

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this church shall be

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ASBURY PARK, NJ.

ARTICLE II - FOUNDATION, OBJECT AND PRIORITIES OF MINISTRY

The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11), and its code of guidance in all its affairs, the Word of God, and this Church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31).

The object of this Church shall be to worship God according to the teaching of His Word, to practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, to sustain its ordinances and doctrines and to preach and propagate among all peoples the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith on Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Eph. 2:8-9).

The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen the vision in nurture and education (I Corinthians 14:26; II Peter 3:18), and spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (I Peter 2:9; 1 Peter 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 5:16).

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by a living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this Church, who have been baptized by immersion and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church (pg. 13). A member must remain in good standing to receive all privileges and benefit accorded to this membership.

ARTICLE IV - LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The purpose of the officers of the Church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.

The offices of the Church shall be

Elder

The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Elders who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The Senior Elder should be considered first among equals and the deciding vote.

The vote of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in the By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:

- A. Accept members into the Church;
- B. Elect officers of the Church;
- C. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office;
- D. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property;

E. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;

F. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church;

G. Approve the call and job description of those Elders who receive compensation from the Church for fulfilling their Elder responsibilities.

Leave of absence

An elder may take or be asked to take a leave of absence from active status in a time of crisis, family need, or for a qualification issue.

Deacon.

Deacons are equally qualified with elders in terms of character and spiritual life. The one difference between their qualifications is that an elder must be able to teach, but the deacon doesn't have to be. The elders oversee the work of those who serve the Lord, and they are assisted in their work by deacons. The qualifications for deacons can be divided into two categories: personal character and spiritual character. Deacons shall assist the Council of Elders by performing services of advice, administration and implementation.

ARTICLE V - THE CHURCH PROPERTY

In the event of a division of this Church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this Church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the Church membership before recognizing a division therein provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division.

Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same denomination be advisable, the Council of Elders shall be authorized by a vote from the church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of First Baptist Church is concerned.

ARTICLE VI - REVISIONS, ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS

As part of their leadership and oversight responsibilities,

Only the active Elders may revise this constitution.

The proposed revisions shall be presented to the congregation for their information and comment at least one month prior to final approval by the elders. This period is intended to provide time for prayer, feedback, and seeking God's will.

Revisions, additions or amendments of this constitution may be made only in the following manner:

at the annual meeting; and

by a majority vote of the membership, or a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting at such meeting, provided at least ten percent (10%) of the resident membership of the Church is present at such meeting; and

after presentation by written motion at a quarterly or special business meeting held at least three months before the annual meeting; and at least one month prior to final approval by the elders.

if notice of the proposed change or addition has been given, by mail, in writing, bulletin, or electronics means, and from the pulpit on at least two weekends in the interim period between said meetings.

Article II and VI of this constitution shall not be repealed, amended nor revised.

ELDER AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

I. THE WORD OF GOD

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20, 21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31, 32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32.

II. THE TRINITY

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection; and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19, 20; Ephesians 4:5, 6

III. GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1, 2; 2:5, 6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

IV. JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:32; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9, 10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26, 27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

VI. REGENERATION

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation (Rom. 8:6-7). We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus

Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. Genesis 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Ecclesiastes. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; II Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 19:3, 20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

VII. THE CHURCH

We believe in the universal church; a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

VIII. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15, 23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:9-10

IX. THE ORDINANCES

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has ordained two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26

X. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other. I Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9, 12

XI. CHURCH COOPERATION

First Baptist Church is an Independent Reformed Baptist Church.

XII. THE LAST THINGS

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15

OUR CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and supreme Treasure of our lives, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of

God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and peace; to promote its spirituality and fruitfulness; to sustain its worship, ordinances, and discipline; to welcome, and test biblically, instruction from the Scriptures by the elders of the church which accords with the Elder Affirmation of Faith, seeking to grow toward Biblical unity in the truth; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay (Matthew 18).

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a likeminded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.

We acknowledge that implicit within this covenant is the consent to be governed by the Relational Commitments that have been officially adopted by the church and that address peacemaking and reconciliation, accountability and church discipline, marriage and divorce, counseling and confidentiality, and the protection of our children.

When you decide to become a covenant or fully participating member of First Baptist Church, it's a big deal. It's even counter-cultural. It means you are not a consumer content to sit on the sidelines. You want to commit, contribute, to be added to the community. And you want a church that gives back, that makes a two-way covenant.

Covenant members are baptized believers commit to being:

RELATIONALLY CONNECTED.

Members actively seek belonging, being known, and caring for others and letting others care for them (Philippians 2:4). These connections take the form of committing to a small group or ministry with small group and mentoring components in our Family and Adult Ministries.

MISSIONALLY Participating:

Members (in good standing) actively participate in the mission of the church (Matthew 28:18-20). As living examples of Christ's transformation, we are called to bear witness in the

way we live together and serve together for the purpose of making known to our world that Jesus lives!

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

PROCEDURE

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, First Baptist Church may, without special notice, receive new members.

INSTRUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS

All persons uniting with First Baptist Church shall previously be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Membership Affirmation of Faith. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations to regularly attend worship and participate in service and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the Church.

REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

Members may be removed from membership upon recommendation by the Elders and a majority vote of the members present at any business meeting.

Members in good standing may request a letter of recommendation to present to a different church. Members who unite with another Church will be removed from the membership roll.

Members who are found to be inactive in the worship, fellowship and ministry of the Church will be removed from the membership roll after a year. It is the responsibility of the Council of Elders to remind members of their duties in this respect.

Members whose conduct consistently or grievously contradicts the commitments outlined in the First Baptist Church Covenant may be subject to Church discipline under the leadership of the Elders.

ARTICLE II - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

The Biblical offices of the Church are Elders and Deacons. The Council of Elders are the legal directors of the Church. Elders and Deacons shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as described in Article II, Sections 2–3 of these Bylaws (Pg.9). All Elders and Deacons of the Church shall be members in good and regular standing. The Church also recognizes the administrative positions of Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary and will serve the church as described in Article III of these Bylaws.

ELDERS

Qualifications

Elders and nominees for Elder shall be men of demonstrable godly character, above reproach in public and private, and committed to shepherding the flock of God and to teaching and guarding sound doctrine, as expressed in the First Baptist Church Elder Affirmation of Faith. A plurality of elders exists in this church. Elders and nominees will exemplify the Biblical characteristics of elder-overseers in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and I Peter 5:1-4 and will agree with the First Baptist Church Elder Affirmation of Faith (Article 2) and commit to the Elders Covenant.

Acts 14:23 is the pattern for the selection of elders in the New Testament.

Acts 20:17, 28-30 – Elders Are Chosen by God. Titus 1:5 –

Elders Appoint Elders. Titus appointed elders who met the marks of spiritual maturity – The final authority for appointing the elders belonged to Titus, not the congregation.

Responsibilities

The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word.

The Elders are responsible for governing the Church as godly servant leaders. They must teach the Word and tend the flock of God in this Church. The responsibilities of the Elders shall include: examining prospective members and candidates for baptism and acquainting them with the Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official Church business, overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed Church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church, and mobilizing the Church for world mission.

1. Only properly ordained or licensed Elder shall officiate at marriage ceremonies conducted on First Baptist Church property.

2. Elders shall only officiate marriage ceremonies that comply with the First Baptist Church doctrine of marriage (Article 9).

Composition

The Council of Elders shall be comprised of Staff and Non-Staff Elders. Staff Elders are men who receive financial compensation from the Church as they fulfill God's call to the specific ministries of the Word, prayer and shepherding the flock. In addition to the duties of their office as described in Section 'b' above, Staff Elders shall perform the duties determined by the Council of Elders and approved by the congregation. The duties shall be in writing at the time of employment and substantial changes shall be approved by the Church.

Non-Staff Elders are men recommended by the Council of Elders and called by First Baptist Church who serves voluntarily without financial support from the Church as they fulfill God's call to the specific ministries of the Word, prayer and shepherding the flock.

Call by the Church

The members (in good standing) shall call Staff Elders and Non-Staff Elders (1) by ballot upon recommendation of the Council of Elders and (2) by at least a two-thirds majority of those members voting at the meeting of the Church present. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the two successive weekends preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

Organization

The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. Meetings of the Council of Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon

notice. The Council of Elders will meet at least quarterly and will consist of a quorum which is at least one-half of the Non-Staff elders plus at least one-half of the Staff Elders, except for matters on which only Non-Staff Elders are entitled to vote, in which case a majority of the Non-Staff elders shall constitute a quorum.

DEACONS

Qualifications

Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be men and who are members in good standing and demonstrate godly character and possess particular gifts of service. Deacons will exemplify the godly characteristics set forth in I Timothy 3:8-12 NKJ.

Responsibilities

The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include: administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress; the greeting and welcoming ministries of the Church; assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel; assisting at fellowship gatherings of the Church; caring for and maintaining the Church properties; administering the business affairs of the Church that pertain to its material assets (1 Tim. 3:8-13 NKJ).

Composition

The Deacons will be men of First Baptist Church of Asbury Park. Deacons may or may not be employed by the Church. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the Church.

Organization

Under the direction of the Elders, the Deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders or the Deacons may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular diaconal function.

REMOVAL OF OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

By resignation

Elders or Deacons may resign their office at any time if they find they are no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

Grievance

Where a grievance exists against an Elder or Deacon due to teaching contrary to the beliefs of First Baptist Church, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the call of the Elder or Deacon may be terminated at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of First Baptist Church present and voting present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the two successive weekends preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the membership at least one week before the meeting.

LICENSING AND ORDINATION

In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, First Baptist Church shall follow the procedure approved by the Council of Elders (Section 1 and 2).

ARTICLE III - CHURCH EMPLOYEES

In addition to Staff Elders, the Church may employ additional personnel. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. The Council of Elders or their designees will be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel.

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH FINANCES

IN GENERAL

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of First Baptist Church of Asbury Park.

All funds donated for missions by the societies and organizations of the Church shall pass through the Church Finance Secretary and the Treasurer in order that due record may be made and credit given to the Church. The Deacons shall provide assistants for the Financial Secretary in accounting for funds donated.

CONTRIBUTIONS

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum. Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

The financial planning of First Baptist Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders, or, if authorized by the Council of Elders, the Deacons or other committee. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor, or his designee, or the lay members of the Council of Elders. The Church fiscal year shall begin on November 1, and end on October 31. The Senior Pastor, or his designee, shall work alongside the treasurer and Financial secretary to provide direction to the Pastors and Directors of the Church for annual budget planning. The Senior Pastor, or his designee, along with the treasurer and Financial secretary shall recommend an annual budget to the Council of Elder.

The Senior Pastor, or his designees, along with the treasurer, financial secretary, and others shall coordinate the Church's financial planning. Its duties shall include the presentation of a realistically attainable annual unified budget, which supports the Church's various ministries, meets its financial obligations and maintains a healthy financial condition for the Church.

As part of the annual financial planning process, the Senior Pastor, or his designee, along with the treasurer and Financial secretary shall prepare and recommend a compensation budget for inclusion in the Church budget.

The process of developing the budget and its approval shall be concluded prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year.

4) The Church, its officers, and staff, shall be committed to the principle of fiscal responsibility and sound stewardship.

The Great Commission Demands a Great Commitment

We invite you to take advantage of the many opportunities throughout the year to help fulfill the Great Commission.

Commit to Care

The first step in increasing your commitment to the Commission is being informed. Where in the world are our missionaries? What type of ministries are they involved in? What are their challenges and needs? Explore our Missionaries.

Commit to Pray

The greatest commitment we can make to our missionaries is to pray for them. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." –Matthew 9:37–38. Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you. –2 Thessalonians 3:1

Commit to Give

(Luke 6: 35, 38; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor.16:2; 2 Cor. 8:12; 2 Cor. 9:7, 10; Heb. 13:16).

Giving is a very tangible way we can display our commitment to the Great Commission. An important part of our mission focus is asking each household to make a faith-promise to our missionaries over the next 12 months.

We will:

GIVE Missionally: offer financial support from the heart (2 Corinthians 9:7);

SERVE Missionally: serving in the church (Romans 15:8); and

GO Missionally: witness the gospel of Christ locally and globally (Acts 1:8).

ACCOUNTS

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Finance Secretary according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the Budgets or other authorized designations. All moneys for missions shall be remitted in accordance with the Mission Budget of the Church or otherwise designated, preferably each month and not less than each quarter.

AUTHORITY TO BIND THE CHURCH

The senior Elder and his designate of the Council of Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

FOR WORSHIP

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month or at such other times as the Council of Elders may determine. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

FOR BUSINESS

The Annual Meeting. The annual meeting shall be held sometime during the first month of the fiscal year of the Church for the purpose of calling and reaffirming the officers, reviewing proposed budgets and other business. Officers called at the annual meeting shall assume their duties at the beginning of the new fiscal year (November).

Quarterly Meetings. Quarterly meetings of the Church shall be held within the first month of each quarter of the fiscal year.

Special Meetings. The Council of Elders or 5% of the members in good standing may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on especially important matters not otherwise provided for.

Quorum. One-third of the active membership shall constitute a quorum for business meetings. Active members 18 years of age or older shall be eligible to vote at any ordinary meeting of the Church; and meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in these By-Laws, the quorums prescribed shall apply.

Rules Governing Business Meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the business meetings of the Church. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

Notice Provisions. Unless specifically defined in other sections of these By-Laws or the Constitution, "resident membership" means those members who reside within 75 miles driving distance from the church building, "notice . . . in writing" means a written announcement sent by regular U.S. mail or other electronic means, and "notice from the pulpit" means an oral announcement at each of the weekend worship services.

ARTICLE VI - ORGANIZATION OF MEMBERS FOR MINISTRY

Members (in good standing) of First Baptist Church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Council of Elders as an official ministry of First Baptist Church. Such sanction shall be granted provided that

The object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and

The primary officers of the organization are: members of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Council of Elders. Sanction by the Council of Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

ARTICLE VII - DISCIPLINE

In order for church discipline to be effective, it should be accepted by, and adhered to by, the majority of the members of the church (1st Corinthians 5:1-13; 2nd Corinthians 2:6), remembering that the goal of all discipline is repentance from sin and restoration to the fellowship of the church (2 Corinthians 2:6-11).

Church discipline should always be practiced as outlined primarily in Mt 18:15-20; and expanded upon in Romans 16:17-20; 1st Corinthians 5:1-13; Gal 6:1; 2nd Thessalonians 3:6; 14-15; 1st Timothy 5:19-20; Titus 3:9-11; and James 5:16 as summarized below:

The initial action should originate with the person offended, or made aware of the offense, or who is an eyewitness to the offense (Matthew 18:15). This person should meet one-on-one with the offender in a spirit of humility (Gal. 6:1), before it is discussed with anyone else (James 5:16). Two or three witnesses must handle the matter. If the matter cannot be resolved through private counsel, it should be taken to an Elder, or other godly man or woman who will prayerfully and lovingly accompany the offended person to a second meeting with the offender (Matthew 18:16).

If this step fails to bring resolution to the matter, it should be taken to the Council of Elders who will assist the Pastor(s) in bringing the matter where suitable recommendations before the church body for action shall be agreed upon (Matthew 18:17).

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

RESTORATION

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any reason may be restored by the Council of Elders after repentance has occurred.

ARTICLE VIII - RELATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Relationships in the church will be guided and governed by the biblical principles set forth in the Bylaws. This document establishes our commitments related to peacemaking and reconciliation, accountability and church discipline, preserving marriages, biblical counseling and confidentiality, and the protection of our children. These Commitments shall apply to members of our church, and may be amended from time to time in the same way that these Bylaws may be amended.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

General

Amendments to these By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any quarterly meeting, with the exception of Article II(4)(b) regarding amending the Elder Affirmation of Faith which as previously stated may only be amended by a recommendation of the Council of Elders to the church. Amendments shall not be acted on until the following quarterly or annual meeting, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the membership of the Church, or a two-thirds majority of those members present at the meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance; be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given

from the pulpit on at least two weekends and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.

ELDERS STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, AND SEXUALITY

We teach that marriage was given by God as part of His common grace, and that it has no meaning other than as He has provided (Gen. 2:18–24). We teach that marriage is subject to the curse of the Fall but that believers, living in obedience to the Scripture and under the control of the Holy Spirit, can begin to experience peaceful, productive, and fulfilled marriage as intended by God (Gen. 3:16; 1 Peter 3:7).

We teach that the marriages of believers (members in good standing) are to illustrate the loving relationship of Christ and His church, with the husband loving his wife as Christ loves the church and the wife responding to her husband's loving leadership as the church responds to Christ (Eph. 5:18–33).

We teach that as believers' marriages (members in good standing) are to illustrate Christ's relationship with His church, believers should choose to marry those who share their faith and regenerate life (2 Cor. 6:14).

We teach that the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, members in good standing, as delineated in scripture (Gen. 2:23–24).

We teach that marriage is always a public, formal, and officially recognized covenant between a man and a woman. We teach that without such a covenant, which may include a "common law marriage," where valid in specific cases under pertinent law, prolonged conjugal cohabitation does not establish, and is not equivalent to, marriage (John 4:18). We teach that where no such covenant exists, or can be discerned, between cohabiting couples prior to coming to faith in Christ, family units should be preserved to the extent possible and, if otherwise appropriate, solemnization encouraged. We teach that where a valid marriage has been established prior to coming to faith in Christ, the couple should remain married (1 Cor. 7:24).

We teach that God hates divorce, permitting it only where there has been unrepentant sexual sin (Mal. 2:14–16; Matt. 5:32, 19:9) or desertion by an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:12–15). We teach that remarriage is permitted to a faithful partner, but only when the divorce was on biblical grounds.

We teach that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We teach that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (Heb. 13:4).

We teach that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, pornography, any attempt to change one's sex or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God (Lev. 18:1–30; Matt. 5:28; Rom. 1:26–29; 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1–8).

We teach that homosexuality, in particular, is subject to God's wrath of abandonment, is a matter of choice and not inherited status, and epitomizes man's ungrateful rebellion against God (Rom. 1:18–28).

We teach that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture or the doctrines of the church. We teach that the faithful proclamation of the Scripture, including the call to repentance, does not constitute hate speech, or hateful and harassing behavior, but is instead a fundamental part of the church's loving mission to the world (Matt. 28:16–20; 2 Cor. 5:11–20; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:1–2).

We teach that God offers redemption and forgiveness to all who confess and forsake their sin, including sexual sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We teach that His forgiveness is total and complete (Ps. 103:11–12, 130:3–4; Is. 43:25, 44:22; John 5:24; Col. 2:13–14) and that God imputes the full righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21) to the believing sinner. We teach that the forgiven sinner has been cleansed from the guilt of sin, set apart unto God, or made holy, and justified before Him (1 Cor. 6:9–11). We teach that any man or woman who has received that forgiveness is "in Christ" and is a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Weddings

All who are ordained, licensed, commissioned or otherwise authorized by First Baptist Church of Asbury Park to solemnize marriages may do so, in the exercise of religious freedom, only where the participants are one man and one woman, and members in good standing (Gen. 2:21–24; Matt. 19:4–6; Mark 10:6–9).

Please note that only pastors of First Baptist Church can perform weddings on our campus, unless there is a prior agreement with the elders. Any outside pastor who is to be involved in a wedding ceremony must agree with the First Baptist Church wedding policy and must have the written permission of the Elders.

First Baptist Church Membership Covenant

As you prayerfully consider becoming a member at First Baptist Church, we ask that you read the following commitments. They are written in the form of a covenant - the church committing to your care, protection, and spiritual growth; and you committing to actively participating in our life as part of us.

We hope that as you make these commitments, you would experience God's good pleasure to add you here, and that it would fill you with excitement and joy over what God is doing in you at First Baptist Church.

LIFE IN CHRIST

I have surrendered my life to Jesus, placing my faith in Him alone for the forgiveness of my sin, and receiving the right to be called a child of God. I believe in Jesus' perfect life, substitutionary death, physical resurrection, and I will live my life in view of his return, and following Him daily. I am committed to living my life in accordance with God's will as revealed in the Scriptures. I welcome the protection, care, and direction of my church.

RELATIONALLY CONNECTED

I am committed to living my life in the family of God at First Baptist Church. I will participate regularly in our worship gatherings and intentionally develop deeper relationships for spiritual growth. I will seek to be a source of unity in my church, abstaining from gossip or dissension, and resolving/forgiving conflict as much as it depends on me.

MISSIONALLY PARTICIPATING

I am committed to serving others and not letting the church be about my preferences and desires. As a part of the body of Christ, I will serve sacrificially and give generously, spending my time, talents, and treasures to build disciples and be a blessing. I will faithfully represent Jesus in my work, my home, and my neighborhood, seizing every opportunity to carry out God's mission to reach the world, and I will be open to wherever God might send me.

First Baptist Church covenants...

to appoint elders according to the Scriptures.

to prayerfully seek God's will for our church community.

Steward our resources to the best of our ability based on our study of the Scriptures and following of the Spirit.

to care for our members and seek their growth in grace, truth and love.

to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture, protecting from false teachers and teachings.

to equip our members for the work of ministry.