

# CHURCH BYLAWS

(October 29, 2023)

## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

### 815 DAVIE AVENUE

### STATESVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

## NATURE OF ORGANIZATION

### PREFACE

First Baptist Church establishes and adopts these *Church Bylaws* to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, to govern this body in an orderly manner, to protect the liberties of each church member, and to confirm the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches and religious bodies.

### I. NAME

This body shall be known as the *First Baptist Church, 815 Davie Avenue, Statesville, North Carolina.*

### II. PURPOSE

First Baptist Church is a covenant fellowship of Christian believers in Jesus Christ, called to serve God through worship, witness, spiritual nurture and growth, and committed to live the example of Jesus Christ through ministry to one another, our community and nation, and our world.

First Baptist Church endeavors:

1. To be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.
2. To engage in and promote the study of the Holy Scriptures.
3. To promote the spiritual welfare of all persons and to disseminate the Word of God to the people of all nations through evangelistic, educational and charitable missions.
4. To advance the gospel of Jesus Christ by preaching, evangelism, teaching, and the administration of the ordinances of the church.
5. To be Christ-like in our daily living by totally committing life, personality and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.
6. To promote the biblical principles of justice and righteousness in personal, social, community and national life.
7. To carry on the work of the church in all its spiritual, benevolent, educational, philanthropic, civil and social aspects and activities.
8. To help people experience a growing knowledge of, and relationship with God, His Word, and His will for our lives.

### III. STATEMENT OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE

First Baptist Church accepts the *Holy Bible* as the source of doctrine, and so Statements of Faith are not binding, and are not intended to be used to hamper freedom of thought, or the investigation of truth. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statements of *The Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963, with special attention to certain comments of the authors in the "Preface" emphasizing their non-creedal intent, and non-mandatory authority. First Baptist Church looks not to creeds but to the Bible for spiritual guidance. The following are some important convictions we hold:

1. Authority: The ultimate source of authority is Jesus Christ the Lord, and every aspect of life is to be subject to His lordship.
2. The Holy Bible: The Bible as the inspired revelation of God's will and way, made full and complete in the life and teaching of Christ, is our authoritative rule of faith and practice.
3. Salvation: Salvation from sin is the free gift of God's grace through Christ, conditioned only upon trust, faith, and commitment to Christ as Lord.
4. The Church: The church, in its inclusive sense, is the fellowship of persons redeemed by Christ and made one in the family of God. The church, in its local sense, is a fellowship of baptized believers, voluntarily banded together for worship, nurture, and service.
5. Autonomy: The church is an autonomous body, subject only to Christ, its head, with each member having equal rights and privileges.
6. Priesthood: Each Christian, having direct access to God through Christ, is His own priest and is also under obligation to become a priest for Christ on behalf of other persons.
7. The Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the two ordinances of the church, are symbolic of redemption, but their observance involves spiritual realities in personal Christian experience.

8. Church and State: Church and State are both ordained of God and answerable to Him. They should remain separate, but are under obligation of mutual recognition and reinforcement as each seeks to fulfill its divine function.
9. Missions: Missions seeks the extension of God's redemptive purpose in all the world through evangelism, education, and Christian service.
10. Christian Education: Christian education grows out of the relation of faith and reason and calls for academic excellence and freedom that are both real and responsible.

#### IV. GOVERNANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS

In conducting the affairs of this church, the church shall be governed by parliamentary procedure as set forth in *Roberts' Rules of Order*, but any action shall not be invalid because of a failure to follow *Roberts' Rules of Order*.

- A. The governance of this church shall be congregational in nature, and final authority for the operation and management of its affairs shall be vested in its membership. To facilitate its ministry the church authorizes a Deacon Ministry Team to which it delegates the responsibility and authority to oversee the affairs of the church. The Congregation and Deacon Ministry Team set policy, and the Senior Minister works in partnership with the Deacon Ministry Team to administer those policies and ministries. The interpretation and implementation of the Purposes listed in Section II. above, will come from the Lord through the Senior Minister, Deacon Ministry Team, Ministry Staff, and congregation. Procedure and Policy Manuals of First Baptist Church shall be approved by the Deacon Ministry Team.
- B. Congregational responsibilities specifically include the following:
  1. Vote to approve new members.
  2. Elect and dismiss church officers and professional ministry staff.
  3. Approve any changes to these Bylaws and its Articles of Incorporation.
  4. Approve the Budget and any changes to the Budget.
  5. Approve building acquisition or divestment and major building projects.
  6. Be consulted and possibly vote on issues with potential conflict.
- C. This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the practice of mutual counsel and cooperation common among churches of like faith and order. Insofar as feasible, this church will cooperate with and support entities such as
  1. South Yadkin Baptist Association
  2. Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
  3. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
  4. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, and
  5. Any other bodies which the church chooses, so long as those bodies promote and operate themselves by the time-honored doctrines of traditional Baptist polity as interpreted by this church in its "Statement of Faith and Doctrine".
- D. Incorporation
 

On June 16, 2005, First Baptist Church in session voted to dissolve the previous Church Association and to form a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of North Carolina. On July 20, 2005, *Articles of Incorporation* were received by the North Carolina Secretary of State, establishing the name, purposes, and activities of the Church as a non-profit corporation. Specifically, the *Articles* set forth that:

  1. All members on the active roll of the church shall be members of the corporation.
  2. The Directors of the Corporation are and shall be those persons who are elected, installed, and are serving as active Deacons of the Church (the Deacon Ministry Team).
  3. The period of duration of the Corporation shall be perpetual.
  4. The Corporation shall have all of the general powers of a non-profit corporation.
- E. Indemnification
 

To the extent permitted by law, the Corporation may indemnify or agree to indemnify any person who may be party to any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit or proceeding by reason of the fact that (s)he is or was a trustee, director, officer, employee, volunteer or agent of the Corporation against expense, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement incurred in connection with such action, suit or proceeding if (s)he acted in good faith and in a manner (s)he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Corporation, and had no reasonable cause to believe his/her conduct was unlawful.
- F. Conflicts of interest
  1. Members of the Ministerial Staff, members of the Deacon Ministry Team and Church Ministry Teams, and employees of the Church shall exercise the utmost good faith, strict honesty, and fair dealing between themselves and the Church. They shall not use their position, or knowledge gained there from, so that a conflict might arise between the Church's interest and their own.

2. Any member of the Staff, Deacon Ministry Team, or Church Ministry Team having a duality of interest on any matter shall not vote or use his/her personal influence directly or indirectly concerning actions related to the matter, although (s)he may be counted in determining the quorum for the meeting. Any member may raise an issue as to whether or not another member has a conflict of interest with respect to any matter, and the Deacon Ministry Team shall decide if such a conflict exists.

## V. CHURCH ORDINANCES

First Baptist Church members believe that Christ left two Ordinances for Christians to follow, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

- A. Baptism: This church will receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.
  1. The Senior Minister, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism.
  2. Baptism shall be by immersion.
- B. Lord's Supper: Participants in the Lord's Supper observance shall be persons having made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.
  1. The Lord's Supper shall be observed with such frequency as determined by the Senior Minister and Deacon Ministry Team.
  2. The Senior Minister, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall preside at the table, and shall be assisted by deacons of the church.

## VI. CHURCH COVENANT

Since we have committed ourselves to Jesus Christ and have experienced the acceptance, forgiveness, and redemption of God our Father, we covenant together as members of this church that with God's help through the guiding presence of his Spirit:

We will walk together in brotherly love.

We will show loving care for one another and encourage, counsel and admonish one another.

We will assemble faithfully for worship and fellowship, and pray earnestly for others as well as for ourselves.

We will endeavor to bring up those under our care "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

We will seek, by Christian example and personal effort, to win others to Christ and to encourage their growth toward Christian maturity.

We will share one another's joys and endeavor to bear one another's burdens and sorrows.

We will oppose all conduct which compromises our Christian faith and will uphold high standards of Christian morality.

We will prove the reality of our conversion by living Godly, fruitful lives.

We will maintain a faithful ministry of worship, witness, education, fellowship, and service.

We will be faithful stewards of our resources and abilities in sharing the gospel with people of all nations.

As a result of this covenant relationship, we will seek earnestly to live to the glory of God who brought us out of darkness into [H]is marvelous light.

(This covenant is based on a covenant adopted in 1846 by the Maine Baptist Convention. A revision of this covenant was developed in the late 1800's by the Immanuel Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. In 1967 that church published the covenant as it appears here, and is recorded in the *Broadman Church Manual* by Howard B. Foshee, Broadman Press, 1973. Used by permission.)

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### I. MEMBERSHIP

#### A. GENERAL

This is a sovereign and democratic traditional Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of the church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

#### B. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

Each person uniting with this congregation shall understand such action as involving commitment to the *Nature of Organization* stated above.

First Baptist Church accepts members as follows:

1. Persons usually present themselves for membership in services of public worship at First Baptist Church.
2. An individual may become part of the First Baptist Church in one of the following ways:
  - a. By profession of faith in Jesus Christ. This indicates an open and public acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour. The church accepts the person as a candidate for baptism, and membership begins when the person is baptized.
  - b. By letter. This indicates that the individual holds membership in another Baptist church and has been baptized by immersion. This church will then write the former church requesting transfer of membership to this church. Membership begins when the church affirms the person's request for membership.

- c. By statement. This indicates that an individual was at one time a member of a Baptist church, joined a church of another denomination but now wishes to be a part of this Baptist fellowship again. The statement of having been baptized by immersion and of church membership is all that is needed. Baptism is not required of those who have experienced believer's baptism by immersion even from a church of another denomination. Membership begins when the church affirms the person's request for membership.
  - d. By baptism. The individual requests transfer of membership from a church of another denomination, and receives baptism by immersion if such baptism has not previously taken place. This is not a reflection on the validity of the individual's profession of faith but an acceptance of the Baptist belief in baptism by immersion. The church accepts the person as a candidate for baptism, and membership begins when the person is baptized.
3. An affirmation by a majority of those present in the worship service constitutes approval.
  4. New members are encouraged to attend a new member's class.

#### C. RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

1. Only members may vote in the transactions of the church.
2. Members may present any matter of church business at a scheduled business conference or to the Deacon Ministry Team. If congregational action is required, such matters will not be addressed until after due notice has been given to the church.

#### D. DUTIES OF MEMBERS

Membership in First Baptist Church involves serious intention to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, to be a direct participant in the public worship, benevolent service, and financial life of the church, and to do these in such a manner as to strengthen the unity of Christ's church. Specifically,

1. Members shall subscribe in letter and in spirit to the church's *Purpose* and *Statement of Faith and Doctrine*.
2. Each shall be a servant of Christ on mission in the local and worldwide community. This servanthood is to be performed in family life, daily work, recreation and social activities, responsible citizenship, the issues of corporate life and in all attitudes toward others.
3. Each shall be a witness for Christ in the world, a light and leaven in society and a reconciler in a culture of conflict. Each shall identify with the agony and suffering of the world and attempt to radiate and exemplify the Christ of hope.

#### E. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Names of persons shall be removed from the church membership for the following reasons:

1. Transfer of membership to another church.
2. Written request that their name be removed. Requests by members for termination of membership may be granted by the church office, with timely report made to the church.
3. Death of the member.
4. Exclusion. Exclusion of a member shall be in accordance with the procedure on discipline in Paragraph F., below.

#### F. DISCIPLINE

1. First Baptist Church shall take every reasonable measure to assist any troubled member. The ministers and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment is the guideline which shall govern the attitude of one member toward another.
2. Should a serious condition exist which would indicate a member is becoming a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable effort will be made by the ministers and deacons to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17. All such proceedings shall be conducted in the spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. Finding that the welfare of the church would be best served by the exclusion of the member and upon recommendation of the Deacon Ministry Team, the church may take this action by a concurrence of two-thirds of the members present at a meeting announced two weeks in advance and called for this purpose.

#### G. RESTORATION

Any person whose membership has been terminated by exclusion may, upon that person's request and the recommendation of the Deacon Ministry Team, be restored to membership by a simple majority vote of the church in conference.

#### H. NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS

Excepting students or members of the military service, a member who moves from this church's attendance area is urged to unite with a local Baptist church on promise of letter from First Baptist Church. Should a year pass and no request be received, or any indication of support, such an individual's name shall be placed on the roll of non-resident members.

## II. STAFF

The Staff of First Baptist Church is composed of those ministers who are elected by the congregation, and those non-ministerial members who are employed by the Deacon Ministry Team upon the advice and with the consent of the ministers related to the particular area of service. Qualifications and responsibilities of each are detailed in the *PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL* of First Baptist Church. No intent to limit hiring by gender is expressed nor intended.

### A. SENIOR MINISTER

The Senior Minister is the pastor and chief administrator of the church, and is responsible to the Congregation through the Deacon Ministry Team. As pastor he proclaims the good news of Christ and ministers to the needs of others. As chief administrator, he is to serve as leader of the overall work of the church, to enable the members to use their spiritual gifts, and to supervise the ministry of the church staff. He should be in agreement with traditional Southern Baptist beliefs and practices as outlined in these *Church Bylaws*, shall be ordained, and preferably be a graduate of a properly accredited seminary or divinity school.

#### 1. Procedure for selection, call, and election

In the event that the office of Senior Minister of First Baptist Church becomes vacant, the following procedures will be implemented in the calling of a new Senior Minister:

- a. The Deacon Ministry Team will meet and begin the process that will lead to the forming of a seven-person Senior Minister Search Committee. Opportunity will be provided for suggestions from the Congregation. The Deacon Ministry Team, after prayer, will select a chairperson and six other people they think representative of all ages and interests of the First Baptist Church to submit as a slate for church affirmation to form the Senior Minister Search Committee.
- b. This Senior Minister Search Committee will then begin the process of seeking a new Senior Minister, following the leadership of God's Holy Spirit.
- c. When the Senior Minister Search Committee agrees upon the person they feel God wants as Senior Minister of First Baptist Church, they will present that person for a vote of the congregation on a Sunday morning.

Adequate notice and biographical material shall be made available at least one week prior to the church vote.

#### 2. Relationships

The Senior Minister is directly responsible through the Deacon Ministry Team to the congregation whom he seeks to serve under the call of God. He is an *ex officio* member of every church committee, is moderator of the church, advisor to and partner with the Deacon Ministry Team, and supervisor of the church staff.

#### 3. Responsibilities

The Senior Minister leads the congregation to worship, proclaims the Gospel in all of its implications, and leads in regular observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He ministers to the congregation, and in turn leads the congregation to minister. He works with the Deacon Ministry Team in matters relating to the Church Staff.

Additional responsibilities are detailed in the *Personnel Policy Manual* of First Baptist Church.

#### 4. Retirement

Retirement will be at age 67, but requests for annual extensions may be granted with the approval of the Deacon Ministry Team.

#### 5. Resignation

Should the Senior Minister wish to resign, one month's notice is requested.

#### 6. Complaint against

In case of a complaint against the Senior Minister, such complaint should be presented in writing to the Deacon Ministry Team, which will thoroughly investigate the complaint. If the Deacon Ministry Team feels the complaint is valid and significant enough to warrant termination, it will present the case to the Congregation.

#### 7. Termination

See separate policy statement of procedures in the *Personnel Policy Manual*.

### B. OTHER ELECTED STAFF MINISTERS

In addition to the Senior Minister, First Baptist Church elects persons to staff positions such as Minister of Music, Minister of Students, and Minister of Children. These persons should be in agreement with traditional Southern Baptist beliefs and practices as outlined in these *Church Bylaws*, and should preferably be graduates of a properly accredited seminary or divinity school or have advanced training in their area of ministry.

#### 1. Vacancies of Other Elected Staff Ministers

In the event of the vacancy of a church-elected staff minister other than the Senior Minister (e.g., Minister of Music, Minister of Children), great care will be given in securing someone who will be a good fit and function as a cooperative member of the ministerial staff then at First Baptist Church. The following procedure will be followed:

- a. Names of persons recommended by the congregation for a Search Committee will be received during a two week period, and those names given to the Deacon Ministry Team. From those recommended and others suggested by the Deacon Ministry Team, the Chair of the Deacon Ministry Team and the Senior Minister will develop a list of seven (7) nominees. This slate of nominees will be presented to the Deacon Ministry Team and then to the church for approval.

- b. From the slate approved by the church, the Senior Minister and the Chair of the Deacon Ministry Team will select the Search Committee chair.
  - c. The Senior Minister will do the preliminary work of making contacts and building a file on prospective staff members. He will meet with the committee on a regular basis to keep it informed of the progress. When a likely prospect is found, the Senior Minister will discuss this person with the Search Committee.
  - d. The prospective staff minister will then be invited to Statesville to meet with the Senior Minister and Search Committee.
  - e. If a majority of the Search Committee is in agreement with the Senior Minister, then a recommendation will be made to the Church that this person be called.
2. Relationships to church committees  
Each elected staff minister works with the Deacon Ministry Team to enlist members for teams to which (s)he is leader.
  3. Responsibilities  
Each staff minister provides leadership in ministry and administration in their area of calling. Specific responsibilities are detailed in the *Personnel Policy Manual* of First Baptist Church.
  4. Retirement  
Retirement will be at age 67, but requests for annual extensions may be granted with the approval of the Deacon Ministry Team.
  5. Resignation  
Should a staff minister other than the Senior Minister wish to resign, one month's notice is requested.
  6. Complaint against  
In case of a complaint against a staff minister, such complaint should be presented in writing to the Deacon Ministry Team, which will thoroughly investigate the complaint. If the Deacon Ministry Team feels the complaint is valid and significant enough to warrant termination, it will present the matter to the Congregation.
  7. Termination  
See separate policy statement of procedures in the *Personnel Policy Manual*.

#### C. OTHER STAFF MEMBERS

Non-ministerial members of the church staff are employed by the Deacon Ministry Team according to established policy as described in the *Personnel Policy Manual* of First Baptist Church.

#### D. INTERIM STAFF MINISTERS

In the event of a vacancy in the Senior Minister position, the Deacon Ministry Team will be responsible for securing an interim Senior Minister and for delegating and/or reassigning ministerial responsibilities, until such time as a new Senior Minister is called by the church. The Deacon Ministry Team will establish compensation within budget guidelines.

In the event of a vacancy in any other ministerial staff position, the Senior Minister in conjunction with the Deacon Ministry Team will be responsible for securing an interim minister until such time as a new minister is called by the church. The Deacon Ministry Team will establish compensation within budget guidelines.

### III. LAY OFFICERS

#### A. DEACONS

The Deacon Ministry Team shall remain the authority in fulfilling the Purposes, vision, and mission of First Baptist Church as discerned from the Lord by the Congregation, Senior Minister, and Ministry Staff. The Deacon Ministry Team is composed of nine servant leaders serving three-year terms, three retiring each year and three elected each year. Each deacon must be at least 21 years of age. Church staff cannot serve on the Deacon Ministry Team at any time, and spouses cannot serve at the same time. Retiring deacons are ineligible for re-election for two years. Deacons serving one year or less of an unexpired term are eligible for election to a three-year term.

##### 1. Qualifications

First Baptist Church uses the following guidelines in the selection of deacon nominees in order to maintain high standards and for fairness to prospective deacons. First Baptist Church seeks to:

##### a. Maintain Biblical Qualifications (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5)

##### (1). Christian Purpose

Nominees should possess Christian purpose and have a reverence for spiritual matters. (1 Tim. 3:8)

##### (2). Spiritual Integrity

Nominees should possess a confidence that their relationship with God and their relationships within the fellowship of the church are worthy of their commitment to them. (1 Tim. 3:9; Heb. 11:1)

##### (3). Proved Spiritual Maturity

Nominees have demonstrated their spiritual qualifications in daily conduct and speech. The prospective deacons ought to be persons who have demonstrated commitment to ministry; who have supported the church and its programs; and who have been loyal to the church staff, despite whatever honest differences they may have between them. (1 Tim. 3:10)

## (4). Christian Family Life

"Let the deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well" (1 Tim. 3:12). This statement insists on at least three things: (a) deacons must maintain a healthy view of the home and of marriage as a calling within the will of God; (b) deacons are to be a model of faithful devotion to one's spouse; and (c) deacons are reminded both of the commitment to the sanctity of marriage and of Jesus' teaching about marriage (Mark 10:2-12).

## (5). Temperate in Living

Christians must be stewards of good influence (1 Tim. 3:8). "Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). Deacons are under surveillance by non-Christians. Deacons should be free from any excesses that would cause personal injury or injury to the deacon's family, and make ineffective their witness (1 Cor. 8:13).

## (6). Steward of Possessions

Rather than being persons who have an obsession for material possessions, deacons should find fulfillment in ministering to persons in need, in serving with others in and through the church, and in giving their money so that others may minister and serve, and do so freely and compassionately as if Jesus were ministering with and sharing those possessions. (1 Tim. 3:8)

## b. Choose individuals who can serve well

Nominees should be committed to serving in and through their church. They should have or be willing to develop skills in witnessing, counseling, visiting, ministering, maintaining fellowship, and interpreting the work of the church to others.

## c. Choose those who can work well with others

Nominees should have a double portion of patience and understanding. They should have a sensitive spirit but not be so sensitive that their feelings are easily hurt. Consistent sound judgment is needed, and the ability to disagree in an agreeable tone and manner.

## d. Choose persons who will train for service

Because the work of the deacon is changing, nominees should be willing to participate in training sessions in order to develop into skilled and dedicated servants of Christ and of their church. They should review the Biblical Qualifications above, the 1963 *Baptist Faith and Message*, and what it means to be a "servant-leader" (such as described in Wilkes, C. Gene. *Jesus on Leadership: Developing Servant Leaders*. Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998).

## 2. Election

The first two weeks in August the Congregation shall submit nominations to the Deacon Ministry Team of those who meet the Church's qualifications for Deacon and are willing to take servant leader training. All nominees are invited to attend an orientation session at which the pastor and members of the Deacon Ministry Team review the qualifications and duties of deacons. All nominees who attend the orientation and are willing to continue in the process shall be placed on a ballot and the congregation is advised of the names of the nominees at least two weeks prior to the election. The congregation shall vote by ballot the first Sunday in October on the members of the Deacon Ministry Team. When a deacon cannot serve out an elected term, the Deacon Ministry Team shall select a qualified replacement to complete the unexpired term.

## 3. Duties and responsibilities

Deacons serve the church as spiritual leaders whose stature in the church lends authority to their office. They strive to live up to the Biblical qualification of the office, as stated in "A.1." above. With the ministers they have particular responsibility for the life of the church, to safeguard its good name, care for its fellowship and promote its welfare. As a matter of practical necessity they oversee the work of the church, making recommendations to the church in all matters of major concern. Specific responsibilities of deacons include the following:

- a. Set a good example in all areas of the life of the church, such as Bible study and corporate worship, as well as personal meditation, prayer and spiritual growth, and regularly attend meetings of the Deacon Ministry Team.
- b. Lead by equipping and empowering others through building ministry teams to fulfil God's plan for First Baptist Church.
- c. Preserve the teachings and doctrines of First Baptist Church as indicated in these Bylaws.
- d. Nurture and cultivate a clear spiritual direction for the church.
- e. Develop and maintain a practical ministry and organizational structure for the church.
- f. Hold church staff and lay leadership, church ministries and congregation accountable for godly living and service.
- g. Keep confidential those things which should not be shared.
- h. When final decisions are made by fellow deacons or the congregation, deacons will accept the decision even though they may have voted against the recommendation.

## 4. Officers of the Deacon Ministry Team

- a. The officers of the Deacon Ministry Team are Chair and Vice-Chair. They are elected from the Deacon Ministry Team by majority vote at a regular meeting of the Deacon Ministry Team following the annual election of Deacons and to which new deacons are invited, and serve during the next calendar year.

- b. Officers of the Deacon Ministry Team may be removed at any time and their successors elected from the current Deacon Ministry Team by a majority vote of all Deacon Ministry Team members present at any regular or special meeting of the Deacon Ministry Team.

#### B. TRUSTEES

The trustees hold in trust the church property and are representatives of the church. Trustees are nominated by the Deacon Ministry Team and elected by the church for usually life terms. They have no authority for making decisions without church action. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, trustees shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, at least two shall sign legal documents.

#### C. CHURCH CLERK

The clerk and assistant clerks shall be elected upon nomination by the Deacon Ministry Team. In the absence of the clerk or an assistant clerk, a substitute clerk shall be designated by the moderator to perform duties of the clerk. The Church Clerk shall assist the church in maintaining an accurate record of its actions. Duties of the Clerk include the following:

1. Record the minutes of all regular and called business meetings of the church and see that appropriate copies are maintained in the church office.
2. At church business meetings, provide the minutes of previous meetings.
3. Record data about persons presenting themselves for church membership in worship services.
4. Sign certificates of baptism for new members, and certificates of ordination for deacons.

### IV. CHURCH MEETINGS

#### A. WORSHIP SERVICES

The church shall meet regularly for worship of Almighty God at least each Sunday morning. The ministers plan all worship services and activities. These meetings shall be open for all people and conducted under the direction of the ministers. In the event of inclement weather, a decision about cancellation of services will be announced on the local radio and television stations and the church website.

#### B. MODERATOR

The church moderator shall be the Senior Minister. In the absence of the Senior Minister or at his discretion, the Chair of the Deacon Ministry Team shall preside.

#### C. BUSINESS MEETINGS

The Church shall have an annual church conference in September. Members only may vote in the transactions of the church. Members may present any matter of church business at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Deacon Ministry Team. If congregational action is required, ~~action on~~ such matters will not be addressed until after due notice has been given to the church.

#### D. SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

With the approval of the Deacon Ministry Team, specially called business meetings of the church may be held to consider specific matters of a significant nature, usually at all worship times. A two-week's notice of the subject, date and time for the meeting must be given unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. Discussion and amendment of such matters may be done any time prior to the worship time vote, usually on Wednesday nights. Full information shall be made available to all church members. At such called meetings, only matters pertaining to the reason(s) for the meeting may be considered. The worship time vote is held without further discussion.

#### E. RECONSIDERATION OF ACTIONS

At any church discussion or business meeting except worship time, any motion may be amended prior to church vote upon the matter, in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*. However, at that meeting or within 48 hours of it any two church members may request the Moderator refer the motion so amended to the Deacon Ministry Team for reconsideration, where all concerns shall be heard. By vote of two-thirds of the deacons present the Deacon Ministry Team may bring the matter back to the church in either its original or any amended form as described in Paragraph D, but the church shall then vote upon the motion without further amendment.

#### F. QUORUM

A quorum shall consist of church members who attend a business meeting, provided it is one that has been properly called. For purposes of definition, a majority is one vote more than fifty percent of the church members present and voting. No absentee voting is permitted.



## G. CHURCH YEAR

For purposes of election of Deacons and most church activities, the annual church year is January 1 through December 31. The church year for Church Ministry Teams will be set by those teams with the approval of the Deacon Ministry team.

## V. MINISTRY TEAMS

First Baptist Church desires to carry on God's work in an orderly fashion and wishes for the congregation and ministry team members to understand what is expected of each ministry team. Ministry team members are encouraged to have attended a new member's class. All ministry teams meet at the beginning of their rotation to review team guidelines and make recommendations for changes. Plans for the coming year are also discussed. Some teams must meet monthly; others may meet only a few times a year. Ministry teams are responsible to their Staff Minister or designated leader and the Deacon Ministry Team. For detailed descriptions of each team, see the First Baptist Church *MINISTRY TEAM POLICY MANUAL*, which is maintained by the Deacon Ministry Team. Some ministry teams (such as Personnel, Building and Grounds, and Wedding) also have *PROCEDURE or POLICY MANUALS* which describe many of their functions. The Senior Minister and Chair of the Deacon Ministry Team may appoint *ad hoc* committees with the approval of the Deacon Ministry Team.

### A. DEACON MINISTRY TEAMS

The Deacon Ministry Teams are the Business Management, Personnel, and other teams as needed composed of active deacons and other church members. The Deacon Ministry Team appoints the chair of each team for usually one year, and new team members for usually three-year rotating terms. Each team reports monthly to the Deacon Ministry Team.

### B. CHURCH MINISTRY TEAMS

Church ministry team members are recommended by Staff Ministers and leaders and approved by the Deacon Ministry Team. Usually the team chairs are selected for a one-year terms, and team members for three-year rotating terms.

## VI. PROGRAM MINISTRIES

All program ministries of the church are grouped into Adult Ministry, Youth Ministry, Children's Ministry, Worship Ministry, Missions Ministry, and Buildings and Grounds Ministry Teams, and other approved ministry teams, and shall be under church control through the Senior Minister and Deacon Ministry Team. All officers and team members shall be enlisted by the Staff Ministers and leaders and approved by the Deacon Ministry Team, and each ministry shall make regular progress reports to the church and to the Deacon Ministry Team. Program Ministries may be added, deleted, or modified by the Deacon Ministry Team in keeping with the Purposes and mission of First Baptist Church.

### A. SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School, grouped into units for all ages, shall teach the biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, minister to Sunday School members and non-members, and undergird the programs of First Baptist Church. Adult, Youth, and Children's Ministry Staff are responsible for annually enlisting all Sunday School personnel.

### B. ADULT MINISTRY

In addition to Sunday School, Adult Ministry includes such teams as the Caring Team, Food Service, Greeters, Hospitality, Library, Prayer Ministry, Senior Adults, small groups, Special Events, Weddings, Wednesday night ministry, and Women's Ministry, as approved by the Deacon Ministry Team. Women on Mission support the church's ministry for mission education, mission action, and mission support for women, girls, and preschool children. Women on Mission, with the approval of the Deacon Ministry Team, enlists its own officers and the leaders of the organizations it sponsors. Guidelines for Adult Ministry Teams can be found in the *Ministry Teams Policy Manual*.

### C. YOUTH MINISTRY

In addition to Sunday School, Youth Ministry, under the direction of the Minister to Students, includes Sunday and Wednesday activities, mission events and projects, retreats, youth training, and ministry to student families of students in grades 6 through college, as approved by the Deacon Ministry Team.

### D. CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

In addition to Sunday School, Children's Ministry, under the Direction of the Minister of Children, includes Sunday and Wednesday activities, Vacation Bible School and other special events, ministry to families of children in nursery through grade 5, and a weekday preschool ministry, as approved by the Deacon Ministry Team.

### E. WORSHIP MINISTRY

The Worship Ministry, under the direction of the Minister of Music and with such leaders and units as needed, shall lead in worship; train persons to lead, sing and perform music; provide music in the church and community; function as a medium of Christian education to glorify God and magnify the message of salvation; and interpret and undergird the

ministries of First Baptist Church. Worship Ministry includes teams such as the Adult Choir Praise Team, Baptismal, Decorating, Flowers, Lord's Supper, and Technology teams, and Ushers, as approved by the Deacon Ministry Team.

#### F. MISSIONS MINISTRY

Missions Ministry is local, denominational, national, and world missions, and includes such groups as Baptist Men, and the Clothes Closet, Homebound, Medical Equipment, and Prison Ministry teams, as approved by the Deacon Ministry Team. Operation Inasmuch is a service of Baptist Men, whose President with others as needed are enlisted by the Deacon Ministry Team.

#### G. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS MINISTRY

The Buildings and Grounds Ministry, under the direction of a Staff Facilitator, supports the Purposes and mission of First Baptist Church, especially as carried out by all of the other Ministry Teams. Under the direction and approval of the Deacon Ministry Team, it oversees facility use as described in the *Facility Use Policy Manual*, develops and monitors preventive maintenance programs, and ensures building appearance and structural integrity. Jointly with the staff and congregation, it evaluates equipment needs and purchases, and reviews current standing or renewal of service contracts while working within the budget guidelines approved by the congregation.

#### H. OTHER MINISTRY GROUPS

Other program ministries may be constituted from time to time.

### VII. CHURCH FINANCES

#### A. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITY

It is understood that membership in this church involves the financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts.

#### B. CHURCH BUDGET

The church budget shall be prepared annually by the Business Management Team. Budget requests shall be prepared by each organization and/or team responsible for administering church funds and submitted to the Business Management Team prior to a date established by the Deacon Ministry Team. A detailed budget will be presented to the church for discussion and for approval in church conference before the beginning of the church fiscal year.

#### C. FISCAL YEAR

The church fiscal year shall begin October 1 and end September 30, effective in 2011.

#### D. SOLICITATION OF FUNDS

Solicitation of funds for outside purposes or public collection of funds in the name of the church or any organization, department, unit or agency of the church shall not be permitted without approval of the Deacon Ministry Team.

#### E. SPECIAL FUNDS

All special funds, for either short or long range projects, shall be established upon recommendation by the Deacon Ministry Team and approval by the church. Contributions made for the purpose of establishing a non-existent special fund shall be held in escrow until the church approves the intended special fund. Should the fund not be established, the contributions shall, with the contributor's approval, be applied to a church-approved fund or returned to the contributor(s).

#### F. SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Recommendations for special offerings for non-profit organizations, staff anniversaries, resignations in good standing, and other occasions as deemed appropriate should be brought to the Business Management Committee for consideration and approval by the Deacon Ministry Team.

#### G. SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributions, cash and non-cash, designated and undesignated, must be accepted and distributed in accordance with the functions and purposes of First Baptist Church without jeopardizing the tax-exempt status of FBC. Specifically,

1. The church must have complete control of all cash and non-cash contributions. All gifts and items become the property of FBC with full authority to dispose of them.
2. The contributions must be received and used only for the church's tax exempt function and purposes.
3. Appropriate administrative controls must be in place.
4. Donors should be made aware of the conditions of acceptance of all contributions.

Memorial and honor gifts of cash or cash-equivalents may be recognized by special letter, and/or statement in *The Interim*, and/or registration in the "Book of Gifts" kept in the Narthex. Non-cash gifts shall be accepted only after

confirmation by the Deacon Ministry Team and may be recognized as are cash gifts, but neither donor nor honoree shall be recognized on such gifts.

#### VIII. CHURCH RECORDS

Official church records shall be maintained by the church staff. These records include the annual report to the South Yadkin Baptist Association; copies of official deeds, warranties, and certifications; all issues of the church newsletter *The Interim*; minutes of the Deacon Ministry Team; Sunday School records; the *Church Bylaws*; the procedure manuals for ministry teams ; the rosters of all ministry teams; and such other records deemed necessary in the affairs of the church. At the time of revision of these *Church Bylaws*, consideration should be given to placing copies of such records with the Baptist Historical Collection of Wake Forest University Library.

#### IX. BYLAWS PROVISION AND PLACEMENT

A copy of these *Church Bylaws* shall be kept in the church office, in the church library, and made available for use by any member of the church. The church secretary shall enter the revisions when approved by the church. The Deacon Ministry Team is responsible for reviewing these *Church Bylaws* at least every two years.

#### X. AMENDMENTS OR REVISIONS

After discussion by the Deacon Ministry Team, amendments or revisions in the *Church Bylaws* may be made at any business meeting of the church provided (1) each amendment or revision shall be presented in writing, (2) two-week's notice be given to the membership, and (3) copies of the proposed amendment or revision be furnished to each member present at the meeting. Changes to the "Nature of the Organization" section shall be by two-thirds vote of church members present and voting. Changes to the "Policies and Procedures" section shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

\*APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 7-24-1994\*

\*REVISION APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 10-20-1999\*

\*REVISION APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 9-12-2001\*

\*REVISION (re electing Deacons) APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 10-15-2003\*

\*REVISION (re electing Deacons) APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 9-15-2004\*

\*REVISIONS APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 4-20-2005\*

\*APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 8-14-2005, in response to incorporation.\*

\*REVISION (re quarterly business meetings) APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 12-10-2006\*

\*APPROVED CHANGE TO "MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION" BY CHURCH VOTE 9-23-2007.\*

\*APPROVED CHANGE TO "MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY" BY CHURCH VOTE ON 10-21-2007.\*

\*MAJOR REVISIONS APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 9-20-2008.\*

\*CHANGED CHURCH YEAR TO BEGIN OCTOBER 1 BY CHURCH VOTE 4-16,17-2011.\*

\*MAJOR REVISIONS APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 6-8-2014.\*

\*REVISION OF ELECTION OF DEACONS APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 4-22-18

\*REVISION OF DISAFFILIATING FROM THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION APPROVED BY CHURCH VOTE 10-29-23