



FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH
ROOSEVELT

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

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First Baptist Church Roosevelt
1413 County Rd 3300, Lubbock, TX 79403

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PREAMBLE

We, the members of First Baptist Church, Roosevelt, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I - Name

The name of this church shall be "First Baptist Church, Roosevelt, in Lubbock County, Texas."

ARTICLE II - Purpose

The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Holy Scriptures by promoting His worship, by-building up the saints and by evangelizing lost sinners. To this end, we are committed to proclaiming God's perfect Word and His glorious Gospel of grace in Christ Jesus throughout the world, and to defending the "faith once delivered unto the saints." (Matt. 9:37-38; 28:19-20; Mk. 13:10; 16:15; Luke 4:8; Acts 26:20; Rom. 14:19; Eph. 2.8-10; 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 3:16-17; 4:1-2; Jude 3)

ARTICLE III - Statement of Faith

I. The Holy Scriptures

We believe and teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Cor. 2:7-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

We believe and teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed.

We believe and teach that the Bible constitutes the only necessary and infallible rule of faith and practice and is sufficient for all things pertaining to life and godliness (Matt. 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:3, 20-21).

We believe and teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Pet. 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16).

We believe and teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation - the author's originally intended meaning, which is binding on all generations. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). The literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation insists on following the normal rules for interpreting all literature, including the priority of context, the normal meaning of words and figures of speech, the rules of grammar and syntax, and the historical context in which the book or passage was written. Although some things in Scripture are hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:16), it

is sufficiently clear so that when we diligently apply these principles, we are able to discover its meaning (Ps. 19:7; 119:130; Matt. 12:3, 5; 19:14; 21:42; 22:31)—especially in those matters that pertain to salvation (2 Tim. 3:15; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23).

II. God

We believe and teach that there is but one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5-7; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6), an infinite, all-knowing, self-existent Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience.

A. God the Father

We believe and teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and executes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps. 145:8-9; 1 Cor. 8:6). He initiated the creation of all things in six literal days (Gen. 1:1-31; Ex. 31:17; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9), including the special creation of man and woman (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:5-25). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:36). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph. 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chron. 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Hab. 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He diminish or destroy the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Pet. 1:17).

We believe and teach His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Acts 17:28-29; Eph. 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:18). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph. 1:4-6); He saves from sin and adopts all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He becomes, upon their adoption, their spiritual Father (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9).

B. God the Son

We believe and teach that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial (of one and the same essence), and coeternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).

We believe and teach that God the Father created all things according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by Whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).

We believe and teach that, in the incarnation (God becoming man), the second Person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Phil. 2:5-8).

We believe and teach that in the incarnation Christ surrendered only His preincarnate glory (John 17:5) and the independent exercise of the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-Man (Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9), yet without sin (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26).

We believe and teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Mic. 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Col. 2:9).

We believe and teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate, very God and very man (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Ps. 2:7-9; Isa. 9:6; John 1:29; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 7:25-26; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

We believe and teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His perfect obedience (Rom. 5:19) and through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross. His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:24).

We believe and teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Rom. 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18).

We believe and teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He has ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matt. 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Rom. 4:25; 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

We believe and teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross (Rom. 1:4). Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom. 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23).

We believe and teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His Body, unto Himself at the rapture, and returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20).

We believe and teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23):

- He will evaluate the faithfulness of believers at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).
- He will judge those who survive the Tribulation at the Second Coming (Matt. 25:31-46).
- He will judge the unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne on the basis of their works and condemn them to the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

He alone is the Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), the Head of His Body the church (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the throne of David (Isa. 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matt. 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

C. God the Holy Spirit

We believe and teach that the Holy Spirit, the third Member of the Trinity, is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (1 Cor. 2:10-13), emotions (Eph.4:30), will (1 Cor. 12:11), eternity (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), omniscience (Isa. 40:13-14), omnipotence (Rom. 15:13), and truthfulness (John

16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial (of one and the same essence) with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17).

We believe and teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Matt. 1:18), the written revelation (2 Pet. 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, regenerating the elect, persuading, and enabling them to embrace Jesus Christ by faith, and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22).

We believe and teach that the Holy Spirit came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) at Pentecost to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration (John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5), baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13).

We believe and teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher, who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible (2 Pet. 1:19-21; John 16:13). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation (Rom. 8:9), and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit through His Word (Rom. 8:9; Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16; 1 John 2:20, 27).

We believe and teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 3:18).

We believe and teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today, and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of all believers or normative in the church age (1 Cor. 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12; Heb. 2:1-4). All the biblical miraculous sign gifts have ceased.

III. Man

We believe and teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9). God created man as a two-part being: a material body and an immaterial soul or spirit (Matt. 6:25; 10:28; Rom. 8:10).

We believe and teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11).

We believe and teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual, physical, and eternal death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

We believe and teach that, because all men were in Adam as their legal representative, the real guilt for Adam's sin and a corrupt nature have been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

IV. Salvation

We believe and teach that salvation is wholly of God's grace, on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ and the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of any human merit or works (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

A. Regeneration

We believe and teach that regeneration is a supernatural work by which the Holy Spirit imparts new spiritual life (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the Spirit's power through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24; Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23). As a result, the Holy Spirit enables the sinner to respond in faith and repentance to the divine provision of salvation (Acts 16:14). Righteous attitudes and conduct along with good works are the proper evidence and fruit of genuine regeneration (Matt. 3:8; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:10) and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Eph. 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12b; Col. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).

We believe and teach that the believer's pursuit of Christlikeness climaxes in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

B. Election

We believe and teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4-11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:1-2).

We believe and teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Rom. 9:22-23; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Rev. 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48).

We believe and teach that the unmerited favor God grants to totally depraved sinners in election is unconditional (Rom. 9:10-18; Eph. 1:4). That is, it is not conditioned on or related to any human initiative or to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will (Matt. 11:21) but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Eph. 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 1:2).

We believe and teach that election is not based merely on sovereignty in an abstract sense, as if God chooses in isolation from all that He is. God is truly sovereign, but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Rom. 9:11-16). A proper understanding of divine sovereignty in election will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character, as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:25-28; 2 Tim. 1:9).

C. Justification

We believe and teach that justification before God is a gracious act of God (Rom. 8:33) by which He instantaneously forgives and declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 4:1-8; 2 Cor. 7:10; Isa. 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11). This new status or standing of righteous before God is totally unearned and apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom. 3:20, 28; 4:5-6; Gal. 2:16).

Justification consists of the imputation of our sins to Christ (Is. 53:4-6; Col. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (Rom. 5:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

D. Sanctification

We believe and teach that every believer is positionally or definitively sanctified (set apart) unto God at salvation and is therefore declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This sanctification is instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. Positional sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2).

We believe and teach that the believer is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, progressively sanctified. Through this gradual process, the state of the believer increasingly draws closer to the standing he enjoys positionally through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 5:23). Although Christians at times behave in a carnal or fleshly way (1 Cor. 3:1-4), we deny that the normative or permanent state of a true believer can be carnal or fleshly. All believers without exception are engaged in progressive sanctification by the power of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 12:14).

In this respect, we believe and teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new person he is in Christ doing battle against the flesh—that part of him that remains unredeemed with its beachhead in the body. But adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. However, although eradication of sin is not possible, the Holy Spirit does provide for our victory over sin (Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Phil. 3:12; Col. 3:9-10; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

E. Security

We believe and teach that all the redeemed, once saved, persevere in their faith because they are kept by God's power, and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet. 1:5; Jude 24).

We believe and teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian security as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Rom. 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

F. Separation

We believe and teach that both the Old and New Testaments call for separation from sin, but that the Scriptures clearly indicate in the last days apostasy and worldliness will increase (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

We believe and teach that, out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us, and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that God commands our separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices (Rom. 12:1-2, 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

We believe and teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:11-12; Heb. 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:2-12), a continual pursuit of holiness (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10), and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24).

V. The Church

We believe and teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the church (1 Cor. 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18).

We believe and teach that the formation of the church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

We believe and teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Eph. 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Cor. 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6; 5:32).

We believe and teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Cor. 11:18-20; Heb. 10:25).

We believe and teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all

appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:1-2) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) and carry out their service in a godly manner (1 Pet. 5:1-5).

We believe and teach that these men lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Tim. 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Heb. 13:7, 17). At the same time, their leadership must be characterized by a servant's heart (Matt. 18:10-14; 1 Thess. 2:5-7; 1 Pet. 5:3). The Elder's primary role is to equip the saints for the work of service which results in the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).

We believe and teach the importance of discipleship (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matt. 18:5-14), as well as the need for the discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matt. 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16). We believe and teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). It is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders of a local church are responsible to determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Cor. 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:14).

We believe and teach that the ultimate purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21), which is accomplished only as the church carries out its biblically assigned mission. The church's primary mission to God is to worship Him and to serve as the pillar and support of His truth (1 Tim. 3:14-15). Its mission to itself is to ensure the mutual care and edification of its members, by instruction in the Word (2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3), and by the regular practice of the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42). Its mission to the world is to make disciples of all the nations, by communicating the gospel, baptizing them, and by teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

We believe and teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:7-12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:58; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11), calling all saints to the work of service (1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 4:12; Rev. 22:12).

We believe and teach that there were two kinds of gifts given to the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Heb. 2:3-4; 2 Cor. 12:12); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the New Testament revelation now complete, confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary (1 Cor. 13:8-12).

We believe and teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today, but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Cor. 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15). In addition, we believe and teach that the gift of prophecy (in the sense of receiving new revelation directly from God), the gift of tongues, and the gift of the interpretation of tongues have all ceased. However, we acknowledge that miraculous gifts can be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Cor. 13:13-14; Rev. 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are the nonrevelatory, equipping gifts given for edification (Rom. 12:6-8).

We believe and teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Rom. 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We believe and teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Cor. 11:28-32). We also teach that, whereas the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, participation in the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ, who indwells every believer, and so is present, fellowshiping with His people (1 Cor. 10:16).

VI. Angels

A. Holy Angels

We believe and teach that angels are invisible spiritual beings (Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:14; 13:2), who at times can assume bodily form. They were created by God and are therefore not to be worshiped (Rev. 22:8-9). Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Heb. 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Rev. 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9) and they also serve the saints (Heb. 1:14).

B. Fallen Angels

We believe and teach that Satan was the greatest of the created angels and is the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Ezek. 28:11-19; Isa. 14:12-17), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1-15).

We believe and teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isa. 14:13-14; Matt. 4:1-11; John 8:44; Rev. 12:9-10); that he is the prince of this world, who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:20); and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Ezek. 28:11-19; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

VII. Last Things

A. Death

We believe and teach that physical death resulted from sin and is a punishment for sin (Gen. 2:17; 3:19; Rom. 5:12, 17; 6:23). It is the last enemy to be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26). Death

involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev. 6:9-11). The soul of the lost enters conscious punishment (Luke 16:19-26), and the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8). However, at death there is a separation of soul and body (Phil. 1:21-24). For the redeemed, that separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:8).

We believe and teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (Matt. 25:46; John 6:39; Rom. 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Cor. 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan. 12:2; John 5:29; Rev. 20:13-15).

We believe and teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Rev. 20:13-15), when the soul and a resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41-46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

B. The Rapture of the Church

We believe and teach the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thess. 4:16; Titus 2:13) to translate His church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:15-5:11) and, between this event and His glorious second coming with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

C. The Tribulation Period

We believe and teach that immediately following the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matt. 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised, and the living will be judged (Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27; Matt. 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

D. The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

We believe and teach that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His messianic kingdom for 1,000 years on the earth (Rev. 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezek. 37:21-28; Dan. 7:17-22; Rev. 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Dan. 7:17-27; Rev. 20:1-7).

We believe and teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isa. 65:17-25; Ezek. 37:21-28; Zech. 8:1-17) to restore them to the land that they forfeited through their disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matt. 21:43; Rom. 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance and will enter into the land of blessing (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-32; Rom. 11:25-29).

We believe and teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isa. 11; 65:17-25; Ezek. 36:33-38) and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Rev. 20:7).

E. The Judgment of the Lost

We believe and teach that following the release of Satan after the 1,000-year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Rev. 20:9). Following his final defeat, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10). Then Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the unsaved dead, both the great and small, at the Great White Throne Judgment.

We believe and teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection and having received their judgment (John 5:28-29), they will be committed to eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15).

F. Eternity

We believe and teach that after the completion of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God. The elements of this earth will be dissolved (2 Pet. 3:10) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells (Eph. 5:5; Rev. 20:15; 21:27; 22:1-21) and the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Rev. 21:2). This new earth will be the eternal dwelling place of the saints, where they will forever enjoy fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Rev. 21-22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Cor. 15:28).

VIII. Church Distinctives

Every church has its distinctives. They may be carefully thought out and articulated or simply assumed, but there will always be non-negotiable principles that guide the choices and decisions made throughout that church's ministry. At First Baptist Church Roosevelt there are two nonnegotiable distinctives that support and shape all we do: 1) A High View of God and 2) A High View of Scripture.

A. A High View of God

1. A Summary

Although God is immanent—accessible to us as Abba Father—Scripture also teaches He is transcendent—exalted far above us as our Sovereign King. Therefore, He must be treated with profound reverence and respect and never taken lightly (Eccles. 5:1-2; 1 Tim. 1:17; 3:15; 5:21; 6:13-16; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 1:17).

God's transcendence is captured in the attribute we call His *holiness*. God is holy or transcendent in two related, but ultimately distinct ways: He is transcendent in His moral purity and also transcendent in His majesty. He is separate or distinct from and exalted above everything else in the universe (Ex. 15:11; 1 Sam. 2:2; Isa. 8:13; Hos. 11:9).

Our greatest prayer must always be that God's transcendence is seen and known in the worship of this church and that He therefore is both loved and feared (Matt. 6:9, 1 Cor. 14:24-25). It is our profound desire and chief concern that in our worship we treat God as separate, distinct, set apart, majestic, and transcendent. It is only in understanding His transcendence that we can truly see the beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ through which we are reconciled and brought near to such a great and awesome God.

2. God is Sovereign in All Things

Contrary to theological perspectives in which man or even Satan is functionally in control, we believe God is absolutely sovereign over *everything* that happens in His universe. Psalm 103:19 says, "The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all." God has supreme and unfettered freedom and power to act. *Sovereign* is what God *is*—by virtue of being God, He rules. *Providence* is what He *does*—He carries out His rule by actually administering every detail in His creation (Ps. 103:19; Ps. 115:3; Is. 46:10-11; Dan. 4:35; Rom. 8:28).

3. God is sovereign in salvation

A high view of God compels us to believe and teach that God alone acts to effect man's spiritual rescue. Salvation is accomplished by a sovereign act of God alone. At the moment of salvation, God initiates and accomplishes a miracle of new spiritual life called regeneration. It is a divine act of God by His Spirit through the instrument of His Word. Scripture describes God's sovereign work of regeneration as resurrection from spiritual death, a new creation, and spiritual birth (John 1:13; James 1:18-19; 1 Pet. 1:23; Eph. 2:1-6, Col. 2:13; Rom. 4:17; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 4:24, John 3:1).

4. Worshiping God is the chief focus of corporate worship

Although God intends that we benefit greatly from corporate worship, people are not the primary audience. When the church gathers to worship, our primary focus should be on Him. Therefore, our worship services are designed to be God-centered (1 Cor 14:26; Heb 10:23-25).

B. A High View of Scripture

1. A Summary

Since we have such profound respect for God, we also have a profound respect for His Word. The Scripture is in part the reason for the existence of the church. In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul identifies the church as "the pillar and support of the truth"! That truth is found in only one source—His eternal Word. As a pillar, the church exists to hold up the truth. And as a support, the church is the foundation on which the truth rests. The church holds up the truth by teaching it and supports the truth by defending it and passing it on to the next generation. In our desire to be a genuinely biblical church, we hold to an exalted view of Scripture. God has exalted above all things His Name and His Word (Sam. 7:28; Ps. 12:6; 119:151; John 17:17; Ps. 138:2).

A high view of Scripture means we believe and teach several crucial attributes of Scripture.

2. Inspiration

In 2 Tim. 3:16, Paul asserts that “all Scripture is inspired by God,” or is of divine origin. Scripture—all of it, down to the very words—is the product of the breath of God (Ps. 12:6; 119:89; Prov. 30:5; Matt. 4:4; John 17:17; 2 Pet. 1:21).

3. Relevancy

In 2 Tim. 3:16, Paul also insists that all Scripture is profitable, useful, or beneficial. We don’t make the Bible relevant—it simply *is* relevant! If God has breathed out His words to us, how could anything be more relevant (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 4:1-5)?

4. Sufficiency

In 2 Tim. 3:15, Paul describes Scripture as “able to lead you to salvation.” In verse 17, he adds that the Scripture is sufficient to make us adequate, which means “capable, proficient, able to meet all demands.” And Scripture fully *equips us for every good work*—it completely outfits us for spiritual service. It is a sufficient resource for the Spirit to use for both our salvation and sanctification (James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; John 15:3; 17:17; Acts 20:32).

5. Authority

In 2 Tim. 4:1-2, Paul demands that pastors and elders “*preach* the Word.” He uses the primary New Testament word for preaching that means “to proclaim after the manner of a king’s herald.” It carries the connotation of formality, dignity, and gravity. And it explicitly means to speak with authority. Biblical preaching is not a conversation but a proclamation from God Himself that must be heard and obeyed (Titus 2:15).

C. The Chief Implications

1. Scripture is central in the services of our church

In 1 Tim. 4:13-16, Paul instructs Timothy and all church leaders that their chief assignment when the church gathers is to **1)** read the Scripture, **2)** explain the Scripture, and **3)** apply the Scripture. Every other element of corporate worship originates with us and is addressed to God. But when we read and hear the Word of God taught, we are hearing and witnessing a divine work. God speaks to us through His Word. That is why the reformers taught that “the greatest and principal purpose of every church service is to preach and teach God’s Word” and why the central focus in our corporate worship is on preaching the Bible (1 Tim. 4:1-2).¹

2. Scripture alone directs and informs the elements of our worship

The only acceptable worship of God is what Scripture actually prescribes.

This principle—sometimes called the Regulative Principle—grows out of Sola Scriptura: the fact that the Bible is the ultimate and only inspired authority of faith and practice. The Second Commandment explicitly warns how unprescribed forms of worship become idolatry. The regulative principle asks: “Where does Scripture command or sanction this practice?” If Scripture does not, then the practice is not permitted in corporate worship.

Therefore, our worship includes only these biblically mandated elements:

¹ Martin Luther

1. We sing the Scripture—we choose music rooted in the truth of God’s Word (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
2. We pray the Scripture—our prayers grow out of our response to the Scripture (1 Tim. 2:1-8).
3. We read the Scripture (1 Tim. 4:13).
4. We teach the Scripture (1 Tim. 4:13; 6:13-16; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 2:15).
5. We give our freewill offerings to see true scriptural worship supported and extended.
6. We see the Scripture acted out in the signs or ceremonies of:
 - a. Baptism (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38; 2:42; 16:31-33; 18:8).
 - b. The Lord’s Table (1 Cor. 11:23-32).

The fact that these are divine directives adds solemnity to what we do on Sunday, but also great joy because as we do these things with the right heart, we can be confident it honors our God.

3. Consecutive expository preaching is our normal and consistent approach to teaching the Scripture

In Old Testament corporate worship, there was a consistent pattern of the consecutive reading of the law and the prophets, followed by an exposition or explanation of its meaning (Deut. 1:1, 5; Neh. 8:1-8). When you examine the ministry of Jesus, you find that a central focus of His ministry was participation in corporate worship in the weekly synagogue services (Matt. 4:23; Luke 4:14-16, 20, 31, 44; 6:6; 13:10; John 18:20), which centered on the consecutive reading and exposition of the Word of God. Timothy’s chief assignment when the church gathered publicly was to:

1. Read the Scripture.
2. Teach or explain the Scripture.
3. Apply the Scripture.

This was true not only of the Old Testament, but of Paul’s letters as well (1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16). Ordinarily, following the Old Testament and synagogue pattern, the reading would have been consecutive with accompanying exposition. The Word has always been central and the key element of worship. And the ministry of the Word has normally been the systematic, consecutive reading and explaining of God’s Word.

4. We interpret Scripture using a literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic

Every biblical text has only one unchangeable meaning determined solely by the intent of the human author and ultimately the Holy Spirit. That meaning is expressed in letters, words, and grammar. However, Scripture’s meaning can be difficult at times to understand and therefore misunderstood (2 Pet. 3:15-16), so it requires careful exegesis (2 Tim. 2:15). We seek to determine the meaning of every passage in Scripture by interpreting it literally, which simply means we follow the normal rules of interpreting any literature. We examine the language, grammar, words, culture, geography, and history in a process called the grammatical-historical method. There are figures of speech, allegories, symbols, and word pictures in the Bible just as exist in other literature. But as with other literature, we interpret the Bible in its simplest, most literal sense, unless there is authorial and contextual evidence not to do so.

D. Contemporary Applications

A high view of Scripture compels us to believe and teach the straightforward statements of Scripture about controversial contemporary issues—even when a literal reading of Scripture disagrees with prevailing views, whether secular or Christian. The following is not a complete catalog of such issues but rather merely representative of how a high view of Scripture must inform our thinking.

1. The Sufficiency of Scripture

We believe that God has provided us in the Scripture with everything necessary to nurture and sustain spiritual life. That means we are committed to teaching and counseling directly and exclusively from the Word of God (Ps. 19:7; 119:9,11; John 15:3; 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 5:14; 2 Tim. 4:2; James 1:21). We do not believe that secular psychology has any legitimate role in the sanctification of the believer.

2. Creation

We believe Genesis is a straightforward, literal presentation of the historical events it describes. We teach, therefore, that God created everything in six literal days (Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Ex. 31:17). We reject every form of theistic evolution (Isa. 44:24; 45:18; John 1:3; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16).

3. The Role of Women

We believe that both men and women bear the image of God and that those in Christ enjoy equal spiritual standing before God (Gen 1:27; 5:1-2; Gal. 3:28). But Scripture teaches that God has assigned different roles and responsibilities to men and women. In the home, the husband is to be the gracious, loving head and the wife is to submit to her husband's leadership (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1-7). God has provided equally clear roles in the church. While there are many ways women can and should serve, we believe that Scripture forbids women from teaching and leading men, or in any way exercising authority over men in the context of the church (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:9-12; 3:1-2, 5).

4. The Gift of Tongues

We believe that the gift of tongues was the miraculous, God-given capacity to communicate the truth of God's Word in human languages the speaker had never learned or studied. It was a manifestation of God's power and blessing to validate the gospel message the Apostles taught and to establish the early church (Acts 14:3; 1 Cor. 14:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4). We believe that ecstatic outbursts and private prayer languages share nothing in common with the New Testament gift of tongues, and that they are patently unbiblical (Acts 2:4-12; 1 Cor. 14:5, 13, 27).

5. A Changed Life

We believe that all those whom God has genuinely saved by grace through faith alone are new creatures in Christ and will demonstrate that new life by submission to Christ and obedience to God's Word (Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46-49; Rom. 10:9-10). All Christians still sin (James 3:2; 1 John 1:8-10), sometimes horribly, and sometimes for extended periods without repentance (2 Sam. 11:26-12:15). But a decreasing pattern of sin and an increasing pattern of holiness will characterize every Christian's life (John 15:1-11; Gal. 5:19-25; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; 1 John 1:6-7; 3:4-10).

6. Human Sexuality

We believe that God created mankind in His own image (Gen. 1:27; 5:1; 9:6; James 3:9). In two separate acts, He created only two distinct genders: male and female (Gen. 1:27; 5:1-2; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6). The genders of Adam and Eve were established by God and defined by their physiological sex at creation (Gen. 1:27; 2:7, 22). Subsequent to creation, God determines the gender of all other humans by their physiological sex at the time of birth (Gen. 18:10; Lev. 12:2, 5, 7). Thus, all attempts to redefine human sexuality beyond the physiological male-female distinction (whether framed biologically or culturally) and all attempts to change one's birth gender are sinful rebellion against our Creator. As our Creator, God stipulates in His Word that the only legitimate and acceptable sexual desires and sexual acts are those between a man and a woman within the context of marriage (Gen. 2:24; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Matt. 5:28; 19:4-6; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 7:1-5; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Th. 4:3-8; 1 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 13:4).

7. Marriage

We believe marriage is a gift of God's common grace to all mankind as a fundamental building block of society (Gen. 1:28; 2:18, 24; Ps. 127:3; Prov. 18:22; 31:10-11; Heb. 13:4). As the architect of marriage, God alone retains the right to define its constructs and guidelines, and He has done so in His Word (Gen. 2:18-24). In accordance with Scripture, we teach that God's design for marriage is a public, formal, and official covenant between one male and one female (Gen. 2:24; Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 16:8-14; Mal. 2:14). God designed the marriage covenant to be a life-long bond, with divorce permitted only in the case of unrepentant sexual sin or of desertion by an unbeliever (Mal. 2:16; Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:12-16, 24). Although sexual sins of thought are not justification for divorce, all sexual immorality, both thoughts and behavior, must be taken seriously as a transgression against God (Job 31:1; Matt. 5:28; 15:19; James 1:14-15). God intends that the union between two believers be a loving illustration of the relationship between Christ and His church, when carried out in obedience to the Bible and through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18-33; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Pet. 3:7).

ARTICLE IV - Membership

Section 1 The Meaning of Membership:

Scripture teaches that God has designed the Christian life in such a way that the local church plays a vital role in a Christian's growth and maturity in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16). Therefore, we at FBC Roosevelt believe that, if possible, all Christians should be a member of a local church. According to Scripture, a local New Testament Church is a collection of people who are committed to Christ and to each other (Acts 2:40-47). Therefore, we also believe that the membership composition of a local church should reflect a church's understanding of salvation, accurately as possible portraying who is a Christian and, a church's membership should serve as a corporate witness before the world. In becoming a member of a local church, a person is entering into a covenant relationship with the fellow members of that church. Both parties join hand-in-hand to disciple each other, pray for one another, support one another, encourage one another, and hold each other accountable in love.

Section 2 Qualification Requirements for Membership:

Because the church is to be a body of people who profess and give evidence that they have been saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, persons desiring to unite with this church (1) must give a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1: 1; Colossians 1:2-4), (2) must be or must have been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28: 19-20; Acts 2:41), and (3) must believe in the Bible as the only inspired, inerrant, sufficient, authoritative guide for life (2 Timothy 3:16). Also, for the sake of unity and oneness of heart, the person must be willing to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in FBC Roosevelt's Statement of Faith and subscribe to the Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 3 Admission Process for Membership:

I. Interview & Application for Membership

Those persons desiring membership in this church shall make a request with the pastor and/or elders. Upon making a request, the pastor and/or an elder shall conduct a personal interview to ascertain the person's conversion experience, doctrinal convictions, and seriousness of intention to wholeheartedly support the ministry of this church in prayer, service, giving, and attendance. If the interview meets with the approval of the pastor and/or elder, then the applicant shall be given an application for membership to be completed and returned to the pastor and/or elder during the membership class, as well as a copy of the Constitution and By-laws. The applicant shall be informed of the required new member's class. At any point during the admissions process, the pastor and/or elders have the discretion to deny the applicant membership if they determine that the person does not confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, does not reflect a godly lifestyle, or expresses an unwillingness to submit to the Constitution and By-laws and the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith.

II. Instruction for Membership

To help best inform the applicant of who FBC Roosevelt is and their beliefs as a church, as well as help the leadership further ascertain the applicants conversion experience, assent to the Statement of Faith, and commitment to support the church, a new member's class will be provided and must be completed before an applicant is eligible to be presented for membership. In this new member's class, the applicant will receive pertinent information about the church's doctrine and practice. In particular, four specific areas will be addressed: (1) an overview of the gospel, (2) an overview of the church's Statement of Faith, (3) an overview of Church Discipline, and (4) an overview of the church's expectations of its members and what members should expect of the Church (service opportunities in the church will be presented in this portion of the class).

III. Confirmation for Membership

Upon completion of the new member's class, both the applicant and the church must then visibly confirm their desire to unite with one another in church membership. To promote unity and the health of the church, all potential candidates for membership must sign a statement of commitment that contains four essential covenant agreements. No individual is eligible to be presented for membership by the pastor and/or elders unless this statement has been signed.

The four covenant agreements are a willingness:

1. To be governed by the Constitution and By-Laws.
2. To submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith. We recognize that ultimately man's conscience is to be bound to the Word of God, not any creed, confession, or council. Therefore, this submission to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith does not mean that all persons desiring membership must agree with every teaching of the church, but that he or she will not be divisive in publicly disseminating teachings that oppose the church's understanding of Scripture as expressed in the church's Statement of Faith (Titus 3:9-11).
3. To submit to the leadership of the church (Hebrews 13:17).(4)
4. To agree in accordance with 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 not to pursue legal action against the church or its members, nor against any pastor, elder, or deacon, because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third and fourth steps of church discipline.

After the applicant has visibly confirmed his or her desire to unite with FBC Roosevelt, the church must do the same in the following way:

1. By a unanimous vote of recommendation from the elder body to the congregation.
2. By a vote of affirmation by the members present and voting to serve as counsel to the elders in their final decision.
3. By a unanimous vote of final approval by the elder body.

Section 4 Presentation of New Members:

Once the applicant has been admitted into the membership by the final vote of the elder body, if possible, he or she shall then be presented at a Sunday morning worship service designated by the pastor and/or elders, at which time the church body will welcome the individual into the church family.

Section 5 Obligations of Membership:

As members of this church, we recognize our obligation to honor, serve, worship, praise, and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in all we do (1 Corinthians 10:31). We also recognize that Jesus Christ is Head of this church, and therefore, is its Lord and Lawgiver (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; Isaiah 33:22), and those who truly love Him will endeavor to keep His commandments (John 14:15). In His Holy Word, our Lord entreated believers to perform certain duties toward one another and toward the leadership.

I. Duties toward Fellow Members of the Church

1. To love one another, without offense or hypocrisy (John 13:34-35; Romans 12:9; 13:9-10).
2. To labor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:13).
3. To endeavor for the edification and spiritual benefit of the whole body, and that they grow to be a holy temple in and for the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26; Ephesians 2:21-22; 4:12, 29).
4. To watch over one another for their good (Philippians 2:3-4).
5. To pray for one another (James 5:16).
6. To not forsake assembling together with one another for the celebrating of the worship of God, so as to provide for one another's spiritual benefit (Hebrews 10:25; Acts. 2:42).

7. To strive for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Psalm 93:5; 1 Cor. 11:2 Jude 3).
8. To have their homes characterized by spiritual commitment and devotion by keeping the Lord's Day, attending the meetings of the church, reading the Scriptures, and private and family prayer.
9. To govern their homes by Scriptural precepts (Ephesians 5:22-6:4).
10. To make personal efforts to witness for Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).
11. To practice Scriptural giving (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15).
12. To support the pastor, elders, and other ministers of the church (Hebrews 13:7).
13. To live lives of holiness and purity, so as to adorn the gospel of Christ (Titus 2:10).

II. Duties toward the Leadership of the Church

1. To pray for them, that God would grant them boldness in proclaiming the mysteries of the gospel (Ephesians 6:18-20).
2. To obey them in the Lord in whatsoever the leadership admonishes them according to the Word of God (Hebrews 13:17).
3. To follow their example in faith and imitating Christ (1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 1: 1; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 13:17).
4. To stand by them in all their trials and afflictions, defending them in all good causes (2 Timothy 1:15).
5. To not speak evil of them (Acts 23:5).
6. To not receive an accusation against them except on the basis of two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19).
7. To rebuke in the presence of all the church those leaders who continue to sin so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning (1 Timothy 5:20).
8. To consider those leaders who rule well worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17-18).
9. To appreciate and esteem very highly in love those who diligently labor among you (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

Section 6 Termination of Membership:

Membership in the church may be terminated by a unanimous vote of the elder body. This will follow a vote of affirmation by the members present and voting, which will serve as counsel for the elders in their decision. Members may be removed from membership for the following reasons:

1. By Death
2. By the request of another church of like faith and order (Southern Baptist) for transfer of membership. This will be granted unless the member is presently under discipline by the church. Resignation from membership is possible only by members who are in good standing in the church.
3. By a member's request who has united with a church of different faith and order (non-Southern Baptist). This will be granted unless the member is presently under discipline by the church. Resignation from membership is possible only by members who are in good standing in the church.
4. By the Implementation of church discipline as stipulated in Article V, Section 4 of the Constitution and By-Laws.

Candidates Covenant Agreement for Membership

As one who desires membership in First Baptist Church, Roosevelt, and as one who has read the Constitution and By-Laws of the church and completed the new members class, I recognize that in becoming a member of FBC Roosevelt I am entering into a covenant relationship with the members of this church. For the sake of unity and oneness of heart in entering into this covenant relationship, I willingly agree to the following four covenant agreements if confirmed by the elders and affirmed by the church in becoming a member:

1. To be governed by the Constitution and By-Laws.
2. To submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith, understanding that this submission to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith does not mean that I must agree with every teaching of the church, but that I will not be divisive in publicly disseminating teachings that oppose the church's understanding of Scripture as expressed in the church's Statement of Faith, (Titus 3:9-11).
3. To submit to the leadership of the church (Hebrews 13:17).
4. To agree in accordance with 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 not to pursue legal action against the church or its members, nor against any pastor or elder because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation during the third and fourth steps of church discipline.

Candidate's Signature

Date

Pastor's/Elder's Signature

Date

ARTICLE V - Church Discipline

Before the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven after His resurrection, He commanded His church to be on mission with Him by going out to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). A disciple is a learner; therefore, a disciple of Christ is a learner and follower of Christ. This has been called the Great Commission and an essential part of the Great Commission is to make disciples by teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). Therefore, if a church is to be a Great Commission Church, a church on mission with Christ, it must not only be evangelizing the lost, it must also be teaching its disciples to observe all Christ's commandments. This is where discipline enters into the picture. Hebrews 12:11 states, "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." Discipline is designed by God to educate and to train His children, producing righteousness as its fruit.

Through the years, this practice of teaching disciples of Christ to observe all Christ's commandments has been called church discipline. Church discipline is the exercise of that authority which the Lord Jesus has committed to the visible church for her purity and peace. It is necessary because it is the will of God for the church. Church discipline also serves as the wall of protection for the church to the impurities of the world, as well as serving as the witness of Christ for the church before the world.

Therefore, it behooves any church to practice church discipline as taught in Scripture. We strongly believe that loving church discipline is one of the privileges and blessings of belonging to a Christian church, and we endeavor to practice it in two ways: (1) through formative discipline and (2) through corrective discipline.

Section 1 Formative Discipline:

Formative discipline is discipline that takes place primarily through the teaching of God's Word, the example of Christian living, and the mutual ministry of all the members of this local body of Christ. The objective of formative discipline is the instruction of the disciples, the transformation of their lives, and their edification in love (Ephesians 4:1 1-13; Romans 12:1-16; I Cor. 12:4-27). It has a sanctifying influence as each member grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, doing their part to strengthen and grow this local body to maturity (I Peter 4:7-12; Ephesians 4:16). Therefore, formative discipline utilizes the gifts of each church member, whether old or young, for the edification of all. And, each who has been redeemed by Christ should live for Him and His church and not for himself/herself.

Article IV, Section 2, Conduct of Membership, in this document, lists several obligations expected of members of this church. When those duties are faithfully performed by all with dependence on the grace of God, a positive formative effect will be seen upon the whole assembly. And, with the blessing of the Holy Spirit, we will all be enabled by God's grace to grow up in His love (Ephesians 4:16).

Section 2 Corrective Discipline:

Another way we endeavor to make disciples as commanded by Christ (Matthew 28:19) is through corrective discipline. This aspect of discipline results from disorderly conduct or heretical doctrine contrary to the standards of Scripture and the church's standard of life and doctrine. This includes living in a way that is inconsistent with Scripture by refusing to

fellowship with the church in two ways: (1) through persistent non-attendance for unjustifiable reasons in "forsaking the gathering of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25) and (2) through consistent non-participation in neglecting his or her duties as a member (Romans 12:3-21; 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Peter 4:8-11).

Corrective discipline is in agreement with the teachings of Jesus found in Matthew 18:15-17. Jesus said, "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens you have won your brother. But, if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and tax collector." These are the commands Jesus has given His church concerning how to appropriately address sin in our lives and in the church (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:12-18; Gal. 6:1-2).

Corrective discipline always has for its aims the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the Church, and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender.

Section 3 Purposes of Church Discipline:

1. To maintain the purity of the church (1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 John 10).
2. To edify believers by deterring sin in the church (1 Timothy 5:20; Acts 5:1-6).
3. To restore fallen Christians to usefulness to God and fellowship with His church (Matthew 18:12-14; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1-2).
4. To promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to repentance, reconciliation, and a return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1; 1 Timothy 1:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5).
5. To guard and preserve our corporate witness to non-Christians (Acts 5:1-14).
6. To glorify God by reflecting His holy character and therefore prove our obedience to Him (1 Peter 2:12; 1 Peter 1:14-16).
7. To train Christians to be self-disciplined so that they may share in the holiness of God (Hebrews 12:7-13).
8. To guard and preserve the honor of God (Romans 2:24; 1 Corinthians 10:31).
9. To prevent giving God any cause to set Himself against the church (Revelation 2-3).
10. To maintain the purity of the church's worship so as to avoid profaning the elements of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 11:27-30).

Section 4 Procedures for Corrective Church Discipline:

The guidelines and procedures detailed in this section serve to provide a full entailment of the corrective disciplinary process as laid out by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17. We provide these procedures for two reasons: (1) we, as a church, desire that people considering joining our church have a full understanding of the disciplinary process before they commit to unite in membership and (2) the details assist in ensuring our membership that fundamental fairness is adhered to throughout the disciplinary process, preventing the church from misusing its authority. The church's desire is to provide a loving, biblical framework within which it hopes to honor Christ by remaining faithful to His Word, while at the same time lovingly confronting those who have been caught in a trespass (Galatians 6:1-2).

I. Preliminary Step: Personal Preparation

Galatians 6:1-2 "Brethren, if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. "

When a Christian becomes aware of another Christian's sin, who is a member or regular attendee of our church, he or she has the privilege and the responsibility to warn and correct the sinning Christian. However, it behooves the person who is initiating and confronting the sinning Christian to do two things to properly prepare for the encounter. The first is intercession. He or she should offer up prayer on behalf of the sinning believer. The second is examination. The individual should examine himself or herself by spending time in God's Word and prayer to ensure that he or she is going with a heart of love, humility, forgiveness, and gentleness to warn and confront the sinning Christian (Galatians 6:1-2). This preparation of the heart should take place before every step in the process.

II. Step 1 - Private Meeting:

Matthew 18:15 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."

Once the person who has knowledge of the offending person's misconduct or heresy has prepared their heart, he or she should arrange a private meeting with the one who has sinned so as to first verify that the sin has or is occurring. If verified, then the confronting believer should warn and appeal to the sinning believer for repentance (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3). If the sinning believer acknowledges and repents of their sin, then the confronting brother has won the sinning believer to a place of unity and restoration. If the erring/sinning individual does not heed the warning and repent of their sin, the confronting believer out of obedience to the teachings of Christ must then move to the next step in the disciplinary process as taught by Jesus Himself (Matthew 18:16).

III. Step 2 - Private Conference:

Matthew 18:16 "But if he does not listen to you take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED."

The next step is a private conference, which will include not only the confronting believer and the sinning believer, but it must also include one or two more mature believers (see Preliminary Step) from the church (Matthew 18:16). This meeting helps confirm the facts of the sin, that the sin has occurred or is occurring, and that the sinning believer has been appropriately confronted. If the sinning believer listens to the two or three witnesses and repents, then they have won their brother to unity and fellowship. If he or she refuses to listen and repent, then the two or three witnesses are now required in obedience to the teachings of Christ to advance to the next step in the process of discipline, which is to tell it to the church (Matthew 18:17a).

**It is important to note here that Jesus never gives a definite time period between any of the steps, as to when a person should move forward in the process. What biblically triggers a necessity to move from one step to the other in the process is a failure to listen or a lack of repentance. However, we encourage that ample time be given for repentance and that grace and patience be shown during each step. It may take multiple private meetings or private conferences before moving to the next step or before repentance occurs.*

IV. Step 3 - Public Announcement

Matthew 18:17a - "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church."

If all private attempts (private meetings/conferences) to elicit repentance from the sinning believer have failed, then the next step is to tell it to the church with a public announcement (Matthew 18:17a). However, Scripture leaves flexibility in how this shall be communicated to the church; therefore, we at FBC Roosevelt have adopted the policy that only the pastor or an elder has the authority to make this public announcement to the overall congregation in step three of the disciplinary process. And, before they may make such a public announcement, they must investigate the charges brought before them and make sure that certain criteria have been met. Here is the general framework of how this should happen.

Once it has been established by the two or three witness involved in the private conferences that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur and that there is a lack of repentance, then the issue shall first be brought to the attention of the pastor and elder body for further investigation by arrangement of a meeting with the leadership body to inform them of the situation. At that time, the leadership body of the pastor and elders shall begin a thorough investigation in the matter in accordance with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture (Deuteronomy 17:2-7; Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1-2; and 1 Timothy 5:19).

During the investigation, three criteria must be met before the leadership may bring the matter to the congregation:

1. that there is corroborating evidence that the sinning individual has sinned or is continuing to sin,
2. that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and
3. that the individual has refused to repent.

If all three criteria have been met, then the pastor and elders shall make a reasonable attempt to call the sinning individual to repentance before bringing the situation and person to the church. If after further exhortation by the leadership body for the sinning believer to repent, the person still refuses, then in accordance with Jesus' instructions in Matthew 18:17a the pastor (or, another elder if the pastor is not able) shall publicly announce the matter to the church at a regularly scheduled monthly ministry meeting or a special called emergency meeting. The purpose of the public announcement is to ask the church to engage in collectively calling the erring/sinning individual to repentance. Now, all the members are enjoined to go and plead with the offending believer to repent of their sin and to return to a right relationship with God.

If during this period of time (an indefinite period of time decided by the leadership body) the pastor and elder body determine that the sinning believer repents, the pastor (or, another elder if the pastor is not able) shall then publicly announce to the church at a regularly scheduled monthly ministry a notice to that effect. However, if after a sufficient amount of time, as determined by the pastor and elders, the individual refuses to even listen to the church and repent, then by virtue of Jesus' own pronouncement in Matthew 18:17, step four must be enacted, a public dismissal.

V. Step 4 - Public Dismissal

Matthew 18:17b-"and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

If the collective call of the church to elicit repentance by the sinning believer has failed to bring about repentance, then the pastor and elders shall seek the counsel of the church at a regularly scheduled monthly ministry meeting by a vote of affirmation regarding the sinning believer being publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church. This vote of affirmation will serve as counsel to the elders in making their final decision. The final vote of approval to remove the sinning believer shall be by the elder body and announced to the church in a timely fashion. The church must carry out this public dismissal to vindicate the honor and integrity of Christ's teachings and exhibit fidelity to His principles in Matthew 18:17.

Section 5 Special Cases:

As stated previously, we encourage that ample time be given within each step, and that grace and patience be shown toward the sinning individual before moving forward in the process of corrective discipline. However, Scripture does indicate at least three cases whereby the church may hasten the process of discipline, bypassing steps 1 and 2 (private meetings/private conferences) and immediately proceeding to step 3 (i.e. publicly announcing to the church) or step 4 (publicly dismissing the individual from the fellowship and membership of the church) in order to protect the purity and unity of the church. These circumstances include: (1) if the person's sin and refusal to repent have been open knowledge to the church (1 Corinthians 5:1-5), (2) if a person has been disseminating false doctrine as understood and taught by this church (Romans 16:17), and/or (3) if a person has been warned twice by the leadership of the church concerning factious conduct and disregarded the warnings (Titus 3:10-11). Henceforth, the pastor and elders have the discretion in such cases to proceed directly to steps 3 or 4, so long as they follow the criteria specified under both steps.

Section 6 Restoration to Church Membership:

Throughout each step in the disciplinary process, the goal is to win or restore your brother or sister in Christ to fellowship with God and the church (Matthew 18:15-17). Therefore, if the pastor and elders determine that a person who has been publicly dismissed from the church demonstrates fruits of repentance in accordance with the sin that has been committed and desires to have their membership reinstated, they shall then publicly recommend to the church for their vote of affirmation at a regular monthly ministry meeting that the individual in question be publicly reinstated as a member of FBC Roosevelt. (This vote of affirmation by the congregation will serve as counsel for the elders in making their final decision on reinstating the person in question). After considering the voice of the congregation, the elder body shall make the final decision by vote. If unanimously approved by the elders for reinstatement of membership, the elders shall inform the congregation of their decision in a timely fashion, and accompanying this announcement shall be an admonition to the church to forgive, comfort, restore, and reaffirm their love for the individual (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

ARTICLE VI - Church Ordinances

Section 1 General Statement:

There are two ordinances of special significance, which our Lord has commanded the church to observe, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (These are sometimes referred to as "Sacraments"). Neither of them has saving merit, nor is any grace imparted to the recipient through the water of baptism or the bread and cup of the Supper. These ordinances are not means of "special grace", but they are "special means of grace" and powerful aids to the faith of the believers who participate in them.

Section 2 Baptism:

Only confessed disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ are proper candidates for baptism, and all such persons should be baptized (Acts 2:38). Believing that baptism is the God-ordained door or entrance into the visible community of the people of God, we shall receive into membership of the church only those who have been baptized in the Biblical manner, which is by immersion and "into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

Section 3 The Lord's Supper:

Baptism is an initiatory ordinance by which one enters the visible church and should be observed only once by each believer. However, the Lord's Supper should be celebrated frequently by the assembled church (1 Cor. 11:26). While this is a most holy ordinance and should be observed with solemnity and dignity, the bread and the cup of the Supper, are and remain, only symbols of the broken Body and the shed Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper shall, under normal circumstances, be celebrated by the church once a month.

ARTICLE VII - Church Government

Section 1 Purpose of Church Government:

Church government is an extremely practical and theologically significant issue. Biblical structure and function allows the peaceful and orderly working out of the ministry of the church. The Church is the family of God and its head is Jesus Christ. Just as God has given us the structure and the function of each person in a family, He has done so in regards to His church. God's Word reveals the proper structure of the church and the function of each of its parts. (Ephesians 5:23; Philippians 1:1). The purpose of such structure and instruction is to ensure spiritual maturity both individually and corporately as a New Testament Church (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Section 2 Structure of Church Government:

I. Jesus Christ is the Head

Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. Jesus Christ has revealed His will for us, as the Church, through His Word, the Bible (Eph. 1:22; 5:23).

II. Elders

Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church mediates His rule over the Church by calling and appointing elders (pastors) to shepherd, oversee, and lead the church. These elders are

directly responsible to Jesus Christ for the governing of the church according to His Word (Acts 20:28-30; Hebrews 13:17). Thus, the Elders will be responsible for the final decisions (1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

III. Deacons

Deacons are servants recommended by the church and approved by the elders to assist the elders in the practical ministry of service to the church (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-10).

IV. Congregation

God has gifted every member of the church with the indwelling and gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve and edify the body of Christ. Thus, every member of a local church plays a vital role in the growth and development of that local body of believers. Therefore, we believe that it is wise and biblical for the congregation to have a significant voice in the decisions and matters of the church.

A. Congregational Affirmation

The purpose of an affirmation from the congregation, deacons, or any other group of the church is the wisdom of seeking the godly counsel of many as taught in Scripture (Proverbs 11:14). This type of counsel can be helpful in providing wisdom to the elders in the determining of God's will in a matter.

B. Affirmation Options

The elder body may choose at any time and on any matter to seek the affirmation of the congregation or any leadership group within the church such as deacons, teachers, etc. These affirmations may be formal or informal.

- **Formal Affirmation:** A vote by ballot or show of hands of all eligible members present at a congregational meeting. If by ballot vote, the ballots will be counted by elders and two members (preferably deacons). The results of all formal affirmations will be made public.
- **Informal Affirmation:** A vote taken using any method desired by the elders for the purpose of polling the counsel of the congregation or a leadership group (i.e. deacons, teachers, etc.) on any matter.

B. Congregational Meetings

- **Notice of Meetings:** Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at regular worship services on two successive Sundays immediately prior to the meetings. In an emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by notifying local members of the time, place, and purpose for the called meeting.
- **Number of Meetings:** Congregational meetings shall be held monthly for the reception of reports and the transaction of such other business as may be properly brought before the church. A congregational meeting shall be held in September and shall be called the Annual Meeting. The regular affirmation of officers, ministry teams, and the yearly budget shall take place at the Annual Meeting.
- **Method of Calling Meetings:** It shall be the right and responsibility of the elders or Pastor to call all congregational meetings. When special congregational meetings are called, there must be a two week notice given to the congregation as to the purpose.

- Responsibility for Meetings: The pastor-teacher (pastor) or elders shall arrange the details of all congregational meetings and see that all possible preparation for their conduct is made.
- Quorum for Transaction of Business: The voting members present at any constitutionally called congregational meeting shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business.

C. Eligible Members

A church member is eligible to cast a ballot in formal affirmations when he or she is present and has reached the age of eighteen.

D. Ballots

When ballots are used for voting, the following choices shall be considered, after prayer on the matter at hand:

- I believe that this is a wise decision or choice that exemplifies the principles and precepts of Scripture regarding this issue.
- I do not believe that this is a wise decision or choice that exemplifies the principles and precepts of Scripture regarding this issue.
- I am undecided in the matter.

E. Special Decisions

The elder body shall seek the formal affirmation of the congregation when the following decisions are being made (Proverbs 11:14):

- The calling of or removal of the pastor-teacher.
- The calling of or removal of pastoral or non-pastoral ministry staff.
- The church's annual budget.
- Expenditures involving new property/buildings and related indebtedness.
- The selection of elders/deacons.
- Any changes or amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws.
- The Removal of a Member
- The Establishment of the Finance Council
- The Hiring and Removing of Paid Church Staff
- The Selection of Church Treasurer and Church Clerk
- The Establishing of Ministry Teams
- The Appointing of Trustees
- Dissolution of the Church

Section 3 Ministry Teams:

To promote efficient handling of church matters, the elder body will annually appoint various ministry teams from within its members at large (Proverbs 11:14) to be affirmed by the congregation. These ministry teams shall perform tasks in accordance with the duties and with the powers specifically delegated by the elder body. (Acts 6:1-6; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Peter 5:1-2). All elders serve as ex-officio members of all ministry teams and may sit as such at their discretion. All ministry teams shall exist for the period of one year unless specified differently by the elder body. The general functions of any ministry team are:

1. To bring recommendations to the body of elders concerning church matters.
2. To provide a wider base of counsel to the elders regarding church matters
3. To serve faithfully the church body in their team's particular area of service.

Section 4 The Finance Council:

The fiscal year of the church shall begin October 1 and end September 30.

The work of this church is financially dependent upon the voluntary gifts of God's people. To promote the efficient and studied handling of the financial matters of the church, the elder body shall annually appoint a council of members for the purpose of compiling an annual budget under the care and direction of the elders. The annual budget shall detail the proposed expenditures for the coming fiscal year. This group shall be known as the Finance Council. They shall also aid in any other financial matters that the elders delegate to their care. The elders shall determine the number and tenure of members of the Finance Council (Proverbs 11:14; 1 Peter 5:2; 2 Corinthians 8:18-20). They, along with lay elders, shall be responsible for initially establishing and annually reviewing salary and benefit packages of those elders who are paid pastoral staff. They are also to be diligent in seeking to meet any special need that should arise regarding our pastoral staff (Romans 10:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Section 5 Church Records and Books:

The church shall maintain current, adequate, and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. An accurate account of all receipts and disbursements shall be maintained by financial staff under the direction of a Church Treasurer that is appointed by the elder body and affirmed by the congregation at the annual membership meeting in September. All church records and business pertaining to congregational meetings shall be kept by a Church Clerk that is appointed by the elder body and affirmed by the congregation at the annual membership meeting in September (2 Corinthians 8:18-21).

Section 6 Trustees:

The elder body for the purpose of the signing of legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal document where the signatures of trustees are required shall appoint four trustees. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer property without the specific authorization of the elder body. A minimum number of four trustees shall be required to fulfill the trustees' obligations. If at any time a trustee shall make application to be released from his office or is no longer a member of the church in good standing, the elders shall appoint a qualified individual to fill the vacancy. Trustees shall serve for a period specified by the body of elders.

Section 7 Dissolution of The Church:

The elder body shall seek the formal affirmation of the congregation concerning the dissolution of the church. Upon the dissolution of the church, the elder body shall create a plan to cause all assets of the church to be distributed to another church of like faith and kindred spirit. The church membership shall vote to approve the plan for the distribution of the assets of the church. Approval shall be by a 75% majority vote of all eligible members present at a special-called meeting for that purpose.

Section 8 Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws:

The Constitution and By-Laws adopted by the church in a business meeting held on January 28, 2024 shall supersede all prior resolutions, precedents, and actions of the church not in harmony with its provisions. Henceforth, the Constitution and By-Laws shall be amended or changed by the elder body. Changes to Article III, Statement of Faith and Doctrine, will require a unanimous vote of the elder body. The elder body shall seek the formal affirmation of the congregation when changes or amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws are required.

ARTICLE VIII - Church Officers

Section 1 General Statement:

Jesus Christ alone is the head of His church (Col. 1:18; Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:11-12). As the head, He has ordained that individual churches should be blessed with the spiritual rule and ministry of special office bearers. (Acts 20:17, 28; Phil 1:1).

Section 2 Elders:

The New Testament Scripture is clear about those who have the responsibility of oversight and care of the church. These men are called elders, overseers, and bishops. All three different titles are used to refer to the same spiritual office of leadership in the church and are interchangeable (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Acts 20:28-30). We know that Christ is the head of the church and that He mediates His rule in the church through the shepherding of elders (pastors) (Acts 20:17, 28-31; 1 Peter 5:14).

I. Qualification of Elders

A. Called by God:

An elder (pastor) must be a man who has been called by God into the gospel ministry. The evidences for such a call are as follows (1 Timothy 3:1-7, 10):

1. As a member of the church, he shall fulfill all the qualifications and obligations for membership as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws (Article IV, Sections 2&5).
2. Confirmation of the call to the ministry by other believers (2 Tim. 2:1-2).
3. Possession of the abilities necessary to serve (giftedness).
4. A deep desire to serve (1 Timothy 3:1).
5. A lifestyle characterized by moral integrity (Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

B. Biblical qualifications:

Must possess the Biblical qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall be:

1. Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach
2. Husband of one wife
3. Temperate, sober, vigilant
4. Sober-minded, prudent
5. Given to hospitality
6. Apt to teach; able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching
7. Not given to wine

8. Not violent; not pugnacious
9. Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle
10. Not a brawler; uncontentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered
11. Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain
12. Rules his own household well. His children are faithful; not accused of rebellion to God
13. Not a novice; not a new convert
14. Has a good report or reputation with outsiders
15. Not self-willed
16. Loves what is good
17. Just, fair
18. Holy, devout
19. Self-controlled

II. Selection of Elders

The process by which elders are nominated and appointed to the body of elders is as follows:

1. The elders shall set aside men that they have determined to have shown a *competency* with the Scriptures, a *capability* to teach and lead, and who meet the character qualifications and the *calling* to the office of elder.
2. The elders shall then make it known to the church that a particular individual is being considered as a candidate for the office of elder.
3. The elders shall then take it upon themselves to train and equip the man being considered, preparing him for the public question and answer sessions before the church as conducted by the pastor-teacher. During this time, the congregation will have the opportunity to prayerfully consider the individual's qualifications for the office of elder (1 Timothy 3:1-10). If a member believes, for any reason, that the person may be unqualified, they should go to him in love with discretion and privately discuss their concerns (Matthew 18:15-18; Titus 1:7). If after a discussion with the nominee, the member's concerns are unresolved, then he or she shall approach the elders with their concern.

During the time that a man is under consideration, there are several process options.

- Option 1: The man under consideration can withdraw himself from consideration and the process will cease.
 - Option 2: The elders may deem the man unqualified for whatever reason and the process will cease.
 - Option 3: The man and the elders agree that the process should continue.
4. At the appropriate time as deemed by the elders, the man shall come before the church on two separate occasions for a formal examination of his Bible and Theological Knowledge.
 5. After ample time of consideration and upon his successful completion of the examination for his Bible and Theological Knowledge, the elders shall call a special meeting for the purpose of a formal affirmation of the congregation.
 6. After prayerful consideration of the counsel provided by the congregation through their vote of affirmation, the elders shall then vote and make known their decision regarding the man. To be approved, the man must receive a unanimous vote of approval by the elder body.

7. Upon elder body approval, the man shall be licensed and ordained to the ministry at a public service and then immediately assume his position as an elder.

III. Responsibilities of Elders

A. To Spiritually Shepherd the Church

1. By preaching and teaching God's Word to the church (Acts 6:2-4; 1 Tim. 5:17; 2 Tim. 4:2).
2. By praying for and with the church (Acts 6:4).
3. By maintaining doctrinal purity in the church (Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 1:3-7; Jude 3-4).
4. By reproving, rebuking, and exhorting the church with great patience (2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9-11).
5. By loving, serving, and being an example in the church (1 Peter 5:3).

B. To Govern and Oversee All the Affairs of The Church

1. By establishing policies and practices for the church that are consistent with Scripture and the purpose of the church (1 Timothy 3:4-5).
2. By directing and overseeing all of the financial resources and expenditures of the church (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Acts 11:30).
3. By directing and overseeing the maintenance of adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of the business of the church (1 Timothy 3:4-5).
4. By appointing officers, ministry teams and councils as needed to carry out the business of the church in an orderly and acceptable manner. Any officer or council appointed by the elders is directly responsible to the elders and shall serve as long as the elders see the need (Acts 6:3).
5. By selecting a pastor-teacher in accordance with the selection process established in these by-laws (Acts 6:1-6; 20:28-30; 1 Tim 1:3-7; Titus 1:5-1 1).
6. By appointing elders for the church in accordance with the selection process established in these by-laws (Titus 1:5).
7. By appointing deacons for the church in accordance with the selection process established in these by-laws (Acts 6:2-6).
8. By maintaining open communication with the church body (Acts 15:1-29; 1 Timothy 5:20).

IV. The Authority of The Elders

The primary decision-making authority of the church is vested in the elders (pastors) who shepherd the church. The objective of any and all decisions made shall be to do the will of God regarding the matter at hand (Acts 15:2-6; Hebrews 13:7), However, we believe it is wise, when possible, for the elders to seek the counsel and wisdom of the congregation. We endeavor to do that through formal and informal congregational votes of affirmation.

V. Number of Elders

The number of elders shall be as many as are qualified and needed to carry out the ministry of shepherding the church, as determined by the elder body.

VI. Term of Elders

The term of office for an elder shall be as long as he is qualified, capable, and desirous of fulfilling the duties of an elder.

VII. Removal of Elders

Any elder may be removed from office if he becomes incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or his inability to serve is established unanimously by the remainder of the elder body. After presenting the evidence to the congregation for their formal affirmation, the remainder of the elder body must unanimously approve the removal. Any accusation or action against an elder must be presented to the elder body in accordance with Scripture (1 Timothy 5:19-20).

VIII. Elder Body Meetings

Meetings of the elder body shall typically be held on a monthly basis as determined by the elders. Anyone desiring to approach the elders on any matter or need may feel free to arrange to meet with them. The pastor teacher/chairman may call special meetings of the elder body as needed.

Section 3 Pastor-Teacher:

I. Qualifications

See Qualifications for Elders (under Article VIII, Section 2).

II. The Position

The pastor-teacher is the primary teaching pastor of the church. He is responsible for the spiritual equipping and oversight of the entire congregation. As demonstrated in the Scriptures, even among the leadership of the church, there is a leader. Because of the general nature of his position to the staff, his full-time devotion and duties to the ministry, his responsibility of the spiritual equipping and oversight of the entire congregation, of which each of the elders are a part, and his responsibility to arrange for the public and regular services of the church, he shall be the first among equals in the elder body. In that capacity, he will generally serve as the spokesman for the elder body to the congregation and shall have general oversight of all the affairs of this church. Furthermore, he is directly responsible to the elder body for the carrying out of his duties in the church (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Peter 5:24). And, he shall have but one vote in the elder body and in that way is an equal among equals (Acts 15:13-21). In the absence of the Pastor-Teacher, the Body of Elders shall be responsible to arrange for the public and regular services of the church and appoint one among them to be the spokesman for the elder body to the congregation.

III. The Nomination/Selection

The elder body shall select the pastor-teacher as follows:

1. The elders shall serve as the pastor-teacher search team, along with at least two other members from the congregation. The two members from the congregation shall be recommended by the elder body, affirmed by the congregation, and unanimously approved by the elders.
2. A member of the elder body shall serve as the chairman of the pastor search team.
3. Upon the unanimous recommendation of the elder body, the elder body shall make known to the congregation all pertinent information about the pastor-teacher candidate.
4. A special meeting shall be set and announced publicly at least two weeks in advance when a pastor-teacher candidate is coming in view of a call.

5. At the special-called meeting, a formal affirmation of all eligible members shall be taken concerning the candidate for pastor-teacher. The results of this affirmation will be made public.
6. After consideration of the formal affirmation of the congregation, the elder body shall make the final decision regarding the candidate for pastor-teacher. Upon approval of the elder body, the man shall become the pastor-teacher. The elder body shall announce to the church the date the new pastor-teacher's tenure shall begin.

IV. The Duties

1. To pray (Acts 6:4).
2. To prepare and to preach the Word (1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:5).
3. To protect the church from false doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16; Titus 1:9).
4. To oversee the administration and care of all church staff (Acts 20:34).
5. To lead in the selection of all church staff in accordance with the selection process established in the Constitution and By-Laws.

V. The Resignation or Removal of the Pastor-Teacher

A pastor-teacher shall be released from his role as pastor-teacher by a formal letter of intent to resign. Or, if the elders conclude that he is no longer able to serve because he has become incapacitated or spiritually unqualified, they may vote to remove him by a unanimous vote after presenting their evidence to the congregation for their formal affirmation. Upon resignation or dismissal, his role and responsibilities as a pastor-teacher shall be terminated.

Section 4 Deacons

I. Qualifications

A deacon is one who evidences the personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. He shall accept the Statement of Faith and the Constitution and By-Laws freely, he shall be in full communion with the church, of mature judgment, of unquestionable Christian character, having a good reputation outside the church, loyal to the Word of God, devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and the spiritual welfare of His church, and be able to comfort the oppressed.

II. The Duties

1. Deacons shall see that the sick, the sorrowing, and the aged receive spiritual and physical comfort. They shall minister the Word of God, administer the church benevolence funds, and render counsel to those in need of physical assistance. As a member of the church, deacons shall fulfill all the qualifications and obligations for membership as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws (Article IV, Sections 2&5).

III. Nomination/Selection

1. Prior to a monthly ministry meeting, the elders shall consult with the deacons to determine whether or not the need for new deacons exists and whether or not qualified candidates are available.
2. If the elders are convinced that more deacons are necessary to adequately minister to the church and are confident that qualified candidates for the office are available,

then an announcement would be made to the church indicating the need to increase the size of the deacon body (Acts 6).

3. Following this announcement, the members of the church would be allowed to submit the names of those men whom they believe to be qualified to serve according to 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
4. The elders would then carefully consider each nominee to decide if the deacon candidate meets the qualifications established for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The elders must unanimously agree that the nominees fulfill the biblical requirements for the office.
5. If the elders unanimously agree that the nominees fulfill the biblical requirements for the office, they shall then approach those men who had been nominated to determine whether or not they would be interested in serving in this capacity.
6. Those agreeing to serve shall then be presented to the church for their consideration (1 Timothy 3:10). After ample time of consideration, the elders shall call a special meeting for the purpose of a formal affirmation of the congregation, expressing their voice of counsel for the elders to consider.
7. After prayerful consideration of the counsel provided by the congregation through their vote of affirmation, the elders shall then vote and make known their decision regarding the man. To be approved, the man must receive a unanimous vote of approval by the elder body.
8. Upon elder body approval, the man shall be ordained to the ministry at a public service and then immediately assume his position as a deacon.

IV. Resignation or dismissal

A deacon shall be released from his role as deacon by a formal letter of intent to resign, as received and approved by a unanimous vote of the elder body. Or, if the elders conclude that he has become disqualified they may vote to remove him by a unanimous vote, after presenting their evidence to the congregation for their formal affirmation. Upon resignation or dismissal, his role and responsibilities as a deacon shall be terminated, having no bearing on his membership.

ARTICLE IX - Church Staff

Section 1 General Statement:

A church staff member shall be one who gives a credible Christian profession of faith and practice. As a members of the church, church staff shall fulfill all the qualifications and obligations for membership as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws (Article IV, Sections 2&5). They shall be recommended by the pastor, investigated, and unanimously approved by the elders. Before final approval, the elders shall present the person being considered to the church for their voice of formal affirmation through a ballot vote or show of hands. They shall be under the supervision of the pastor.

I. Ministerial Position

The person being considered for a ministerial position shall meet the qualifications presented for an elder (Article VIII, Section 2). Though an employee of the church, he shall be a member of the church.

Thus, the same privileges and responsibilities incumbent upon any other member will apply.

II. Worship Leader

A man called of God with the express purpose of leading the people of God in worship and praise. His responsibility shall include the direction and maintenance of all music in the church. He will be responsible for directing the choir or choirs and setting the tone of worship in each service. He shall also be responsible for instrumental music in each worship service and shall work closely with the Pastor in determining the needs of the church. Since the Worship Leader is a member as well as an employee of the church, the same privileges and responsibilities incumbent upon any other member will apply.

III. Church Clerk

The Clerk shall keep a record of all business transacted at the monthly ministry meetings, keep an accurate record of membership and carry on all necessary correspondence for the congregation.

IV. Church Treasurer

The Treasurer shall deposit all church funds in a bank account or accounts, which account shall be opened and maintained in the name of the church. He or she shall disburse the same at the direction of the elders. The Treasurer shall make monthly reports to the elders for their monthly meeting, as well as for the church at the monthly ministry meetings and an annual report at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall be primarily responsible for all offerings received by the church, and immediately following any service he shall count and keep a record of all offerings. Four signatures shall be on the bank signature card for the church accounts. These signatures shall be of the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, one deacon and one trustee nominated to the church for their vote of affirmation, and then approved by the elders.

V. Financial Secretary

A Financial Secretary shall be appointed to assist the Treasurer, upon the recommendation of the elders to the congregation for their formal affirmation followed by the unanimous approval of the elders.

ARTICLE X - Use of Building

Section I General Statement:

The members of the First Baptist Church, Roosevelt, desire that the building be of service to the membership and when possible, to the community, but at the same time realizing the necessity and importance of safeguarding the physical property and insuring that the use of the building be consistent with the intention and purpose of the church as stated in its Bylaws. We, the members of First Baptist Church, Roosevelt, understand that weddings and funerals are ordained of God and that they should reflect His glory and honor. Thus it is our intent that the Gospel be declared in said services because of the nature and opportunity of both services.

- A. Use of all facilities shall be confined to religious and other activities deemed suitable to the function of the church.

- B. Decisions concerning groups and individuals who may use the facilities shall be made by both the Pastor-Teacher and the elder body.
- C. Arrangements for use of the facilities for approved functions shall be made with the Hospitality Team Coordinator.
- D. There shall be no smoking in the church building or use of alcoholic beverages in the building or on the grounds.
- E. No meals may be cooked or brought in and served in the sanctuary.

Section 2 Funerals:

- A. Any member of First Baptist Church, Roosevelt, may use the sanctuary for funeral services for themselves or members of their family.
- B. Non-members may request use of the church for weddings and/or funerals and use said facilities if in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws.
- C. Arrangements for use of the building, time and preachers must be cleared through the Pastor-Teacher and elder body.
- D. Planning for family meals before or after funerals should be arranged with the Hospitality Team coordinator, after consultation with the Pastor-Teacher.

Section 3 Weddings:

- A. Only one wedding shall be scheduled per day in the church.
- B. No wedding or rehearsal should be scheduled on holidays observed through the church calendar.
- C. Wedding rental also includes use of Activity Center, if desired.
- D. The church's kitchen equipment may be used only by notice to the Hospitality Team Coordinator.
- E. No tacks, nails, or staples are to be placed in any part of the church for any purpose at any time.
- F. Cloths or other coverings shall be placed under all candleholders to prevent tallow from soiling carpets and upholstery.
- G. No candles shall be used in the aisles of the sanctuary.
- H. Charges:
 - Members using the church shall be charged a clean-up fee of \$50.00, in advance.
 - Charges for non-members desiring to use our facilities for weddings:
 - Use of Sanctuary only-\$750.00 in advance
 - Use of Sanctuary and fellowship hall-\$1000.00 in advance

Section 4 Activities Center (Fellowship Hall):

- A. Teas, coffees, showers, or other approved functions may be scheduled that require use of the Activity Center only.
- B. No Activity Center event may be scheduled on days the facilities are being used for other approved functions unless approved by all parties involved. Overlapping of functions will be coordinated by the Hospitality Team coordinator.
- C. Charges: Charges for non-members desiring to use the Activities Center for such things as teas, coffees, showers, or other approved functions: \$500.00 in advance.