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the Discipline Committee. He shall be entitled to the same steps as other Church members and be subject to the same discipline.

(B) Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration (**Matt. 18:16-18; Gal. 6:1-4**).

(C) If reconciliation is not reached, a second member, either a deacon or the Pastor is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination, and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.

(D) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, the Discipline Committee, as the Church representatives biblically responsible for putting down murmuring, may hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing or if no hearing has taken place, the Committee shall recommend to the members of the Church that they, after self-examination, vote the offending member out of the membership.

(E) No matter may be heard by the Discipline Committee or the Church unless the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, except in the case of a public offense.

(F) If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the Church membership, all contact with him from that point forward must be for the sake of restoration (except family members). (**Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:14,15; I Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:6-11**)

#### **SECTION 5 - MEMBERSHIP DISPUTES:**

In accord with the principles of I Cor. 6 disputes between brethren which directly pertain to local church matters shall be mediated within the church, by the Pastor and Deacons. The parties involved shall submit to their decision.

#### **SECTION 6 - TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP:**

Members, not under the disciplining process of Section 4, may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church of like faith and practice.

#### **SECTION 7 - TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP:**

(A) The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the Church in

the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the Pastor, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the Pastor.

**(B)** No member of this Church may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person is automatically terminated without notice from membership in this Church.

**(C)** A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the Pastor.

## ARTICLE IV

### OFFICERS

#### SECTION 1 - CHURCH OFFICERS:

The spiritual offices are Pastor and Deacons. **(Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1-13)**

Other positions, such as church clerk, treasurer, ushers, etc. are for the order of good business and shall be filled as needed.

#### SECTION 2 - ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTINUANCE IN OFFICE:

**(A)** No person shall be elected to any office whatsoever, who is unwilling to subscribe wholeheartedly to the Articles of Faith and the Church Covenant. If any officer should, during his term of office refuse to do so, his tenure of office shall immediately and automatically cease, at the recommendation of the Deacons. No one shall serve as Sunday School Teacher, Sunday School Class Officer, or as an officer of any unit of this church, who is not a member in good and regular standing.

**(B)** Only Church members are eligible for election or appointment to any Church office or position.

**(C)** No officer of the church, Sunday School, Young People's or any subsidiary organization, Sunday School Teacher, song leader, pianist or organist, choir member, etc. shall be elected or employed who cannot sincerely testify to and unreservedly subscribe to the following:

- (1) Born again and faithfully witnessing to the lost.
- (2) Faithful to services and activities of the church.
- (3) Separation from the world, such as membership in secret and oath binding organizations and affiliation with modernistic activities (i.e. Mason's, K.K.K., etc.).
- (4) Abstinence from worldly indulgences, such as liquor, tobacco, narcotics, etc.
- (5) No participation in worldly amusements, such as movie theaters, pornography, gambling, dancing, public mixed swimming.
- (6) Modestly attired at all times. (i.e. Women no mini skirts, see through or low cut dresses or blouses, etc. **I Tim. 2: 9 –10**). Women to dress in feminine attire. Men in masculine attire. **(Dt. 22:5)**

### **SECTION 3 - TERMS OF OFFICE:**

The length of terms of office shall be as follows:

(A) The relationship between the Pastor and the Church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of 90 days notice (Church to Pastor or Pastor to Church), or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between the Pastor and the Church may be considered at any regular Church Business Meeting, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit to the Church one Sunday prior to said regular Church Business Meeting. A three-fourths majority of the members present and voting shall be required to decide the matter. Disciplinary removal of the Pastor from office automatically terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of Article II, Section 1 (D).

(B) The term of service for deacons will be 3 years. Other positions' term of service shall be determined by the Pastor and Deacons.

(C) A vacancy occurring in any office, except in the case of the Pastor, may be filled at any regular Church Business Meeting.

(D) All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed.

### **SECTION 4 - ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

(A) The annual election of officers by the Church membership shall occur during the month of December.

(B) The Nominating Committee (consisting of Pastor and Deacons) shall present a list of nominees submitted by the congregation, after having been reviewed by the Nominating Committee, for election. Additional nominations will not be considered.

### **SECTION 5 - PASTORAL OVERSIGHT OF OFFICERS AND STAFF:**

(A) Subject to approval of the Church membership and on the condition that they shall become a member of the Church upon assuming their duties, the Pastor may hire associates and assistants, to assist the Pastor in carrying out his God-given responsibilities.

(B) All Church staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the Pastor who has the authority to hire, appoint, or dismiss the same.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

#### **SECTION 1 - THE PASTOR:**

(A) The Pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He shall administer the ordinances of the Church, act as moderator at all Church meetings for the transaction of the Church matters, supervise the teaching ministries of the Church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership.

(B) The Pastor shall serve as the president of the corporation. He shall publicly inform all newly-elected officers of the particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the Church and perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position. The Pastor shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him.

## **SECTION 2 - THE DEACONS:**

(A) The deacons shall assist the Pastor, in such manner as he shall request, in promoting the spiritual welfare of the Church, in conducting the religious services, and in performing all other work of the Church. They shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the Church. They shall, if requested by the Pastor, consider applications for Church membership. They shall, in cooperation with the Pastor, disburse the benevolence fund. They shall assist the Pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the Church. They shall provide the pulpit supply and act as a Pulpit Committee and act as leaders for Church meetings if the office of Pastor is vacant. The deacons shall assist the Pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the Church's various ministries as requested by the Pastor.

(B) Immediately following the annual Church Business Meeting, the deacons shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chairman.

(C) The deacons shall constitute the trustees of the Church. The trustees shall exercise the following specific powers:

(1) to purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the Church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the Church;

(2) to sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the Church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the Church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the Church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges with the approval of the church.

(3) to exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the Church, if such action is mandated by a vote of the Church membership.

## **SECTION 3 - CHURCH CLERK:**

The church clerk shall keep a record of Church proceedings, of the membership roll, of all baptisms, of certificates of ordination, licenses and commissions as directed by the Church, and preserve all documents, papers, and letters coming into his hands during his term of office. All records are to be kept secure, and delivered to any successor upon leaving office. He shall keep an account of any special events in the life of the Church which are of historical interest and

shall give a report at the annual Church business meeting of the status of the Church membership roll in the past year.

#### **SECTION 4 - TREASURER:**

The treasurer shall account for all funds contributed to the Church and shall disburse the same as ordered by the Church. He shall present a written report of itemized disbursements each month and make a general report for the year at the annual Church business meeting. All expenditures of the Church except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements shall be paid by check. He shall work with the Pastor in preparing an annual budget for the Church.

#### **SECTION 5 - HEAD USHER:**

The head usher, in cooperation with the Pastor, shall appoint a sufficient number of assistants to care for the work of ushering and extending the official hospitality of the Church to its members and visitors.

#### **SECTION 6 - ASSISTANT PASTORS:**

Under the direction and guidance of the Pastor, the assistant pastors of the Church shall assist the Pastor in carrying out the ministries of the Church.

#### **SECTION 7 - DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS:**

(A) All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual Church business meeting and shall surrender any records in their possession to the chairman of deacons at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the Church. All records are the property of the Church and must be kept in the Church office.

(B) Any officer, other than deacon, who neglects his duties as outlined in the constitution for a period of three months may be removed from his office at the discretion of the Pastor and another may be appointed by the Pastor to serve the unexpired term.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **MEETINGS**

#### **SECTION 1 - MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP:**

Unless otherwise determined by the Pastor, the Church shall meet each Sunday for public worship both morning and evening and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer.

#### **SECTION 2 - MEETINGS FOR CHURCH BUSINESS:**

(A) The Pastor may call a business meeting anytime he deems it necessary and prudent for the effective and smooth operation of the Church.

**(B)** The annual budget shall be presented to the Church by the deacons and the Pastor, who should comprise the Budget Committee, for ratification. Changes in the proposed budget may be suggested by the congregation. However, certain areas, such as salaries and benefits of church employees, are not subject to change from the floor of the meeting without first being referred back to the Budget Committee who will consider any proposed changes and return with a possible amendment.

### **SECTION 3 - SPECIAL MEETINGS:**

**(A)** The Pastor (or deacons if the office of Pastor is vacant or the Pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the Church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the call of a Pastor may be called by the Pulpit Committee at any regular Church meeting of the Church at least one week in advance. The Pulpit Committee shall be the deacons.

**(B)** Bible conferences, missionary conferences, revivals, etc. may be held as the Pastor deems beneficial.

### **SECTION 4 - FISCAL YEAR:**

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

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

#### **SECTION 1 - PURPOSE:**

The Church believes that it is to provide the members' children with an education which is based upon and consistent with Biblical teachings. The Church believes that the home and Church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To this end, the Church shall engage in ministries of education in keeping with the following dictates:

#### **SECTION 2 - CHURCH PARTICIPATION:**

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the Church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the Church; however, the Pastor may permit non-Church members to participate in Church educational programs or courses of instruction if he deems it in the best interest of the Church.

#### **SECTION 3 - STAFF MEMBERSHIP:**

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members of this Church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers, engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or other special meetings on a temporary basis.

#### **SECTION 4 - STATEMENT OF FAITH ACCORD:**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Statement of Faith of the Church.

#### **SECTION 5 - UNITY:**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the Church.

#### **SECTION 6 - TEACHING:**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. ANY assertion or belief which conflicts with or questions a Bible truth is a pagan deception and distortion of the truth which will be disclaimed as false. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

#### **SECTION 7 - CHRISTIAN WALK:**

All administrators, instructors, and teachers shall continue or adopt a lifestyle consistent with the precepts which they teach, whether in or out of the classroom.

### **ARTICLE VIII**

#### **UNAUTHORIZED EXPENDITURES**

Any expenditure in excess of \$200 and not authorized in the regular annual budget must be authorized by the Pastor (or the Deacons if the office of Pastor is vacant [in cooperation with the Treasurer]).

### **ARTICLE IX**

#### **ORDINATION**

#### **SECTION 1 - ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS:**

Any male member of this Church or its mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in I **Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:6-9**, may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

#### **SECTION 2 - ORDINATION PROCEDURE:**

(A) Upon a conference with the Pastor and after the Pastor has approved the candidate for ordination, the Pastor shall call a council to examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate. The ordination council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.

(B) If the candidate is found worthy of the ordination by the council, the Church may proceed with the ordination of the candidate.

(C) The Pastor and the chairman of the deacons shall arrange for the ordination service.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS**

#### **SECTION 1 - PRIVATE INUREMENT:**

No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article 1, Section 2 hereof.

#### **SECTION 2 - POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT:**

No substantial part of the activities of the Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The Church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office (Political Separation).

#### **SECTION 3 - DISSOLUTION:**

Upon the dissolution of the Church, the Trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the Church, dispose of all of the assets of the Church to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Trustees shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the Church's Statement of Faith.

#### **SECTION 4 - RACIAL NONDISCRIMINATION:**

The Church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS**

#### **SECTION 1:**

From time to time the Church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Pastor and the Deacons. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the Church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article 1, Section 2. (Biblically the tithe should not be designated.)

## **SECTION 2:**

It is understood that all gifts and donations become the permanent property of First Baptist Church of Easton.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **CALLING OF A PASTOR**

#### **SECTION 1 - PULPIT COMMITTEE:**

- (1) The deacons holding office at the time of the previous Pastor's departure shall constitute the pulpit committee. Note: No new deacons shall be elected while the Pastor's position is empty.
- (2) The pulpit committee shall interview all possible candidates for the office of Pastor and shall recommend acceptable candidates to the church.
- (3) All candidates must have a unanimous recommendation of the pulpit committee.

#### **SECTION 2 - CANDIDATES:**

- (1) Each candidate shall preach a minimum of two Sundays, both morning and evening services.
- (2) Each candidate must be voted upon before another candidate may be considered.
- (3) In the event a candidate is voted on and fails to receive a sufficient majority of votes, he may not be considered or voted on again for a minimum of ninety days.
- (4) No candidate, having been turned down twice by the vote of the church shall be considered again for a minimum of one year.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting, at any regular Church business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has

been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken and is in harmony with Biblical principles and the letter and spirit of this Constitution.

## ADOPTION

This Constitution was adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly-called meeting of the Church in which a quorum of no less than 20 was present.

This Constitution and By-Laws supersedes any other constitution and/or by-laws of the First Baptist Church of Easton.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Clerk

## CHURCH BY-LAWS

### NUMBER 1:

All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof including time and place and the use of the property belonging to the Church for purposes other than the stated appointments shall be under the control of the Pastor.

### NUMBER 2:

All literature used in the Church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith. The Authorized Version - King James Bible shall be the only Bible used in any and all ministries of First Baptist Church of Easton.