

First Baptist Church Kerens, Texas

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Constitution and By-Laws Rev. 06/8/16

Revision History

Rev Date	Approved By	Revisions Made
06/8/16	Senior Pastor Chairman of Deacons	Completely reformatted and rewritten to incorporate the By-Laws into the Constitution. Renamed as "Constitution and By-Laws".

The undersigned approve the implementation of this document. The paper copy of this document maintained by the church secretary is the official revision. Digital versions of this document are maintained on the First Baptist Church Kerens, Texas website as necessary, and shall match the content of the official version with exception of signatures.

Senior Pastor:

Chairman of Deacons:

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Church Constitution

Preamble

We declare and establish this document to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the Church in an orderly manner while pursuing its ministry. This document will guide this Church in conducting His ministry locally, nationally, or across all borders as He leads us. This document applies specifically to the First Baptist Church Kerens, Texas and to the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of like faith and order.

Name & Purpose

Name

This church will be known as the First Baptist Church Kerens, Texas (FBCK) or simply "Church". The Church is affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and as such is subject to Group Ruling #1703 providing exemption from Federal Income Tax under the provisions of IRS Code, Section 501 (C) (3).

Purpose

The Church is formed to support public worship of God and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through such ministries as may be determined by the Church.

Vision

The vision of FBCK is to transform our world with the Gospel of Christ through the Word of God one person at a time through worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship and missions.

Mission

Our mission at FBCK is to transform our world with the Gospel of Christ through the Word of God one person at a time.

Objectives

1. To be a dynamic spiritual body empowered by the Holy Spirit to teach, baptize and disciple as many people as possible (Matthew 28: 18-20).
2. To help members realize their spiritual gifts and encourage them to use these gifts in sharing Christ (1 Corinthians 12).
3. To be a Church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment to the Lordship of Christ (1 Thessalonians 2:1-13).
4. To help members grow in the knowledge of God and man through church programs of Bible teaching, training, and education (Acts 2:42-47).
5. To encourage members to support the ministry of this Church, through personal stewardship (Luke 6:38).

Statement of Faith

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired infallible word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000 (Appendix E). We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind and to minister to all. The ordinances of the Church are believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its financial wellbeing and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has blessed us, toward its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor, and the spreading of the Gospel through the world. In case of a difference of opinion in the Church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also encourage to maintain family and personal devotions; to study diligently the Word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; and to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith. We pledge as a Church and to each other to take a stand against deeds of the flesh and to live according to the fruits of the spirit according to Galatians 5:19-26.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to exhort and encourage each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay; and to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

When we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the principles of God's word.

Polity and Relationships

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership.

All internal groups created and empowered by the Church shall report to and be accountable only to the Church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it enjoys mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this Church will, in a democratic sense, cooperate with and support the Corsicana Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Revisions to the Constitution

Once the Committee has agreed to the Constitution and By-Laws (this document) the proposed document shall be presented at a business meeting and a copy of this Constitution and By-Laws will be made available to members for review two (2) weeks in advance. The Constitution and By-Laws shall be adopted by receiving the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Church members present at a business meeting. The pastor and Chairman of Deacons shall sign the document to implement its ratification. This document supersedes all previously adopted Constitution and By-laws by the First Baptist Church Kerens, Texas.

Church Government

This Baptist Church is an autonomous Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Members reserve the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the condition of such membership. This Church is a democracy, its authority vested in the members. Every member has the right to a voice in the Church's government, plans and discipline. The Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but enjoys mutual counsel and cooperation with other churches of like faith and order.

Church By-Laws

Church Membership

Member types are defined below. All members, excluding watch care members are encouraged to attend a membership class and acknowledge the receipt of the FBCK Constitution and By-Laws. (Appendix F)

Classification of Members

There are three classifications of members at the Church:

- A. **Members:**
Members who attend worship services at FBCK on a regular basis and contribute to FBCK by giving financially and by works that support FBCK.
- B. **Inactive members:**
Members who do not attend FBCK services on a regular basis or do not support FBCK financially or by works. When members attend services at another church, or do not attend church services they are considered to be "Inactive". Inactive members may remain on church rolls but may not be in a leadership role. If such person does not step aside as a leader, then that person should be counseled by the pastor and a deacon or by two deacons about this policy.
- C. **Watch care members:**
Any person who wishes to join the fellowship of the Church, but does not wish to be placed on the membership rolls, can become a watch care member. Such membership is usually of short term duration and is for fellowship and guidance only. A watch care member may not vote or hold an office in the church.

Membership Candidacy

- A. Persons shall be received into membership by majority vote of the church members present. Candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:
- B. **By Faith and Baptism:**
Upon a profession of faith, candidates for baptism are examined and can be approved at any regular service. It is expected that approved candidates will be baptized at the earliest time after their approval. They are not enrolled as members of the Church until after their baptism. These new members are encouraged to attend a new member's class.
- C. **By Letter:**
Applicants for membership by letter are received upon promise of their letter from another Baptist church. It is expected that these applicants shall have been scripturally baptized after conversion, by immersion and in response to salvation rather than for salvation. In case this expectation has not been fulfilled, the pastor will be expected to make recommendations to the Church before the letter is ruled upon. These new members are encouraged to attend a new member's class.

D. By Statement:

When church letters cannot be obtained because of loss of records or similarly unavoidable circumstances, applicants are received upon their own statement, affirming that they have received Jesus as their Savior, that they have been scripturally baptized by immersion after their conversion. That their baptism was a testimony of their faith and not a part of their salvation, and that they were previously church members. These new members are encouraged to attend a new member's class.

Rights of Members

Every member of the Church may participate in the ordinances of the Church as administered by the Church.

Members:

- A. Members present are entitled to one vote at elections and on all questions submitted to the Church.
- B. Must be present at the church location to vote unless provisions are made by the Church for absentee balloting.
- C. Are allowed to help make decisions concerning FBCK.
- D. Are eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the Church.

Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in any of the following ways:

- A. Death of the member.
- B. Dismissal to another Baptist church.
- C. Removal by request.
- D. Proof of membership in a church of another denomination.
- E. Exclusion by action of this Church per Matt. 18. Circumstances for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Sexual, moral or ethical impurity.
 - 2. Participation in gossip, murmurings or complaints about church leaders or policies either to church members or nonmembers. *Note: If an individual has concerns or complaints they should be addressed in a Christ-like manner directly to the person in question if possible, or to a deacon or the pastor.*
 - 3. Before dismissal, the pastor and a deacon or two deacons should counsel the offending member privately to attempt to return them to fellowship. If efforts fail the dismissal should continue.
 - 4. The pastor and a deacon or two deacons may require that members in leadership positions take an immediate leave of absence until an issue has been resolved. The leave of absence may apply only to the leadership role or to membership in the Church, depending upon the situation.

5. After dismissal, efforts should be made by Church friends of the former member, by Deacons or by other members to restore the former member to fellowship.

Exclusion of a Member

Should a member become an offense to the Church by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct or by denying acceptance of fundamental doctrines of the Church (Appendix E), it shall be the responsibility of the pastor and/or deacons to take steps to resolve the offense in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20. If exclusion of the member is necessary after due personal notice and hearing in private by the pastor and a deacon or two deacons, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance, membership may be withdrawn. Exclusion will be finalized upon recommendation of the pastor and/or deacons, and upon the vote of the majority of the members present at a regular business meeting. The basis for the recommendation of the pastor and/or deacons shall not be required to be made public, announced in public, or put forward to the general church membership of the general public.

The Church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and after the excluded person has met with the pastor and/or deacons and indicated such person's repentance. Upon recommendation by the pastor and/or deacons and by a majority vote of church members present at a regular business meeting membership may be restored.

It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Church Officers and Staff

All who serve as officers and staff of the Church and those who serve on Church Committees shall be members of this Church. All of the following positions are considered to be church officers with exception of non-ministerial staff.

Pastor

The pastor is responsible for leading this Church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such he works with the deacons and church staff to:

- (1) Lead the Church in the achievement of its mission,
- (2) Proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers, and
- (3) Care for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

A Pastor Selection Committee shall seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring for consideration of the Church only

one name at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, an affirmative majority vote of those present being necessary for approval.

The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated:

(1) By his request or,

(2) At the Church's request: The Personnel Committee and deacons must be in one accord, specify reasons for dismissal and submit their recommendation to the church body for a majority vote. All members shall be allowed to determine the validity of the recommendation by vote. See Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, Resignation, Discipline and Dismissal section.

The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving two weeks' notice or less if the Personnel Committee agrees. The Church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant and the pastor's employment terminated.

Ministerial Staff

The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the Church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined.

A staff member may relinquish his office by providing his/her supervisor and the chairperson of the Personnel Committee with a two week written notice or a shorter notice period approved by the Personnel Committee.

Non-ministerial Staff

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the Church determines the need for their services.

Upon instruction from the Church and the church Personnel Committee, the pastor shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall occur after consultation with the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consideration of related committees of the Church.

Deacons

Deacons must be members of the Church. The deacons shall be ordained to provide spiritual leadership for, and service to, the fellowship of the Church. The deacons are to be servants of the Church and pastor in ministering to the moral and spiritual needs of the church and community to provide the pastor time to fulfill his mission to the church. They shall assist in the preparation for and the observance of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The deacons shall guard the unity of spirit within the membership. In order to do this properly, they shall set an example for the Church by their regular attendance of its services and organizations, and financial support of the Church and its programs.

Deacons must be provided with appropriate training and agree with Deacon's Role, Appendix A.

Deacons are to be problem solvers and preservers of church harmony, and must not be involved in church politics or allow divisive factions to take hold. Members must feel free to speak with deacons, so deacons should keep conversations with members confidential when possible. However, deacons as a committee should be as transparent as possible while making decisions that will impact the church as a whole.

As needed, the deacons will recommend to the Church that new deacon candidates be set aside by the Church. The Church shall nominate candidates from a list of eligible candidates that meet the scriptural requirements of Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13; be a member of the Church for at least two (2) years at the time of nomination; and be at least 25 years of age. Nominees and their families shall be interviewed by a Deacon Screening Committee. A list of men who have been interviewed, that meet scriptural and church qualifications and have agreed to serve will be presented to the Church by the deacons. From the candidates presented, the Church will vote by secret ballot and those candidates receiving an affirmative majority vote of the members present shall be elected. An ordination service will be planned for the newly elected deacons.

The Church is under no obligation to accept deacons from another church. However, upon examination by the deacons, previously ordained deacons from another church of like faith and order, who have completed at least a six-month resident membership and who have agreed to serve may be presented to the Church for majority approval at a regularly scheduled business meeting.

Deacons shall arrange for regular meetings and elect annually a chairman, vice chairman, and a secretary and committees as are necessary for the discharge of their duties. The pastor or deacon chairman may call the deacons into special session whenever the need arises.

Deacons may be placed on inactive status by submitting a written request to the deacon chairman and/or pastor. The request will be read and considered at the next regularly scheduled Deacon's meeting. A deacon on inactive status must make a written request to the deacon membership expressing the desire to regain active status.

Deacons must remain church members and attend meetings to continue being deacons. If at any time a deacon feels that he is unable or unwilling to perform the ministries expected of him, he may resign his position as deacon. A deacon who has served faithfully and is no longer able to serve consistently, may be nominated to become Deacon Emeritus.

The pastor and deacon chairman may remove a deacon from his responsibilities when any of the preceding expectations are not being met; discipline will be administered according to Matthew 18:15-20.

Sunday School Teachers

Sunday School Teachers are recommended by the Sunday School Director to the Nominating Committee to be voted on by the church.

All Sunday School Teachers must be members of the Church and agree to the Sunday School Teacher Commitment, Appendix B. Any new Sunday School teacher must attend Sunday School Teacher training and agree to the Sunday School Teacher Commitment, Appendix B.

Sunday School Teachers shall:

- A. Only teach doctrine subscribed to by the church and avoid controversial subjects.
- B. Lead the class toward participation in the ministries of the church.
- C. Personally support the overall ministry of the church through prayers, giving, regular participation in worship and fellowship at FBCK.

Moderator

The chairman of the deacons, vice chairman of deacons or pastor shall serve as moderator, presiding over church business meetings. Should a motion involve or relate to the moderator, he shall remove himself and a temporary moderator be appointed. If the moderator has knowledge in advance that he will be absent, he will appoint a temporary moderator. In the absence of both, the clerk shall call the Church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

The moderator must maintain a neutral position while presiding. If he wishes to debate a question under consideration, he should ask an assistant to preside.

Church Clerk/Secretary

The Church shall elect annually a clerk/secretary as its clerical officer, who shall serve until a successor has been elected. The clerk/secretary shall keep a suitable record of all official actions of the Church and record minutes of the church business meetings as applicable. The clerk/secretary or assistant must be present in all regular and special church business meetings to record the results of all matters voted upon. The church clerk/secretary shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or removal, the membership roll and the inactive membership roll, together with a record of baptisms and applications of new members who respond to the invitations.

The clerk shall:

- A. Record information on applicants for church membership and other decisions in regular meetings.
- B. Record all actions voted on by the Church and follow through on all necessary correspondence related to the actions in business meetings.
- C. Issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice for all meetings where notice is necessary.

All church records are church property and shall be maintained by the church secretary in the church office.

Church Treasurer

The Church shall annually elect a church treasurer and assistant as its financial officer who shall serve until a successor has been elected. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to

receive, account for, and pay out upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid by or given to the Church.

The treasurer shall serve on the Finance Committee to develop and recommend to the Church adequate policies and procedures related to receiving, accounting, disbursing, and reporting church monies. The financial secretary will maintain members' records of contributions and provide annual reports of the same.

The treasurer shall not be elected to any of the Finance Committee elected positions.

Church Trustees

The Church shall elect three or more trustees to act for the Church in legal matters who shall serve until successors are elected. They shall hold the Church property in the corporate name of the Church. Upon specific vote of the Church authorizing each action, they shall be authorized to execute all legal papers and transactions of the church, but not otherwise. When the signatures of Trustees are required, any two or more shall act as legal representatives in any legal action involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to Church approved matters. They are to protect church property in any way necessary.

Church Committees

Church committees are a valuable resource in carrying out God's work. Committees must pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance. Committees which function properly save time for the congregation, utilize each member's spiritual gifts, develop members as Christians, broaden participation to involve as many people as possible, and improve communication in our Church. These committees are responsible for carrying out the policies established by the Church. Because of a committee's knowledge of certain needs, the committee may recommend that the church adopt certain policies.

Committee members should accept the responsibility of serving, realizing that the strength and effectiveness of their committee is diminished if they are not in attendance.

Committee members may resign or be replaced if they are unable to faithfully complete their commitment. This may be done by communication with the committee chairperson, chairperson of the Nominating Committee or with the staff liaison for that committee. Committee member may not serve more than a three (3) year term after which the committee member rotates off that committee. The committee member may not serve back to back terms on the same committee without rotating off of the committee for a minimum of one year. No church member may serve on more than one (1) committee and three (3) teams at a time; excluding Leadership Committee and Search Committee.

- A. The power of the committee is advisory and suggestive only. The Church will take final action on every committee recommendation.
- B. All committees should meet regularly as deemed necessary. Either the chairperson or ministerial staff may call the committee meeting. The chairperson assumes the responsibility of notifying members of the committee meeting.
- C. The chairperson is responsible for reporting the work and the recommendations of their particular committee.

1. A committee will report its findings and recommendations to the deacon body for approval. The findings and recommendations will be presented to the church by the committee.
 2. Every member of a committee shall be a member of First Baptist Church.
- D. All committees shall vote, to approve or disapprove, every issue that is sent to the committee. A statement of disposition shall be sent to the originator.
- E. The ministerial staff shall serve as ex-officio members of every committee, with one staff member assigned to each committee by the pastor in the capacity of an advisor. They shall have every right that a committee member has except voting.
- F. The first meeting of each committee shall take place within one month after election of the committee.
- G. Each committee shall maintain minutes of meetings, and a copy shall be filed in the church office.
- H. The Nominating Committee shall recommend members to fill vacancies that occur during the year. The chairperson of the Nominating Committee shall be notified at once when a vacancy occurs.

Pastor Search Committee Election Process:

The pastor search committee will be elected by the following procedure: (1) the members of the church, in a regular or special called business meeting, will nominate five people each. (2) The Personnel Committee will complete the nominations, listing the one with the most votes through the ones with the least votes. (3) Then the Personnel Committee will list the top eight vote getters on a ballot. (4) In another business meeting, regular or special called, the ballots [processes will be put in place to maintain the integrity of the vote] will be passed out to the voting members who will vote for six people to serve on the committee. (5) The Personnel Committee will then count the votes. The six people who get the most votes and the chairman of the deacons will comprise the Pastor Search Committee. The other two will serve as alternates. The alternates will meet with the committee and can make suggestions, but cannot vote. (6) The Pastor Search Committee will elect a chairman, vice chairman, and recording secretary. (7) The Personnel Committee will decide in each election if absentee voting is allowed.

Search Committees for Other Staff Members:

The pastor will meet with the Personnel Committee to determine the need of additional staff members. The Personnel Committee will bring the selected search committee members before the church in a regular or special called business meeting. The pastor will gather resumes for each staff position needed and present to the search committee. And give a recommendation of five (5) to ten (10) candidates to the search committee selected by Personnel Committee. When the search committee has made its final selection, the church will then vote on the candidate in a church business meeting, regular or special-called.

The Church has the following committees:

- A. Finance
- B. Nominating

- C. Building and Grounds
- D. Personnel
- E. Leadership (Chairs of Finance, Nominating, Building & Grounds, Personnel, Deacons, WMU President and ministerial staff.)
- F. Search (Only when needed)

The Church shall appoint temporary committees as needed (including but limited to Auditing Committee) for special purposes not covered by standing committees. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to review the responsibilities of committees and to suggest such changes as they deem necessary. Such changes shall be recommended to the Church for approval. The Nominating Committee shall also have the responsibility of communicating the duties of each committee to that elected committee.

Church Teams

Church teams differ from committees in two important ways. (1) Committees are generally decision making bodies that discuss and make recommendations; teams are ministering bodies doing a particular ministry. (2) Teams are composed of volunteers who have a passion for what the team is doing and a sense of call to serve the Lord according to their spiritual gifts. Teams meet needs.

Team members should accept the responsibility of serving, realizing that the strength and effectiveness of their team is diminished if they are not in attendance. Team members may resign if they find themselves unable to faithfully complete their commitment.

Church teams are a valuable resource in carrying out God's work. Teams must pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance. Teams which function properly save time for the congregation, utilize each member's spiritual gifts, develop members as Christians, broaden participation to involve as many people as possible and improve communication in our church.

Church Team Rules & Guidelines

1. Each team shall faithfully follow the mission statement of the Church.
2. Every member of a team shall be a member of First Baptist Church.
3. Ministerial staff shall be ex-officio members of every team.
4. Each team shall meet in September/October and plan the work for that year.
5. Each team shall maintain minutes of meetings and file them in the church office.
6. The Nominating Committee shall enlist a coordinator and an assistant coordinator for each team. These will be voted on by the Church each year in September.
7. An individual may be coordinator of only one (1) team at a time, but may serve on up to two (2) other teams as felt called.
8. The members of each team may be enlisted by the coordinator of a team, or a church member may volunteer to serve on the team of his/her choice.
9. A team member may serve on up to three (3) teams as he/she feels called by God to serve.

10. A coordinator, an assistant coordinator, or a team member may serve on a team as long as he/she feels led.
11. New teams may be started at any time the need arises.
12. When a coordinator or an assistant coordinator resigns during the year, the chairperson of the Nominating Committee shall be notified at once. The Nominating Committee shall recommend a replacement to the church body for approval as soon as possible.
13. A team may be dropped when the need for it no longer exists.

Current Church Teams

The Church has the following teams and/or possible teams:

1. Baptism
2. Music
3. Church History
4. Counting
5. Greeters
6. Hospitality
7. Library/Media Center
8. Men's Ministry
9. Missions
10. Lord's Supper
11. Nursery/Preschool
12. Prayer
13. Recreation
14. Seasonal Decorating
15. Bereavement
16. Technology
17. Transportation
18. Ushers
19. Women's Ministry
20. First Responder

Church Organization & Training Programs

The Church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching, church member training, church leader training, new member orientation, mission education, action and support, music

education, training and performance and such other as the Church may deem wise to sponsor. All organizations related to the church program shall be under church control. All officers being elected by the Church and reporting regularly to the Church and all program activities shall be subject to church coordination and approval. The Church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

Training Overview

All members must be provided with a membership class. Staff, Sunday School Teachers, deacons and other church leaders may be asked to take training classes.

Sunday School

The basic responsibility of the Sunday School is Bible teaching and biblical revelation in a way that would reach people for Christ and church membership; and aid in the interpretation of information pertaining to the Church and denomination.

The Sunday School shall be divided into departments and/or classes depending on its size to meet the needs of all ages and shall be under the direction of a Sunday School Director selected by the Nominating Committee and Church.

Disciple University

Disciple U shall serve as the training unit of the Church. Its tasks shall be to train church members to perform the functions of the Church, train church leaders, orient new church members, teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, and church polity and organization, and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination.

Women's Ministry

The purpose of the Women's Ministry is to provide opportunity for spiritual growth for the women of the Church. They are to work with the education leader in planning and scheduling Bible studies and in planning and coordinating any women's social events and activities that reflect the mission statement of the Church.

The team will consist of a coordinator and assistant coordinator and the people she enlists to help. Any woman who is a member of the Church may volunteer to serve on the team and works in conjunction with the Women's Missionary Union.

Men's Ministry

The purpose of the Men's Ministry is planning and coordinating opportunities for spiritual growth for the men of the Church. They are to work with the education leader in planning and scheduling Bible studies and in planning and coordinating any men's events and activities that reflect the mission statement of the church.

Music Organization

The church music organization, under the direction of the church elected Worship Minister, shall be the music education, training, and performance organization of the church. Its tasks shall be to teach music, train persons to lead, sing, and play music and provide music in the Church and community. The church music program shall have such officers and organization as the program requires.

Church Ordinances

Baptism

This Church may receive for baptism all persons who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior by personal faith, who profess Him publicly, and who indicate a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Baptism shall be by immersion in water. The pastor, or whomever the Church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The Baptism Team shall assist in the preparation for and the observance of baptism. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.

The Lord's Supper

The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper once per quarter unless otherwise scheduled by the pastor. The deacons shall prepare and shall assist the pastor in administering the Lord's Supper. All born again, baptized by immersion believers are eligible to participate in this church ordinance.

Church Meetings

Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning for the worship of Almighty God. Sunday and Wednesday evenings services and additional services may also be held at the discretion of the pastor. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor shall direct the services for all church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Special Services

Revival services and any other church meetings for the advancement of the church's objectives shall be held as recommended by the pastor.

Regular Business Meetings

The Church shall hold regular business meetings every three months. Notice of any rescheduled meeting shall be announced during a worship service two (2) weeks in advance. If a regular business meeting will include matters of special nature or significance then, a specific agenda is required and the rules of Special Business Meetings shall apply.

Special Business Meetings

The Church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. Business meetings must have a specific agenda to spell out the business ahead of time, and there must not be any secret or surprise agenda at the time of the meeting. The notice of a special business meeting shall include the subject, date, time, and place of the meeting; it must be given by announcement in each regularly held Sunday and Wednesday service of the Church for two (2) weeks immediately prior to the meeting. No business except that for which the meeting was called may be transacted.

A special business meeting may be called by the chairman, vice chairman, secretary of deacons, or pastor (in that order) or as otherwise provided specifically by a written petition signed by not less than one-half of average Sunday School attendance by members, or as otherwise provided specifically in this document.

Emergency Business Meetings

A type of Special Business Meeting. In case of an absolute emergency where time is a factor, a business meeting can be called at any Sunday. Such a meeting should not be to decide major issues or to decide a problem that could wait until prior notice could be given to the congregation. When the vote is taken to go into a business meeting without prior notice, seventy-five percent (75%) of the votes cast must be in the affirmative. If twenty-six percent (26%) or more of the votes cast are against going into a business meeting without prior notice, then no business is to be transacted. If there is a question on the vote, a second vote may be taken.

Quorum

The quorum consists of 40 voting members present at any regular or special business meeting. No business shall be conducted without a quorum present. Since non-members cannot vote or influence decisions, care must be taken to include only voting members.

Procedure at Meetings

The 11th Edition of Robert's Rules of Order is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church unless otherwise provided in this document.

Church Finances

Budget

The Finance Committee, the staff, and each of the committees and teams shall submit an estimated amount for their line items. The Finance Committee will prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for members' use.

It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its cause with regular, proportionate gifts. Annually there shall be opportunity provided to secure commitments of financial support from the church members.

The Finance Committee will meet and review monthly financial statements. It shall be the duty of the Finance Committee to report to the Church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding months. The Finance Committee reports and records will be audited annually by an auditing committee and every two (2) to five (5) years by a paid public accounting firm.

Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer, or his/her designee, and be properly recorded on the books of the Church.

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

The trustees shall be authorized to select and designate such depository or depositories for the funds and securities of the Church as they shall deem proper, upon recommendation of the Finance Committee. All checks, notes, and contracts of the Church, and all orders for deposit or withdrawal of securities from the designated depository or depositories shall be signed by the church treasurer or someone authorized by the Church.

Fiscal Year

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

Indebtedness

Any action, other than routine church operations, that places the Church in financial debt \$30,000.00 or less will require a simple majority, and a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required for a debt over \$30,000.00 of members present at a regular or special meeting.

Operation and Dissolution

This Church is organized and operated primarily for the purpose of engaging in religious worship or promoting the spiritual development or well-being of individuals. It is to be operated in a way that does not result in accrual of distributable profits, realization of private gain resulting from payment of compensation in excess of a reasonable allowance for salary or other compensation for services rendered, or realization of any other form of private gain.

The church pledges its assets for use in performing the organization's religious functions. It directs that on discontinuance of the Church by dissolution or otherwise the assets are to be transferred to another church of like faith and order or religious organization, educational organization under Section 501 (c) (3), Internal Revenue code of 1986, as amended or the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Amending the Constitution and By-Laws

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by means of the following procedure:

1. Any proposed amendment shall be presented in writing at a regular church business meeting. At this first meeting the proposed amendment shall be eligible for discussion, but not for a vote.
 - a. Any committee, team or individual may make a proposal for an amendment.
 - b. The pastor, staff, or deacons, may recommend a committee to explore the need for and proper wording of any new amendment.
2. The pastor, staff or deacon representative of the church shall make available at public worship to the membership the proposed amendment for no fewer than three (3) Sundays.
3. The pastor, staff or deacon representative of the church shall announce in every worship service for no fewer than two (2) consecutive Sundays the date, time, and location of the business meeting at which the proposed amendment will be considered for adoption.
4. During the business meeting the moderator and congregation shall provide reasonable time for discussion of any proposed amendment.
5. Amendments to this Constitution and By-Laws shall be by a ballot vote with at least a quorum present at the time of the vote. The amendment shall be accepted and ratified with three-fourths vote of church members who are qualified to vote and are present voting in the affirmative.

Appendix A, Deacon's Role

As a member of First Baptist Church I believe God has called me to serve as a deacon and with all humility commit myself to faithful service unto the Lord and His church. I will seek to adhere to the qualifications set forth in God's Word for this position. (Acts 6: 1-7, 1 Timothy 3: 8-13) In so doing, I affirm the following:

- 1) I have personally put my faith and trust in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. As an outward symbol of this salvation, I have been scripturally baptized by immersion. (Rom 10:9, Matt. 28:19).
- 2) I believe the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God. Moreover, I believe such doctrines as the virgin birth, the blood atonement of Jesus, the bodily resurrection of Christ, His literal Second Coming, and the reality of both heaven and hell to be true. His Word is my guide and authority. (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1: 20 - 21).
- 3) I believe salvation and eternal life come only by grace through faith in Christ, as there is no other way to heaven. (John 14:6, Acts 4:12).
- 4) I will seek to be consistently involved in the services and ministries of my church and to model servant leadership in not only my role as a deacon, but in every area of ministry within the church to which God leads me. In addition to serving as a deacon I will seek to have at least one other area of ministry in my church. (Heb. 10:24-25, Heb. 12:28).
- 5) I will seek to develop the character quality of being a cheerful giver, recognizing that God uses His people for the advancement of His kingdom. (Lev. 27:30, Mal.3:8-10, 2 Cor. 9:7).
- 6) I will seek to work with the pastor God leads to shepherd our church and to cooperate in a spirit of humility to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord. (1 Thess. 5:12-13).
- 7) I will seek to be a witness for Jesus Christ and desire to grow in the area of sharing His plan of salvation to anyone as the Holy Spirit leads. (Matt. 28:18-20, 1 Peter 3:15).
- 8) I will strive to be the faithful husband, father, and spiritual leader God has called me to be. In humility I will be a servant/leader in my home, guiding my wife and children to support God's work in our church. I am confident my wife will be a supportive asset to my service, as well as to our church leadership, in her speech conduct and faithfulness. (1 Tim. 3:4, 1 Tim. 3:11).
- 9) I will seek to grow in my walk with God and to develop the regular habit of prayer, Bible study, and devotions. (Col. 2:6).
- 10) In recognition that certain behaviors can be a stumbling block to unbelievers, as well as young believers, if asked by fellow deacons or my pastor, I will be willing to refrain from any questionable practice that might hinder my witness and testimony for the Lord. (Rom. 14:21, 1 Cor. 8:9-12).
- 11) I commit, furthermore, to resign the office of deacon if my fellow deacons and pastor deem my conduct inappropriate or if my circumstances render me ineffective for service.

Appendix B, Sunday School Teacher Role

As a member of First Baptist Church, believing that the privilege of guiding others in their discovery and application of Scripture is worthy of my best, I will:

- 1) Continually develop my personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Mark 10:21).
- 2) Prioritize my conduct in keeping with the principles of the Bible and seek the Holy Spirit's help in my life (Eph. 4:1).
- 3) Maintain a Christ-like witness by abstaining from strong and excess drink, sexual immorality, unwholesome speech, gambling, etc. (James 1:22; Eph. 5:18).
- 4) Be faithful to my class by being punctual and, in case of an unavoidable absence, securing a replacement teacher (1 Cor. 4:2).
- 5) Take the required time I need each week to prepare the teaching session and seek to incorporate my own gifts in my teaching (2 Tim. 2:15).
- 6) Use the Bible as my main curriculum resource and help my class discover and apply the truth of Scripture (Ps. 119:16).
- 7) Seek to build community in my class by helping class members and prospects know one another and support each other in prayer, fellowship, and ministry (Gal. 6:2; Acts 2:46).
- 8) Contact prospects and absentee members on a regular basis (Matt. 10:6, 1 Thess. 2:8).
- 9) Make sharing my faith a regular part of my daily life (Matt. 28:19, Luke 19:10).
- 10) Attend regularly scheduled Sunday School teacher meetings, worship service, and business meetings at FBCK and will only teach the approved curriculum provided by FBCK (Heb. 10:25).
- 11) Participate thoughtfully in Sunday School training and planning meetings (Luke 14: 28-30, 2 Tim. 2:15).
- 12) Personally support the overall ministry of my church through my prayers, financial giving, and regular participation in worship and fellowship (1 Thess. 5:17; Mal. 3:10 ; Heb. 10:25).
Note: Any class funds are contributions over and above the Church budget.
- 13) Lead my class members toward complete participation in the ministries of my church (1 Cor. 4:16, 17).
- 14) Understand that the head of the Body is Christ and that the Sunday School Class is a part of the Body.
- 15) I commit to resign my position of teacher if the Sunday School Director and Pastor deem my conduct or teaching have become ineffective or hurtful to the Church.

With God's help, I will seek to do my best in fulfilling this commitment:

Appendix C, Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We, members of the First Baptist Church of Kerens, Texas, believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

I commit to uphold the biblical, God mandated idea of marriage and sexuality.

Pastor: _____ Date: _____

Chairman of the Deacons: _____ Date: _____

Deacon Body:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Appendix D, The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the

world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will

in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his

wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Appendix E, Fundamental Doctrines

“He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” (Titus 1:9, ESV)

The Bible itself reveals what is important and essential to the Christian faith. These essentials are the deity of Christ, salvation by God’s grace and not by works, salvation through Jesus Christ alone, the resurrection of Christ, the Gospel, monotheism and the Holy Trinity.

The deity of Christ. Quite simply, Jesus is God. While Jesus never directly says, “I am God” in the Scriptures, He makes it very clear to those around Him, especially the Pharisees and Sadducees that He is God. John 10:30 says, “I and the Father are one.” Jesus was claiming deity, and, interestingly enough, He did not deny that He was God. Another example is John 20:28, when Thomas says, “My Lord and my God!” Again, Jesus does not correct Him by saying that He is not God. There are many other examples one can find in the Scriptures regarding Jesus’ rightful place in heaven.

Salvation by grace. We are all sinners separated from God and deserving of eternal punishment for our sin. Jesus’ death on the cross paid for the sins of mankind, giving us access to heaven and an eternal relationship with God. God did not have to do this for us, but He loves us so much that He sacrificed His only Son. This is grace, and it is most definitely undeserved favor. Scripture tells us, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). There is nothing we can do to earn God’s favor or gain access to heaven apart from His grace.

Salvation through Jesus Christ alone. Eventually, we are all going to stand before God when we die, no matter what faith we are. It is there that we will be judged for what we have or have not done while we were alive and whether Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives. For the majority of people, this will be a terrible occasion, as most will not know Him or be known by Him. For these people, hell will be the final destination. But God in His mercy has provided all of us the only means for salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 tells us that “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” This passage speaks of the name of Jesus and His saving power. Another example is found in the book of John. Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). No one gets into heaven except by faith in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ on his or her behalf.

The resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is, perhaps, the most important event in Jesus’ life. Jesus died and then after three days came back to life and rose again to reappear to His followers in bodily form. Jesus had already demonstrated His ability to resurrect others such as His friend Lazarus. But now God the Father had resurrected Him to display His awesome power and glory. This amazing fact is what separates the Christian faith from all others. All other religions are based on works or a powerless deity or person. The leaders of all other religions die and remain dead. The Christian faith is based on Christ crucified and resurrected to life. “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (1

Corinthians 15:14). Lastly, to deny Christ's bodily resurrection (John 2:19-21) is to deny that Jesus' work here on earth was a satisfactory offering to God for the sins of mankind.

The gospel. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul spells out what the gospel is and how important it is to embrace it and share it with others. He reminds the Corinthians of the gospel he preached among them: "That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." This is the essence of the gospel. Paul also warns us to be wary of the many "false gospels" that are being offered to the unsuspecting: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8-9). The pure gospel of Jesus Christ—His death on the cross for sinners and His resurrection to everlasting life—is central to the Christian faith.

Monotheism. Quite simply, there is only one God. Exodus 20:3 states very powerfully, "You shall have no other gods before me." Monotheism is the belief that there is only one God to be worshipped and served. "'You are my witnesses,' declares the LORD, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me'" (Isaiah 43:10). Here we see that we are to "believe" and "understand" that God lives and is one. A Christian will know that there is only one God, the God of the Bible. All other "gods" are false and are no gods at all. "For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (1 Corinthians 8:5-6).

The Holy Trinity. While the concept of a "three-in-one God" is not represented by a single verse or passage, it is described frequently throughout Scripture. If we look at Matthew 28:19, we see the verse calling out the Trinity: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." While this verse mentions all three Persons of the triune God, it does not call them the Trinity. So to understand the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, we must look at the "totality" of Scripture and glean from it the definition. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, we see how this comes together: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone." Again, we see all three Persons being represented but not titled the Holy Trinity.

Faith. The essentials of Christianity would not be complete without the ingredient that binds everything together—faith. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). As Christians we live by this verse with the understanding that we believe in a God we cannot see. But we see His work in our lives and all around us in His creation. We do all of this through faith because we know that faith pleases God. "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Taken from the [Moody Handbook of Theology](#)

Appendix F, Acknowledgement of Receipt

I acknowledge I have read the Statement of Faith, Statement on Marriage and Sexuality, Constitution and By-Laws, and the Fundamental Doctrine of the First Baptist Church Kerens.

Name: _____

Date: _____