

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
CONSTITUTION**

Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each Church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other Churches.

**ARTICLE I  
THE NAME**

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina, located at 61 Church Street.

**ARTICLE II  
OBJECTIVES**

To be a dynamic, spiritual body empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our Church, community and throughout the world. To be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person and responding in obedience to His leadership. To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers. To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man. To be a Church which ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and the world in Jesus' name. To be a Church whose purpose is to be Christian in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

**ARTICLE III  
THE CHURCH COVENANT**

Of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina  
We do solemnly covenant and agree:

That we will take the ONLY LIVING and TRUE God: One God in THREE PERSONS: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be our God.

That we will unreservedly and solemnly give up ourselves, both souls and body, and all we possess, to Almighty God; to be ordered, directed and disposed of by Him, according to the counsel of His holy will. This we do, in an humble dependence on the grace of the Holy Spirit to aid and support us in these sacred engagements: and hope for acceptance and salvation, through the merit and mediation of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We take the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the infallible rule of faith and practice in the great concerns of religion, the general affairs of life, and transacting the business of the Church.

We promise to maintain communion and fellowship with each other, in the public worship of God, according to the various ordinances of the Gospel; not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but embracing all regular convenient seasons for this purpose, as the providence of God shall permit.

We will exercise Christian forbearance and love, one towards another, pray for and sympathize with each other in the various circumstances of life, and use every laudable endeavor to provoke to love and good works.

We promise to contribute in a reasonable manner, according to our ability, for the support of public worship and the relief of the poor in the Church, and to use our influence, to forward and to promote the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom in the world. We will be careful to conduct ourselves with uprightness and integrity, and in a peaceful and friendly manner, toward mankind in general, and toward Christians of all descriptions, in particular. We will also pay a conscientious regard to civil government, and give it our support as an ordinance of God.

This covenant we make, that we shall therein be accepted of God, unto Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and majesty, power and dominion, everlasting. Amen.

Originally adopted by the Church, August 21, 1791.

Revised by the Church, May 12, 1851

Revised by the Church, March 31, 1992

Revised by the Church, May 29, 1996

Revised by the Church, February 21, 2016

## **ARTICLE IV STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

### **God**

There is one and only one living and true God. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

### **God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.

### **God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

### **Man**

Man is the special creation of God, in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore every person of every race possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

### **Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.

### **God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.

## **The Church**

The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all his true disciples. The New Testament Church of Jesus Christ consists of autonomous local congregations of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.

## **Baptism and The Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

## **Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

## **The Lord's Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion.

## **Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell. The righteous will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

## **Education**

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence. There should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

## **Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions.

## **Cooperation**

Christ's people should organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations.

## **The Christian and the Social Order**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society in the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

## **Religious Liberty**

Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal.

## **Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage.

## **Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These distinct and complementary genders together reflect the image of God.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union as described in Scripture. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. Sexual intimacy is to occur only between a man and woman who are married to each other. Sex outside of marriage is sin because it is inconsistent with God's will and good purpose for humanity. All people, including those involved in sexual sin or confused about sexual identity, are to be afforded kindness, compassion, love, respect, and dignity. God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking his mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

## **ARTICLE V POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS**

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership.

This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist Churches. Insofar as is practical, this Church will cooperate with and support the Charleston Baptist Association, the South Carolina Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

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## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

#### Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of the Church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the conditions of such membership.

#### Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this Church. All such candidates shall be presented to the Church at any regular Church service for membership in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith and request for baptism according to the bylaws of the Church.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church.
3. By a statement of prior conversion experience and believer's baptism when no letter is obtainable.
4. By request of a Christian for baptism by immersion.
5. By spiritual watchcare, for persons who are temporary residents in the city or who are members of a church of another denomination or have justifiable reasons. Such persons may come under the spiritual watchcare of our Church by presenting themselves for membership. These persons shall have rights and privileges ordinarily afforded full members of the Church, such as benefits of the clergy and Pastoral care, participation in the observance of the Lord's Supper, etc. However, they shall not hold office in the Church or vote in Church business meeting.

All adult candidates for church membership shall complete a membership application, affirm his/her acknowledgement and support of the Church Covenant and Statement of Faith, and meet with a designated Deacon membership team to sign a member covenant. Candidates for membership under age 18 are to meet with the Pastor or designated ministerial staff member to affirm that the candidate understands his/her faith. The member covenant describes the relationship as a voluntary association and the member agrees to the scriptural principles taught by the Church.

Then the names of candidates for Church membership shall be presented to the Church at the next regular business meeting. A majority vote of those Church members present and voting shall be required to elect candidates to membership. Full membership shall be effective after baptism, upon receipt of transfer of letter or receipt of statement of prior experience and baptism by immersion.

### Section 3. Duties of Members

New members of the Church are urged to participate in the Church's new member orientation. All members are considered to be in good standing except those under counseling discipline as outlined below in Section 6.

Members of this Church in good standing shall be expected to:

1. be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life.
2. attend faithfully the services of this Church.
3. give regularly for its support and its causes.
4. share in its organization.
5. affirm his/her acknowledgment and support of the Church Covenant and Statement of Faith.

### Section 4. Rights of Members

1. Each member of the Church in good standing is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church in a business meeting, provided the member is present.
2. Unless otherwise herein provided, each member of the Church in good standing is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the Church.
3. Each member of the Church may participate in the ordinances of the Church as administered by the Church.

### Section 5. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated by:

1. death of the member.
2. dismissal to another Baptist Church.
3. exclusion by action of this Church.
4. request of the person in writing.
5. membership in a Church of another denomination (erasure).

### Section 6. Counseling Discipline, Exclusion, and Restoration

It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, other members of the Church staff, and Deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption.

Should some serious condition exist with a member which adversely affects the general welfare of the Church, the Pastor and the Deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. The Deacons may place a member under counseling discipline for the purpose of correction and restoration. A member under counseling discipline is free to participate in the life of the Church but is not a member in good standing and is ineligible to vote, hold office, teach, or represent the Church in any capacity. A member under counseling discipline may be restored to full membership in good standing after the completion of the restoration process with a vote of the Deacons. If the restoration process fails, the Deacons may recommend to the Church to take action to exclude a member. A two-thirds vote of the members present is required in a regularly called business meeting; and the Church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the Church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The Church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by a majority vote of the Deacons and the Church.

## **ARTICLE II CHURCH OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

All who serve as officers of the Church and those who serve on Church committees shall be members of this Church.

### Section 1. Church Officers

- 1) Pastor – The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the Church staff to perform their tasks. The Pastor is leader of Pastoral ministries in the Church. As such, he works with the Deacons and Church staff to:
  - lead the Church in the achievement of its missions.
  - proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
  - care for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

The organization of a Pastor Search Committee shall be called for by the Chairperson of the Deacons upon the resignation or termination of the Pastor. There will be 11 voting members and one alternate on this committee. Two weeks advance notice of the nomination of the committee members shall be required.

In a called business meeting immediately following a Sunday morning worship service, the Church shall nominate the committee members by secret ballot. Any Church member, in good standing, 18 years of age or older is eligible for nomination. Voting tally shall be made by the Deacons.

The 22 receiving the highest number of votes and who are willing to serve will be placed on the final ballot to be presented on the following Sunday to the Church in a business meeting. The 11 receiving the highest number from the second ballot shall be the members of the committee; the person with the next highest number of votes shall serve as the alternate. The committee shall elect its own chairperson.

The committee shall bring to the Church the name of only one prospective Pastor at a time. Election to call the Pastor shall occur at least two weeks after written presentation of the name to the membership. The election shall occur at called business meeting immediately following the Sunday morning worship service during which the prospective Pastor has preached. Selection of the Pastor shall be conducted by secret ballot and shall constitute at least seventy-five percent of the votes cast.

The Pastor may resign the office of Pastor by giving at least two weeks written notice to the Church at the time of resignation. The Church may declare the office of Pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two week's notice has been given in the Church printed and electronic publications. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the Deacons, or by a vote of the Personnel Committee. The moderator for this meeting shall be someone other than the Pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the Pastor so excluded from office, the Church will compensate the Pastor with not less than one-twelfth of the total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

When the office of Pastor becomes vacant, an Interim Pastor shall be recommended by the Personnel Committee, to the Deacons, and to the Church for a vote at a called business meeting. The Interim Pastor shall serve until the office of Pastor is filled, until dismissed by the Church in a regular Church business meeting, or in accordance with the employment agreement entered into with the Church. The position of Interim Pastor will not include responsibilities involving finance or personnel during the interim period of service.

- 2) Staff – The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the Church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Those prospective staff members of whom the Church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be interviewed by the Personnel Committee and recommended to the Deacons who shall present them to the Church for a vote. Seventy-five percent of the votes cast shall be required to extend a call to a ministerial staff member.

A staff member may resign by giving at least two weeks written notice to the Church.

The Church Personnel Committee has the authority to vacate ministerial staff positions in consultation with the Pastor. Such termination shall be immediate and the compensation conditions shall be the same as for the Pastor, except the amount shall relate to the individual's compensation.

Non-ministerial staff members (including hourly wage earners) shall be employed as the Church determines the need for their services. The Personnel Committee may delegate its authority to the Pastor to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be in consultation with the supervising staff member, and as appropriate, with related committees of the Church.

- (3) Deacons –The Church shall elect deacons by ballot in the following manner:  
The Church will announce Deacon election dates the last week of February. Each church member in good standing will be asked to submit one or more Deacon candidate names to the Church before April 1. By March 1 of each year, the Church shall publish a list of members eligible to serve as Deacons. Members now serving as active Deacons, members under eighteen years old, paid ministerial staff, and First Baptist Church members for less than one year are not eligible for election. Church members may communicate with the Church Office to decline nomination. The currently serving Deacon body, through its designee(s), shall inquire of each nominated person as to his or her willingness to serve as a Deacon if elected.

Biographies of the Deacon nominees who have expressed a willingness to serve shall be made available to the congregation during the month of April. These nominees shall meet the New Testament Deacon standards described in 1 Timothy 3: 8 – 13:

*<sup>8</sup> In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>9</sup> They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. <sup>10</sup> They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. <sup>11</sup> In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. <sup>12</sup> A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. <sup>13</sup> Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.” (NIV)*

Each Church member in good standing and in attendance on the first Sunday morning in May will be asked to vote for up to six of the nominated individuals. The twelve persons receiving the highest number of votes will be placed on the second ballot. Ties for the twelfth position on the ballot will be added to the second ballot.

Each Church member in good standing and in attendance on the third Sunday morning in May will be asked to vote for six of the nominated individuals. The six receiving the highest number of votes on the second ballot will then serve as deacons with terms to begin June 1.

Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year, the assigned term of office of one-third of the number of Deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill those vacancies. In case of a vacancy other than the completion of a three-year term, the next alternate from the last Deacon election shall fill the remainder of the unexpired term. After serving a term of three years, a Deacon shall be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of at least one year. If an alternate filling an unexpired term serves less than one year, he/she is eligible to be nominated without a lapse in service. Any Deacon who misses three consecutive meetings without consulting with the Chair, will have vacated the office and the vacancy shall be filled. A member who was a Deacon at another Church does not automatically have active Deacon status in this Church. If elected by this Church, his previous ordination by another Church of like faith and order, as determined by the Pastor, shall suffice. In accordance with the meaning of the Word and the practice in the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church. Their task is to serve with the Pastor and staff in performing the Pastoral ministries of (1) leading the Church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) caring for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

- 4) Church Clerk – The Church Clerk is elected and serves as a corporate officer as delineated in (7) below. The Clerk, assisted by the Pastor and staff, shall be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all official actions of the Church, except as noted elsewhere in these bylaws. The member covenants, affirmations, and other

signed documents should be kept in the care of the Church Clerk along with all other permanent Church records of importance. The Church Clerk shall also assist in enrolling new Church members as they unite with the Church. All Church records under the care of the Clerk and Church staff are Church property and shall be kept in the Church office. The Church Clerk may delegate these responsibilities to the Church Office staff.

- (5) Treasurer – The Church shall elect annually a Church Treasurer as its financial officer and one of the corporate officers. The term of office is for one year with no individual serving more than three consecutive one-year terms. The Treasurer's term of office will follow the fiscal year (June 1 – May 31). However, in the event of an emergency, the term of office will continue until a successor is elected. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer, or his designee, to receive, preserve and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized Personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the Church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The Treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountants. The Treasurer shall be bonded, the Church paying for the bonding. All records of the Church Treasurer shall be maintained in the Church Office with appropriate, secure off-site back-up.
- (6) Moderator – The Church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer. In the absence of the moderator, the Chairperson of the Deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the Vice-Chairperson of the Deacons will act as moderator.
- (7) Corporate Officers – The Church shall elect annually a President, a Vice-President, and a Church Clerk to serve with the Treasurer as corporate officers for the Church. They shall hold in trust the Church property. Upon a specific vote of the Church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any Church property. When the signatures of officers are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase or rental of property, or other legal documents related to Church-approved matters and such other powers as might be granted by the statutes of the state to the Church under its charter of incorporation of 1778. The terms of office are for one year with no individual serving more than three consecutive one-year terms.
- (8) Associational Executive Committee members – The Church shall elect annually one individual to serve with the Pastor as the Church's Associational executive committee members. The term of office is for one year with no individual serving more than three consecutive one-year terms.

## Section 2. Church Committees

The Committees of this Church shall be:

Finance Committee  
Long-Range Planning Committee  
Nominating Committee  
Personnel Committee  
Acts 1:8 Strategy Committee

Procedure for standing or ad hoc committee action is as follows: Any action of a committee that requires a vote of the Church must first be brought before the Diaconate. The committee's recommendation may then go forward to the Church along with the recorded action of the Deacons, recognizing that the Church is the final authority.

Additional regular committees may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these bylaws. Except in situations concerning the hiring or dismissal of Church employees in which a need for confidentiality exists, the meetings of the Deacons and all Church committees are open to the membership. All members of regular Church committees and boards of institutions (see Article VIII) shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church unless otherwise specified within the bylaws. However, ad hoc committees may be appointed as the need arises by the Nominating Committee. It is recommended that at least seven days' notice be given prior to a committee meeting. Each committee will meet in the fiscal year to elect a chairperson, if a chairperson has not previously been elected. Any member who does not attend his/her committee meetings for three consecutive meetings without consulting with the Committee Chair will have vacated the office and the vacancy shall be filled. Ex-officio members are non-voting members of committees, except where stated otherwise. When a member has completed his prescribed term on a standing committee, he shall be eligible to serve on that committee after the lapse of one year. If an alternate filling an unexpired

term serves less than one year, he/she is eligible to be nominated without a lapse in service. Members, in good standing, who are full-time employees of the Church may vote on matters before the congregation, but do not vote within committees.

### **Finance Committee**

Membership – The committee shall be composed of nine members, six of whom will be elected for three-year terms with two of these will rotating off each year. The Church Treasurer for that year will be a voting member while the Pastor and Chairperson of the Deacons will be non-voting ex-officio members. Both the committee and the Church Treasurer will follow the Church fiscal year.

Responsibilities:

1. To consult the church committees about their anticipated financial needs for the next year.
2. To prepare the budget for presentation to the Deacons for approval and/or amendment and to the church for its approval or amendment. At each stage (in committee, in the Diaconate, and before the Church), the proposed budget shall have the approval of two-thirds of the members present and voting.
3. To promote stewardship emphasis during the year.
4. To offer monthly supervision of expenditures and receipts.
5. To give periodic reports to the Deacons (available to Church members upon request):  
Monthly: an analysis of revenues and expenses;  
Quarterly: balances of designated or restricted funds and records of “pass-through” funds (e.g. Lottie Moon Christmas Offering).
6. To develop a system of accounting.
7. To arrange for a yearly audit.

### **Long Range Planning Committee**

Membership – The committee shall be composed of nine members, six of whom will be elected for three-year terms with two of these rotating off each year. The Pastor, the Chairperson of the Deacons, and the Chairman of the First Baptist School Board shall be non-voting ex-officio members. Whenever necessary, the Church Nominating Committee may designate additional members with appropriate professional skills.

Responsibilities:

1. To discover and analyze long range Church needs, specifically those of the physical plant.
2. To recommend long-range goals and strategies to the Deacons and to the congregation, including the utilization of existing facilities or development of new facilities.
3. To evaluate the long range effectiveness of Church plans.
4. To interpret long range goals and strategies to appropriate groups.
5. To work in cooperation with the Pastor and other staff ministers.

### **Nominating Committee**

Membership – The committee shall be composed of nine members, six of whom will be elected for three-year terms with two of these rotating off each year. The Pastor, Associate Pastor and the Chairperson of the Deacons will serve as non-voting ex-officio members. The nominations for the Boards of the Institutions (see Article VIII), Church Committees and Church officers must be presented to and approved by the Church prior to June 1, the beginning of the fiscal year. Every effort should be made to ensure that no individual is nominated to serve on more than one committee.

Responsibilities:

1. To give committee representation to a broad spectrum of the Church body. Adequate representation by the Diaconate will be considered in nominations.
2. To select, interview and enlist Church organization leaders, committee members, board members of institutions, Church corporate officers and general Church officers. In the event a committee has not elected a chairperson, the nominating committee shall designate a convener for the purpose of calling the first meeting.
3. To work in conjunction with the Associate Pastor to enlist all Sunday School teachers and workers.
4. To agree on volunteer workers before inviting them to serve in Church-elected leadership programs.
5. To assist Church leaders in discovering and enlisting qualified persons to fill Church-elected positions of leadership in their respective organizations.

6. To present volunteer workers to the Church for election.
7. To nominate special committees as assigned by the Church.
8. To present to the Church its list of nominees to all elected positions at least one week in advance of the business meeting scheduled for the election of such positions.
9. To receive additional nominations from the membership from the floor of the business meeting, provided the individual being nominated has given consent.
10. To fill vacancies as may occur on any committee or board.

### **Personnel Committee**

Membership – This committee shall be composed of eight members, six of whom will be elected for three-year terms with two of these rotating off each year. The Pastor and the Chairperson of the Deacons shall serve as non-voting ex-officio members.

#### Responsibilities:

1. To work in coordination with the Pastor and Deacons in determining the need for new staff positions.
2. Once a determination is made for the need to fill a vacant position or create a new position, it is the responsibility of the Personnel Committee to fill that position using the following procedures: Paid ministerial staff positions (other than the Pastor): The Committee will immediately begin to use all resources available to determine the person best suited for the position, and recommend the individual to the Deacons and to the Church. The Committee should coordinate their efforts with the Pastor. Other staff positions: To employ other staff members on recommendation of, or after consultation with, the Pastor, excluding hourly wage earners (See Article II, Sec. 1, Para. 2).
3. To conduct staff evaluations on an annual basis (or more frequently if the situation dictates) to determine the effectiveness of each staff member and make recommendations for changes as needed.
4. To review staff compensations and to make recommendations to the Finance Committee.
5. To review and update job descriptions on existing staff positions and create job descriptions for new positions.
6. To act on behalf of the Church in matters related to paid Church staff members.
7. If necessary, to recommend to the Deacons, and to the Church, a person who will serve as interim Pastor. Included with the recommendation will be a written proposed description of duties and compensation.

### **Acts 1:8 Strategy Committee**

Membership-This committee will be composed of 8 members, six of whom will be elected for three year terms with two rotating off each year. The Pastor and Chairperson of the Deacons will serve as non-voting ex-officio members.

#### Responsibilities:

1. To develop a comprehensive missions strategy to help First Baptist Church fulfill the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)
2. To help personalize missions for each member by developing local and international partnerships that emphasize opportunities for personal prayer, personal giving, and personal participation.
3. To develop a method of evaluating and comparing ministry partnerships and potential partnerships based upon the biblical basis of missions, a set of delineated ministry priorities, and the effectiveness of the partners in sharing the Gospel.
4. To develop a yearly Global Missions Budget from the monies allocated from the First Baptist Foundation Global Missions Fund. This budget will be managed by the Acts 1:8 Strategy Committee with oversight from the Church Finance Committee.
5. To work alongside missions volunteers to receive ministry and financial requests, help communicate mission activity and opportunities to the Church Body, and to encourage the personalization of the Acts 1:8 Strategy to all members.

## **Section 3. Ministry Teams**

In addition to the elected committees of the Church, ministry teams shall be established for the various ministries of the Church. All church members shall be requested and encouraged to be involved in at least one ministry team based on his or her gift(s) and passion for ministry. The establishment of the ministry teams,

team organization and selection, and such other information as is necessary for the effective operation of the ministry teams shall be contained in a Ministry Team Manual. The number and priorities of the ministry teams may change from year to year.

### **ARTICLE III CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS**

The Church shall maintain programs that foster the teaching of God's Word, equip believers in discipleship, facilitate worship, encourage Christian fellowship, and connect members in missions and evangelism activities from Charleston to partnerships worldwide. All organizations related to the Church programs shall be under the Church control, and all program leadership, whether nominated or voluntary, must be from Church members in good standing. The church shall provide the human, physical, and financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

- (1) Sunday School shall be the basic organization for teaching God's Word. Its responsibilities shall be to teach Biblical revelation, to minister to its members and prospective members in community, and to serve as a connecting point in reaching new members for Christ and the Church. The Associate Pastor (or designated staff member) and Sunday School Director shall work together to administrate all facets of Sunday School operations.
- (2) Homebound Ministry shall give special attention to those who are unable to attend Church services and other activities of the Church. This program is under the direction of the Homebound Ministry Team and is supported by the Deacons and the Church staff.
- (3) Women's Missionary Union shall be a mission education, mission action and support organization of the Church for women and children of all ages. Its task shall be to teach missions; engage in mission action; support world missions through praying and giving; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination. Women's Missionary Union shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.
- (4) The Church Music Program, under the direction of the Minister of Music, shall be the music education, training and performance organization of the Church. Its tasks shall be to teach music; train persons to lead, sing and play music; provide music in the Church and community; lead the Church in worship through music and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination. The Church Music Program shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.
- (5) The Women's Enrichment Ministry shall be an organization with the purpose of enriching women through discipleship activities. Its task will be to develop ministries including mentoring, prayer, Bible studies, and retreats. Women's Enrichment Ministries shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires to fulfill its stated purpose within the overall ministry of First Baptist Church.
- (6) The Men's Ministry shall be an organization with the purpose of enriching men through discipleship activities such as Bible Studies, retreats, prayer groups, service projects, and special events. The Men's Ministry will have such officers and organizations as the program requires to fulfill its stated purpose within the overall ministry of First Baptist Church.

### **ARTICLE IV CHURCH ORDINANCES**

#### Section 1. Baptism

The Church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- (1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- (2) The Pastor, or whomever the Pastor or the Church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The Deacons shall assist the Ordinance Ministry Team in the preparation for and the observance of baptism. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.
- (3) A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Pastor and/or Deacons.

#### Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least once a quarter. The Pastor, or his designate, and Deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper.

### **ARTICLE V CHURCH MEETINGS**

#### Section 1. Worship Services

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and Wednesday evening for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction and evangelism shall be among the elements of these services. The Pastor shall direct the services for all the Church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Under unusual circumstances or to meet special needs, the Pastor may temporarily change the time and/or date of scheduled services. If special conditions persist, the Deacons will be consulted to determine a course of action. Any consideration of the discontinuance of a regularly scheduled Church worship service must be brought before the Church for majority approval of members present.

#### Section 2. Special Services

Revival services and any other Church meetings essential to the advancement of the Church's objectives shall be placed on the Church calendar by the ministerial staff.

#### Section 3. Regular Business Meetings

The Regular Church Business Meetings will be held on Sunday afternoon of each quarter beginning with the church year. Dates for each meeting will be announced two weeks in advance of the meeting.

#### Section 4. Called Business Meeting

The Church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. The Pastor or the Chairperson of Deacons, will make a determination of which items of business are of special nature and significance requiring a called business meeting.

A one-week notice must be given for the called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, time and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have the opportunity to know of the meeting. Any action taken must pertain to the subject for which the meeting was called. Generally, items of special concern will be presented to the membership on Sunday afternoons for discussion and amendment/revision and vote. However, a Sunday morning vote will be taken on the proposed annual budget, calling a ministerial staff member, and other matters as determined by a vote of the Deacons. All discussion for Sunday morning business will take place the preceding Sunday afternoon. The procedures will have no effect on other measures provided for elsewhere in these bylaws.

#### Section 5. Quorum

The quorum consists of those members in good standing who attend the business meeting, provided it is a regular meeting or one that has been properly called.

#### Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church.

#### Section 7. Church Calendars

The Church year shall be from June 1 through May 31. Church program organizations and committees will operate on the Church year unless otherwise specified. The terms of office for all Church officers except Pastor and ministerial staff will coincide with the Church year unless otherwise specified in this document.

## **ARTICLE VI CHURCH FINANCES**

### Section 1.

The Finance Committee, in consultation with Church program directors, committee chairpersons, and staff, shall prepare and submit to the Deacons and the Church for approval an inclusive budget, including by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses.

The proposed budget will be submitted to the Church for discussion, amendment, or change at either a regular or special business meeting. Changes may be made by a majority of those members in good standing who are present and voting. The proposed budget will be made available to the membership at least one week prior to the vote on the budget at Sunday morning services. To be adopted, the budget requires approval by a minimum of two-thirds of the members present and voting. It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its voted and approved budget with regular, proportionate gifts. Annually there shall be opportunity provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from the Church members. Offering envelopes will be provided.

### Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall be properly recorded on the books of the Church by the Church Treasurer or by the Bookkeeper, both of whom shall be bonded, the Church paying for the bond. (See Article II, Section 1, number (5), regarding the Church Treasurer).

A system of accounting, including regular, independent audits that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds, shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

### Section 3. Dedicated and Restricted Giving Beyond Budget

The First Baptist Church of Charleston approves designations to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship up to the percent of the members' donation to the Church which is equal to the percent of the Church budget allocated to Southern Baptist Convention causes.

Other giving in the form of funds to be used by the Church for specific purposes approved by the Church Finance Committee is reserved by the Church for those purposes and held or invested as instructed by the donors and reported by the Church Finance Committee quarterly to the Deacons and the Church membership. Funds donated for purposes outside the Church will also be processed by the Church office as directed by the donors and approved by the Church Finance Committee.

## **ARTICLE VII CHURCH OPERATIONS MANUAL**

The Church shall maintain a Church Operations Manual to include policies and procedures and organization charts depicting lines of responsibility for the administration of the Church. The manual shall be kept in the Church office and its upkeep will be under the oversight of the Pastor. The manual shall be written within the constraints of the Church Constitution and By-Laws and additions, deletions and revisions.

## **ARTICLE VIII INSTITUTIONS**

### **A. Purposes**

The First Baptist Church shall sponsor institutions for the accomplishment of the purposes of the Church and shall appoint (Article II, Section 2) the members of the boards of directors to which the governance of these institutions shall be committed in accordance with their charters.

## B. Identification of Sponsored Institutions

The following are the institutions sponsored pursuant to the Church's Bylaws:

- The First Baptist Church Foundation
- The First Baptist School Foundation
- The First Baptist School

## C. Changes Regarding Sponsored Institutions

1. A motion made to the Church to dissolve or substantially alter the relationship between the Church and a sponsored institution, or to add a sponsored institution shall be referred to the Deacons for study and a recommendation to a subsequent business meeting. If the motion is in the nature of or contains an amendment to the Church Bylaws, the motion shall be considered in keeping with the amendment provisions of these Bylaws.
2. A request by the board of directors of an institution to dissolve or substantially alter the relationship between the Church and that institution shall be conveyed in writing to the Deacons. The Deacons shall submit that request to the Church and shall advise the Church of the Deacons' recommendation for a response by the Church to the request.

## D. Terms of Directors' Service

1. Directors shall be appointed (See Article II, Section 2, appointees are nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church) to a term of three (3) years, except directors being appointed to complete an unexpired term. One-third (1/3) of the directors shall retire from each board each year. Board members shall not be eligible to succeed themselves or be appointed to any other board until one year has elapsed except in the case of a board member who has first been appointed to fill less than one year of an unexpired term. Terms commence June 1 following appointment by a vote of the Church.
2. No person shall serve on more than one board of directors at the same time. A person who is an employee of an institution may not serve as a member of a board of directors of an institution sponsored by the Church.
3. Any voting director of an institution who becomes a member of another church shall thereby terminate membership on that board.

## E. Articles of Incorporation

All proposed Articles of Incorporation, or changes or amendments to Articles of Incorporation of institutions sponsored by the Church under these Bylaws, and of any subsidiary corporation created by a sponsored institution, shall be submitted by the institution to the Church for approval before they become effective.

## F. Contents of Articles of Incorporation

The Articles of Incorporation of an institution sponsored by the Church under these Bylaws shall contain the following provisions:

1. The board of directors, consisting of designated persons, a number sanctioned by First Baptist Church, shall be appointed by First Baptist Church.
2. Directors shall be appointed for terms of three (3) years. Directors' terms shall be staggered.
3. First Baptist Church may remove directors prior to the expiration of the term of the directors' appointment upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee and by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members voting in a regular or called business meeting of the Church. Removal may occur only upon the Church's finding that removal of the director is in the best interest of the institution.
4. Vacancies in the board of directors are to be filled by the Church.
5. The directors may adopt bylaws not inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation.
6. Any amendment to the Articles of Incorporation or bylaws of the institutions must be approved by First Baptist Church.
7. Any merger shall require the consent of First Baptist Church.
8. Before the institution may sell, lease, exchange or otherwise dispose of any real property other than in the usual and regular course of its activities, the permission of First Baptist Church must be secured.
9. Dissolution of the institution may occur only with the permission of First Baptist Church, and upon dissolution the assets of the institution shall pass to First Baptist Church if at that time First Baptist Church is a tax exempt corporation within the meaning of 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code. If First Baptist Church is not a tax exempt corporation, then the assets of the institution shall be distributed to one or more tax exempt organizations selected by First Baptist Church. The corporation is (either) a religious nonprofit corporation (or a public benefit nonprofit corporation).

10. The Articles shall contain language appropriate for a corporation exempt from federal taxation under 501 (c)(3) or a successor section of the Internal Revenue Code.

## **ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS**

Changes in the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the Church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to the membership of the Church. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds of Church members in good standing who are present and voting. Amendments to the bylaws shall have concurrence of a majority of the members in good standing who are present and voting. Amendments shall become effective when approved by the Church.