

# COVENANT AND CONSTITUTION



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## **ARTICLE 1: NAME**

The name of the church will be “First Baptist Church, Leamington, Ontario” (hereafter FBC)

## **ARTICLE 2: COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God in accordance with Holy Scripture 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 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.

Therefore, we zealously engage, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of Christ’s Church, in knowledge, holiness, and the unity of the saints; 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, and the expenses of FBC, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotion; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to be a light to the world but not of it; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our Christian conduct.

We further engage to watch over one another in Christian love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offence, and always ready for reconciliation.

Moreover if/when we remove from FBC, we will unite with some other local church where we can carry out the principles of God’s Word and the spirit of this covenant as soon as possible.

Finally, in as far as this constitution aligns with Holy Scripture we engage to uphold its tenants with integrity, and as our standard of church life and discipline.

## **ARTICLE 3: PURPOSE**

**The purposes for FBC are to:**

- a) Worship God and administer the ordinances of the New Testament.
- b) Provide opportunity within which we as members of God’s family experience a deeper relationship with Him, comprehend His love for us more completely, and develop a closer relationship with each other.
- c) Encourage people towards a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour through faithfully participating in the proclamation of the gospel of Christ, both locally and globally.
- d) Teach the principles of Christian living for the development of the Christ-like character.

- e) Reflect Christian morals within our community, our educational system, and every area of society.
- f) Express the love of Christ to those in need.
- g) Guard Christian doctrine by maintaining the Holy Scriptures as our ultimate authority in all of life.

## **ARTICLE 4: STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **Section 1: Of The Holy Scriptures**

- a) We affirm that the Holy Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is the only sufficient, certain, inerrant and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.
- b) We deny that the Bible is a mere witness to the divine revelation, or that any portion of Scripture is marked by error or the effects of human sinfulness.
- c) We affirm that the authority and sufficiency of Scripture extends to the entire Bible in all 66 books and is our final authority for all doctrine and practice.
- d) We deny that any portion of the Bible is to be used in an effort to deny the truthfulness or trustworthiness of any other portion. We further deny any effort to identify a canon within the canon or, for example, to set the words of Jesus against the writings of Paul. We deny the right of any ecclesial authority to sit in judgment over Holy Scripture.
- e) We affirm the centrality of expository preaching in the church and the urgent need for a recovery of biblical exposition and the public reading of Scripture in worship.
- f) We deny that God-honouring worship can marginalize or neglect the ministry of the Word as manifested through exposition and public reading. We further deny that a church devoid of true biblical preaching can survive as a gospel church.

**2 Tim. 3:15-17; Isa. 8:20, 66:2; Luke 16:29,31; John 16:13-14; Eph. 2:20; Rom. 1:19-21, 2:14,15, 10:17, 15:4; 1 Cor. 14:37-38; Psalm 19:1-3; Heb. 1:1; Prov. 22:19-21; 2 Pet. 1:19, 20.**

### **Section 2: Of God in Holy Trinity**

- a) We affirm that there is but one living and true God, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of all things, infinite in being and perfection and to Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence and obedience. In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him.
- b) We deny the claim that the Trinity is not an essential doctrine, or that the Trinity can be understood in merely economic or functional categories.

- c) We affirm that God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe and all creatures contained therein. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God as Father is the wellspring and fountain of salvation, choosing His elect in Christ before the foundation of the world.
- d) We deny that the God of the Bible is in any way limited in terms of knowledge or power or any other perfection or attribute, or that God has in any way limited His own perfections.
- e) We affirm that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the divinely appointed mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the law; suffered and died upon the cross for the salvation of sinners. He was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended to His Father, at whose right hand He ever lives to make intercession for His people. He alone is Head over the church and He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission.
- f) We deny that the substitutionary character of Christ's atonement for sin can be compromised without denying and repudiating the gospel.
- g) We affirm that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired men of old to write the Scriptures and through illumination enables men and women in every generation to understand the truth contained therein. He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls people to the Saviour and effects regeneration. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ and pours out the love of the Father in the hearts of true believers and gives witness to the believer that he or she is a child of God. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance and the seal of faith. He liberally and prudentially gives gifts to all believers unto the edification of the church. The Holy Spirit becomes in our hearts the Spirit of supplication.
- h) We deny that the Holy Spirit is merely "the power of God" or that He is the possession of an elite class among the blood bought people of God. We deny the identification of speaking in tongues as a unique sign gift, seeing instead an emphasis on a diversity of gifts within the Body of Christ for her common edification.

**1 Cor. 8:4,6; Deut. 4:15-16, 6:4; Jer. 10:10; Isa. 46:10, 48:12; Exod. 3:14; John 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17; Mal. 3:6; 1 Kings 8:27; Jer. 23:23; Ps. 90:2; Gen. 17:1; Isa. 6:3; Ps. 115:3; Prov. 16:4; Rom. 9:5, 11:36; Exod. 34:6,7; Heb. 11:6; Neh. 9:32,33; Ps. 5:5,6; Exod. 34:7; Nahum 1:2,3.**

### **Section 3: Of Creation and Fall**

- a) We affirm that in the beginning it pleased God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom and goodness, to create the world and all things therein whether visible or invisible in the space of six days and all things very good.
- b) We deny that the universe is eternal, or self existent or without purpose and obvious design. We further deny any attempt to explain the origin and uniqueness of human life without reference to the Creator and His eternal will.
- c) We affirm that God created humanity in His image and likeness, male and female and that the first humans, Adam and Eve, were created in holiness, under the law of their Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in

consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, by nature and by choice, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

- d) We deny that human beings are born innocent or that any persons are without need of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We deny that the existence of sinful orientations or desires within human beings should be interpreted as God's will for their behaviour and personal expression.

**Genesis 1-3 in total; Eccles. 7:29; Rom. 2:14,15; John 1:2,3; Heb. 1:2; Job 26:13; Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:16; 2 Cor. 11:3; Rom. 5:6, 8:7; Eph. 2:1,5; Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44**

#### **Section 4: Of Redemption**

- a) We affirm that salvation is all of grace, and that the gospel is revealed to us in doctrines that most faithfully exalt God's sovereign purpose to save sinners and, in His determination, to save His redeemed people by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to His glory alone.
- b) We deny that any teaching, theological system, or means of presenting the gospel that denies the centrality of God's grace as His gift of unmerited favour to sinners in Christ can be considered true doctrine.
- c) We affirm that sinners are justified only through faith in Christ, and that justification by faith alone is both essential and central to the gospel.
- d) We deny that any teaching that minimizes, denies, or confuses justification by faith alone can be considered true to the gospel. We further deny that any teaching that separates regeneration and faith is a true rendering of the gospel.
- e) We affirm that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers by God's decree alone, and that this righteousness, imputed to the believer through faith alone, is the only righteousness that justifies.
- f) We deny that such righteousness is earned or deserved in any manner, is infused within the believer to any degree, or is realized in the believer through anything other than faith alone.
- g) We affirm that the gospel of Jesus Christ is God's means of bringing salvation to His people, that sinners are commanded to believe the gospel, and that the church is commissioned to preach and teach the gospel to all nations.
- h) We deny that evangelism can be reduced to any program, technique, or marketing approach. We further deny that salvation can be separated from repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- i) We affirm that the liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their immediate freedom from the guilt of sin, their progressive freedom from the power of sin and their ultimate freedom from the presence of sin.
- j) We deny any notion of liberty which teaches that Christians can ever be entirely free from the battle with sin and temptation in this earthly life.
- k) We affirm that God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to His word, or not contained in it.
- l) We deny any notion of liberty which would leave people or churches free to believe or practice things contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

**Matt. 6:12; Luke 17:5,19:8, 22:31,32; John 1:7-12, 5:25, 10:28, 15:14, 17:17; Acts 11:18, 15:11, 16:31, 20:32, 24:14, 26:18; Rom. 3:24-26, 4:5-8, 17-19, 25, 5:17, 6:5-23, 7:18-23, 8:30-32, 10:14,17, 11:7; 1 Cor. 1:30,31, 2:14, 2 Cor. 3:17-18, 4:13, 5:21, 7:1,11; Gal 2:20, 3:8, 5:17, 24; Eph. 1:1-11, 17-20; Eph. 2:1-6, 8, 3:16-19, 4:15-16; Col. 1:11,21,22; 1 Thess. 5:21-23; 2 Thess. 2:13,14; 1 Tim. 1:13,15, 2:6; 2 Tim. 1:9-12; Titus 3:2-7; Heb. 10:14, 11:13, 12:14; Phil. 3:8,9; 1 Pet. 1:2,11,18,19, 2:2; Ezek. 36:26-31; Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:27; Ps. 110:3, 19:7-10, 69:72; Eccles. 7:20; Zech. 12:10; Ps. 119:6,128; Isa. 1:16-18, 53:5,6, 55:7; Ps. 89:31-33**

## **Section 5: Of Marriage, Sexuality and Gender**

- a) We affirm that marriage is to be between one man and one woman; united in loving covenant before God for the mutual help and comfort of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with legitimate offspring, and the preventing of sexual immorality.
- b) We deny that it is lawful or legitimate before God for any man to have more than one wife, or for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time. We further deny that it is lawful or legitimate before God for a man to marry another man, or for a woman to marry another woman.
- c) We affirm that men and women are equal in dignity and worth, bearing as they do the very image and likeness of God. We affirm that the Scripture reveals a pattern of complementary order between men and women, and that this order is itself a testimony to the gospel, even as it is the gift of our Creator and Redeemer. We also affirm that all Christians are called to service within the body of Christ, and that God has given to both men and women important and strategic roles within the home, the church, and society. We further affirm that the teaching office of the church is assigned only to those men who are called of God in fulfillment of the biblical teachings and that men are to lead in their homes as husbands and fathers who fear and love God.
- d) We deny that the distinction of roles between men and women revealed in the Bible is evidence of mere cultural conditioning or a manifestation of male oppression or prejudice against women. We also deny that this biblical distinction of roles excludes women from meaningful ministry in Christ's kingdom. We further deny that any church can confuse these issues without damaging its witness to the gospel.

**Gen. 1:27-28, 2:18, 24; Lev. 18:6-18, 22; Neh. 13:25-27; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:5,6; Mark 6:18; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:9-11, 7:2,9, 39, 11:4-5, 14:29-35; Gal. 3:23-29; Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Tim. 2:8-15, 3:1-13, 4:3; Heb. 13:4**

## **Section 6: Of Ministry and the Church**

- a) We affirm that the heart of the Great Commission is to make disciples of all nations by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and that this is best done in and through local churches adorning their proclamation with a faithful witness of love and good deeds.
- b) We deny that good works on their own can communicate the saving message of the gospel; the gospel must be heard or read in vernacular words for it to be believed to saving effect. We further deny that the local church can be bypassed as the primary vehicle for Christian mission.



- c) We affirm that the Lord Jesus is the head of the Church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is invested supremely all power for its government. According to His commandment, Christians are to associate themselves into particular churches for their mutual edification and their due performance of that public worship, which He requires of them in the world. To each of these churches He has given needful authority for administering that order, discipline and worship which He has appointed.
- d) We deny that any mere human being can be in any sense the head of the church and that the claim of any to be the Vicar of Christ on earth should be strongly resisted. We further deny that any Christian can truly be a faithful disciple apart from the teaching, discipline, fellowship, and accountability of a congregation of fellow disciples, organized as a gospel church.

**Matt. 16:18, 18:15-20, 28:18-20; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:10,20-23, 4:11, 5:23,27,32, 6:18; 1 Cor. 1:2, 5:4-5,13, 9:6-14; Acts 2:41-42, 6:3-6, 11:26, 14:23, 15:2-25, 20:17-28; Rom. 1:7, 16:1-2; Col. 1:18; John 10:16, 12:32; 2 Cor. 1:24, 2:6-8; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2, 4:14; 5:17,18; Gal. 6:6,7; 2 Tim. 2:4; Titus 2:1-10; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15; Heb. 12:23, 13:17; Ps. 122:6; 1 John 4:1; 3 John 8-10**

### **Section 7: Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

- a) We affirm that baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, obligatory upon every believer, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of their fellowship with Him, in His death and resurrection; of their being engrafted into Him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life. We further affirm that baptism properly follows a credible profession of faith and is prerequisite to church membership. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.
- b) We deny that agreement on believer's baptism by immersion alone is a sufficient basis for free will association or missiological partnership between local churches.
- c) We affirm that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and wine, and to be observed by His church till the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with Him, and of their church fellowship.
- d) We deny that the Lord's Supper can be faithfully administered apart from the right practice of church discipline. We further deny that the elements are in any way physically or substantially altered into the body and blood of Christ. While Christ is present really and spiritually He is not to be understood as present physically in or "underneath" the elements.

**Matt. 3:16, 28:19,20; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 2:41, 8:12, 8:36-38, 18:8, 22:16; John 3:23; 1 Cor. 10:16-21, 11:23-29; Heb. 9:25,26,28; Matt. 7:6, 26:26,27; 2 Cor. 6:14,15**

## **Section 8: Of the Autonomy of the Local Church and Free Will Association**

- a) We affirm that every duly gathered local church, according to the mind of Christ declared in His word, has been given all power and authority which is in any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which He has instituted for them to observe; with commands and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power.
- b) We deny that a church's autonomy may be exercised independently of the Word of God or that it may govern itself in ways contrary to the clear teaching of Holy Scripture.
- c) We affirm the principle and potential benefit of free will association between substantially aligned local churches. The appropriate aim of this association should be strategic collaboration, mutual consultation and intercessory prayer. We further affirm the right of a local church to withdraw from association should the association no longer reflect the theological convictions of that congregation. Similarly, we affirm the right of the association to declare local churches no longer substantially aligned.
- d) We deny that any such association may be entrusted with any church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any churches or persons; or to impose their determination on the churches or officers.

**Matt. 18:15-20, 28:20; John 10:16, 12:32; Acts 15:2,4,6,22,23,25; Rom. 16:1,2; 1 Cor. 5:4, 5, 5:13; 2 Cor. 1:24, 2:6-8; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15; 1 John 4:1; 3 John 8-10; Ps. 122:6**

## **Section 9: Of the Return of Christ and Last Things**

- a) We affirm our belief in the imminent and physical return of the Lord Jesus to the earth. The Lord shall descend with the voice of an archangel and with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ shall arise first. Then we who are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever.
- b) We deny any attempt to spiritualize the return of the Lord. We further deny that we are to find ultimate fulfilment or happiness in this present world or that God's ultimate purpose is for us to find a more meaningful and prosperous life in this fallen world. We further deny that any teaching that offers health and wealth as God's assured promises in this world can be considered a true gospel.
- c) We affirm that God has appointed a day wherein He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all people who have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ when everyone shall receive according to their deeds. The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; the righteous, into everlasting life in the New Heavens and the New Earth wherein we shall see the face of God and enjoy His presence forever.
- d) We deny that the Bible's teaching on everlasting punishment is meant as mere symbol or empty threat or that it means anything other than the opposite of what is meant by everlasting life. We further deny that the punishment of hell is only of everlasting

significance or that one's experience of hell is anything other than everlasting, conscious torment.

**Matt. 10:28, 12:36, 25:34, 46; Mark 9:47-48, 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40, 16:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:35-57; 2 Cor. 5:8; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 20:15, 21:3; Acts 17:31; John 5:22,27; 1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Eccles. 12:14; Rom. 9:22-23, 14:10,12; 2 Tim. 4:8; 2 Thess. 1:5-10; Rev. 20:11-15, 22:20**

## **ARTICLE 5: AFFILIATION**

FBC recognizes the necessity of united denominational action as well as the obligations of mutual counsel and co-operation common among Baptist churches. For this reason, FBC seeks to co-operate and maintain fellowship with the Western Association of Baptist Churches, the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (here after CBOQ), Canadian Baptist Ministries, and other co-operative associations within CBOQ. Further, FBC will seek opportunities for co-operation and united Christian action with other Christian churches in the community to extend the Kingdom of God.

FBC, including its facilities and property, may be withdrawn from the fellowship of the CBOQ only after the proposal has been accepted at two special business meetings called for this purpose. At the first special business meeting, a formal notice of intention must be approved by the members of FBC. The notice of intention shall be forwarded to the CBOQ with a copy to all FBC members. At the second special business meeting, at least one month from the first meeting, the proposal must be re-affirmed by the members of FBC. At both meetings, voting shall be by ballot and require approval by at least eighty percent majority of the members present at the time of the meeting. Notice of the meetings shall be the same as for amendments (see Article 11).

## **ARTICLE 6: MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1: Qualifications**

Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, and who professes that faith publicly through baptism, and who is in agreement with the statement of faith held by FBC, may be admitted into membership. Prospective members will be required to work through the FBC constitution under the guidance of the discipleship committee. Upon completion of the requirements, a signature from each prospective member will be required for admission into membership indicating agreement with FBC's constitution.

## **Section 2: Admission to Membership**

Persons may be received into membership upon recommendation of the discipleship committee and by vote of the board of elders, and who:

- a) Profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and publicly proclaim their faith through baptism by immersion at FBC;

Or have

- b) Previously been baptized by immersion, or other means, at an age of understanding and who give evidence of Christian faith and experience;

Or have

- c) Been members in good standing in other Baptist churches and who have been recommended to FBC by letter;

Or have

- d) Professed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and who are willing to give public witness of this faith through baptism by immersion but, for health reasons, are unable to do so.

In each case mentioned above, the candidate must be a member for a minimum of one year before being eligible to serve in any elected position.

*Ref: 1 Timothy 3:1-12, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 4:2-5*

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Names being recommended for membership to the board of elders from the discipleship committee, shall be posted in the bulletin at least two weeks prior to the elder's regular monthly meeting and any concerns from the congregation, regarding the recommendation, shall be voiced in writing to the board of elders.

## **Section 3: Reception of Members**

New members shall ordinarily be publicly welcomed into membership on the occasion of the observance of the Lord's Supper.

## **Section 4: Duties of Members**

- a) All members, in good standing, are expected to participate and vote in transactions of FBC, as often as possible.
- b) Members are expected to be faithful in all spiritual duties essential to the Christian life. This includes attending of the services, prayerfully upholding FBC ministries, giving for its support and benevolence regularly, and sharing in its organized work.

- c) Members are expected to show love towards and recognize the leadership of the elders and deacons of FBC.

### **Section 5: Removal from Membership**

Persons may be removed from membership, by recommendation of the board of elders, in the following instances:

- a) A member in good standing is entitled to a letter of recommendation to another Baptist church. The letter thus granted is to be forwarded directly to a particular Baptist church, except where otherwise recommended by the elders.
- b) A member in good standing who desires to join a church of another denomination may be granted a certificate of good standing to the church of choice.
- c) A member, whom has been absent for two years may be removed from membership without notification, but only at the discretion of the board of elders.
- d) A member submits written request to have their name removed.
- e) Persons may be removed from membership for misconduct by recommendation of the board of elders and by vote of FBC members, **but only after reasonable effort at reconciliation and restoration has been made.** *Matthew 18:15-22*

### **Section 6: Restoration to Membership**

Any person whose name has been removed from the membership list for misconduct (Section 5 e) may be restored to membership upon confession and repentance of their sin, a recommendation of the board of elders, and a vote of FBC members. Any person whose name has been removed from membership for reason of inactivity may have their membership restored by the board of elders upon renewed participation.

## **ARTICLE 7: THE ORGANIZATION OF FBC**

### **Section 1: Boards of FBC**

The official boards of FBC shall be:

**The Board of Elders**  
**The Board of Deacons**

### **Section 2: Committees**

- a) The boards of FBC shall execute their continuous duties through standing committees as established by the constitution.
  - i. Standing committees shall be organized annually at the board organization meeting each December immediately following the regular December board meeting.

- ii. The chair of each standing committee shall be a board member and may include more board members as needed. The vice chair will be appointed by the chairperson.
  - iii. FBC members and adherents are eligible to be appointed to any standing committee.
  - iv. Each standing committee shall have a minimum of three people in addition to the chair and must consist of more members than adherents.
  - v. Committee chairs shall submit the complete list of committee members to the board of elders for approval.
- b) The boards of FBC may establish (subject to congregational approval) from time to time special committees as may be valuable to the work of FBC. The congregation must approve the duration of the existence of special committees either by a designated time period or a clearly defined task. All extensions beyond the time and scope of the committee when originally formed must be approved by the congregation. Subsections a) iii and a) iv of Article 7 Section 2 apply to special committees.
- c) Board committees and special committees have no decision-making authority on their own. Their mandate is to provide analysis and recommendations. Final decisions are the responsibility of the board unless specific authority has been delegated to the committee. If recommendations are denied, their decision and reasoning is to be submitted to the committee in writing.
- d) Both standing and special committees are required to maintain minutes of all meetings. A COPY OF THE MINUTES, other related documents or information gathered by the committee, and any recommendations made by the committee are to be given to FBC clerk.

### **Section 3: Meetings of the Boards and Committees**

The boards shall normally meet once a month; however, if business from previous meetings goes unresolved for a period of more than two months without due cause the boards shall hold an additional meeting per month until the said business is resolved. Additionally, the chairperson of each board may call a special meeting of the board upon forty-eight hours of notice to each member of the board.

The board of elders and the board of deacons will meet jointly at the regularly scheduled board meetings to discuss issues that are relevant to both boards as determined by each board chairperson.

Committees, as appointed by the elders and deacons of FBC, shall meet at the discretion of the chairperson of the committee and shall report monthly to the appropriate board.

A majority of the elected members of the board or the appointed members of a committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business.

## **Section 4: The Board of Elders**

a) The membership of the board of elders will consist of:

**A minimum of four FBC members provided the number of FBC members exceeds the number of vocational elders**

**This number includes the positions of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson Pastor (vocational elder) (see Article 8, Section 2a)**

b) The qualifications of an elder shall be a man who:

- i. Holds wholeheartedly to the statement of faith of FBC.
- ii. Has a desire to lead the church with humility (1Tim 3:1).
- iii. Is a person of honesty and integrity (1Tim 3:2).
- iv. Demonstrates hospitality (Titus 1:8).
- v. If unmarried, is firmly committed to God's design for marriage and family (Gen 1:20-25, Article 4, Section 5).
- vi. If married leads, honours, and serves his family well (Eph 5:25, 1Tim 3:2,4-5).
- vii. Is self-controlled in temperament and actions (1Tim 3:2).
- viii. Avoids drunkenness (1Tim 3:2).
- ix. Is able to teach the Scriptures (1Tim 3:2, Article 4 Section 5iii).
- x. Is not given to greed (1Tim 3:3).
- xi. Is not a recent convert (1Tim 3:6)

c) The responsibilities of the board of elders will be:

- i. To guard the teaching and doctrine at every ministry level in FBC and strive to ensure it is in accord with Holy Scripture. (1Cor 14:26-40)
- ii. To ensure proper accountability for the stewardship of the financial resources of FBC.
- iii. To encourage the pastor in continuing education and spiritual development.
- iv. To keep the pastor accountable for their commitment to Christ, their family, and right doctrine.
- v. To develop a long-term plan for FBC and thus, ensure its continuing response to the needs of the community for the cause of Christ and His Gospel.
- vi. To stimulate and encourage the spiritual development and growth of members and adherents of FBC.
- vii. To encourage an environment of Christian love and witness whereby unbelievers may be directed to Christ.
- viii. To stimulate the spirit of evangelism among members and adherents of FBC.
- ix. To support the activities and programs of FBC.

d) The duties of the board of elders will be those considered essential to the fulfillment of its responsibilities, including but not limited to those listed below:

- i. To watch over, care, and pray for the members and adherents of FBC (1Pet 5:2).

- ii. Provide for the co-ordination of the activities planned by each committee, ensuring that their programs support each other for the general benefit of FBC's mission.
- iii. Be responsible for reviewing complaints from members and adherents of FBC with respect to the conduct of any of the duly elected board members in accordance with Matt 18:15-20 and 1Tim 5:19. The elders, after reviewing the complaint received may deem the removal of the individual from the board necessary. Removal may occur through voluntary resignation with a report given to the congregation or by a congregational simple majority.
- iv. Encourage and strive to maintain holiness among the members of FBC by confronting known sin and lovingly calling brothers and sisters in Christ to repentance. In cases where members ignore the loving corrections of the elders, it is the responsibility of the elders to proceed with church discipline as outlined in Matt 18:15-18 and required by Article 6 section 5 of this constitution.
- v. Evaluate the effectiveness of the programs of its committees and provide assistance and advice as required.
- vi. Provide assistance and advice to the pastor in all phases of FBC's programs, acting as an advisory council and management committee for the pastor on behalf of the congregation.
- vii. Regularly review the membership roll to ensure that it current.
- viii. With the assistance of the deacons, prepare a budget for the coming church year.
- ix. Supervise the public information and advertising activities of FBC.
- x. Oversee all associations of FBC and participation therein, in order to provide direction to the congregation with regards to the usefulness of said associations.
- xi. Approve, coordinate and inform the congregation of the plans, policies, activities and accomplishments of the standing committees.
- xii. Be an active participant in the Bible teaching ministry of FBC.

The board of elders shall execute its remaining continuous duties through the following standing committees:

- a) Missions Committee
- b) Worship Committee
- c) Discipleship Committee
- d) Personnel Committee

a) Missions Committee

The duties of the missions committee shall include but may not be limited to the following:

- i. Be responsible for overseeing the disbursement of monies relating to benevolent needs.
- ii. Develop an educational program about FBC missions, both locally and abroad.
- iii. Provide for the continuing enrichment and development of outreach, fellowship and missions.
- iv. Be responsible for the recruitment of new missionaries.
- v. Maintain accountability for the missionaries and projects supported by FBC.
- vi. Implement the mission policy of FBC.



## b) Worship Committee

The duties of the worship committee shall include but may not be limited to the following:

- i. Maintain and supervise a committee that receives and recommends the allocation of memorial donations. (Article 10, Section 5).
- ii. Assist the pastor in establishing the order of service to be followed in worship.
- iii. Be responsible for physical and spiritual support where needed in the worship service.
- iv. In counsel with the pastor and music leader, the committee shall be responsible for the ministry of music.
- v. The establishment and supervision of a roster of ushers for FBC worship services.
- vi. Welcoming new attendees to worship services and providing information about the basic layout of FBC (washrooms, Sunday school registration, etc...).
- vii. The decoration of the sanctuary.
- viii. The arrangements for the celebration of baptism and communion.
- ix. Oversee and maintain the audio visual equipment and the archives.

## c) Discipleship Committee

The duties of the discipleship committee shall include but may not be limited to the following:

- i. Annually allocating and disbursing income of the youth trust fund (Article 10, Section 6) in accordance with the provisions of the said trust fund.
- ii. The examination and instruction of prospective members.
- iii. Provide for the continuing enrichment and development of the discipleship ministries of FBC.
- iv. Oversee and support all:
  - a) Adult ministries.
  - b) Youth ministries
  - c) Children's ministries
- v. The ongoing recruitment and development of the leadership for the discipleship ministries of FBC
- vi. Oversee the selection of materials used for the discipleship ministries of FBC.
- vii. Supervise and maintain the FBC library.

## d) Personnel Committee

- i. The membership of the personnel committee will consist of:

**At least one Elder**  
**At least one Deacon**

**The personnel committee will consist of three to six FBC members elected by the congregation.**

**Pastors or paid staff are not eligible for this committee or any other persons with a conflict of interest see Article 9 Section 7.**

- ii. The personnel committee will annually review the effectiveness of each personnel member and prepare a written report.
- iii. The personnel committee's report shall be presented to the elders for information purposes and, said report, shall be kept for record.
- iv. The chairperson of the personnel committee will be an elder and shall report to the board of elders.
- v. The duties of the personnel committee shall include but may not be limited to the following:
  - a) Establishing and updating job descriptions and annually evaluating the effectiveness of all personnel including the pastor.
  - b) Recommending appropriate compensation for personnel to the elders.
  - c) Address complaints against personnel. After review, the personnel committee will then inform the elders of their course of action. The personnel committee may then call a meeting of the FBC membership to vote on the recommended course of action.
  - d) Make recommendations to the elders concerning the hiring, disciplining and dismissing of said personnel with the exception of the pastor who will be called (hired) by the members of FBC on the recommendation of a pulpit committee (Article 8 Section 4) and may only be dismissed by a majority vote of FBC members.

### **Section 5: The Board of Deacons**

- a) The membership of the board of deacons will consist of:

**Five Church Members**  
**This number includes the positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson**  
**Pastor(s) (See Article 8 Section 2a)**  
**Treasurer**

- b) The qualifications of a deacon shall be a man or woman who, according to 1 Timothy 3:8-12:
  - i. Is worthy of respect (not given to moral failings) and sincere.
  - ii. Avoids drunkenness.
  - iii. Does not pursue dishonest gain.
  - iv. Holds the truths of the faith with a clear conscience.
  - v. Is not a malicious talker.
  - vi. Is trustworthy.
  - vii. If married or unmarried is firmly committed to God's design for marriage and family (Gen 1:20-25, Article 4, Section 5).

- c) The responsibilities of the board of deacons will be:
- i. To develop, in consultation with the elders, a long-term financial plan for FBC, and thus ensure its continuing response to the needs of the community for the cause of Christ and His gospel.
  - ii. To plan and promote the effective use of facilities and finances in the work of FBC
  - iii. To manage those resources so as to achieve the most effective and efficient use of them.
  - iv. To facilitate the care of members and adherents of FBC in physical need.
  - v. To plan social events and activities for the encouragement of FBC members and adherents.
- d) The duties of the deacons will be those considered essential to the fulfillment of its responsibilities including, but not limited to, the following:
- i. To review and allocate funds to meet special requests outside the annual budget provided that any request for the allocation of funds in excess of \$2500 not otherwise included in the annual budget shall require the approval of FBC members. Conditions requiring emergency repair will be exempt of prior congregational approval, but will be brought to the attention of FBC members at the earliest opportunity.
  - ii. To approve, coordinate and inform the congregation of the plans, policies, activities and accomplishments of its standing committees.

The board of deacons shall execute its remaining continuous duties through the following standing committees:

- a) Stewardship Committee
  - b) House Committee
  - c) Fellowship Committee
  - d) Congregational Care
- a) Stewardship Committee

The duties of the stewardship committee shall include but may not be limited to the following:

- i. To plan and promote the effective use of facilities and finances in the work of FBC.
- ii. Prepare an annual budget for FBC and its programs.
- iii. Plan and supervise the stewardship program of FBC and enlist the necessary funds to maintain the programs of FBC.
- iv. Receive, invest, and disburse funds given to FBC or to the Trustees of the Church through bequest, gift or otherwise.
- v. Oversee the office administrator who will maintain records, where possible, of all giving and prepare contribution statements for contributors as required.
- vi. Through the treasurer, the deacons will have responsibility for all financial activities such as: supervising and counting of offerings, banking, payment of salaries, and other expenses.

## b) House Committee

The duties of the house committee shall include but may not be limited to the following:

- i. Plan for and supervise the care, the maintenance, and the extension of FBC facilities.

## c) Fellowship Committee

The duties of the fellowship committee shall include but may not be limited to the following:

- i. Encourage the spirit of Christian friendship at all FBC functions.
- ii. Organize and promote social gatherings of FBC members and adherents.

## d) Congregational Care Committee

The duties of the congregational care committee shall include but may not be limited to the following:

- i. Assist the pastor in the visitation of FBC members and adherents.
- ii. Assist FBC members and adherents in need of meals, transportation, and other basic necessities as needed.

## **Section 6: The Nominating Committee**

a) The membership of the nominating committee will consist of:

**Chairperson (elected by vote of the nominating committee)  
Three to eight FBC members with at least one elder and the majority being non-elders.**

All elected by the members of FBC at the annual election & budget meeting

b) Purpose of the Committee:

The nominating committee will prepare a list of nominations for vacant positions as they occur, and annually for the entire slate of church officers and board members for review and election by the members of FBC. The annual slate of nominations should be prepared each year for presentation at the election and budget meeting in November or December.

c) Candidate Selection Guidelines:

- i. Being a member of the local congregation is the first and minimal qualification for being in church leadership, **while certainly not the only qualification**, being a member helps to ensure that the individual being considered shares the basic theological beliefs that identify him or her as a born again Christian and that are held in common by a particular

local church. For FBC this means prospective leaders must hold completely to the statement of faith herein this constitution (Article 4).

- ii. Membership also indicates a person's willingness to join themselves to our local congregation. By becoming a member, a person is agreeing to serve the Lord at FBC, encourage their fellow believers to follow Christ more closely, and make themselves accountable to a tangible body of believers.
- iii. Implicit in these ideas is the understanding that being a church member means attending and participating in church services and activities. As such, the nominating committee must consider not only the membership, but whether or not an individual regularly attends church gatherings.
- iv. Subsequent to being a church member, who is an active attendee, a person must also possess the biblical qualifications for leadership as outlined for us in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 (See Article 7, section 4b and section 5b respectively).

d) Process

- i. The committee should begin the process by reviewing the membership role and discuss each member in light of the above qualifications. Those who qualify should be noted as possible candidates. If the committee does not know an individual well enough to make a determination, they should consult with the pastor.
- ii. In order to engage the members of FBC in the nominating process, an insert will be placed in the bulletin for a period of one month, in May or June, for the members of FBC to make nominations of people to be considered for positions.
- iii. The committee should review the positions that need to be filled and review the skills of possible candidates comparing them with the requirements of the vacancies.
- iv. Once the list of candidates has been established the chair of the nominating committee shall contact the prospective nominees to arrange a meeting with the committee if the candidate is willing to let their name stand for nomination.
- v. The committee will meet with each candidate in order to discuss the importance of leadership, the positions needing to be filled and the qualifications for leadership. Following this discussion the candidates will be asked if they feel they meet the requirements and are still willing to be nominated to a position of leadership within FBC. **“Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus” 1 Timothy 3:13.**
- vi. The positions of leadership to be filled should be discussed with the candidates. Candidates should be asked where they feel they might best serve given their gifts, abilities and calling.
- vii. Once the list has been finished it can be submitted to the congregation for approval.

e) The committee shall avoid nominating:

- i. A member of the nominating committee.
- ii. A volunteer for a position unless the committee unanimously is in agreement and the person fully qualifies.
- iii. A person who is an immediate family member of an existing board member. An exception can be made by a congregational vote.

- iv. Placing candidates that do not meet the guideline for qualifications set out in this section to reach the required number of vacancies. These vacancies should remain unfilled.

## **ARTICLE 8: OFFICERS OF FBC**

### **Section 1: Officers**

The officers of FBC shall be:

**The Pastor**  
**Chairperson of the Elders Board**  
**Chairperson of the Deacons Board**  
**Clerk**  
**Treasurer**  
**Sunday School Superintendent \***  
**\*(This position will only be filled if no paid staff are available)**  
**Trustees**  
 (All officers of the FBC shall be members in good standing).

### **Section 2: Duties of the Officers**

- a) The pastor, in addition to his spiritual duties, is welcome to attend all board and committee meetings (with the exception of personnel committee), but may only be a voting member of the board of elders (Article 7, Section 4, 5).
- b) The chairperson of the board of elders will preside over all meetings of the elders and will chair all FBC business meetings.
- c) The chairperson of the board of deacons will preside over all meetings of the deacons and will assist the chair of the Elders board at all FBC business meetings.
- d) The vice chairperson will act on behalf and in the place of the chairperson when the chairperson is absent.
- e) The clerk shall act as secretary at all FBC business meetings, shall maintain accurate membership rolls, shall perform and record all actions related to letters of recommendation and shall maintain an official record of the minutes of boards and committees of FBC. The clerk shall perform such other duties as the boards and the congregation may request.
- f) The treasurer shall directly or by overseeing the work of the office administrator, assure accurate records be kept of all receipts and disbursements of FBC, shall be responsible to account for all monies of FBC, shall keep an account of all transactions as treasurer in conformity with accepted accounting practice, and shall present a financial report at

each annual business meeting. The treasurer shall also be responsible, in the same manner, for maintaining an accurate record of all receipts, gifts, and pledges of monies for the work of FBC by name of donor and current address. The treasurer is charged to assure the highest level of confidence concerning the amounts given by individual members. The treasurer will serve as a member of the board of deacons.

- g) The Sunday school superintendent shall be responsible for the direction of the Sunday school under the guidance of the board of elders.
- h) The trustees shall be responsible for the fulfilment of those legal obligations indicated in the terms of the Trust Deed and/or The Religious Institutions Act. As trustees, they have no other administrative function. They shall be three in number and they shall be elected for a term of up to five years.

### **Section 3: Elections**

- a) All officers and members of the boards (Article 7, Section 4,5), with the exception of the clerk, treasurer, Sunday school superintendent, pastor, and the trustees, shall be elected for a period of three years. The position of board chair and vice chair shall be filled by members of the board that have served at least one year and be elected by the congregation annually.
- b) All officers and members of the boards (Article 7, Section 4, 5) with the exception of the pastor shall be elected at the annual election and budget meeting. They shall take office at the beginning of the new calendar year.
- c) The list of nominations prepared by the nominating committee shall be posted on FBC bulletin board for a period of at least fourteen days prior to the annual election and budget meeting. Nominations for officers and for elders and deacons, with exception of the pastor are to be made in writing to the nominating committee. FBC members wishing to make nominations for those positions must do so in writing at least one month prior to the annual election and budget meeting to allow the nominating committee adequate time to review the nominees. The nominating committee shall be willing to provide adequate explanation to any nominee that is not put forward to serve in the capacity for which he/she was nominated. In the event that there are more members nominated for positions than positions available, there will be an election by ballot. All names will be placed alphabetically on the ballot and the nominees with the most votes will be elected. Ties will require a second vote.
- d) The treasurer and clerk will be reviewed annually by the nominating committee.

### **Section 4: Calling A Pastor**

- a) The calling of a pastor shall involve two separate actions. First, the board of elders shall draft a job description and required qualifications of the new pastor. These terms and duties must

be approved by FBC members. Secondly, a pulpit committee, consisting of at least one elder and four other congregational members shall be elected by FBC members to seek out and recommend a pastor.

- b) The issuing of a call to a pastor shall require at least an eighty percent yes vote of the members in attendance at the meeting called for the purpose of supporting the recommendation of the pulpit committee. This vote shall be done by ballot.

## **ARTICLE 9: MEETINGS OF FBC**

### **Section 1: Worship Services**

Worship services shall be held at those times and on those days that are designated by the board of elders, unless otherwise directed by the congregation.

### **Section 2: Ordinances**

- a) The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of each month unless otherwise directed by the pastor or the board of elders. It is recommended that the serving of the Lord's Supper be undertaken by the board of elders and the board of deacons.
- b) The ordinance of believers' baptism shall usually be observed on Sunday, unless otherwise requested by the candidate and approved by the board of elders. If someone other than the pastor is performing the baptism said person must be approved by the board of elders.

### **Section 3: Business Meetings**

- a) The FBC year shall conform to the calendar year.
- b) The annual meeting of FBC shall be held during the first two months of the year on a date fixed by the board of elders and board of deacons.
- c) The election and budget meeting of FBC will be held during the last two months of the year on a date fixed by the board of elders and the board of deacons.
- d) At the election and budget meeting the chair of the board of elders shall present a slate of nominees for the election of officers and the treasurer shall present a budget for adoption for the coming year.
- e) Special business meetings of FBC may be called at any time by the chairperson of either board, or the pastor, or at the written request of five members, provided proper notice has been given.
- f) All meetings of FBC and of boards and committees will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order when not in conflict with Holy Scripture or this constitution.



#### **Section 4: Notice of Meetings of FBC**

Notice of all meetings will be given by announcement at two Sunday morning worship services prior to the date of the meeting.

Written announcement of the meeting shall also be posted on the FBC bulletin board, fourteen days prior to the meeting.

#### **Section 5: Quorum**

Thirty members of FBC shall constitute a quorum at any regular, annual or special business meeting. An additional ten members will be added to the quorum for every increment of fifty members above one hundred and fifty on the membership roll.

#### **Section 6: Eligible Voters**

Only members of FBC may vote on any motion presented at a business meeting. In routine matters, the voting of the membership will be by the showing of hands except in those cases specified in other articles of this constitution (Article 5, Article 8 Section 3c, and Article 8 Section 4). However, it shall be within the rights of any member to ask that the vote be taken by ballot providing this is done before the vote is called.

A simple majority of eligible voters present is sufficient to carry any motion or elect any officer other than those majorities required in other articles of this constitution (Article 5, Article 8 Section 4). Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.

#### **Section 7: Conflict of Interest**

No member of FBC shall be allowed to participate in any discussion or vote on any issue at any meeting where the subject under discussion involves a personal benefit to the member, his/her parent, spouse, child, or grandchild. The member in question shall declare a conflict of interest at the commencement of such discussion, and shall retire from the meeting during such discussion and subsequent vote. Additionally, paid staff and the parent, spouse, child, or grandchild of paid staff shall not be eligible for sitting on the personnel committee. Such persons however may attend the general business meetings of FBC and participate in discussions and vote on issues not having a potential direct or indirect personal benefit. In the event a member shall fail to declare a conflict of interest as provided herein and such conflict is known to the chairperson of the meeting, that chairperson shall have the authority to ask any member in conflict to retire from the meeting for the duration of the pertinent discussion and any potential corresponding vote.

No two persons related as described in this section may co-sign for financial transactions (See Article 10 Section 3).

## **ARTICLE 10: FINANCES**

### **Section 1: Policy**

The financial policy of FBC, and of all auxiliary organizations is predicated on personal, voluntary giving as an act of worship.

FBC shall function as a non-profit organization with any profits or assets realized from its operation being used for the sole purpose of its objectives.

### **Section 2: Budget**

FBC shall operate on a budget format developed by the board of deacons, approved by the board of elders, and adopted by a vote of the members of FBC.

### **Section 3: Expenditures**

Money shall not be expended, nor liability incurred, beyond the amount appropriated in the budget or allowed for in this constitution (Article 7 Section 5di) without authorization from the members of FBC.

The treasurer, chairperson of the board of deacons, and office administrator have signing authority for all financial transactions. Signatures of any two of the three authorized persons are required to transact expenditure business.

### **Section 4: Auditors**

The nominating committee shall nominate two auditors for election at the election and budget meeting. They shall act as internal auditors, only reviewing non-operating bank accounts and present a report at the next annual meeting.

### **Section 5: Memorial Fund**

The board of elders shall be responsible for allocating and disbursing monies left to the memorial fund of FBC in memory of specific members or adherents. An accounting for the receipt and disbursement of these funds will be made at the annual meeting.

## **Section 6: Youth Trust Fund**

Monies have been received by FBC according to the terms of the last wills and testaments of Constance Louise Gregory, Bethia Best West and Ina Pearl Fox, collectively known as the Mabel Huffman Trust Fund. The trust provides that the income from the capital of the fund shall be used and expended for the promotion of youth activities connected with FBC. The board of deacons shall be responsible for investing the capital of the said fund and the board of elders shall be responsible for allocating and disbursing the income of the trust in accordance with the terms of the trust. Any income not used in any year shall be maintained by the board of deacons in a holding fund and shall not become part of the capital of the trust fund and therefore may be available for disbursement as income in succeeding years. Further monies received by FBC and designated to be used for youth activities will be added to the youth trust fund and disbursed in accordance with the terms of the trust. An accounting for the receipt and disbursement of these funds will be made to the members of FBC at the annual meeting.

## **ARTICLE 11: AMENDMENTS**

These articles may be amended, modified or rescinded, or new articles adopted at any regular or special business meeting of the membership, provided that due notice is given.

For the purposes of this article, due notice shall mean either:

- a) A written notice mailed to the membership at least thirty days prior to the date of the meeting,  
or
- b) A notice given publicly thirty days prior to the date of meeting with additional announcements made at two regular Sunday services. Written notice must also be provided on the FBC bulletin board at least thirty days prior to the date of the meeting.

In both cases, notices shall include the proposed amendment in writing.

On matters pertaining to the amendment, modification, removal, or adoption of new articles, such action shall require the approval of seventy percent of the members present at the time of the meeting.

## **ARTICLE 12: GENERAL**

Words importing the singular number will include the plural and vice versa.