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PREAMBLE

We the members of First Baptist Church of Fremont, Michigan, set forth the following constitution and confession of faith by which we agree to be governed.

ARTICLE I. Name

This church will be known as the First Baptist Church of Fremont, Michigan.
This Church is in fellowship with both the Grand Rapids and General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.

ARTICLE II. Articles of Incorporation

The purpose of this corporation will be: the maintaining of public Christian worship, the study and teaching of the Bible, the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, the administration of the New Testament ordinances, the spiritual improvement of its members, the winning of the lost to Christ and to exercise, as far as possible, a Christian and moral influence in the community and a missionary spirit in the world at large.

These Articles of Incorporation may be changed by proceeding according to the provisions of Act No. 327, Public Acts of the State of Michigan, for the year 1931.

ARTICLE III. Dissolution of Corporation

If this organization should bring its work to a conclusion and dissolve its corporation, none of its assets remaining after meeting all responsibilities and payment of all just obligations, will inure to the benefit of any individual member of the corporation, board member, employee, or any other private individual. All such assets, if any, will, in the event of its dissolution, be turned over by the decision of an annual meeting or a special meeting of the members of the corporation, to an organization, or organizations, which is or are in harmony with the objectives and doctrinal position as stated in the constitution of the corporation. Such an organization or organizations must also be recognized by the United States Treasury Department as entitled to income tax exemption.

ARTICLE IV. Our Church Covenant

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and, on the public confession of our faith, having been immersed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully enter into a covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

Galatians 3:26-29 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek,

there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

We purpose, 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 attend its services regularly; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to give faithfully of time and talent in its activities; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to abstain from any activity which dishonors our Lord Jesus Christ, such as: gossip, backbiting and unrighteous anger, the sale and use of intoxicating beverage which may cause stumbling to a fellow believer or hinder the winning of a soul to Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1 Cor. 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Thess. 5:22 Abstain from every form of evil.

We further purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return; 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 in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to seek it without delay.

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious

appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

We, moreover, purpose that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith and order where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. If there is no such church, we will seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one.

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

ARTICLE V. Articles of Faith

Section 1. Of the Scriptures

We believe in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written; that it was verbally and plenary inspired and is the product of Spirit-controlled men and, therefore, is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks.

Psalm 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven;

Psalm 119:160 The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed and opinions will be tried.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work;

2 Peter 1:19-21 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Section 2. God the Father

We believe there is one and only one 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; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Eph 2:8-10; Eph 4:30).

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Section 3. God the Son

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is both fully God and fully man, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: after His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit;

Matthew 1:23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, "God with us."

Matthew 1:25 And did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

He grew and developed as a man without sin.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.

He died by crucifixion to pay the penalty for mankind's sin. He was buried, rose bodily from the grave on the third day and ascended to Heaven where, at the Father's right hand, He prays for and defends His children.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures:

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

He will return and ultimately establish His kingdom on earth (Col 1:13-19; Heb 1:2,3).

Hebrews 1:8 But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom".

Section 4. God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the Agent in the new birth; that He seals, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. (Matt. 28: 19; Heb. 9: 14; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5; John 14:26; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Rom. 8: 14,16,26,27)

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Ephesians 1:13-14 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Section 5. The Devil or Satan

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; and that he was created by God as an angel; but, through pride and rebellion, became the enemy of his Creator; that he became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire (2 Cor. 4:4).

Isaiah 14:12-16 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation the farthest sides of the north; I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. "Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms.

Revelation 20:10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Section 6. Creation

We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and man; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are

descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race (Gen 1; Gen 2; John 1:3).

Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Section 7. The Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in innocence (in the image and likeness of God) under the law of his Maker, but, by voluntary transgression, Adam fell from his sinless and happy state and all men sinned in him, in consequence of which all men are totally depraved, are partakers of Adam's fallen nature, and are sinners by nature and by conduct, and therefore are under just condemnation, without defense or excuse (Rom. 1:18, 32).

Genesis 3:1-6 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate;

Romans 5: 12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned:

Rom 5: 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Section 8. The Virgin Birth

We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God the Son (*Gen 3:15; Mat 1:18-25; John 1:14*).

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

Section 9. Salvation

We believe that God the Son shed his blood to pay for man's sin and was raised from the dead to provide perfect righteousness for those who believe salvation is a free gift of God's love, mercy and grace which cannot be earned by any virtue or work of man, but may only be received by personal faith in Jesus Christ. All those who repent of their sin and believe in and receive Christ as Savior are completely forgiven, born into the family of God and receive eternal life. All those who are genuinely saved are kept eternally secure by God and should demonstrate their salvation by living in obedience to God (Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24,25; Phil. 2:7,8; Heb. 2:14-17; Is. 53:4-7; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24).

Jonah 2:9 But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD;

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yours elves: it is the gift of God;

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life

Section 10. Resurrection and Priesthood of Christ

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ and in His ascension into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest interceding for us (Matt. 28:6,7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-6,51; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 8:6; Heb. 12:2; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 5:9,10).

Acts 1:9-11 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

Section 11. Grace and the New Birth

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God)

We believe that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus and that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of

the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life (1 John 5:1; Acts 16:20-33; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Col. 2:13; John 3:8).

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

Section 12. Justification

We believe that justification is that judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous upon the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood (*Rom. 4:5; Rom. 5:1; Phil. 3:9*).

Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Section 13. Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting a part of the believer unto God accomplished in a threefold manner (Heb. 3:1; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 1:30): First, an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior;

Hebrews 10:10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Second, a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life;

1 Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth;

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is;

Section 14. The Security of the Saints

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:35-39; Jude 1).

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God;

John 10:28-29 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand;

Section 15. The Church

We believe that a local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by 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, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 11:2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you

1 Timothy 3:1-13 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife,

ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

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 it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; that on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline and of benevolence, the will of the local church is final (Acts 20:17-28).

Acts 2:41-42 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Matthew 16:17-18 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the church, which is the Body of Christ (Eph. 3:1-6; Eph. 4:11; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18; Acts 15:13-18).

1 Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

Ephesians 1:22-23 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Section 16. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our identification with the crucified, buried and risen Savior, through Whom we died to sin and rose to a new life; that baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church; and that it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership (John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:36,38-39).

Matthew 28: 18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Acts 2:41-42 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination.

1 Corinthian 11:23-28 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.)

Section 17. Separation

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy (1 Thes. 1:9,10; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11; John 17:14-16; 1 John 2:15-17).

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wrangling of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore, "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Section 18. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming King of Kings (2 Sam. 23:3; Exo. 18:21,22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29; Acts 4:19,20; Dan 3:17,18).

Romans 13:1-7 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor;

Section 19. Israel

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be re-gathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ (Gen. 13: 14-17; Ezek. 37).

Romans 11: 1-2 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel.

Romans 11 :25-26 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

Section 20. Rapture and Subsequent Events

We believe in the premillennial return of Christ, an event which can occur at any moment, and that, at that moment, the dead in Christ will be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ will be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 51-54; Phil. 3:20-21; Rev. 3:10).

1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the millennial kingdom on Earth (Dan. 9:25-27; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6,7; 11:1-9; Acts 2:29,30).

Matthew 24:29-31 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Revelation 20:1-4,6 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [...] Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years

Section 21. The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious

suffering of the lost in the lake of fire (Mal. 3:18; Gen 18:23; Rom. 6:17-18,23; 7:6; 1 John 5:19; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34-41; John 8:21).

Proverbs 14:32 The wicked is banished in his wickedness, But the righteous has a refuge in his death.

Revelation 20:14-15 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

ARTICLE VI. Church Government

Section 1. Authority

A. Under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ultimate human authority for the government of the church rests with the voting age members of the congregation. Under the authority of Christ and the church body, the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) are designated by God and called by the congregation as the shepherds and overseers of the church.

Acts 20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Acts 6:3-5 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

B. Repealing Clause: The church and it's ministries will be governed by this constitution and by-laws. All by-laws or part thereof passed, but not included in these by-laws, are hereby rescinded.

C. The congregation (voting age members present) will vote on calling of pastors, the officers, membership items, the approval of the annual church budgets and recommended adjustments to them, the incurring of indebtedness, the acquiring of assets and the spending outside of the budgets, the construction of new buildings, and on matters of business as required by the constitution and the bylaws or as requested by the pastors, officers, or the church body. All other matters of business will be carried out by the pastors, staff, officers, and committees of the church.

- D. The church and its ministries are under the authority of the congregation and the leadership of the Senior Pastor and must operate in accordance with the constitution and by-laws of the church, and within the budgets approved by the congregation (1 Thes. 5:12).

Hebrews 13:7-17 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

- E. The Properties Committee will be limited to a maximum monthly expenditure of \$1000 to any individual or organization. The Board of Deacons will be limited to a maximum monthly expenditure of \$5000 without prior approval of the membership at a duly called business meeting. Payments made to individuals or organizations that have prior approval of the Church are not subject to the limitations noted above.
- F. These by-laws may be changed at any quarterly business meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership present, previous notice of said change having been given and written copies made available at the two Sunday morning services prior to said business meeting.

Section 2. Meetings

- A. Meetings for worship, fellowship, instruction and evangelism will be held each Lord's day (Sunday morning and evening) and during the week (Wednesday prayer meeting) as needed to accomplish the purpose of the church and meet the needs of the church family.
- B. Church Business Meetings
- 1 – An annual business meeting will be held on the third Sunday of January to present reports to the congregation along with the annual budgets.
 - 2 – A business meeting for the election of deacons will be held after the close of the first Sunday evening service of December.

- 3 – The quarterly business meeting will be held after the close of the third Sunday evening service of the months of April, July, and October.
- 4 – Special business meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor, the deacons, or, upon written request to the church clerk, by fifteen unrelated members of the church. Prior notice of all business meetings must be announced at all regular Sunday services of the church on two consecutive Sundays.
- 5 – The Senior Pastor or deacon board may call an emergency meeting in cases of extreme importance.
- 6 – The sequence of presiding chair will be the Senior Pastor, and if he is unavailable, the chairman of the deacon board.
- 7 – Business will be conducted according to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order unless in conflict with the Church constitution.
- 8 – A quorum for all deacon board and committee meetings will be a simple majority of its members.
- 9 – All regular deacon board meetings will be held once a month at a time and date set by the deacon board.

Article VII. Membership

Section 1. Qualifications

Any person having accepted Christ as his personal Savior and giving evidence of the new birth, having been baptized by immersion and in agreement with the articles of faith, church covenant, and the by-laws, will be received as a member of this church.

Section 2. Procedure

- A. Each candidate will meet with the Senior Pastor and a deacon, Or, in the absence of the Senior Pastor, meet with two deacons, to review qualifications for membership, including a personal testimony of salvation. If the Senior Pastor and/or deacons are satisfied that the qualifications of membership have been met, they will recommend the candidate to the congregation for membership.
- B. A majority vote of the voting members present grants membership immediately if previously baptized.
- C. A voting member is defined as one who has attained the age of seventeen and is in good standing with the church.

- D. New members will be received and welcomed with the "right hand of fellowship" at a regular service of the church.
- E. Members joining with another church may be dropped from membership by recommendation of the deacon board, and majority vote of the congregation. A letter of transfer may be granted upon request from any member in good standing.

Section 3. Associate Membership

An associate member is one who is not able to be in regular attendance of the services and ministries of the church, but who desires to maintain his/her membership status. (Associate members might be students, missionaries, members having moved to a distant location, etc.) Associate members cannot vote or hold office.

Section 4. Member Not in Good Standing

A member will not be considered to be in good standing if they have absented themselves from the services for a period of three months without justifiable cause and in spite of all reasonable efforts to re-enlist them. They will be placed on an inactive membership list and will not be permitted voting privileges until they are restored to active membership status. Should the inactive membership status extend beyond one year, the Board of Deacons will recommend to the church for its vote that the inactive member be dropped from the membership rolls. Said actions will be final at the moment it is adopted by the church. If the whereabouts of the inactive member is known, the individual will be notified by whatever means is deemed appropriate by the Worship Committee of the Board of Deacons.

Section 5. Discipline

- A. Church discipline is appropriate for any member who is guilty and unrepentant of:
 - 1 – Promoting doctrinal error
 - 2 – Engaging in sinful conduct
 - 3 – Exhibiting divisive behavior
 - 4 – Neglecting consistent church attendance without just cause
- B. Efforts for restoration according to the procedure of Matthew 18: 15-17 and the spirit of Galatians 6: 1-2 should be lovingly pursued. Lack of appropriate response by the member will result in removal from church membership by recommendation of the deacon board and majority vote of the voting members present at a duly called business meeting.

Matthew 18:15-17 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector;

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

- C. Upon repentance, confession and correction of the sinful condition, the disciplined individual may request restoration to membership. By recommendation of the deacon board and majority vote of the voting members present at a duly called business meeting, membership may be restored.

Article VIII. Officers/Committees

Section 1. Senior Pastor

Qualifications

The Senior Pastor must meet the qualifications of: Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1 :6-9.

1 Timothy 3: 1-7 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil;

Titus 1:6-9 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

Calling a Senior Pastor

When it is necessary to call a Senior Pastor, the Pulpit Committee will investigate the merits of every candidate under consideration in regard to his personal character, his ministerial record, his preaching and pastoral ability, and his zeal for the Lord's work, in determining his fitness for the pastorate. He will subscribe completely to the doctrinal statement as set forth in the constitution of this church. When a suitable man is found, the committee will then recommend him to the deacon board. The candidate will have opportunity to preach/teach and meet with the congregation at the discretion of the deacon board. (See Deacon Responsibilities Section D.)

Election

Upon recommendation of the Pulpit Committee and deacon board, a call may be extended by seventy-five percent majority vote of the members present at a duly called business meeting for that purpose. The Senior Pastor and his wife's membership will be automatic upon acceptance of the call.

Responsibilities

The Senior Pastor's leadership will be that of exemplary servant hood setting forth an example of godliness before those with whom he serves, the congregation, and the community at large. At his discretion, he may have a training class for new deacons coming into office. He, or his designee, is an ex-officio member of all organized groups or committees and he is responsible for the oversight of the ministry of the officers, staff and committees of the church. He will be moderator of the church and deacon board. Those members of the pastoral staff and paid employees of the church will be accountable to the Senior Pastor and under his authority.

Termination

The Senior Pastor's indefinite term of office may be terminated by thirty days written notice, either by the Senior Pastor or by the church. Such period may be waived by mutual agreement. The Senior Pastor may be dismissed by a majority vote of membership present at a duly called business meeting called for that purpose. However, the congregation may, in cases of immorality or doctrinal heresy, dismiss the Senior Pastor immediately from all responsibility and salary. The Senior Pastor will be given thirty days to vacate the parsonage.

Section 2. Associate Pastor

Election

The Associate Pastor(s) must meet the same qualifications as the Senior Pastor. The Associate Pastor(s) will be recommended to the deacons following recommendations by the Senior Pastor and Pulpit Committee and called by seventy-five percent of the membership present and voting at a duly called business meeting for that purpose. The Associate Pastor(s) and his wife's membership will be automatic upon acceptance of the call.

Responsibilities

The Associate Pastor(s) will be under the supervision of the Senior Pastor in the ministry and oversight of the church.

Termination

An Associate Pastor's indefinite term of office may be terminated in the same manner as the Senior Pastor's. However, the Senior Pastor may temporarily suspend the duties of an Associate Pastor until congregational action is taken with regard to this recommendation. Salary and benefits will continue during this suspension.

Section 3. Deacons

Qualifications

Deacons must meet the qualifications of Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13. They must be a member in good standing for a minimum of one (1) year and at least 21 years of age.

Acts 6:3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

1 Timothy 3:8-13 Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus).

Election

Deacons will be elected for staggered three-year terms by the voting membership present. There will be one deacon for every thirty-five voting members with a minimum of seven deacons. A sabbatical of one year will be taken at the end of two consecutive terms. Any portion of a term served shall be considered a full term (see G.) Deacons will assume their office on January 1 of the new year.

Responsibilities

Deacons will serve under the leadership of the Senior Pastor to minister to the needs of the church in such a way that the Senior Pastor will be free to focus his attention on prayer and the ministry of the Word.

- A. They will elect a chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and clerk and make designated appointments as soon as possible after the annual election. Each term of office will be for one year. The officers will, under the guidance of the Senior Pastor or his designee, lead the deacons in carrying out their ministries. The chairman of the Board of Deacons will be the vice-moderator of the church.
- B. Included in their ministries will be the interviewing and recommending of new members, encouraging, initiating discipline, administering the benevolent fund, and ministering to widows and widowers, as well as those who are shut-ins, ill, or bereaved. They will assist with baptism and communion and perform other ministries as needed, such as financial affairs of the church.

- C. The Senior Pastor and any two deacons will comprise the Discipline Committee.
- D. For the calling of a Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor, the deacons will appoint a Pulpit Committee made up of two deacons and three members at large. Upon recommendation of the Pulpit Committee the deacons will prayerfully seek God's will in recommending a man to the membership of the church.
- E. The deacons will recommend to the congregation as to who will cover the Senior Pastor's responsibilities in the period between Senior Pastors (i.e. Associate Pastor, pastoral staff, interim senior pastor or other appointees).
- F. When a vacancy occurs in an elected office, the Board of Deacons will appoint a man to fill that office until the following December elections. The congregation will then elect a man to complete the vacated term.

Section 4. Other Officers

Clerk

The clerk will have charge of the statistical records and will keep an accurate record of the meetings of the Board of Deacons and the church business meetings. He will keep a record of the membership of the church and perform such duties as may be requested by the church.

Treasurer

The treasurer will serve as chairman of the Finance Committee. He will be responsible for the disbursement of all monies and make a report of the same at all board meetings and regular business meetings of the church.

Head Usher

The Worship Committee will recommend a head usher to the Board of Deacons for approval. He will be under the leadership of the Worship Committee.

Director of Music

The director of music will be recommended by the Worship Committee to the Board of Deacons for approval and will be responsible for the music ministry of the church, working closely with the Senior Pastor and the Board of Deacons. In the event the church retains an Associate Pastor whose job description includes any of these responsibilities, no further implementation of the particular responsibilities of this section will be needed.

Sunday School Superintendent

The Sunday School superintendent will be recommended to the Board of Deacons for approval by the Christian Education Committee for a two-year term. He will perform all duties associated with his office, appoint his assistants, and make an annual report of

the condition of the Sunday School. He will exercise care in seeing that the teachers subscribe to the doctrine of the church, and will consult with the Senior Pastor and Christian Education Committee on all changes made in the teaching staff. He will appoint all teachers and officers, subject to the approval of the Christian Education Committee.

Section 5. Standing Committees

Each standing committee will be chaired by a deacon and each deacon will serve on a committee.

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee will consist of two or more deacons, one of which will be the chairman of the Board of Deacons, the director of music and a member from the membership at large. They will take care of the observance of the ordinances as requested by the pastors. They will also supervise the Music Committee and Visitation Committee.

Music Committee

The Music Committee will consist of one or more deacons, the director of music, one organist, one pianist and two members from the membership at large.

Visitation Committee

The Visitation Committee will consist of one or more deacons, the visitation pastor and two or more members from the membership at large.

Properties Committee

The Properties Committee will consist of one or more deacons and three members from the membership at large. They will have the responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the properties of the church. They will make all emergency repairs as efficiently as possible and report cost to the Board of Deacons and the congregation as soon as possible. Other than emergencies, the Properties Committee must work within their budget unless prior approval is received from the congregation.

They will have the responsibility of retaining custodial care for the purpose of maintaining, cleaning and orderliness of the buildings and grounds. The chairman will be registered as the legal representative of the church and will have the authority to sign such legal documents as required by law and by order of the church.

Christian Education Committee

The Christian Education Committee will consist of one or more deacons, the Sunday School superintendent, the Associate Pastor and three members from the membership at large. They will have the responsibility for the church

nursery, Sunday school, children's church, youth training, AWANA, Vacation Bible School and Christian camping. They will assist in securing personnel for each of these ministries and will approve appointments. They will discuss and determine curriculum where necessary and perform such other duties as required. They will provide oversight of groups providing Biblical instruction as an extension of First Baptist Church.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will consist of one or more deacons and two members from the membership at large. They will have the responsibility of receiving, counting, and depositing the income of the church and will keep accurate records of same. They will approve the payment of all bills. They will prepare monthly and annual statements of receipts and disbursements. They will serve as the budget directors and will recommend to the Board of Deacons salary adjustments as well as other items of expenditures annually.

Missions Committee

The Missions Committee will consist of one or more deacons and four members from the membership at large. They will investigate and recommend to the Board of Deacons for approval all missionary enterprises assumed by any department of the church. They will recommend to the finance chairman missionaries and missionary projects to be included or altered in the church budget. They will report to the church bi-monthly the activities and needs of missionaries (if known). These reports will be intended to increase missionary interest within the church, as well as to assist the missionaries in their labors through intelligent praying and other ways. They will correspond with the missionaries to determine their needs and their activities.

They will assist the Senior Pastor in planning missionary conferences, providing hospitality and fellowship for visiting missionaries and generally promote missions within the church.

Section 6. Other Committees

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will consist of the senior pastor, two deacons who continue in office and two members from the membership at large. The Board of Deacons will select the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee's report must be submitted to the Board of Deacons for approval, and then to the church for prayerful consideration at least two weeks before the annual election of officers.

Pulpit Committee

The Pulpit Committee will consist of two deacons and three members from the membership at large.

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Adhoc Committee

Any adhoc committees will be appointed by the Board of Deacons as needed.

Discipline Committee

See Article VIII, Section 3, Responsibilities, C.