

## CHURCH CONSTITUTION

(Approved by the church in called business meeting September 19, 2004)

### Article I – Name

Section 1. The name of this church shall be the First Baptist Church, Oxford, Alabama.

### Article II - Covenant

1. **Salvation and Baptism**  
John 1:11-12  
Matt. 28:19-20  
Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior,  
And on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost,
2. **Duties to the Church**  
John 13:34-35  
Phil. 1:27  
2 Tim. 2:15  
2 Cor. 7:1  
2 Peter 3:11  
Heb. 10:25  
Matt. 28:19  
1 Cor. 11:23-26  
Jude 3  
Matt. 6:33  
1 Cor. 16:2  
2 Cor.  
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 sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines;  
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.
3. **Duties in Personal Christian Living**  
1 Thess. 5:17  
Acts 17:11  
2 Tim. 3:15  
Deut. 6:4-7  
Acts 1:8  
Matt. 4:19  
Ps. 126:4-6  
Prov. 11:30  
Eph. 4:31  
Eph. 5:18  
Titus 2:14  
We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; 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 abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating substances, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

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| 4. | Duties to Fellow Members<br>I Peter 1:22<br>James 5: 16<br>Gal. 6:2<br>James 2:15<br>I Peter 3:8<br>Eph. 4:30-32 | We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love;<br><br>To remember each other in prayer; To aid each other in sickness and distress; To cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech;<br>To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay. |
| 5. | Duties to local Community<br>Acts 11:19-21<br>Acts 18:24-28  | We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and principles of God's Word.  |

### Article III – Character

- Section 1. Polity. The government of the church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body; but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation with other Baptist churches.
- Section 2. Denominational affiliation. This church shall be a cooperating member of the Calhoun Baptist Association, the Alabama Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.
- Section 3. Doctrine. It receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice.

### Article IV – Mission Statement and Object

- Section 1. Mission Statement – First Baptist Church strives to be a compassionate body of believers who worship and glorify God, proclaim and teach His word, reach out to the world, and make faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Section 2. Object - United by the grace of God in Christian experience, we declare our object as a body of believers to be: First, the maintenance of the worship of God; Second, the study and practice of the Christian life as found in the Scriptures; Third, to seek to bring to bear upon the life of our society the teaching of Jesus; Fourth, to promote and advance the Kingdom of God throughout the earth.

### Article V – Membership

- Section 1. The membership of this church shall consist of persons who have made a profession of their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord; who desire the fellowship of the disciples of

Christ; who have been baptized by immersion; who are in sympathy with the faith and practice of this church, and have an understanding of the church covenant.

Section 2. Admission of Members. Membership may be attained in this church as follows:

- A. By the ordinance of Baptism after profession of faith.
- B. By letter from any church of the same faith and order.
- C. By restoration to the roll after having been dropped or excluded.
- D. By statement of Christian experience indicating previous compliance with either "A" or "B" above.
- E. Those who come from churches of other faiths will be baptized, unless such persons were baptized in keeping with Baptist understanding of baptism.

Section 3. Termination of Membership. Membership in this church shall be terminated as follows:

- A. By letter of dismissal, at request of the church united with.
- B. By dropping from the rolls.
- C. By exclusion.
- D. By death.
- E. By written request to the Church Clerk.

#### Article VI – Officers

Section 1. The officers of this church shall be Pastor, Moderator, Deacons, Trustees, Clerk, Treasurer, Sunday School Director, Discipleship Training Director, Brotherhood Director, WMU Director, and any others the church may choose to select to carry out its programs and ministries.

#### Article VII – Committees

Section 1. The Standing Committees shall consist of the Personnel Committee, the Stewardship Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Properties Committee, the Pulpit Supply Committee, the Benevolence Committee, the Baptismal Committee, the Ushers, the Welcoming Committee, the Floral Committee, the Counting Committee, the Senior Adult Committee which includes the LLL Director and Homebound Ministry, the Youth Council, the Transportation Committee, the Recreation Committee, the Audio-Visual Committee, the Long Range Planning Committee, the Wedding Liaison Committee, and any other committees the church establishes to carry out its programs and ministry.

### Article VIII – Elections

- Section 1. The annual and special election of officers, messengers, and committees shall be held as prescribed in the By-Laws.

### Article IX – Ordinances

- Section 1. The ordinances shall be Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Section 2. Baptism shall be by immersion.
- Section 3. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least four (4) times per year. The days and hours shall be prescribed by the deacons in conjunction with the pastor.

### Article X – Amendments

- Section 1. Order of Business. All business meetings shall be conducted in conformity with **latest** *Roberts Rules of Order* unless otherwise provided for in the Constitution and By-Laws.
- Section 2. Unless otherwise provided for in the Constitution and By-Laws, a majority vote of members present shall govern.
- Section 3. Constitution. This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting at a stated business meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at least thirty days prior to the time of the vote.
- Section 4. All votes shall become effective the date of approval unless otherwise specified.

## By-Laws

### Section 1. Officers - Term of Office and Duties:

- A. Pastor – The pastor shall seek to perform the duties of that office with all fidelity; to preach on the Lord’s Day; to administer the ordinances as commended in the New Testament; to conduct and direct the mid-week devotional services; to visit the sick; to seek, through personal effort, to win the lost and to enlist the unenlisted, and to perform all other duties as usually pertain to that office.

The Pastor shall be ex-officio member of all organizations and committees, and his leadership shall be recognized in all of them.

The call or election of a pastor may be held at any regular meeting or special meeting for that purpose, for which not less than one week’s notice has been given the membership. The call shall be by written ballot. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the membership present and voting shall be necessary for a choice. The call shall be for an indefinite period.

The termination of the service of the pastor can be determined by the pastor or the church. In the event the pastor wishes to end his service with the church, he shall give the church thirty (30) days notice. The church may terminate the services of the Pastor by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular meeting or special meeting provided that the entire church has been notified, by the deacons, of such meeting and its express purpose not less than one week prior to such meeting. The date of the termination of the Pastor’s services shall be specifically set by the same vote. If the pulpit is made vacant either by choice of the church or the pastor, a Pulpit Committee shall be nominated by the Deacons and elected by the church. This committee will agree on a minister, after due investigation, and present his name for election. The church shall vote on only one man at a time. In case of a negative vote, another name will be presented and so on until a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote is had.

- B. Moderator – The Moderator shall be either the Pastor or the Chairman of the Deacons. The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the church. It shall be his duty to see that the regular meetings are held, to see that required reports are submitted by the various departments and officers; to advise the Chairman of the Deacons of the church when, in his opinion, any committee is not carrying out the duties assigned them.

- C. Clerk – It shall be the duty of the Clerk to work with the church secretary to record and preserve the minutes at all business meetings of the church, to record and preserve an accurate roll of membership, to handle all correspondence involved in granting and receiving letters of membership, to prepare jointly with the Pastor and heads of the various departments and the Treasurer the annual letter to the association and to perform any other duties which may be assigned to this office.

The minutes, membership rolls, et al, are the properties of First Baptist Church of Oxford and the originals are to be kept in the church or in the church's safety deposit box. It is also to be the duty of the Clerk to see that a permanent method is used to preserve records in case of catastrophic loss.

- D. Treasurer – The Treasurer shall receive, hold, and disburse all checks, monies, bonds or funds of any kind of the church. The Treasurer shall keep all funds in a bank approved by the Deacons and/or the Stewardship Committee. The treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all funds received and disbursed and shall render reports monthly to the church. The Treasurer shall submit annually, and at other times, which may be directed by the Stewardship Committee, the books for an audit by a committee appointed by the Stewardship Committee.

The Treasurer is to be assisted by the Financial Secretary and related committees in preparing and distributing contribution envelopes and keeping an accurate record of individual contributions and mailing statements of the same annually. (See Financial Policies).

- E. Deacons – The Deacon body shall consist of 15 or more men who are active members of the church. These men, in the opinion of the church, meet the accepted qualifications for deacon and have proven themselves loyal and faithful members of the church. These are men who are well grounded in Baptist polity and doctrine and who are considered to be good stewards of their influence, time and possessions. A Deacon must be at least twenty-one (21) year of age and have been a member of First Baptist Church for at least one (1) year at the time of nomination and a Christian for three (3) years. A Deacon shall be the husband of one female wife who manages his household well.

The deacons shall be elected for a term of three (3) years. An “active deacon” is defined as a deacon who is currently serving an elected term. Deacons may not serve two consecutive full terms. When it is necessary to replace a deacon because of removal, resignation, or death, the deacon nominee who received the next highest number of votes during the last election will become an active deacon of First Baptist Church. Five or more men are to be elected each year as needed.

Deacons shall be selected by the following process:

Last Week of June: Mail to every church family a letter from the church advising each member of the importance of nominating persons to be selected as deacons. Enclosed will also be an explanation of the Deacon Selection Process and a Deacon Nomination form. The purpose of the Deacon Nomination Form is not to judge the individual or their qualifications but to encourage the person making the nomination to stop, to think and to pray before making such an important decision. The church will also be advised that additional forms will be available in the church office and in the sanctuary. It is requested that each church member nominate no more persons than there are vacancies on the Deacon body. These nomination forms can be mailed in or hand delivered to the church office any time prior to the second Sunday in July. Nomination forms received after the second Sunday in July will be considered invalid. The person making nominations for the office of deacon must sign all nominations. This is required to make sure the nominator is a member of First Baptist Church. Nominations not signed by the nominator will not be considered valid. Publicity will be made through the worship services and the *Reporter* as to the qualifications and expectations of the Deacons of First Baptist Church.

Second Sunday of July: A letter of explanation will be mailed to every nominee as of the second Sunday of July no matter how few or many nominations are received. Contained in this letter will be a question or a series of questions that will be asked of the nominee by one or more deacons. Those men who have previously served First Baptist Church as deacon will only be asked if anything in his life has changed or would keep him from serving since his last service as a deacon. If a nominee has served as a deacon in another Southern Baptist church, he will be asked the questions mailed to him. If a nominee has never been ordained a Southern Baptist Deacon, he will meet with the active deacons and he will be asked a series of questions, including but not limited to, the questions mailed to him. The nominee will be given one (1) week to study the questions and prepare for the time of discussion. At that time, or any time prior, if the nominee decides to remove his name from consideration, he may call the Chairman of Deacons or church office.

The questions to be asked are:

- 1) How do you know for certain you are saved? Please share your conversion experience.
- 2) What is your role in the home?
- 3) Tell your view of the tithe and why you do or do not tithe.
- 4) What is to be the relationship between the deacons and staff of First Baptist Church?
- 5) How do you understand the ministry duties of a deacon? How will you participate?
- 6) Is there anything in your life to prohibit you from serving as a deacon of First Baptist Church? (Romans 2:24)

- 7) How do you feel about the participation and affiliation of First Baptist Church in the Calhoun Baptist Association, the Alabama Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention?
- 8) How do you feel about your attendance and participation in the regularly scheduled meetings of First Baptist Church?

Third Week of July to Second Sunday of August: The deacons, in pairs of two, will meet with each of the nominees to hear their response to the questions stated above. After all nominees have been contacted, the deacons will discuss the answers and provide a list of nominees to be voted on by the church body. This list will be placed in the *Reporter* and properly publicized.

Fourth Sunday of August: Deacons will be selected by the church from the list publicized earlier in August. The number of Deacons selected will be equal to the number of vacancies on the Deacon body. The vote shall be by secret ballot of members present.

Following Deacon Selection: Those who have been selected by the church to serve as deacon will be contacted by the active deacons with duties and expectations explained and praying together about God's leadership.

If a deacon misses three (3) consecutive regular meetings without reasonable excuse made to the chairman, he shall be removed from the Deacon body and replaced. The deacons shall assist the Pastor in performing the ordinances and shall be responsible for the services in absence of the pastor.

The Deacons shall be expected to faithfully perform any and all special duties, which the church may assign, to them and to work closely with the Pastor in counsel and cooperation. The Deacons shall meet monthly and shall make recommendations to the church as deemed necessary. If any officer becomes incapacitated or unable to serve, the Deacons shall appoint a replacement subject to the approval of the church.

The church shall maintain a Policy Manual which shall be reviewed by the Deacons regularly. Any changes require church approval.

A deacon liaison shall be selected by the Chairman of the Deacons, approved by the Deacons and shall be ex-officio member of all organizations and committees of the church.

When the Chairman of Deacons is unavailable to fill the office for any reason, the Vice-Chairman of Deacons will fill in for the Chairman of Deacons as needed.

Deacon Emeritus – When a man has served this church faithfully in the office of Deacon for a minimum of twelve (12) years of active service and because of age or illness can no longer serve, he, by the recommendation of Deacons and the vote

of the church, shall be elected Deacon Emeritus and shall serve in an advisory capacity.

- F. Trustees – The Trustees shall consist of six (6) members elected by the church. The Trustees shall hold in trust the church properties. They shall execute all conveyances upon proper instruction from the church but shall have no power to buy, sell or mortgage without the approval or direction of the church.

The Trustees shall keep the church properties covered with adequate insurance. The Chairman of the Trustees shall work in close cooperation with the Properties Committee in proper maintenance of buildings and grounds.

Selection of trustees shall be as follows:

1. Nominated by the Nominating Committee;
2. Approved by the Deacons;
3. Voted on by the church.

Term of Office – The trustees shall be elected for a three (3) year rotating term of office and may not serve two consecutive terms.

- G. Personnel Committee – The Personnel Committee shall be composed of the Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons, Chairman of the Stewardship Committee and at least three (3) members at large. This committee shall recommend to the Stewardship Committee and the Deacons regarding salaries, employment and dismissal of paid employees with the exception of the Pastor. They shall also have full responsibility for the work done by all staff members. It shall be their responsibility to see that the duties of such paid workers are outlined and carried out.

Selection of the Personnel Committee shall be as follows:

1. Nominated by the Nominating Committee;
2. Approved by the Deacons;
3. Voted on by the church.

Term of Office – The Personnel Committee shall be elected for a three (3) year rotating term of office and may not serve two consecutive terms.

- H. Properties Committee – The Properties Committee shall be composed of five (5) or more members of the church including the Chairman of Trustees. They shall have supervision over all repairs and proper maintenance of buildings and grounds. This committee shall have authority to expend such monies only for repairs and maintenance as are allocated in the church budget. Needed expenditures above in the budgetary allocation must be referred to the Stewardship Committee. (See also Financial Policies).

Selection of the Properties Committee shall be as follows:

1. Nominated by the Nominating Committee;
2. Approved by the Deacons;
3. Voted on by the church.

Term of Office – The Properties Committee shall be elected for a three (3) year rotating term of office and may not serve two consecutive terms.

- I. Stewardship Committee – The Stewardship Committee shall be composed of seven (7) or more members of the church, one (1) of whom shall be the Treasurer of the church. This committee shall meet as needed and carefully review the financial status of the church. The committee shall be charged with the responsibility of stimulating and promoting stewardship among the membership of the church. They shall prepare and submit to the church an annual budget. This budget is to be adopted not later than one (1) month prior to the beginning of the financial year, which shall run concurrent with the calendar year.

Selection of the Stewardship Committee shall be as follows:

1. Nominated by the Nominating Committee;
2. Approved by the Deacons;
3. Voted on by the church.

Term of Office – The Stewardship Committee shall be elected for a three (3) year rotating term of office and may not serve two consecutive terms.

- J. Nominating Committee – The Nominating Committee shall consist of three (3) representative members of the church. This committee shall be elected by the church upon the nomination of the committee at the regular or called business meeting prior to the beginning of the church year.

The Nominating Committee shall begin its official service at the beginning of the church year and continue until their successors are elected. The committee shall make nominations of the church for the replacements of all elected officers and teachers of the church, except deacons and staff, which may occur through the year and shall make nominations for all officers and teachers for election in Business Meeting prior to the beginning of the church year. The Nominating Committee will make nominations for the Sunday School Director, the Discipleship Training Director, WMU Director and the Brotherhood Director at least sixty (60) days prior to the annual election of officers. These shall become a part of the committee.

The church year shall be commensurate with the calendar year effective January 2005.

Selection of the Nominating Committee shall be as follows:

1. Nominated by the Nominating Committee;
2. Approved by the Deacons;
3. Voted on by the church.

Term of Office – The Nominating Committee shall be elected for a three (3) year rotating term of office and may not serve two consecutive terms.

- K. Pulpit Supply Committee – The Pulpit Supply Committee shall consist of the Chairman of Deacons, Chairman of Personnel Committee and the Chairman of Stewardship Committee. This committee shall assist the Pastor in filling the pulpit in his absence and shall be responsible for recommending an interim pastor when necessary.
- L. Benevolence Committee – The Benevolence Committee, composed of three (3) members of the church, shall determine persons needing assistance and the manner in which such assistance can best be rendered. The committee shall have full authority in expenditures of such monies as is provided in the church budget. If more funds are needed in emergencies than thus provided for, the Benevolence committee may make requests or recommendations to the Stewardship Committee.

Selection of the Benevolence Committee shall be as follows:

1. Nominated by the Nominating Committee;
2. Approved by the Deacons;
3. Voted on by the church.

Term of Office – The Benevolence Committee shall be elected for a three (3) year rotating term of office and may not serve two consecutive terms.

- M. Baptismal Committee – The Baptismal Committee shall be composed of five (5) or more members of the church. These shall furnish and care for the baptismal rooms and robes and assist the Pastor and the candidates in the observance of the ordinance of baptism.

Selection of the Baptismal Committee shall be as follows:

1. Nominated by the Nominating Committee;
2. Approved by the Deacons;
3. Voted on by the church.

Term of Office – The Baptismal Committee shall be elected for a three (3) year rotating term of office and may not serve two consecutive terms.

N. Ushers – The Ushers Committee shall consist of as many members of the church as may be needed. There shall be a Chairman for both morning worship services and evening worship services. The Chairman will be responsible for notifying members of the committee in advance of days or occasions upon which they are to serve. The duties of the ushers committee shall be outlined in the church policy manual. A copy of these duties shall be carefully studied and followed by all ushers.

O. Welcoming Committee – The Welcoming Committee shall consist of not less than four (4) members of the church. These shall station themselves at the entrances before all worship services and shall courteously greet all people who pass into the facilities.

Selection of the Welcoming Committee shall be as follows:

1. Nominated by the Nominating Committee;
2. Approved by the Deacons;
3. Voted on by the church.

Term of Office – The Welcoming Committee shall be elected for a three (3) year rotating term of office and may not serve two consecutive terms.

P. Floral Committee – This committee shall consist of five (5) or more members of the church and shall be charged with the responsibility of procuring and arranging floral displays and any and all other arrangements of the general sanctuary appointments. Expenditures by the committee must be limited to the budgetary allocations or authorized by the Stewardship Committee.

Selection of the Floral Committee shall be as follows:

1. Nominated by the Nominating Committee;
2. Approved by the Deacons;
3. Voted on by the church.

Term of Office – The Floral Committee shall be elected for a three (3) year rotating term of office and may not serve two consecutive terms.

Q. The selection process does allow for nominations from the floor for any office or committee except that of pastor or deacon.