



Trinity Baptist Church

CARMEL, INDIANA

CONSTITUTION

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Mission Statement

We are a Gospel family committed to being and making disciples of Jesus for the glory of God.

Philosophy of Ministry

The Gospel. . .

- is the good news that Jesus came to save sinners through His substitutionary death and bodily resurrection
- is the truth that continues to shape our lives as disciples of Jesus
- is the story of the Bible about God's redemptive plan in Jesus to renew all things
- is at the heart of all that we believe, teach, and practice
- is the message that offers salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone

The Church is a family who. . .

- is a diverse and redeemed people unified in Jesus
- is growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ
- worships God in Spirit and in truth
- is committed to intentionally sharing our lives with each other
- expresses mutual care and encouragement
- lives out the truths of the Gospel with one another
- practices believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper
- reflects the Gospel in the roles of men, women, and children
- depends on God through prayer
- joyfully and generously gives to each other and to the local church

We make disciples by speaking the gospel. . .

- where God has placed us in our families, communities, neighborhoods, and workplace
- and by participating in God's mission to form a new humanity
- and blessing others as God has blessed us
- and intentionally loving and serving those around us in practicing acts of mercy, kindness, and generosity
- and supporting and sending others around the world for the furtherance of the Gospel

A Summary of TBC's Statement of Faith

Note: numbers in parentheses are references to pages in the 1689 London Baptist Confession.

Theology Proper (doctrine of God)

We believe in the one true God of the Bible Who exists in three eternal distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Although God is fully sufficient, holy, and sovereign over all, He chooses to interact with His creation. (14-15)

Christology (doctrine of Jesus Christ)

We believe that Jesus Christ was pre-existent but came to earth, being born of a virgin. He is both fully God and fully man. The Father sent His only Son to redeem, call, justify, sanctify, and glorify those whom He had chosen to be His children from eternity past. Christ died, having lived a sinless life, for sinful men. (23-26)

Pneumatology (doctrine of the Holy Spirit)

We believe the Holy Spirit is truly and eternally God. He indwells all believers and places His seal on them from the moment of their salvation. He illumines believers so they might understand the Scriptures and grow in personal holiness. (15)

Bibliology (doctrine of the Bible)

We believe the sixty-six books of the Bible are inspired by God and are inerrant and infallible in the original writings. They are sufficient to provide all we need for life and salvation; thus, they are the final authority in matters of faith and practice. (11-14)

Anthropology (doctrine of Man)

We believe man was created in the image and likeness of God for the purpose of glorifying Him. Man was originally created with the ability to obey God's commands but chose not to. (21-22)

Hamartiology (doctrine of Sin)

We believe that because Adam chose to sin, death, condemnation, and a sinful nature were brought upon all his offspring. Thus, every man and woman is born a sinner, is totally depraved, and is totally unable to please God or seek after Him. (21-22)

Soteriology (doctrine of Salvation)

We believe that because all men are totally unable to believe unto salvation by the exercise of their own will, salvation is a product of the sovereign grace of God. Thus, in eternity past God chose some persons to be His own. This election was according to His sovereign purpose alone and was not conditioned on any foreseen faith or merit of those chosen. Christ died for the purpose of securing the salvation of those chosen. Those for whom Christ died are regenerated by sovereign grace and are thus made willing and able to come to Christ in faith. Those genuinely saved will persevere in the Christian life until the end. (32-34)

Ecclesiology (doctrine of the Church)

We believe the church is both universal (all believers everywhere) and local (believers gathered in a common locality). Christ is the Head of the church and has given each local church the authority necessary for conducting forms of worship and discipline that are in harmony with the Word of God and in submission to the authority of Christ. The local church, being governed by duly authorized elders, gathers for worship, edification, fellowship, service, and observance of the two ordinances (baptism and communion). (49-53)

Eschatology (doctrine of Last Things)

We believe Christ will one day return to the earth in sovereign rule and final judgment. The righteous will enjoy eternal life with Christ, and the wicked will endure everlasting punishment. (59-60)

Covenant

Having been brought by God's sovereign grace to repent of our sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give ourselves up to Him, and having been baptized as believers in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we do now, humbly and joyfully renew this covenant together by God's grace.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others. We will give to this church a preeminence over all human endeavors and institutions as the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, walking together in brotherly love, exercising affectionate care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully admonishing and entreating one another as the occasion may require.

We will be slow to take offense, quick to forgive others, and always ready for reconciliation. Moreover, we will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each others' burdens and sorrows.

We will seek, by God's grace, to engage regularly in the spiritual disciplines of Word and prayer, be quick to confess and repent of our sins, to live carefully in the world, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; remembering that, as we have been buried and raised with Christ in baptism, so there is a new obligation to lead a holy and faithful life for the glory of God. We will endeavor to bring up our children and any others under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by speaking the truth in love, seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will seek to demonstrate in our marriages the relationship between Christ and His church, husbands loving and leading their wives as Christ is with the church, and wives submitting and respecting their husbands as the church is with Christ.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful Gospel ministry in this church as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipleship, discipline, doctrines, and submit to its elders as the Lord has placed them to shepherd our souls. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry and for the spread of the Gospel to all nations so that Christ might be preeminent in all things.

We purpose that if we leave this church, we will inform those who are charged with caring for our souls and make every effort to leave peaceably with those in the body of Christ. Likewise, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church of like faith and order where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the truth of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Constitution

Revised May 2000; October 2014; April 2017; October 2022

Preamble

We, the members of the Trinity Baptist Church of Carmel, Indiana, Inc., desiring to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus Christ, to foster the spirit of harmony, to promote good order in the church, and to better set forth our position before the world, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED,

That, beginning October 30, 2022, we shall be governed by the following Constitution and By-laws, such action making void any preceding Constitution(s).

Article I—Name

This organization shall be known as First Baptist Church of Carmel, Indiana, Inc., doing business as Trinity Baptist Church of Carmel, IN, under the laws of the State of Indiana.

Article II—Association

This church has Christ as its Head, and it shall not be subject to any other entity outside itself. It may associate in fellowship with those of like faith or practice and may declare itself in agreement with others in a common cause. Under no circumstances shall such association or agreement ever be construed as bringing this church under the authority of any person, group, or body outside itself. In the event of an attempt to so interpret its association to any person, group, or body outside itself, the original action or actions which declared such association or agreement shall immediately and automatically be deemed null and void.

Article III—Membership

A. Membership in this church shall be limited to regenerate believers who have received baptism by immersion subsequent to regeneration.

- B. Applicants for membership, whether by letter, baptism, or experience, shall be interviewed by the elders concerning their salvation, baptism, and Christian life. All applicants shall be in substantial agreement with the Statement of Faith. Additionally, the elders shall receive from the applicants their written intention to abide by and be governed by the Philosophy of Ministry, Covenant, and Constitution of the church; to support the church with financial contributions; and to personally attend its activities. The elders shall make a recommendation to the church for the applicant's reception for membership; otherwise the applicant's name shall not come before the church.
- C. Applicants shall be received into membership of this church on a majority vote of the members of the congregation. A vote to receive anyone into the membership of the church may be taken at any regular service of the church or at a duly called members' meeting. (4-2017)
- D. The elders shall seek to aid erring and delinquent members to restoration. They may recommend proper action to the church in relation to erring or delinquent members who refuse to show evidence of repentance. A majority vote in a regular or duly called members' meeting shall be sufficient for discipline or dismissal. The procedures and principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5 shall be followed. (4-2017)
- E. Letters of dismissal may be granted to any member in good and regular standing. Such letters must be addressed to some particular church of the same faith and order as this church and sent by our clerk to the church to which the member is dismissed. Members not in good and regular standing, or those desiring to unite with a church not of our faith and order, may be given a certificate of standing to date.
- F. Members absenting themselves from the regular services of the church for a period of six months shall have automatically excluded themselves from membership in this church. Exceptions to this rule shall apply in cases of illness or infirmity, missionary and Christian service, absence due to military service, and temporary employment not involving a permanent relocation. Such exceptions shall be granted by the elders. (4-2017)
- G. In summary, individuals are received into and dismissed from the membership of the church by means of congregational vote upon the recommendation of the elders. Exceptions to

dismissal by congregational vote are death, absence for six months, and failure to submit a written declaration as described above. In such cases dismissal is automatic. In no case is termination of membership accomplished by resignation. (4-2017)

Article IV—Officers

A. The officers of this church shall be elders and deacons.

B. The Office of Elder

1. There shall be a distinction made between elders whose vocation is the eldership and elders whose vocation is something other than the eldership (1 Timothy 5:17). These will be called vocational elders and non-vocational elders, respectively. (10-2014)
2. The church shall elect from its membership men who are qualified and willing to serve as non-vocational elders. These elders' term of service will be four years; however, terms of service may be adjusted so that generally not more than fifty percent of the non-vocational elders' terms expire in the same year. Vocational elders will serve indefinite limits, subject to the requirement of item B.9 of this Article. The total number of elders will vary depending on the needs of the congregation and availability of qualified men. (10-2014)
3. The qualifications for the office of elder shall be such as prescribed by 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Non-vocational elders shall be chosen from among men who meet these qualifications and who have been members of the church in good and regular standing for at least one year prior to consideration for office. (10-2014)
4. All elders shall be in substantial agreement with the Statement of Faith of this church and shall subscribe to the doctrines of grace commonly referred to as Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints. (8-2010; 10-2014)
5. The general duties of elders shall be overseeing, managing, and shepherding the congregation. The elders are the authority and decision-making body in the congregation. They are to be submitted unto and followed as sheep follow a shepherd, so long as the direction of leadership is within the bounds of Scripture.

6. Notice for the proposed calling of a vocational elder shall be announced at least one week in advance, and such announcement shall be made in at least one Sunday worship service. Voting shall be by ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for extending a call. Consideration shall be given to only one candidate at a time. The board of elders shall serve as the search committee and shall make a unanimous recommendation to the congregation. (10-2014)
7. The qualifications for a vocational elder are those cited for an elder in B.3 (with the exception of length of membership). If a vocational elder candidate is in disagreement with any area of the church's Statement of Faith, that disagreement shall be made known to the congregation. (10-2014)
8. A vocational elder shall give notice in writing to the church of his intention to terminate his service as a vocational elder at least thirty days in advance, but not to exceed ninety days in advance. (10-2014)
9. Dismissal of a vocational elder will be effected upon a unanimous decision of the other elders that is confirmed by congregational vote. (10-2014)
 - a. The church shall give ninety days notice as to the effective date of such termination of a vocational elder's service. However, upon mutual agreement between the vocational elder and church, the length of time of notice required may be altered. (10-2014)
 - b. The elders retain the prerogative of immediately dismissing a vocational elder, without advance notice, for a practice that is biblically disqualifying. (10-2014)
10. Non-vocational elders may be dismissed from office in accordance with the same general provisions for dismissing a vocational elder.
11. In the event the number of non-vocational elders is less than two, the elders shall seek input from the deacons in the exercise of their oversight and management of the affairs of the congregation. This shall be done in order to enhance the decision-making process and promote quality care of the congregation.
12. The elders shall determine who will be the chairman of the board of elders. (10-2014)

C. The Office of Deacon

1. The church shall elect from its membership men who are qualified and willing to serve as deacons. Each deacon's term of service will be three years; however, terms of service may be adjusted so that generally not more than fifty percent of the deacons' terms expire in the same year. The total number of deacons will vary depending on the needs of the congregation and availability of qualified men. (10-2014)
2. The qualifications for the office of deacon shall be such as prescribed by 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons shall be chosen from among men who meet these qualifications and who have been members of the church in good and regular standing for at least one year prior to consideration for office.
3. The general duties of deacons shall be to serve as assistants to the elders and as servants of the congregation. They shall serve in close association with the elders, receiving delegated tasks and authority in areas the elders deem appropriate.
4. Deacons may be dismissed from office in accordance with the same general provisions for dismissing a member of the pastoral staff.
5. Deacons may choose necessary leaders from among their numbers and will keep the elders informed of their activities.

D. Election Procedures

1. The elders shall annually consider who might be qualified office bearers. This review shall include both a written questionnaire and a personal interview of those the elders believe to be possible office bearers. After determining if qualified individuals are willing to accept nomination, the elders, at their discretion, will place qualified names in nomination. The names of these nominees will be published not later than four Sundays prior to the annual election so that members of the congregation may raise any concerns regarding the qualifications of any nominee. Such concerns shall be handled in accordance with the general procedures outlined in Matthew 18:15. Each nominee will be voted upon individually for a specific office (elder or deacon) without consideration of any other nominee. A majority of votes cast will be required to place a nominee into office. Voting will be accomplished by ballot.

2. Elders and deacons may also be elected at any time during the year as deemed appropriate and necessary by the incumbent elders. Election procedures analogous to those of the annual election shall be adhered to as closely as possible.

Article V—Business Affairs/Administration

- A. Each year the elders shall appoint a clerk, a financial secretary, a treasurer, and other positions deemed necessary for the efficient management and oversight of the church. Written job descriptions shall be maintained for all such appointments.
- B. The elders shall meet on a regular, published basis. Elder meetings shall be open meetings with the exception of matters of discipline and other sensitive items. Special meetings may be called at such times as it is deemed necessary. A quorum shall consist of at least fifty-one percent of the total number of elders. A summary of the minutes of the elders' meetings shall be presented at the quarterly members' meetings of the church as part of the elders' report. (4-2017)
- C. The elders shall maintain a policy book accessible to all members and keep it in the church office. This book shall contain the official church policies governing various matters of church life.
- D. The deacons may choose necessary leaders from among their number and will keep the elders informed of their activities.
- E. The deacons may organize and meet as they see fit in order to accomplish their responsibilities.
- F. There shall be a regular members' meeting during each quarter of the fiscal year in conjunction with a regularly scheduled service. The elders shall set the date and time of this meeting and shall publish it one week in advance. The annual election of officers shall take place in the fourth quarter each fiscal year. Special members' meetings may be called at any time provided public notice is given at a service on the Lord's Day. The reception of members into the church can be carried out at any regular service of the church as well as at duly called members' meetings. (4-2008) (4-2017)

- G. For the purposes of this constitution, the regular services of the church shall be considered to mean the weekly services which normally appear on the schedule of the church and which are not distinctly specified as being limited to a group other than the entire membership of the church.
- H. A quorum for a members' meeting shall be constituted when not less than ten percent of the voting membership is present. Voting shall normally take place during members' meetings with the right of vote extended only to members who are present. Alternate voting procedures such as absentee balloting or voting at a polling place may be authorized by the elders as necessary for the efficient operation of the church. (4-2017)
- I. The elders will determine who among the elders will lead members' meetings. (10-2014) (4-2017)
- J. In summary, the elders shall request a congregational vote for the following matters: amendment of the constitution, reception and discipline of members, dissolution of the corporation, calling and dismissal of a vocational elder (subject to Article IV.B.9), debt authorization, and election of officers. (8-2010; 10-2014)

Article VI—Finances

- A. The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of each year.
- B. All church money shall be disbursed by means other than cash except for small amounts which may be disbursed through a petty cash fund or by exception made by the elders.
- C. The books of the church shall be reviewed upon turnover of the treasurer or as deemed appropriate by the elders.
- D. No money shall be raised by the church or an auxiliary organization except by freewill giving. Exceptions may be granted by the elders.
- E. The annual church budget will be reviewed and approved by the elders. The elders shall also publish the budget in conjunction with a regularly scheduled service of the church. (4-2008)
- F. No financial obligation shall be placed upon the church either as a mortgage, note, or outstanding bill, or in any other form, unless money is in hand to meet the same, except by

corporate act of the church. However, the elders shall have the authority to make reasonable and proper expenditures without special permission from the church.

- G. The elders serve as the officers who manage the business and legal concerns of the corporation. They may delegate various duties as they see fit, subject to the remainder of the church constitution.
- H. The elders shall determine and annually review pastoral staff employment arrangements such as, but not restricted to, salary, allowances, benefits, vacations, holidays, absences from the pulpit for extra-church ministries, sick leave, study leave, emergency leave, training seminars, denominational conferences, etc.

Article VII—Missions

- A. It shall be the policy of this church to support only missionary enterprises and schools that are known to be in substantial agreement with our Statement of Faith both in doctrine and practice.
- B. No missionary, missionary organization, school, or other institution shall be supported by any church organization or the church body without the approval of the elders.

Article VIII—Sunday Bible School

This organization shall have as its purpose the teaching of the Bible with emphasis on a program to teach each age group on its own level. It shall be responsible to the elders or their designee, and shall be in no sense independent of the church, even though it may select leaders as necessary for efficient operation. (8-2010)

Article IX—Auxiliary Organizations

- A. There may be such other organizations as the most efficient accomplishment of our purpose shall require, but none shall be initiated without the consent of the elders. Such organizations may be self-governing but always subject to the control of the church through its constitution and policy. All leaders shall be members of this church.

- B. Selected elders, or their designees, shall be ex officio members of all committees, boards, and auxiliary organizations of the church.

Article X—Amendments

- A. This constitution may be amended by a majority vote at a regularly called members' meeting of the church, provided that notice of a proposal to amend shall have been given from the pulpit for the two Sundays prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment shall be considered. All amendments shall be proposed to the congregation only upon the recommendation of the elders. (4-2017)
- B. The elders possess authority to make temporary exceptions to operational policy and constitutional guidance as are necessary and reasonable.
- C. Dissolution Clause—In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated, by corporate vote prior to dissolution, to such other not-for-profit religious organizations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith adopted by this church, and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (Section 501 C-3).