# **CONSTITUTION**

# **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

# **CLARION PENNSYLVANIA**

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PREAMBLE – We are enacting this Constitution in order to govern the body of Christ, at First Baptist Church of Clarion, “decently and in order” in accordance with 1 Corinthians 14:40.

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

This organization shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Clarion (FBCC), Pennsylvania.

**ARTICLE II – PURPOSES AND BELIEFS**

SECTION A – Purposes: FBCC exists to glorify God. To that end, our purposes are:

1. WORSHIP – In every sphere of life, we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and we worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23);
2. FELLOWSHIP – Among ourselves and with all followers of Jesus Christ, we endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3);
3. DISCIPLESHIP – We seek to follow Jesus Christ in our doctrine and manner of life, observing and teaching others to observe everything He has taught us (Matthew 28:19);
4. MINISTRY – As often as God gives opportunity, we serve all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers (Galatians 6:10); and
5. MISSION – In obedience to Christ, we go into all the world and proclaim the good news to all creation (Mark 16:15).

SECTION B – Statement of Faith:

1. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tested.  As a more complete expression of our beliefs concerning the Scriptures, we adopt and incorporate herein The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (see Addendum).  2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; Matthew 5:18-19; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19; Romans 2:12; Psalm 119:4.

1. GOD

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one God, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; who exists eternally in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection.  Nehemiah 9:6; Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Revelation 4:8, 11; Matthew 28:19, John 15:26.

1. 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. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all people. Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff; 20:1ff; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3, 15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

1. JESUS CHRIST

We believe the Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of the Living God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a perfect and sinless life on earth, was crucified and died on the cross, freely accepting God's judgment upon our sins that we might be pardoned.  He was resurrected on the third day for our eternal salvation and, after showing Himself to His followers, He returned to heaven where He lives as our advocate before God.  He will come again to earth, personally and visibly, to judge the living and the dead, and to establish the new heaven and earth in which His people will live forever.  Matthew 1:18-21; 16:16; 28:1-10; John 1:1-14; 14:1-6, 9; 1 Peter 2:22-24; Isaiah 9:6-7; 53:4-6; Acts 1:9-11; 2 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:15-16; 7:25; Acts 17:31; 1 Corinthians 15:20-58.

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to people and abides in all who have accepted Christ as Savior and Lord, granting them a new spiritual birth, enabling believers to will and act according to God's good purpose.  Joel 2:28-29; John 16:5-15; 1 Corinthians 12:3-31; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3; Philippians 2:12-13.

1. HUMANITY

We believe the Scriptures teach that although the human race was created in God's image as the free, rational guardian of God's creation, living in loving relationship with God, we have rebelled against God's created order.  Therefore, all people are now sinners by choice and inclination, and are condemned by God's law to spiritual death and eternal separation from God.  Genesis 1:26-28; 3:1-24; Romans 1:18-32; 3:23; 5:12; 6:23.

1. SALVATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that salvation is a gracious gift of God, offered on the basis of Christ's atoning death and received through faith.  For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.  John 3:16-18; 14:6; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1-2; 8:1; Isaiah 1:18; 45:22.

1. THE CHURCH

We believe the Scriptures teach that the church is the body of Christ composed of believers associated for worship, instruction, fellowship, service, and to proclaim the gospel to all nations.  The church meets for worship on the first day of the week, which is the Lord's Day, given to us by God for our physical and spiritual renewal.  We observe two ordinances: believers baptism by immersion as a testimony to our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior; and the Lord's supper, in remembrance of Christ's body which was broken, and His blood which was shed for us until He comes again.  Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 4:32-33; 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Hebrews 10:25; Exodus 20:8-10; Matthew 24:27, 36, 42.

1. THE 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. God’s intention for marriage is the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God’s unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God’s image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

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. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5, 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16 Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6; 15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15; 17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8; 14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

**ARTICLE III – POLITY**

FBCC shall be governed by Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. Under Christ, authority resides in the membership. The membership shall invest authority and responsibility for governance in the Boards of Elders, Deacons, and Joint Session (a board composed of the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons). All committees and other agencies will function under the authority vested in these two boards.

**ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

SECTION A – Qualifications: Membership in FBCC shall be extended to people who:

1. Profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ;
2. Personally adopt the purposes and beliefs as set forth in Article II of this Constitution;
3. Desire to worship regularly at FBCC; and
4. Contribute to the life and ministries of FBCC.

SECTION B – Associate Members: These members will have the same qualifications for membership as in Section A but will retain home church membership. They will be non-voting members of the church.

SECTION C – Reception of Members: People may be approved and received into membership by the Board of Elders.

1. Membership will be effective on the date the Board of Elders approves membership. The “Hand of Fellowship,” offered in a public service of worship, shall be the symbol of membership.

SECTION D – Dismissal of Members: Membership in this church may be terminated by the Board of Elders on behalf of the membership by any of the following means:

1. Death; or
2. Resignation. Only written resignations will be considered and then acted upon after an attempt has been discussed with the member; or
3. Letter of transfer. Should a member desire to unite with another church, such a letter shall be granted by the Board of Elders upon written request, at which time the person shall cease to be a member of this church; or
4. Excommunication. Should any member become an offense to FBCC and its good name, the Board of Elders may terminate membership, but only after due notice and hearing before the Board of Elders, and after sincere efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and restoration; or
5. After failure to make contact with a member for a period of one (1) year.

**ARTICLE V – PASTORATE**

SECTION A – The Senior Pastor:

1. Qualifications: The Senior Pastor shall:
2. Meet the qualifications for an Elder in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9;
3. Be a member in good standing at FBCC;
4. Work cooperatively with the denomination; and
5. Be ordained, meeting the qualifications for ordination currently in force in the denomination.
6. Administrative responsibilities shall include:
7. Working cooperatively with the boards, committees, and elected officials in coordinating the total program and ministries of FBCC;
8. Will serve on the Board of Elders and have ex-officio membership on all other boards, committees, and organizations of FBCC; and
9. Being accountable to the Board of Elders and the membership.
10. Pastoral responsibilities shall include:
11. Preaching the Gospel and conducting all public worship services unless other arrangements are made through the Board of Elders;
12. Conducting baptisms, Communion, marriage and funeral services;
13. Calling on and/or counseling with those who are facing personal problems, especially those who are hospitalized, confined or bereaved; and
14. Inspiring and motivating the church to fulfill its purpose as stated in Article II.
15. Termination of Service:
16. Resignation: A pastor may resign by giving notice of ninety (90) days to the Board of Elders, which shall as soon as practicable, set in motion the procedure in Article V, Section C;
17. Dismissal: The membership shall try to avoid dismissing its Pastor by seeking reconciliation. Failing this the membership may dismiss a pastor by the following means:
18. Statements clearly establishing the violation of conduct or responsibility for which the pastor is being charged shall be submitted to the Board of Elders with the pastor having the right of defense before the Board of Elders.
19. If the Board of Elders decides to recommend dismissal, such action may be taken at a duly called business meeting, providing a notice of two (2) weeks is given, including notice from the pulpit on each of two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the vote, and by a two-thirds (2/3) vote by secret ballot of those present, qualified and voting. The Pastor shall have opportunity for defense before the vote is taken, and shall be given a notice of ninety (90) days before termination of duties.
20. If the Board of Elders decides against recommending dismissal, the membership may, by written petition of twenty-five percent (25%) of its voting membership, override the Board of Elders and call for a business meeting to be conducted as in (ii) above.

SECTION B – Associate/Assistant Pastor:

1. Qualifications: An Associate/Assistant Pastor shall meet the qualifications for an Elder in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, and be a member in good standing in FBCC.
2. Administrative Responsibilities of an Associate/Assistant Pastor:
3. Work with the boards and elected officials as assigned by the Board of Elders;
4. Will serve on the Board of Elders and have ex-officio membership on all other boards, committees, and organizations of FBCC; and
5. Be accountable to the Board of Elders and the congregation.
6. Additional responsibilities of the Associate/Assistant Pastor shall be assigned according to the job description for the position as determined by Joint Session.
7. Termination of service shall be the same as for the Senior Pastor.

SECTION C – Search Committee: When a pastor is to be sought, a Search Committee shall be formed.

1. Membership: The Search Committee shall consist of:
2. One (1) member of the Board of Elders to be chosen by that Board;
3. One (1) member of the Board of Deacons to be chosen by that Board;
4. Five (5) members at large, at least three (3) of which shall not be an Elder or a Deacon, to be nominated by Joint session and subject to election by the membership.
5. Procedure: The Search Committee shall:
6. Elect a chairperson and a secretary;
7. Have the option to seek the guidance and counsel of the denomination to which FBCC belongs or any of its affiliated agencies;
8. Work with Joint Session to determine the needs of FBCC.
9. Secure names and credentials of candidates;
10. Reduce the list of candidates on the basis of written information available;
11. Visit the candidates believed most likely to fulfill the needs of FBCC;
12. Screen and select one (1) candidate at a time for recommendation to the Board of Elders;
13. Arrange an opportunity for members to hear and meet the approved candidate;
14. Keep the membership informed of progress by reporting at least monthly, but at the same time exercising discretion concerning confidential information about specific candidates;
15. Receive from the Board of Elders a job description including expectations and requirements; and
16. Receive from the Board of Deacons a compensation package including pay and benefits.
17. The Call: A vote to extend a call shall be taken by secret ballot no sooner than the Sunday following the conclusion of the candidacy process established by the Search Committee. An affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the members present, qualified and voting, shall be necessary to extend a call. The vote may be taken at any regular or special business meeting, providing two (2) weeks’ notice has been given, including notice from the pulpit on each of two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the vote. The call shall be extended and accepted by a signed Pastor-Church agreement, one (1) copy to be retained by the Church Clerk and the other copy forwarded to the Pastor-elect. When the call is accepted the Search Committee shall notify the denomination of this fact. The Search Committee shall then work in cooperation with the Pastor-elect in planning a Service of Installation, at which time the committee shall be discharged.

**ARTICLE VI – OFFICES**

SECTION A – Qualifications of Officers:

1. Each officer shall be an active member as described in Article IV, SECTION A;
2. No officer shall hold more than one (1) position at office level simultaneously; however, an officer may serve in one (1) additional committee position simultaneously;
3. Each officer shall attend the regular church business meetings; and
4. Each officer shall be expected to carry out the functions of office as defined in this Constitution to the highest degree of his or her ability.

SECTION B – Election and Term: Each officer shall be elected by secret ballot by a majority vote of members present, qualified and voting at the Annual Meeting, (see page 16, Article X, Section B1) for a term of one (1) year, election being effective immediately.

SECTION C – General Responsibilities: All officers shall transfer to their successors all records pertaining to their offices.

SECTION D – Officers:

1. The Moderator shall:
2. Preside at all business meetings of FBCC and Joint Session, according to Robert’s Rules of Order Revised. In case of absence an alternate will be appointed.
3. Work cooperatively with the Board of Elders in coordinating the work of the officers, boards, and committees;
4. Have ex-officio membership on all committees; and
5. Appoint the following, subject to prior approval by the Board of Deacons.
6. A committee responsible to audit all financial records of the church by Board of Deacons
7. Special Committees by approval of Joint Session
8. Appoint a Nominating Committee, subject to the approval of Joint Session, which shall:
9. Consist of three to five (3-5) members;
10. Serve a term to expire at the next Annual Meeting;
11. Submit to the Moderator nominees for Church Clerk; submit to the Board of Elders nominees for the Christian Education Committee and the Missions Committee, submit to the Board of Deacons nominees for Financial Secretary, Church Treasurer, the Trustee Committee, and the Memorial Committee.
12. Upon approval under the provisions of (iii) above, present nominees to the membership at the next Annual Meeting.
13. Be ineligible to serve on another board or committee.
14. Be accountable to the membership.
15. The Church Clerk shall:
16. Keep minutes of all meetings of Joint Session and business meetings;
17. Maintain a permanent and current record of membership including dates and manner of admission and dismissal;
18. Write for letters of transfer and issue letters of dismissal;
19. Maintain a file of annual reports, booklets, and other documents of historical significance;
20. Prepare denominational reports as necessary;
21. Be eligible to serve on any board or committee, but not as chairperson; and
22. Be accountable to the Moderator.
23. The Financial Secretary shall:
24. Count, record and deposit in a bank all receipts;
25. Deliver to the treasurer deposit slips showing amount to be credited to each fund which FBCC maintains;
26. Furnish envelopes for contributions to the church budget;
27. Keep a record of each individual’s contributions, sending out an annual statement of the same to each recorded giver;
28. Provide a written summary report of all receipts of the church at the Annual Meeting;
29. File monthly, quarterly, and annual reports with the Boards of Deacons and Elders;
30. Be accountable to the Board of Deacons.
31. The Church Treasurer shall:
32. Hold all funds not otherwise provided for;
33. Keep an accurate account of all funds received and disbursed;
34. File monthly, quarterly, and annual reports with Boards of Deacons and Elders;
35. Provide a written report at the Annual Meeting;
36. Be available to any board or committee for consultation as necessary;
37. Be ineligible to serve on the Board of Elders while holding this office; and
38. Serve on the Board of Deacons, but not as chairperson.
39. Alternates for Financial Secretary and Church Treasurer shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons.

SECTION E – Unfinished Term of Office: A vacancy of any office shall be filled in the following manner, until the next Annual Meeting, at which time the office shall be filled by election:

1. The Church Moderator shall be appointed by Joint Session;
2. The Church Clerk shall be appointed by the Church Moderator; and
3. The Financial Secretary and the Church Treasurer shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons.

**ARTICLE VII – BOARDS**

SECTION A – Elders

1. General Statement: The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the general oversight of FBCC and for its spiritual ministries. Elders are men called and equipped by God to serve in this office. In recognition of God’s calling, Elders shall be elected by the membership. The nature of this calling from God and this trust from the membership require that an Elder exercise his responsibilities in love, serve willingly, and lead FBCC out of a desire to serve rather than to exercise power.
2. Qualifications: The qualifications for Elder are established in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Using these qualifications as a guide, Joint Session shall nominate men to serve as Elders. Those Elders currently in office shall interview all nominees and approve for election all men who are willing and biblically qualified to serve.
3. Responsibilities:
4. The overall spiritual care and direction of FBCC, including but not limited to prayer, visitation, planning, strategizing, counseling, and training for membership;
5. Oversee the membership as prescribed in Article IV, Sections B, C, and D, referring all such decisions to the Church Clerk for recording;
6. Approve absences, including continuing education and vacation for the pastors, and arrange for worship leadership and speakers in their absence;
7. Approve special services and speakers;
8. Meet as a board at least monthly, requiring a simple majority as a quorum to conduct business, and address in a timely fashion matters forwarded to them by the Deacons or committees;
9. Hire, oversee, and dismiss secretarial staff, music director and musicians, and pay those serving according to the financial package previously determined by the Board of Deacons;
10. Work in Joint Session to present nominees to the membership for the office of Church Moderator;
11. Recommend to the membership such people as may desire ordination or licensing in Christian ministry;
12. Appoint delegates to organizations with which FBCC is affiliated;
13. Act on behalf of FBCC in all legal matters;
14. Work with the Deacons in Joint Session to fill any other ministerial or administrative position not otherwise identified; and
15. To see the pulpit is filled or an interim is called in the absence of the pastor.
16. Number: There shall be a minimum of three (3) Elders in addition to the pastors.

Provision: If the minimum of qualified and willing is not achieved, the membership may approve fewer to serve until the next Annual Meeting.

1. Election:
2. Joint Session shall present a list of names to the Board of Elders to screen for biblical qualifications to serve as Elder.
3. At the Annual Meeting, each member qualified, present and voting shall vote for each nominee by secret ballot. Any nominees receiving three-fourths (3/4) of the votes cast shall serve on the Board of Elders.
4. Terms of service: Elders shall serve a term of two (2) years.
5. Resignation: An Elder may resign his office.
6. Disciplinary Action: Any Elder who for any reason no longer meets the biblical qualifications for the office, or who is unwilling or unable to carry out the duties of the office, shall be subject to the following process:
7. Following review and upon recommendation by the Board of Elders, a special meeting open only to members of FBCC shall be called to consider the matter. The matter shall be presented to the membership with opportunity for the Elder in question to respond.
8. The Elders shall recommend appropriate action to the membership.
9. Upon recommendation, an Elder may be removed from office by the membership. Voting shall be by secret ballot and shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members qualified, present, and voting.
10. Once removed from office, and after completing a restoration process prescribed by the Board of Elders, a man may be eligible to serve as an Elder through the prescribed Elder election process.
11. Unexpired Terms: If for any reason an Elder vacancy should occur, it may remain vacant until the next Annual Meeting, unless the Board of Elders calls for a special election.

SECTION B – Deacons

1. General Statement: The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for the service ministries of the church. Deacons are called and equipped by God to serve in this office. In recognition of God’s calling, they shall be elected by the membership. While principally concerned with the tangible needs of the church, the Deacons shall work closely with the Elders to implement and facilitate the spiritual ministries as determined by the Elders.
2. Qualifications: Using the qualifications established in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 as a guide, Joint Session shall nominate to the Board of Deacons men and women to serve as deacons and deaconesses. The Board of Elders shall interview all nominees and submit for election all men and women who are willing and biblically qualified to serve as Deacons.
3. Responsibilities:
4. Gather, review, and submit a proposed budget to the membership at the Annual Meeting;
5. Supervise and maintain the financial matters;
6. Establish financial packages for pastors, secretarial staff, custodians, and any other FBCC employees;
7. Maintain and dispense The Fellowship Fund;
8. Work in cooperation with the Elders in the areas of visitation, spiritual care, and planning special services;
9. Facilitate the celebrations of Baptism and Communion as scheduled by the Elders;
10. Meet as a board at least monthly, requiring a simple majority as a quorum to conduct business, and address in a timely fashion matters forwarded by the Elders or by a committee;
11. Work in Joint Session to present nominees at the Annual Meeting to the membership for the office of Church Moderator;
12. Appoint alternates for Financial Secretary and Church Treasurer as the need arises;
13. Work with the Elders in Joint Session to fill any other ministerial or administrative position not otherwise identified;
14. Recruit and oversee volunteers to assist in the ministry as needed; and
15. Dispense funds as designated or, in case of memorial funds, determine a suitable use for the contribution.
16. Number: There shall be a minimum of nine (9) Deacons, including the Church Treasurer.

Provision: If the minimum of those qualified and willing is not achieved, the membership may approve fewer to serve until the next Annual Meeting.

1. Election:
2. Joint Session shall present a list of names to the Board of Elders to screen for biblical qualifications to serve as Deacon.
3. Any nominees receiving three-fourths (3/4) of the votes cast shall serve on the Board of Deacons.
4. Term of Service: A Deacon shall serve a term of two (2) years.
5. Resignation: A Deacon may resign his or her office.
6. Disciplinary Action: Any Deacon who for any reason no longer meets the biblical qualifications for the office, or who is unwilling or unable to carry out the duties of the office, shall be subject to the following process:
7. The Board of Deacons shall forward to the Board of Elders a written statement of the matter accompanied by recommendations.
8. Following review and upon recommendation by the Board of Elders, a special meeting open only to members shall be called to consider the matter. The matter shall be presented to the membership with opportunity for the Deacon in question to respond.
9. The Elders shall recommend appropriate action to the membership.
10. Upon recommendation of the Elders, a Deacon may be removed by the membership. Voting shall be by secret ballot and shall require two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members qualified, present and voting.
11. Once removed from office and after completing a restoration process prescribed by the Board of Elders, a person may be eligible to serve as Deacon through the prescribed Deacon election process.
12. Unexpired Terms: If for any reason a vacancy should occur, that vacancy may be filled by appointment by the Board of Deacons, subject to prior approval by the Board of Elders. The term of service shall be until the next Annual Meeting.

 **ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES**

SECTION A – Qualifications of Committee Members:

1. Each committee member shall be a member of FBCC as described in Article IV, SECTION A;
2. Each committee member shall perform their responsibilities, including attendance, to the satisfaction of the Board overseeing that committee.

SECTION B – Election and Terms: Each committee member shall be approved by the Board overseeing that committee, and elected by a majority vote of those present, qualified, and voting at the Annual Meeting for a term of two (2) years, except to fill an unexpired term. Election to a committee position is effective as of the Annual Meeting.

SECTION C – General Responsibilities: Each committee shall be responsible to:

1. Elect a chairperson, a secretary, and other officers as may be needed annually;
2. Create any sub-committees or appointments it deems necessary to assist in meeting its responsibilities, subject to the approval of its respective Board;
3. Meet regularly and at other times as called by the chairperson or a majority of the committee, provided a quorum is present;
4. Require a simple majority of committee members as a quorum to conduct business;
5. Work cooperatively with the Pastors and Boards in carrying out the programs of FBCC; and
6. Report minutes to the overseeing board in a timely manner.

SECTION D – Trustees: The Trustees Committee shall, under the oversight of the Board of Deacons, maintain the material possessions of the church. This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The responsibilities of this committee shall be to:

1. Maintain the real and personal properties of the church and be responsible to acquire the consent of the membership in the transfer of real estate and major personal properties;
2. Obtain from the Board of Deacons and the membership approval for expenditures exceeding five thousand dollars ($5,000.00) which are not provided for in the budget;
3. Schedule requests for use of the church facilities according to the building use policy; and
4. Hire, oversee, and dismiss custodial staff.

SECTION E – Christian Education: The Christian Education Committee shall, under the oversight of the Board of Elders, support the education program of FBCC. This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The responsibilities of this committee shall be to:

1. Investigate and make recommendations to the Board of Elders regarding matters of curricula;
2. Recommend Sunday School teachers to the Board of Elders;
3. Receive Sunday School offerings which shall be transmitted to the Financial Secretary and which shall be deposited in the General Fund from which Christian Education expenses shall be met;
4. Provide for youth programs, camping, conferences, Vacation Bible School, and other programs as requested by the Board of Elders;
5. Secure a Babysitter Coordinator to supply sitters for all regular services and Sunday school; and
6. Secure a Sunday School Coordinator to oversee curricula, recruit teachers, and keep a record of attendance.

SECTION F – Missions: The Missions Committee shall, under the oversight of the Board of Elders, be responsible to support the missions program of FBCC. This committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members. The responsibilities of this committee shall be to:

1. Promote the knowledge, interest, and support of missions;
2. Investigate and recommend missionary candidates for support through the FBCC’s mission budget; and
3. Develop and recommend relevant missionary programs in the event of local, state, national, or world emergencies.

SECTION G – Unfinished Term of a Committee Position: A vacancy of any committee position due to resignation, death, dismissal, or for any other reason shall be filled by appointment of the Board overseeing that committee. The replacement shall serve until the next Annual Meeting, at which time the position shall be filled by an election for the remainder of the term.

**ARTICLE IX – STANDING COMMITTEES**

SECTION A – Term and Qualifications: Standing Committees shall be elected for a one (1) year term by majority vote of those present, qualified and voting at the Annual Meeting. Election is effective as of the Annual Meeting. Committee members may serve two (2) consecutive full terms. Standing Committees shall be comprised of church members as described in Article IV, SECTION A.

SECTION B – Memorial Committee: The Memorial Committee shall be responsible for all memorials given to FBCC. The Committee shall consist of three (3) members whose responsibilities shall be to:

1. Maintain a written record of all memorial contributions and their designations;
2. Inform the family that a memorial gift has been made;
3. Send an acknowledgement of the gift to the donor;
4. Arrange an appropriate response in the event of a death according to church policy;
5. Submit a written report quarterly to the Board of Deacons; and
6. Be responsible to the Board of Deacons.

**ARTICLE X – CHURCH MEETINGS**

SECTION A – Public Meetings: Public services for the worship of God shall be held each Sunday, and Communion (the Lord’s Supper) celebrated at least once a month, customarily on the first Sunday of each month. Other public meetings may be scheduled by the Pastor(s), the Board of Elders, and/or the Board of Deacons.

SECTION B – Business Meetings:

1. The Annual Meeting of the membership shall be held on a date in September as determined by Joint Session.
2. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor(s), the Moderator, the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons, or by the Church Clerk upon receipt of a petition from ten (10) percent of the active membership with no more than two (2) from the same household. Public notice of the business to be considered shall be given and no other business shall be transacted at such a meeting except that specified in the call, unless by unanimous consent of the meeting.
3. Notice of the time, place, and subject of all business meetings of the church shall be given at least two (2) weeks in advance including notice from the pulpit on each of two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting, by written announcement in the Sunday bulletin, or by a mailing sent to all members. Joint Session may waive the requirement of two (2) weeks advance notice for a special business meeting, if deemed an emergency.
4. As a quorum, ten (10) percent of the voting membership of the church shall be required to conduct business.
5. Parliamentary authority for the conduct of business meetings shall be Robert’s Rules of Order Revised, where such rules are not inconsistent with this constitution.

**ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS**

Amendment(s) to this constitution may be made at any regular or special business meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those qualified, present and voting, provided that the proposed amendment(s) have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and distributed to all active members at least four (4) weeks before action is to be taken by the membership.



Addendum: **The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy**

Preface

 The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God’s written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

 The following Statement affirms this inerrancy of Scripture afresh, making clear our understanding of it and warning against its denial. We are persuaded that to deny it is to set aside the witness of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit and to refuse that submission to the claims of God’s own Word which marks true Christian faith. We see it as our timely duty to make this affirmation in the face of current lapses from the truth of inerrancy among our fellow Christians and misunderstanding of this doctrine in the world at large.

 This Statement consists of three parts: a Summary Statement, Articles of Affirmation and Denial. It has been prepared in the course of a three-day consultation in Chicago. Those who have signed the Summary Statement and the Articles wish to affirm their own conviction as to the inerrancy of Scripture and to encourage and challenge one another and all Christians to growing appreciation and understanding of this doctrine. We acknowledge the limitations of a document prepared in a brief, intensive conference and do not propose that this Statement be given creedal weight. Yet we rejoice in the deepening of our own convictions through our discussions together, and we pray that the Statement we have signed may be used to the glory of our God toward a new reformation of the Church in its faith, life, and mission.

 We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we purpose by God’s grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word.

 We invite response to this statement from any who see reason to amend its affirmations about Scripture by the light of Scripture itself, under whose infallible authority we stand as we speak. We claim no personal infallibility for the witness we bear, and for any help which enables us to strengthen this testimony to God’s Word we shall be grateful.

**A Short Statement**

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God’s witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God’s own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God’s instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God’s command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture’s divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God’s acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God’s saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible’s own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

**Article I**

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

**Article II**

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

We deny that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

**Article III**

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

**Article IV**

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God’s work of inspiration.

**Article V**

We affirm that God’s revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive.

We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

**Article VI**

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

**Article VII**

We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.

We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

**Article VIII**

We affirm that God in His Work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

**Article IX**

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.

We deny that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God’s Word.

**Article X**

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

**Article XI**

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

**Article XII**

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

**Article XIII**

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

**Article XIV**

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.

We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

**Article XV**

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.

We deny that Jesus’ teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

**Article XVI**

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church’s faith throughout its history.

We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by Scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

**Article XVII**

We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God’s written Word.

We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

**Article XVIII**

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

**Article XIX**

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences both to the individual and to the Church.