

FLORIDA BAPTIST CHURCH  
Constitution & By-Laws  
proposed to the membership on September 15, 2024

PREAMBLE

Since it pleased Almighty God to call certain of His servants to unite as a local church in this place in the year 1989 for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, the members of Florida Baptist Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and having recognized the need to update our Constitution & Bylaws to closely conform to His will for the Church amidst the changing culture of this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Now therefore we, the members of Florida Baptist Church, do hereby adopt this Constitution and its subsequent By-Laws as our articles of governance, to be always interpreted to reflect the unchanging character of God and bring glory to Jesus Christ.

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## CONSTITUTION

### **Article 1: Name and Address**

The name of this church shall be Florida Baptist Church located at 30296 Hwy 160 Durango, Colorado 81303.

FBC is affiliated with the Colorado Baptist General Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention and is credentialled by both and entitled to send messengers and vote in annual meetings. The church is autonomous in its operations and governance in accordance with this Constitution and By-Laws.

### **Article 2: Purpose**

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

Worshiping Him as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Equipping the saints through Bible instruction, study and prayer

Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Scripture

Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work in a local, domestic, and international context

Administering the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper

Encouraging biblical fellowship among believers

Mercifully serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for spiritual, physical, and emotional needs in the name of Jesus Christ

### **Article 3: Church Membership Covenant**

Because we trust that we have been brought by Divine Grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ and, by the influence of His Spirit to give ourselves to Him, we do most solemnly covenant with each other that, with God's enabling us, we will walk together with brotherly love.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (John 17:20-21, Philippians 2:1-5).

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others (Hebrews 10:24-25).

That we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully warn, rebuke, and admonish one another as the case may require; and in all things we will seek and guard the honor and the true function of the church.

That we will share in each other's joys and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows (Romans 12:15).

That we will endeavor by example and effort to win souls for Christ and seek to live to the glory of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

We will seek, by divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, remembering that we have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in the newness of life (Romans 13:14, Galatians 3:27).

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church. We 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 to all nations (1 Corinthians 12:26, Hebrews 13:3).

We will, when we move from this place, 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 (Hebrews 10:24-25).

We will be bound by this church's constitution, bylaws, and statement of faith in all matters pertaining to church membership and church discipline.

#### **Article 4: Statement of Faith**

This church stands upon the following doctrinal statements as substantiated in Scripture. These statements of faith are wholly in harmony with the Baptist Faith & Message 2000.

The Scriptures – We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by the inspiration of God. Therefore, all Scripture is authoritative, infallible and inerrant. The Scriptures are the only sufficient rule for faith and practice (Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21).

God – We believe that there is but one God, the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of all things, infinitely perfect in every way. He is without beginning and without end. In His sovereignty, He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. To Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence and obedience (Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 139:7-10; Psalm 145:3; Jeremiah 23:23-24; John 1:3; I Corinthians 8:4-6; I Timothy 1:17).

The Trinity – We believe that the Scriptures reveal that the one true God eternally exists and reveals himself in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each person has distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being (Genesis 1:1-2, 26; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3, 18; II Corinthians 13:14).

God the Father – We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly ordains and foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through His one and only Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16-18; Matt. 5:48; I Timothy 1:1-2, 1 Peter 1:3).

God the Son – We believe in Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. We believe in his sinless life, miracles, and

teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atonement for sins on the cross, His literal death, His bodily resurrection on the third day, His ascension into heaven to the right hand of God the Father, His perpetual intercession for His people, and His pending and certain personal return to earth on a promised Day in the future (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1-3; Romans 1:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-24; John 20:30-31; Matthew 20:28; Romans 5:6-8; Hebrews 9:28).

God the Holy Spirit – We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to save, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide who produces evidence of salvation and the fruits of the spirit. (John 14:16-17, 26; John 15:26-27; John 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-25).

Divine Sovereignty – We believe that God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet He is not in any way the author of or approver of sin, nor does He negate the responsibility of mankind (Job 1-2; Psalm 103:19; Isaiah 46:9-11; Proverbs 16:33; Acts 2:22-24; Hebrews 1:3; James 1:13-15).

Creation of Man – We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that man was created male and female, having a living soul or being, being innocent and blameless before God, and accountable to God. God instructed man that he was not to partake of the knowledge of good and evil, and that if he did, he would suffer death. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7-9,16-17)

The Fall and Curse of Sin - We believe that sin came into the world through mankind's rebellion and disobedience. Contrary to God's command, when tempted by Satan, the man and woman disobeyed God, sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and as soon as they are capable of moral action become actual transgressors and fall under condemnation. (Gen. 2:17; Gen. 3, 6:5; Romans 1:18-32; Romans 5:12, 3:23, 6:23, 8:7-8; Ephesians 2:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9)

Salvation / Redemption - We believe that even as the curse of sin was decreed, God gave the promise of His redemption of sinners. That redemption came through God's only begotten and incarnate Son, Jesus Christ. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are saved from their sins, are delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life (Genesis 3:14-15; John 1:11-14, 3:1-7, 16-18, 36, 5:24, 6:37-40, 8:12, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 1:1-4, 3:19-25, 5:8-9,18-19, 8:1; Ephesians 2:8-10; II Corinthians 5:17, 21).

Regeneration – We believe regeneration is a work of God's free grace alone in which he gives spiritual life to those formerly dead in trespasses and sin. This new spiritual life gives a person a new disposition toward the things of God. The Holy Spirit enlightens their minds to understand the Word of God and renews their whole nature, so they love, desire and practice holiness. (John 1:12-13, 3:1-7, Matthew 3:11, Ephesians. 2:1-6, Titus 3:4-5, 1 John 5:1).

Repentance – We believe that repentance is granted by God to a person who is convicted by the Holy Spirit and made aware of the evil of his sin. This awareness brings about humility with godly sorrow and detestation of sin. A truly repentant person will change his/her ways with the aid of the Holy Spirit and walk before God so as to please Him in all things. Repentance is the result of and evidence of Regeneration (Psalm 32:5, 51:3-4; Acts 2:37-38; 11:18; Philippians 2:12-13; II Corinthians 7:10).

Faith – We believe that saving faith is believing, on God's authority, all that is revealed in His Word concerning Christ, accepting and resting upon Jesus alone for justification and eternal life. It is brought about in the heart by the Holy Spirit and leads to a life marked with the pursuit of holiness (Genesis 15:6; Romans 3:21-28; 4:1-5; 4:13-25; 10:8-10, 13-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:14-26).

Justification – Justification includes the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life on the principle of righteousness in Christ. It is not bestowed because of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer. His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us by God; and it brings us into a state of peace and favor with God. (Romans 4:5, 25, 5:1-2, 9,18, 8:30; Titus 3:5-7)

Sanctification – We believe that God’s purpose upon restoring sinners to Himself is an ongoing process of renewal and transformation of a person’s very nature by the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit and the knowledge and application of His Word. (Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-25; 2 Peter 1:3-4; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)

Security of the Believer – We believe that all those whom God has saved from their sins will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall through neglect and temptation into sin, grieve the Spirit, and impair their graces and comforts, yet they shall be renewed again through repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (John 6:37-40; 10:28-29; Romans 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 1:8-9; Philippians 1:6).

The Church – We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all followers of Jesus Christ are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. The regular officers of a church are Elders (overseers, pastors) and Deacons (John 10:16; Acts 1:8; 20:17, 28; Ephesians 1:22; 2:19-22; 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-18; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 10:25).

Baptism – We believe that baptism is an ordinance given by the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of remission of sins, and of giving himself up to God, to live and walk in newness of life. It is prerequisite to church membership. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13)

The Lord’s Supper – We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, and to be observed by His church until the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with Him.

We offer participation to all believers governed by their own conscience, and parental guidance for their children. (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-34).

Missions and Evangelism – We believe that the church and those who are in Christ are called by Him to go forth and make disciples of all nations. To accomplish Christ’s mission for us, we are to faithfully go across the street and around the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are to financially support Christian missionaries who have been called by God to live amongst the unreached, and we are to pray to God asking Him to build His kingdom through our faithful going and giving (Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-47; Acts 1:7-8; 13:47-48; Romans 10:11-15).

The End Times – We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal suffering of the wicked (Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15-17; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6,11-15).

Sanctity of Human Life – We believe all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions including unborn babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception to natural death. (Psalms 139:13-16)

### **Article 5: Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person (Genesis 1:26-27).

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25).



We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between one man and one woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5).

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman (Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, pre-marital sex, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, transgenderism, incest, pedophilia, and the creation, viewing, and/or distribution of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Florida Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Florida Baptist Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Florida Baptist Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers in any capacity, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Florida Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Florida Baptist Church members and the community, it is imperative that all events held at Florida Baptist Church, whether by members or non-members, be in conformity to this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

## **BY-LAWS**

### **Article 1 – Purpose of the By-Laws**

The purpose of these By-Laws is to guide the church in submitting to the governance of Jesus under the direction of the Holy Scriptures. These By-Laws are intended to liberate the church to move swiftly and safely in fulfilling her purpose in the world; and they are also intended to protect her from unbiblical and destructive abuses of power. Each individual article must be read considering the whole set of By-Laws and in light of the Constitution.

### **Article 2: Membership**

A. Qualification of Membership – To qualify for membership, a person must confess faith in Jesus Christ, give evidence of regeneration, have been baptized as a believer in obedience to Christ following his or her regeneration, and wholeheartedly believe in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. A member must not hold settled convictions that are contrary to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Constitution and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Membership Covenant. The candidate for membership must attend a Membership Class provided by the church. Children of new member candidates who have been saved and received a believer's baptism may come as non-voting member candidates if under the age of 18 years old. Prior to becoming a voting member, these children will meet the requirements of interview and new membership class completion.

B. Two or more elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership by personal interview. In making that determination, they will rely on the person's confession of faith and repentance, evidence of regeneration in his/her life, and, when possible, a letter from the person's previous church.

C. Admission To Membership – To be admitted into church membership, applicants must:

Attend a Florida Baptist Church Membership Class

Be baptized as a believer by immersion

Embrace the Florida Baptist Church Statement of Faith  
Commit to the Florida Baptist Church Membership Covenant  
Commit to abide by the Florida Baptist Church Constitution and Bylaws  
Provide a written Christian testimony to the Florida Baptist Church Elders. A credible Christian testimony would consist of a conversion experience of repentance, professing faith in Christ as Savior, and Christian baptism.

The written testimony of the potential member will be sent out to the membership, and comments will be accepted by the Elders for two (2) weeks. In the absence of substantive negative comments, the Elders will present the person at the next available meeting for welcome into the fellowship as a member. The new member will at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Baptism is a sacrament and will be administered to a candidate for membership who is recommended by the Elders and who meets the above qualifications for membership (excluding baptism). Each candidate will meet with an Elder (or Elders) to confirm their understanding of the Scriptural foundation of baptism prior to being baptized.

#### A. Duties and Privileges of Membership

The church has the central purpose of proclaiming, defending, and upholding the gospel truth of Jesus Christ for the glory of God. When someone joins a church, they become a part of something more significant than a collection of people. They become part of the “household of God...the church of the living God...” (1 Timothy 3:14-15) As such, membership has its requirements, privileges, and responsibilities.

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Membership Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God’s leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.

Only members of this congregation will be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration, professional consultation, maintenance and repair, and construction with approval of the Elders.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members meetings and affirm the election of officers, decisions regarding membership status, and such other matters as may be submitted for congregational approval. Members who are a minimum of 18 years old will have the right to vote.

Members sent out from the Church to serve the Lord in another mission field will maintain their membership and its privileges in full blessing and communication with the Elders.

## B. Discipline of Membership

Formative Discipline is inherent in the preaching, teaching, and exercising of other ministries of the church through which the people are conformed to the image of Christ.

Corrective Discipline occurs when a member is found in sin, by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and the church seeks his/her repentance and restoration to obedience to Christ. Any member guilty of such conduct and so opposing the gospel message of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord:

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:15-17)

According to this text, church discipline, should ordinarily follow three attempts at reconciliation. Should these three attempts not result in repentance, church discipline is in order. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, removal from

office (elder, deacon), removal from other positions of service in the church, or excommunication.

All attempts at reconciliation (one-on-one or small group) must be done from a heart of humility and self-introspection. Should the situation merit church discipline, the elders and the congregation must maintain a spirit of love and humility (Galatians 6:1-5).

Purposes for church discipline:

1. The ultimate objective of church discipline is repentance, reconciliation and restoration. Should the church be required to discipline a member, the discipline should be delivered and communicated with an eye and heart toward reconciliation (Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 17:3-4, James 5:19-20)
  2. For the instruction in righteousness and to provide a good example for other Christians (1 Thessalonians 5:14, 1 Timothy 5:20-22)
  3. For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matthew 5:13-16)
  4. For the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (John 15:8, 1 Peter 2:12, 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)
- A. Termination of Membership – The church shall recognize the termination of a person’s membership under the following circumstances:
1. His or her death.
  2. After he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined another church.
  5. As an act of church discipline in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.

The church shall have authority to refuse a member’s voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

### **Article 3 - Meetings**

Faithful membership includes faithful attendance and participation in the life of worship and service of Florida Baptist Church. The regular meetings of the church include:

#### Section 1 - Worship Meetings

Worship services will be held each Lord's Day (Sunday) and may be held during the week as the church determines. The Lord's Supper will be served during regular worship services at the elders' discretion and may be taken by any believer who professes Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The preaching elder may cancel a worship service on a specific occasion such as inclement weather or another like occurrence, if he sees fit.

Missional / Discipleship House Groups will be established and led as assigned by the Elders for the discipleship of the body.

## Section 2 – Member / Business Meetings

A minimum of two Member / Business meetings will be held during the calendar year, a Mid-year meeting and an Annual meeting. These meetings will be for the purpose of sharing information from the leadership to the body. The Mid-year meeting will include a review of the budget.

Members are expected to attend these meetings, and others who attend FBC as non-members are welcome to attend. On any decision requiring a vote, only members may vote. At the discretion of the elders, any regular or called meeting may be limited to Members only.

The chairman of the elders will moderate Member / Business Meetings. In his absence, the elders will appoint an alternate moderator. The time, date, and purpose of Members Meetings will be communicated two weeks in advance. Meetings will be managed by Christian Courtesy, loosely following Roberts Rules of Order. On any matter brought to a vote, a vote of 75% is needed for it to pass (unless these By-Laws state otherwise). Abstentions will not be counted as votes cast.

The Clerk will keep minutes of all Member Meetings. Minutes will be reviewed by the Elders and approved at the next Members meeting.

An Annual Members Meeting will be held near the end of the calendar year (late Nov. – early Dec.). A primary purpose of this meeting will be to review the

current year budget and for the body to approve the next year's budget. Minutes will also confirm the election of any officers installed or removed during the year.

Additional Members Meetings may be called at the discretion of the elders.

#### **Article 4 - Church Government (Officers)**

##### Section 1 - General Statement

- A. The Biblical offices in the church are Elders and Deacons. In addition to these, the church will recognize the administrative offices of clerk and treasurer, whose responsibilities are outlined in these By-Laws. All officers must be members of this church prior to taking office or assuming their responsibilities. No one may hold more than one office at the same time with the exception that a deacon may hold the office of clerk or treasurer. For compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Colorado, an elder will serve as director of the corporation. The elders have the primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, evaluation, and termination of staff members, any of which they can delegate to others.
- B. Any officer of the church who is Correctively Disciplined will also be removed from the office that he/she holds at the discretion of the elders.
- C. Resignation of any church officer is immediately accepted and does not require approval of the church.
- D. As a matter of policy, a background check will be done for all officers being considered. The same will be done for anyone who is to work with youth or children, and these will always serve with another adult present.

##### Section 2 - Elders

- A. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-7 (the role of the twelve), 20:28-31, 1 Timothy. 3:1-7, 5:17, Titus 1:5-9, Hebrews 13:17, James 5:14, and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the ordained elders will provide leadership, overseeing the ministry and resources of the church. They will seek the mind of Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as they shepherd the flock

of God. They will be given to prayer, study, and teaching of the Word. They will gladly and honorably shepherd the flock, teach and exhort, rebuke those who contradict the truth, pray for the sick, and care for the souls of the church members. Elders will also be responsible for:

- interviewing candidates for membership,
- examining and recommending all prospective candidates for offices of elder, deacon, leadership of Missional / Discipleship House groups and other discipleship and teaching ministries,
- overseeing the work of the deacons and team or committee leaders,
- conducting worship services, administering baptism and the Lord's Supper, equipping the members for the work of ministry, encouraging sound doctrine, overseeing church discipline, and mobilizing the church for world missions.

Elders shall seek to serve in their areas of giftedness.

- B. It is preferable that there be no fewer than three men who serve as elders. They must meet the qualifications of the office as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:5-9. Only men can serve as elders in accord with 1 Timothy 2:12, 3:2-7 and following the examples set forth elsewhere in scripture. All elders must be wholeheartedly in agreement with the Constitution and Membership Covenant. Elders may or may not be in the regular pay of the church. These men will be recognized by the church as gifted and willing to serve in the calling, and they will be received as gifts of God to the church and set apart as Elders. If an insufficient number of qualified men are available, then the church is not required to have three elders.
- C. Contact with the elder body can be made through any of the several elders. Issues brought to one elder will be brought to the full group for review and action as necessary.
- D. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation, dismissal, or death. Any member with reason to believe an elder ought to be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, the issue should be brought before the congregation by the other Elders. Any such action ought to be conducted in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17



and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any elder will be dismissed by a vote of 75% of the members at any Members Meeting of the church.

- E. We as a body recognize existing teams and realize that the body's needs will be dynamic, including both the addition and deletion of teams with the approval of the elders.
- F. The elders will elect a chairman who will chair all elders' meetings and act as moderator in Members Meetings. In his absence, the elders will appoint another to fill his place. The preaching pastor, if he is made an elder, shall not be eligible to serve as chairman or moderator. For compliance with the non-profit corporation laws of the State of Colorado, the chairman of the elders will serve as President of the corporation.
- G. From time to time, the elders may grant to an individual elder, an appropriate sabbatical.

### Section 3 - The Preaching Pastor

A preaching pastor will fulfill all the above criteria but be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called for full time ministry of preaching and teaching the Word of God. In his absence, the elders will assume responsibility of his duties, any of which can be delegated.

Others in the congregation may be given the privilege of preaching and teaching before the whole congregation upon approval of the elders.

### Section 4 - Deacons

- A. In keeping with the principles set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:7, deacons will be given to serving the temporal needs of the church (so that elders can be given to prayer and ministry of the Word) and guarding the unity of the body. Only men may serve as deacons in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. These men will be received as gifts of God to the church and set apart as deacons.

- B. Candidates for the office of deacon may be chosen by the elders or nominated by members.
- C. The deacons will care for the temporal needs of the church: mercy ministries, accommodations for public worship, and overseeing the financial activities and properties of the church. Under the oversight of the Elders, deacons holding the office may enlist and organize other church members, both men and women, to serve in other specific capacities as needs arise in the church.
- D. A deacon's term of office will be terminated by resignation, dismissal, death, or when the elders judge that a particular deacon's area of ministry is no longer needed. In the absence of a needed deacon, the elders may appoint an "acting deacon".

#### Section 5 - Clerk

The clerk will record the minutes of all regular and special meetings, keep an accurate membership roll, keep record of any significant events in the life of the church, and oversee keeping the Constitution and By-Laws available for members. In the absence of the clerk, the elders will appoint an "acting clerk" to fulfill those duties. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Colorado, the clerk will serve as secretary of the corporation.

#### Section 6 - Treasurer / Financial Administrator

See Article 8 Paragraph E on page 22.

For compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Colorado, the Treasurer will serve as the Treasurer of the corporation.

Whenever cash is handled while collecting or counting offerings, two (2) persons, the Treasurer and one other member, will work together. If the Treasurer delegates to another in his/her place, the delegee should preferably be an officer.

### **Article 5 - Election of Officers**

## Section 1 - Principles

The election of officers ought to be undertaken with substantial prayer, both individually and corporately; and the process should express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, unity, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Section 2 - Selection of Officers

The elders will determine the eligibility of candidates for the offices of Deacon and Elder through the scriptures as found in 1 Tim 3: 8-12 (for Deacons) and 1 Tim 3:2, 5:17, Titus 1:7-9 (for Elders). Each candidate will be interviewed, and their qualifications verified by the existing Elders.

The elders will present each candidate for office to the church. Any member with reason to believe a candidate nominated by the elders is unqualified for that office should express this concern to the elders as soon as possible within a three (3)-week window after their announcement.

If no substantial and verifiable reports of a negative nature are received, the elders will confirm the candidate or candidates to the church at a regular meeting of the church. This confirmation will be recorded and included in the minutes of the next Annual Member Meeting. The persons appointed will assume office upon their confirmation as described above.

## Section 3 - Calling of a Preaching Pastor

In calling a man to this position, the same basic process outlined for calling an elder must be followed. In addition, the church must give adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts and Biblical soundness of any candidate. Before voting, the church must receive assurance that the candidate is undoubtedly qualified and gifted for the position and is in wholehearted agreement with the Constitution and By-Laws. Only one man may be recommended at a time to the church for this position. Following a candidate's being nominated to serve as a preaching pastor (which will constitute his election to membership), notice of a pending church vote must be given at two Sunday morning services prior to the vote at a Special

Member Meeting. A written ballot will be used. To be elected, a preaching pastor must receive a 90% super-majority of the votes of those members present.

## **Article 6: Church Government (Congregation)**

Under the authority of the Chief Shepherd and Head of the Body, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Word of God, the final earthly authority within this local church is vested in the assembled membership of the church (Matthew 16:18–19; 18:17–20; 28:18–20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5; Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 5:4). This authority is normally exercised through the election of a plurality of elders to lead the church and to oversee and manage many of the day-to-day tasks of the church. However, some issues of responsibility, opportunity, and/or caution should be decided by the membership of this church at a properly called Members meeting. Such items include (but are not limited to): receiving/dismissing members (Matthew 18:17–20; Acts 2:41; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5), electing/ removing elders and deacons (Acts 6:3–6; 1 Timothy 5:19–20), missions partnerships (Acts 13:1–3), annual budget approval, large expenditures, and asset acquisition or liquidation (land, buildings, vehicles, equipment, etc.) (1 Corinthians 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8:1–15; 9:1–15; Philippians 4:14–20; 1 Timothy 5:17–18). The following details the way the congregation will be engaged in governing the church in conjunction with the Elders:

- A. Congregational Affirmation. Decisions requiring congregational affirmation by vote will be presented to the membership for consideration and clarification at a meeting initiated by the Elders. (See Art. 3, Sec. 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> para. & Art. 5, Sec 3)
- B. Committees and Appointees. The Elders have the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Elders have the authority to dissolve any committee or position that it created. The Elders also have the authority to appoint elders, deacons or other members of the church to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. Every committee shall have a chairperson, responsible for the overall operation of the committee, whom the Elders shall appoint. These committees shall exist for the specific time so directed by the Elders. These committees shall perform tasks solely in

accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the Elders. The general functions of the committees will be to:

1. Research and propose recommendations to the Elders
2. Provide a wider base of counsel to the elders in their general oversight of the church

Examples of situations in which the Elders might call for a committee include (but are not limited to): budget and finance, missions, building and grounds, safety and security, staff search, staff compensation and benefits, etc.

## **Article 7: Church Employees**

In addition to vocational pastors, the church may employ additional personnel. Non-pastoral staff will serve under the supervision of the Elders. This supervision may be carried out by a designee, such as the Lead Pastor. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called members' meeting. The Elders will be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel. All staff members shall affirm and support the Statement of Faith and this Constitution and Bylaws and shall exemplify godly character. Non-pastoral staff may be terminated by the Elders.

## **Article 8: Church Finances**

All financial and physical assets that come into the possession of the church belong to the Lord God alone. They are His that He has entrusted to the congregation of FBC. As such, the Elders, Deacons, and congregation are stewards of God and will seek to faithfully receive, retain, distribute, and deploy God's funds and assets in ways that are biblically sound and justified.

- A. General Statement. No method of raising funds shall be entertained which conflicts with the scriptural ideals of the church. All funds donated shall pass through the financial administrator of the church in order that due record may be made. The deacons may aid with the Treasurer in accounting for funds donated.
- B. Contributions. It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in scriptural giving.

Special offerings may be sought by the church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

- C. Financial Planning. The financial planning of the church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its worship of God. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the church upon recommendation of the Elders, or, if authorized by the Elders, the Deacons or other committees. An annual budget shall be approved by the membership at an Annual Members' Meeting during the final quarter of the fiscal year, preferably the first half of December.
- D. Accounts. Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Treasurer according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The financial administrator shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the church as detailed in the budget or other authorized designations. All moneys for missions shall be remitted in accordance with the Mission Budget of the church each month.
- E. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for working with the elders to prepare regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at a members' meeting to be presented on a quarterly basis. Oversight of the Treasurer may be delegated to a deacon by the elders. The financial administrator shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The Treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions and of the financial condition of the church.
- F. Indebtedness. No note or contract of any amount whereby the credit of the church is pledged shall be made except by recommendation of the Elders and affirmation by the congregation.
- G. Authority to Bind the Church. The Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with the Church Constitution, these Bylaws, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to church real estate, church physical assets, and church finances.

- H. Reporting. The Elders must report to the congregation the financial position of the church at least twice annually, at mid-year and at the Annual Membership Meeting. Additional updates and presentations may be made as deemed necessary and appropriate.
- I. Fiscal Transparency. While some elements of the budget are sensitive (i.e. staff salaries), any member in good standing may inquire of and be informed of any and all line items within the FBC Annual Budget. Such inquiries should be sensitive to the appropriate level of confidentiality (within and outside of the church membership) and made to the Elders.

### **Article 9: Use of Church Property**

Florida Baptist Church, its facilities, and grounds are not public property. The use of said facilities are solely at the discretion of the elders of the church. Requests for use of facilities can be refused if the elders deem that it conflicts with the scriptures and/or convictions of the church as stated in the Constitution and By-Laws. Any use so granted must be attended by a church member, preferably a person associated with and representing the requesting party.

### **Article 10: Dispute Resolution**

Believing that Scripture commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18:15–20, 1 Corinthians 6:1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically-based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or non-Christian and whether individuals or corporate entities.

### **Article 11: Indemnification**

#### Section 1 - Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he/she was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide

indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care that an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner that the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church and that the person had no reasonable cause to believe his/her conduct was unlawful.

## Section 2 - Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his/her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

## Section 3 - Procedure

If a quorum (51%) of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

## **Article 12: Amendments**

- A. The Constitution may be amended by a vote of 75% of the members present and voting at the Annual Members Meeting (not a Special Members Meeting) provided that the amendment has been offered in writing for at least three weeks prior and that the vote had been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sunday mornings prior to such a vote.
- B. These By-Laws may be amended by a vote of 75% of the members present and voting at the Annual Members Meeting (not a Special Members Meeting) provided that the amendment has been offered in writing at least three weeks prior and that the vote had been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sunday mornings prior to such a vote.

## Conclusion



In conclusion, we pray as a congregation that we will be found in harmony and effectiveness in our service of Jesus Christ in His church in accord with Paul's exhortation to the congregation in Corinth:

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (2 Corinthians 13:14)