

**CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**  
Of  
**First Baptist Church of Clearfield, PA,  
Inc.**



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# **ARTICLE 1 - NAME AND PURPOSE**

## **SECTION 1.01 - NAME**

This congregation of believers shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Clearfield, PA, hereinafter referred to as “this church” in this constitution and bylaws.

## **SECTION 1.02 - PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ who are committed to exalting God, living in obedience to Scripture, edifying one another and evangelizing unbelievers. It will promote the worship of the true God, the evangelization of the world, the edification of believers through mutual fellowship and encouragement and the equipping of believers for the work of ministry. This church is committed to the proclamation of the whole counsel of God as contained in the Bible, which, alone, will constitute its rule of faith and practice.

## **SECTION 1.03 – LEGAL STATUS**

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United State Revenue Law).

# **ARTICLE 2 - STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT**

## **SECTION 2.01 - STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The following comprise the scriptural beliefs of this church and its members.

- (A) God.** We believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit – con-substantial, co-eternal, and co-equal in power and glory, each having identical attributes and perfections. We believe in the universal sovereignty of God. He is the Creator of all that is and ordains all that comes to pass, according to His sovereign good pleasure and perfect wisdom, yet without becoming the author of sin. (Gen. 1-3; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 3:16-17; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; II Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:11; 4:6; I Peter 1:2)
- (B) The Scriptures.** We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, in the original manuscripts. We believe the Scriptures to be the inerrant and infallible Word of God and, therefore, the supreme and final authority in faith and life. (Ps. 119:11, 105; Isa. 40:8; II Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2; II Peter 1:20-21)

- (C) **Christ.** We believe in the absolute Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; in His virgin birth; in His literal incarnation; in His perfect humanity (void of sin); in His miracles; in His vicarious substitutionary and atoning death on the cross through the shedding of His blood for remission of sins; in His literal bodily resurrection; in His literal bodily ascension; in His present High Priestly ministry of intercession and sole mediatorship; and in His personal, imminent, literal return. (Matt. 1:18-23; Mark 10:45; Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14; 14:3; Acts 1:9-11; 2:22-24; I Cor. 15:3-4; Gal. 1:4; Col. 2:9; I Tim. 3:16; 2:5; Titus 2:13-14; Heb. 7:25; I John 3:5)
- (D) **The Holy Spirit.** We believe in the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, and in His ministry of revealing Christ, convicting of sin, reproving unrighteousness, baptizing the repentant person into the Body of Christ at conversion only, of regenerating, of sanctifying and filling and empowering for service. (John 16:7-8; 13-14; Romans 8:2; 10-14; I Cor. 2:9-12; Eph. 2:1-3)
- (E) **Satan.** We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man, and that he will be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10)
- (F) **Man.** We believe that man was created in the image of God, directly and without any process of evolution. We believe that, in Adam's sin, the whole human race fell into a state of sin. All human beings come into the world with a sinful nature, being alienated from God, in a state of spiritual death and subject to physical and eternal death. Man is totally depraved, meaning that every part of his nature is corrupted by sin, and he is, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:20-23; Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 2:13)
- (G) **Salvation.** We believe that salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in virtue of His redemptive work on the cross, and that neither baptism, the Lord's Supper, nor any other rite, ceremony or work can avail one whit for the sinner's salvation. We believe that regeneration is a work of the Spirit of God in the human heart constituting the sinner a new creature in Christ and issuing forth in repentance and faith. Repentance and faith are inseparable graces. All who personally receive Jesus Christ as Savior, are justified on the basis of Christ's shed blood, born of the Spirit and thereby become children of God. (John 1:12; 3:3-8, 16, 36, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:24-26; 10:9-10; I Cor. 15:3; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-5)
- (H) **Perseverance.** We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Work, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. We recognize that there will be those who profess Jesus as Lord who are not, nor ever were genuinely born again. We recognize the need for all to do a self examination according to biblical truth to see whether or not we are genuinely in the faith. (Matt. 7:21-23; John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 28-39; 13:13-14; I Cor. 1:8; II Cor. 13:5; Eph. 2:8-10; Col. 1:21-23; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 3:6, 14; I Pet. 1:4-5; I John)

**(I) Church.**

1. We believe that the invisible, universal church is a spiritual organism and includes regenerated persons from Pentecost to the second coming of Christ. We believe that her supreme mission is her worldwide commission as set forth by Christ and His apostles. We believe that Christ is the Head of His church. We believe in the autonomy of the local church, free from any other external authority or control. (Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 2:41-47; 8:4; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 2:10; Heb. 12:23; 10:25)
2. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. (Lev. 19:28; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor. 6:14-7:1; II Tim. 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11)
3. We believe in the "Priesthood of all Believers." That every regenerated human being has direct relations with God and is responsible to God in all matters of faith; that each church is autonomous; and that church and state must be kept separate as having functions each fulfilling its duties free from the dictation or patronage of the other. (Matt. 6:6-13; Acts 4:19-20; Rom. 13:1-7; 14:1-12; Heb. 10:19-22; I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10)
4. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are the ordinances established by Christ for the church in this present dispensation. We believe that baptism is to follow conversion, being a public testimony of one's faith in Christ. It is to be practiced by immersion in water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, publicly identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and portraying death to sin and resurrection to newness of life. We believe that the Lord's Supper was established as a means of showing forth in symbol Christ's death for us until He comes again and expresses the believer's relationship to Christ. We believe that the Lord's table should be open to all regenerated persons living in fellowship with, and obedience to Jesus Christ, and in fellowship with other believers. (Matt. 3:13-17; 26:26-29; 28:19; Acts 2:38; Romans 6; I Cor. 11:23-32)

**(J) Resurrection.** We believe in the literal resurrection of the body. We believe in the endless bliss of believers in God's presence and in the endless, conscious punishment of the nonbeliever. (Matt. 25:41, 46; John 5:28-29; I Cor. 15:22-24; 51-54; II Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:14-15; 21:4, 8)

**(K) Second coming.** We believe in the literal, physical, premillennial return of Jesus Christ to judge the world and to establish His kingdom. (Matt. 24:29-31; 25:31-46; Mark 13:32-37; John 14:2-3; Acts 1:11; I Cor. 15:50-58; I Thess. 4:13-5:11; II Thess. 1:7-10; 2:1-12; Titus 2:13; Rev. 1:7; 19:11-20:10)

**(L) Spiritual gifts.**

1. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts, and that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, teachers and His Word, are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today, and that the sign gifts of speaking in tongues and the working of miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament

scriptures were completed and their authority established. We believe that all Christians are baptized by the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion. (I Cor. 12:9-13; II Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12; II Tim. 3:16-17)

2. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will for the sick and afflicted. We do not believe that it is always God's will to heal or to heal everyone. We do not believe that on the basis of the atoning work of Christ, we have a right to demand healing of the body but that we must trust in the sovereignty of God. (John 15:7; Phil. 2:27; I John 5:14-15)

**(M) Marriage and family.**

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9, Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 7:2; I Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 7:1-2; I Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children, for bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Peter 3:1-7)

**(N) Men and women.** We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (elders and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; I Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)

**(O) Abortion.** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or physical or mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

**(P) Love.** We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers and those who oppose us. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God

forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10, 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; II Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; I John 3:17-18)

- (Q) Lawsuits.** We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. (I Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)
- (R) Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; II Cor. 5:20)
- (S) Giving.** We believe that every Christian, as a steward of a portion of God's wealth, is obligated to God for good stewardship of what he has been entrusted with. We believe that God established the tithe as a basis for giving in the Old Testament, but every Christian should give offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the offerings once the gift has been made. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:17-18; I John 3:17)

## **SECTION 2.02 - AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore, is binding upon all members.

## **SECTION 2.03 - COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith, 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 comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to support its services regularly with attendance; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all



institutions of human origin; and 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 private devotions; to biblically educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from worldliness and to pursue Godliness in all areas of life.

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

If we should be removed from this local fellowship, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith and doctrine.

#### **SECTION 2.04 - POSITION STATEMENT ON THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

We believe that the Word of God does not categorically forbid the use of all alcoholic beverages. Jesus and His disciples drank wine. The Apostle Paul recommended the medicinal value of “a little wine” to Timothy. However, the Bible also condemns drunkenness, exhorts us to be sober-minded and repeatedly warns against the dangers of wine and strong drink. In light of the differences between the use of wine in biblical times and use of alcoholic drinks in our culture, in light of the fact that any use of alcoholic beverages carries the danger of leading into abuse, in light of the fact that drinking alcoholic beverages can readily create a stumbling-block for other believers and hinder our testimony for Christ in the world, we strongly recommend complete abstinence for the members of this church.

### **ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP**

#### **SECTION 3.01 - MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS**

The requirements for membership in this church are as follows:

- (A) Have a credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior and give evidence of a genuine experience of regeneration.
- (B) Have been obedient to believer’s baptism by immersion. Exceptions to immersion may be made where physical conditions prohibit.
- (C) Complete a membership class.

- (D) Be in essential agreement with the doctrinal statement of this church and agree not to teach or advocate any doctrine or viewpoint that is contrary to the doctrinal statement of this church.
- (E) Agree to the church covenant in section 2.03.
- (F) Be in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of this church and agree to abide by them.
- (G) Be interviewed by the elders in regard to one's personal faith, spiritual life and agreement with this church's doctrine and constitution and bylaws. Elders may ask deacons to assist in this interview.
- (H) Any applicant may be required to complete a personal discipleship course, at the discretion of the elders.

No applicant for membership will be accepted only upon a letter of transfer from another church. An applicant wishing to transfer membership from another church will still be required to fulfill the above requirements for membership.

Any former member who has been removed through church discipline may be restored to membership upon demonstrated repentance and public confession of the sin(s) for which he/she was removed from membership. A former member who was not removed from membership on account of disciplinary action may be received back into membership upon a renewed affirmation of faith and of essential agreement with the doctrinal statement.

## **SECTION 3.02 – RECEIVING MEMBERS**

Upon approval by the elders the names of applicants who meet all the criteria in the previous section will be presented, in writing, to the membership of this church two Sundays prior to a vote to affirm their membership. During this time, it is expected that any current member with issues regarding the prospective member will verbalize them privately to the elders for consideration. Applicants will be received into membership upon a three-fourths majority vote of the membership present at a business meeting, which meeting will have been announced at least two weeks in advance.

## **SECTION 3.03 - DUTIES OF A MEMBER**

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the covenant contained in Article 2, Section 2.03, each one further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the leadership; to pray for them; to recognize their authority in spiritual affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church through faithful attendance, ministry involvement as gifts and abilities allow, in prayer, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with biblical commands, to support through a lifestyle walk affirming the beliefs and practices of the church.

### **SECTION 3.04 - INACTIVITY/INAPPROPRIATE ABSENTEEISM**

In being part of a local body of believers, it is the responsibility of each member to be faithful in attendance and participation in the meetings and ministries of the congregation unless hindered by illness, other providential circumstances, those serving in ministry outside this church, religious educators, Armed Service personnel, etc. To be lax or indifferent toward faithful participation may indicate the need for admonition concerning one's faithfulness to the local church. It is the responsibility of the elders to oversee the regularity of participation and to examine the possible reasons for inactivity. If inactivity is consistent in a three (3) month time frame without adequate reason, the elders shall exercise every reasonable effort to reclaim to this fellowship those who, for one reason or another, have absented themselves from the fellowship of the congregation. Every reasonable effort toward redeeming restoration must be exercised by this church. In seeking to restore a member, every reasonable effort must be made to resolve any conflict, correct any error, or remove any offense. This will be done through biblical counsel, admonition and with loving concern. If there is not appropriate response from the individual then the elders may notify such a person and drop him/her from membership. Such a person dropped cannot have membership privileges. Any who desire reinstatement will be required to follow the usual procedure for obtaining membership.

### **SECTION 3.05 - PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

- (A) Only members at least eighteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church has certain limited areas to exercise a vote.
- (B) This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the elders as the undershepherds. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The elders shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church.
- (C) Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The elders and deacons have the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the elders, be treated as a trespasser.
- (D) A member, upon written request made upon the church five business days prior, may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church, the minutes of the proceedings of church meetings, and the minutes of the proceedings of board meetings. This does not include elder meeting notes deemed by the board of elders to be dealing issues of a private nature, nor does it include counseling notes.

1. A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, the list of names and addresses of the church members, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.
2. The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.

### **SECTION 3.06 - DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER**

- (A) There shall be a discipline committee consisting of the board of elders. These men shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith and violations of the church covenant. If an elder or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee. The elders and deacons shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline.
- (B) Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.
- (C) If reconciliation is not reached, a second member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
- (D) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, the discipline committee, as the church representatives biblically responsible for putting down murmuring, shall hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing before the discipline committee, the committee shall recommend to the members of the church that they, after self-examination, make an effort personally to go to the offending member and seek that member's restoration.
- (E) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B), (C), and (D) have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon a majority vote of the membership present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering disciplinary action.
- (F) No matter may be heard by the discipline committee or the church unless the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, except in the case of a public offense.
- (G) If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the church membership, all contact with him from that point forward should be for the sake of restoration.

- (H) The procedures provided in this section are based on Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20 and Titus 3:10-11.

## **SECTION 3.07 – POSITIONS REQUIRING MEMBERSHIP**

Only church members in good standing are eligible for election as church officers. Only church members in good standing are eligible to serve in the roles of deaconess, missions committee, auditors (unless hiring an outside professional auditor) or in teaching positions.

# **ARTICLE 4 - GOVERNMENT**

## **SECTION 4.01 – GENERAL STATEMENT**

This church recognizes Jesus Christ as the only true head of the church. However, Christ has ordained that the oversight and care of each local church should be vested in individuals who are gifted and qualified for office. The New Testament clearly delineates two specific offices of church leadership: elders and deacons. This church recognizes a congregational form of church government with final governing authority resting in the membership, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures and with the leadership and oversight of the duly appointed eldership.

## **SECTION 4.02 – OFFICERS**

The church officers are pastor(s), elders, deacons, church clerk, treasurer and financial secretary. The elders, from time to time as they deem appropriate, may appoint other church officers, subject to a three-fourths majority confirmation vote of the church membership. As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the deacons will serve in the capacity of trustees of the corporation. The pastor will serve as the president of the corporation. The chairman of the deacon board will serve as vice-president of the corporation. The church clerk will serve as secretary of the corporation. The treasurer will serve as treasurer of the corporation.

## **SECTION 4.03 – PASTOR(S)**

This church recognizes the pastor(s) as men especially gifted and called to devote themselves to the study of God's Word and teaching of the church, as well as exercising general spiritual oversight and care towards God's people. These should be recognized by the church and, so far as it is possible, should be financially supported by the church so as to devote their time to the ministry of the Word of God (1Tim. 5:17-18). A pastor is recognized as one of the elders having a gift of pastor/teacher, but with all the duties and responsibilities of an elder.

**(A) Duties:**

A pastor is recognized as one of the elders having a gift of pastor, but with all the duties and responsibilities of an elder. The duties of the pastor/teacher and other elders shall include general oversight of the spiritual aspects of the church. He/they, in cooperation with the other elders, shall fulfill all duties as laid out for the elder board in this constitution. The pastors shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads them. They shall preach regularly at the services of the church. They shall administer the ordinances of the church. The pastor(s)' salary shall be determined by the combined elder/deacon board and reviewed each year at the annual budget review meeting.

**(B) Appointment:**

The elders shall act as a pulpit committee or appoint a pulpit committee to investigate possible candidates. The elders will also assure that the pulpit is filled in the absence of a pastor. The pulpit committee keeping in view the particular needs of the church, will seek a man who by past records, educational attainment and temperament, should measure up to the requirements. The committee being mutually agreed that the man under consideration would be the first choice of the church, shall request him to come preach and confer with the committee and then allow the church, at the earliest possible time, to vote to decide whether a call be extended before another candidate be considered. The vote will be taken at a special business meeting, according to Section 5.03. A vote of no less than 90% of the members present will be required to extend a call. A pastor will be called to serve for an indefinite period of time.

**(C) Termination:**

1. The pastor of this church shall serve until his services are terminated by resignation or by request of the covenant membership.
2. The pastor shall give a minimum of thirty (30) days notice before termination of his services.
3. The elders by a majority vote of those present may grant a severance pay not to exceed the amount of a thirty (30) day pay period.
4. If there is an accusation against the pastor, the elders must remind the congregation that in order to avoid malicious and provocative accusations against the pastor, the accuser must realize that he/she stands to be judged with the same severity with which he/she judges, if the accusation proves false (Matthew 7:1,2). The same procedure as described in Section 3.05 shall be used to "win" the brother, even if he is a pastor. The exception being if the elders vote to bring the case before this church.

5. With regard to a case of an admitted act of immorality or heresy, the elders may act without congregational authority to demand the resignation of the pastor if a resignation has not been received by the elders within a reasonable time; and in such case, the pastor shall not fill the pulpit from the time such evidence is received by the elders until the matter is resolved.
6. Circumstances having nothing to do with immorality or heresy, such as extended illness, incompetence in the performance of pastoral or ministerial duties, or unbiblical character or conduct, the pastor should be advised of the problem and specific efforts should be made to remedy the situation.
7. For Covenant Members to remove a pastor from office, the elders must call a special congregational meeting as stipulated in Section 6.03 of these bylaws. The elders shall state the charges during the congregational meeting. A quorum for this meeting shall consist of sixty percent (60%) of the voting covenant members. Votes are to be on written, secret ballots. A three-fourths majority vote shall be required on the first ballot in order to dismiss the pastor. If the members votes not to dismiss the pastor and finds no wrong, the matter will be dropped, unless the elders believe that disciplinary action should be taken against the accusers.

#### **SECTION 4.04 – ELDERS**

The elders of this church will be men who meet the biblical qualifications for the office as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. A potential elder must have been a member of this church for a minimum of 2 years (excluding a called pastor). The elders, along with the pastor(s) will be the spiritual leaders and have general oversight of the church membership and all aspects of this church and its ministries. Initially, upon adoption of this Constitution, and/or until such time as at least two elders are appointed the existing deacons (and the one elder if one is appointed) shall serve in the capacity of “acting” or “temporary elders”. Upon the appointment of at least two elders the deacons shall no longer act or be temporary elders.

##### **(A) Duties:**

The elders, in conjunction with the pastor(s), shall supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership. They are responsible for the spiritual oversight, instruction and leadership of the church. They are to guard the flock of God against false teaching, to admonish and instruct its members and to oversee all of its ministries and services (Acts 20:28-35; 1 Tim. 5:17). They may establish and appoint committees as needed for the functioning of the church’s ministries. They will have authority to review and approve or disapprove any and all activities of this church. The pastor shall act as moderator at all church business meetings except in the case where a meeting is dealing with him personally in the event of need for discipline, etc. The elders shall choose a moderator for church meetings in the event the pastor is unavailable, or the meeting is regarding him. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof including time and

place and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than the stated appointments shall be under the control of the elders.

**(B) Appointment and terms of service:**

Any member of this church may recommend someone for the office of elder at any time. The existing elders will then examine the candidate to determine spiritual/biblical qualifications for elder (including but not limited to doctrinal knowledge), willingness to minister to the church as a servant-leader and ability to work together with the existing body of elders. If the candidate is approved by the elders, his name will be presented to the church membership for confirmation at a meeting duly called for this purpose. Opportunity will be given, at this meeting, for the membership, under the direction of the elders, to ask any questions of the candidate and express any concerns. The candidate may then be approved by a minimum three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting.

An elder will continue to hold office throughout his lifetime unless: 1. He voluntarily resigns from his position. 2. He no longer fulfills the qualifications and/or duties of an elder. An elder may request up to a 1 year sabbatical from the active duties of eldership. At the end of that year, he will automatically resume his duties unless it is determined that he no longer meets the biblical qualifications for an elder.

No accusation against an elder will be considered without the testimony of two or more witnesses. When two or more witnesses bring an accusation of unbiblical conduct against an elder, the matter will be investigated by the remaining elders. If there is an insufficient number of elders to fairly investigate the matter, they will involve the deacons or, if deemed necessary, like-minded pastors. If it is determined that the accusation is true and of such a magnitude that the elder must be removed from office, it will be brought to the attention of the church membership at a duly called business meeting. A three-fourths majority vote of the membership present and voting at such a meeting will be required to remove an elder from office.

## **SECTION 4.05 – DEACONS**

The deacons of this church will be men who meet the biblical qualifications for the office as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They will be responsible for the administration of the material aspects of the church's ministries and will assist the elders as needed.

**(A) Duties:**

1. The deacons shall have oversight of the care and maintenance of the material property of the church, including the buildings and grounds, so as to free the elders to focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word. In addition, they shall assist the elders, in such manner as they shall request, in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the religious services, and in performing all other work of the church. They shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the church. They



shall, in cooperation with the elders, disburse the fellowship fund. They shall perform a ministry of mercy and encouragement to those in physical need. The deacons shall assist the elders in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries as requested by the elders.

As soon as possible following the annual church administration meeting, the board of deacons shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chairman, a vice-chairman, a treasurer and a secretary.

2. The board of deacons shall constitute the board of Trustees of the corporation. They shall function under the direction of the board of elders. The board of Trustees shall exercise only the following specific powers:
  - a. to purchase, hold, lease or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church, to sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges; and
  - b. to exercise all powers necessary for dissolution of the church corporation, if such action is mandated by a vote of the church membership.

**(B) Appointment and terms of service:**

Any candidate for the office of deacon must be approved by the elders for spiritual/biblical qualifications (according to 1 Tim. 3:8-13) before being presented to the congregation for a vote. A three-fourths majority vote will be required for confirmation of the candidate for the office of deacon.

The term of service for deacons will be three years, after which they shall retire from that board for a period of one year before eligibility for re-election.

**SECTION 4.06 – CHURCH CLERK**

The Church Clerk shall:

- (A) Certify and keep at the office of the church, the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws.
- (B) Keep at the place where the bylaws or a copy are kept a record of the proceeding of all church business meetings, with the time and place of holding, the notice of meeting given, the names of those present at the meetings.

- (C) Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law.
- (D) See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In case of the absence or disability of the Church Clerk, or his/her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor, or by the chairman of the board of deacons.
- (E) Be custodian of the records of the church, including the membership roll, baptisms, and certifications of ordination, licenses and commissions.
- (F) See that the reports, statements, and certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
- (G) Exhibit at all reasonable times to proper persons on terms provided by law the bylaws and minutes of proceedings of the business meetings of the church.
- (H) Keep an account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical interest and give a report at the annual church administration meeting of the status of the church membership roll in the past year.
- (I) Keep all original records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.
- (J) Serve as the secretary of the corporation.

#### **SECTION 4.07 - THE TREASURER**

The Treasurer shall:

- (A) Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the Corporation, and deposit all funds in the name of the church in banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected by the board of deacons.
- (B) Disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the church as may be directed by the board of elders, the board of deacons, or the budget adopted by the members of the church at the annual church administration meeting, taking proper vouchers for the disbursements.
- (C) Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the church's properties and business transactions including account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital.
- (D) Make all expenditures of the church (except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements) by check.
- (E) When and as requested, render to the elders and the board of deacons accounts of all his/her transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

- (F) Present a written report of itemized disbursements at the regular church administration meetings and make a general report for the year at the annual church administration meeting.
- (G) Keep all church financial records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.
- (H) Serve as treasurer of the corporation.
- (I) The treasurer may be assisted by the financial secretary or other individuals approved by the elders.

#### **SECTION – 4.08 FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

The financial secretary shall:

- (A) Receive, and give receipt for all contributions, gifts, and donations to the church.
- (B) Assist the deacons in the counting of the offering and shall be available to assist the treasurer in the deposit of funds.

#### **SECTION 4.09 - DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS**

- (A) All boards or officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church administration meeting.
- (B) Any officer, except an elder, who neglects his duties as outlined in the bylaws may be removed from his office at the discretion of the elders and another may be appointed by a three-fourths majority vote by the elder board to serve the unexpired term. Removal of an elder will be according to the procedures stated in Section 4.04B.

#### **SECTION 4.10 – ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE**

- (A) The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith. All church officers, upon request of the elders, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith (as set forth in Section 2:01).
- (B) All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the elders in order for them to commence or continue in their offices.
- (C) Only church members in good standing are eligible for election or appointment to any church office.
- (D) The nominating committee consisting of one pastor, two members at large, and either one other elder and one deacon, or two deacons shall, after examining candidates for

consideration, present the list to the elder board for approval prior to posting the candidates for office.

#### **SECTION 4.11 – TERMS OF OFFICE**

Terms of service for elders and deacons will be as defined in Sections 4.04B and 4.05B. The terms of service for other officers will be one year.

#### **SECTION 4.12 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The annual election of officers by the church membership shall occur between November and December at a business meeting for that purpose. A simple majority confirmation vote is necessary for any person to serve in offices other than elder or deacon. The vote should be based upon the congregation's recognition of the biblical qualifications in the nominee's life, and not popularity. (1 Tim. 3:1-13)

### **ARTICLE 5 - MEETINGS**

#### **SECTION 5.01 - MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP**

The church shall meet regularly at times established by the board of elders for the purpose of Worship, Bible Study, and Prayer. The Lord's Supper shall be observed as indicated by the elders.

#### **SECTION 5.02 - MEETINGS FOR CHURCH ADMINISTRATION**

- (A) The annual church administration meeting shall be held in January, at which time the regular church administration shall be considered.
- (B) A quorum for any business meeting shall consist of 7 members.
- (C) Notification of any business meeting, including the annual church administration meeting, must be given at least 4 Sundays in advance. The agenda for any regular business meeting will be printed and publicly posted at least 2 Sundays in advance. There will be no items added to the meeting agenda during the meeting.
- (D) The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure and his decision is final and controlling.
- (E) For any meeting under this article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require non-members to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the

moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. The moderator shall have full authority to order the removal of all children (ages to be determined by the moderator) if the moderator determines, in his sole discretion, that circumstances so warrant. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, the moderator may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises in accordance with Section 3.03 (C) and treat the person as a trespasser.

### **SECTION 5.03 - SPECIAL MEETINGS**

- (A) The elders may call a special meeting by giving notice of the time and the purpose of such meeting to the church from the pulpit at least two Sundays prior to said meeting.
- (B) Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the elders deem beneficial.

### **SECTION 5.04 - FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

## **ARTICLE 6 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

### **SECTION 6.01 - PURPOSE**

The church believes that it is to provide the members' children with an education which is based upon and consistent with biblical teachings. The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To this end, the church shall engage in ministries in education in keeping with the following dictates:

### **SECTION 6.02 - CHURCH PARTICIPATION**

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the elders may permit nonchurch members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if they deem it in the best interest of the church.

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members of this church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or special meetings on a temporary basis.

### **SECTION 6.03 - STATEMENT OF FAITH ACCORD**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Statement of Faith of this church (Section 2:01). The church shall not hire, appoint, or

retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith.

#### **SECTION 6.04 - UNITY**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church.

#### **SECTION 6.05 - TEACHING**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. Any assertion or belief which conflicts with or questions the Bible truth is a pagan deception and distortion of the truth which will be disclaimed as false. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

#### **SECTION 6.06 - CHRISTIAN WALK**

All administrators, instructors, and teachers shall continue or adopt a lifestyle consistent with the precepts which they teach, whether in or out of the classroom. They shall abide by all the requirements and duties of membership as outlined in Section 3.01, 3.03 and 3.04.

### **ARTICLE 7 - ORDINATION**

#### **SECTION 7.01 - ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS**

Any member of this church or its mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

#### **SECTION 7.02 - ORDINATION PROCEDURE**

- (A) Upon a conference with the elders and after the elders have approved the candidate for ordination, the elders shall call a council to examine and pass on the qualifications of the candidate.
- (B) If the candidate is found worthy of the ordination by the elders, the ordination council may ordain the candidate on behalf of the church. The ordination may include ministers of like precious faith invited by the elders to participate in the examination of the candidate.
- (C) The pastor and the chairman of the elders shall arrange for the ordination service.

## **ARTICLE 8 - INDEMNIFICATION**

### **SECTION 8.01 - ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION**

The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was an elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interest of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

### **SECTION 8.02 - EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION**

To the extent that an elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in the Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

### **SECTION 8.03 - LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION**

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section 1 of this Article. The determination shall be made (a) by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the elders and deacons who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

### **SECTION 8.04 - TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION**

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the board of deacons in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

## **SECTION 8.05 - EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION**

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

## **SECTION 8.06 - INSURANCE**

The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was an elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

# **ARTICLE 9 - COMMITTEES**

## **SECTION 9.01 - STANDING COMMITTEES**

The elders shall appoint or dissolve standing committees, and except when otherwise specifically provided in these bylaws, shall determine the membership of each standing committee.

## **SECTION 9.02 - SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The board of elders or deacons, in its discretion, may create special committees to provide the board of elders or deacons with advice and information regarding matters submitted to the committees by that board for consideration. The committee shall have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. The members of the committee shall be chosen by a majority vote of the board of elders or deacons and shall serve solely at the pleasure of the respective board. The special committee shall be subject to the control and direction of the respective board at all times.

# **ARTICLE 10 - MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

Any memorial contributions will be placed in the general fund to be used at the discretion of the church leadership.



## **ARTICLE 11 - BINDING ARBITRATION**

### **SECTION 11.01- SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION**

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

### **SECTION 11.02 - NOTICE OF ARBITRATION**

In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to these bylaws or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in Section 11.01, above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to Section 11.04, below.

### **SECTION 11.03 - LIMITATIONS ON ARBITRATION DECISIONS**

- (A) Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline as outlined under Section 3.04, were followed.
- (B) Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the proper procedures, according to this constitution and bylaws were followed.

### **SECTION 11.04 - ARBITRATION PROCEDURES**

The Procedures for Arbitration shall be as adopted by the elders and the board of deacons.

## **ARTICLE 12 - TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS**

### **SECTION 12.01 - PRIVATE INUREMENT**

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Section 1.02 hereof.

## **SECTION 12.02 - POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT**

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. This church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

## **SECTION 12.03 - DISSOLUTION**

Upon the dissolution of the church, the trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the deacons shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax exempt organizations which agree with the church's Statement of Faith.

## **SECTION 12.04 - RACIAL NONDISCRIMINATION**

The church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

## **SECTION 12.05 - LIMITATION OF ACTIVITIES**

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Section 1.02.

# **ARTICLE 13 -AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may with unanimous elder board approval, be revised or amended by a three-fourths majority of the members present and voting at any regular church administration meeting, provided said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit 2 Sundays before the vote is taken.

## ADOPTION

**This constitution was adopted by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of this church in which a quorum was present.**

These bylaws supersede any other bylaws of FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

Mark Bender

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Bill E. Bock

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Bill G. Bock

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David Learish

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Bill Serena

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John Weaver  
(ELDERS/DEACONS)

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(ELDERS/DEACONS)

Joan Learish  
(MINISTER OF RECORDS)

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(MINISTER OF RECORDS)

2/6/08  
(DATE)

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(DATE)