The

Constitution

and

By-Laws

of the

First Baptist Church

of

Morris, Minnesota

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
MORRIS, MN

Constitution and By-Laws
of
First Baptist Church

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CONSTITUTION
OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Morris, Minnesota

As Revised July 22, 2018

PREAMBLE

We, being born-again and Bible-believing Christians by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; believing the Bible to be the Divinely inspired and authoritative Word of God and final authority for all Christian faith and practice; accepting the historic Baptist distinctives; in the interests of growth and knowledge of Jesus Christ through worship and work; and that we might fulfill our responsibilities to propagate the Word of God both at home and abroad; and to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3); and that "all things might be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40); we do, therefore, band ourselves together as a body of immersed believers in Jesus Christ and hereby adopt the following constitution as the statement of our faith and principles for the government of our local church.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be: First Baptist Church of Morris, Minnesota.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

A. The purpose of this church shall be to accomplish the will of the Lord Jesus Christ through the uniting of Christians in fellowship faithful to the Word of God, through preaching of the whole counsel of God, for the establishment of New Testament churches both at home and abroad, and for the observance of the Ordinances.
B. No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall be the carrying of propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation, and this corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in, including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

ARTICLE III. DOCTRINAL POSITION

SECTION I. STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. The Holy Scriptures. We believe the Holy Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments only, to be the plenarily, verbally inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original manuscripts, authoritative, infallible and God-breathed; and that they are the only supreme and ultimate authority for faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 5:18; 1 Cor. 2:10-13).

B. The Godhead. We believe in one triune God, existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, eternal in being, identical in essence, equal in power and glory and having the same divine attributes and perfections; yet exercising them in varied offices (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 14:7-12; John 16:7, 2 Cor. 13:14).

C. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man (Matt. 1:18-20; John 1:1,2,14,18; Luke 1:35).

2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who receive Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood (Rom. 3:24-26; 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21).

3. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ and that our redemption and salvation is guaranteed to us by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead; in His bodily ascension into heaven; and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Intercessor (Matt. 28:5,6; 1 Cor. 15:12-19; Acts 1:9; Heb. 4:14-16; 7:23-25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1,2).

4. We believe in "that blessed hope" which is the personal, visible pretribulational, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:14-17; Tit. 2:13; 1 John 3:2-3).

D. The Personality of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, equal with the Father and the Son and of the same substance and nature; that He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment; bears witness to the truth; is the agent of the new birth; and that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies, and helps the believer; that He baptizes them into the Body of Christ, indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, bestows spiritual gifts upon each one, and fills for service those yielded to Him. We believe that certain of the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church, such as apostleship, prophecy, and tongues, were temporary, were needed only in the infancy of the church and are not to be expected today. We believe that the Holy Spirit testifies concerning Jesus Christ and never leads any person, at any time, contrary to the teaching of the Bible (John 3:8; 14:16; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Acts 5:1-4; ` Cor. 12:4-13; 13:8-11; Eph. 4:30; 5:18).

E. The Total Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all mankind have inherited a sinful nature, become willful sinners with the first expression of personal choice, are totally unable to regain their former position, and are without excuse before God (Gen. 1:26; 3:1-24; Rom 3:23; 5:12; 1:20; Eph. 2:1-6,12).

F. Salvation, Regeneration, Eternal Security of the Believer.

1. We believe that salvation is a gift of God brought to men by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of sins. Salvation is solely through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins and, being a free gift, is not earned by any good works whatsoever, and all those who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are regenerated and become sons of God (Eph. 1:7; 2:8-9; John 1:12; 3:5-7).

2. We believe that the scriptures teach that regeneration, or the new birth, is that change in the soul by the Holy Spirit by which a new nature and spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; and without it salvation is impossible (John 3:2-6; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 1:23; Titus 3:5)

3. We believe that the salvation of every believer is secure for all eternity from the moment of regeneration. This security is guaranteed to each believer by the fact that the life received is eternal life, by the keeping power of God, by the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit, and by the interceding ministry of Christ (John 5:24; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1,29,30,38,39; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25).

G. **Sanctification.** We believe that immediate, positional sanctification is that act of God whereby believers are, at the time of regeneration, eternally set apart as belonging to Him by redemption, thereby being placed in the family of God as children, joint heirs with Jesus Christ (1 John 3:1; Rom. 8:14-17; 1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 10:10-14).

We believe that progressive sanctification is the process by which, according to God's will, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is progressive; that it is begun in regeneration; that it progresses if the believer is yielded to the Holy Spirit's control; that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, self-examination, watchfulness and prayer (1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; Prov. 4:18; 1 John 2:29; Phil. 2:12-13; Eph 6:18; John 17:17).

We believe that ultimate sanctification will be the portion of every believer when finally in the presence of the Lord, complete and entire, with soul and spirit united in the resurrected body free from every trace or effect of sin and rebellion (` John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:52-54; Eph. 4:30; 5:27; Phil. 3:20-21).

H. **Separation.** We believe in the Biblical doctrine of separation which encompasses three things: (1) The separation of the local Church from all affiliation and fellowship with those who deny the verities of the "faith once delivered to the saints;" (2) the separation of the individual believer from all worldly practices that may dishonor the Savior; and (3) the separation of Church and state (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rom. 12:1,2; 14:13; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; 2 Cor. 6:11-7:1).

I. **The Eternal State.** We believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death immediately pass into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory; but, that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery unto the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body are reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

J. **The Church.** We believe in the Church - a living, spiritual body of which Christ is the Head (Matt. 16:16-18; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27).

We believe that each local church is a visible expression of the Body of Christ and is a congregation of believers in Jesus Christ, immersed upon a credible confession of faith, and associated together by covenant for worship, evangelism, and observance of the ordinances, and fellowship. We believe that the local church is the center of God's program for this age, and that every Christian is bound by Scripture to give his unhindered cooperation to the program of His local church (Acts 2:41-47; 14:27; 1 Tim. 2:1-16; Titus 1:5-11; 1 Cor. 3:10-17; 5:1-5; 11:2).

K. **The Church's Ordinances.** We believe that the Lord Jesus instituted two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, to be observed by all believers until His return.

We believe that baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to show forth by solemn and beautiful symbolism, the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, and that it is a Scriptural prerequisite to church membership (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38-41; 8:36; Rom. 6:3-5; I Pet. 3:21;).

We believe that the Lord's Supper is partaking of bread and the fruit of the vine, as symbols of Christ's body and blood, commemorating His suffering and death for us and our continual benefit therefrom; that participation should be limited to those who have united to the local church by baptism and testimony; or to those who are

baptized members of churches of like faith and practice, and that participation should be preceded by careful self-examination (1 Cor. 5:1-10; 10:16-11:32; Matt. 18:15-17).

L. **The Great Commission.** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned the Church to take the Gospel to the world, and that evangelism at home and abroad should be primary in the program of the local church (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

M. **The Responsibility of Believers.** We believe that all believers should seek to walk by the Spirit, not bringing reproach upon their Lord and Savior, exercising Christian liberty regulated by love, separated from worldly pleasure and practices, separated from organization association with apostate groups (Rom. 12:1,2; Gal. 6:16; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Cor. 8:1-13).

We believe that it is the responsibility of all believers to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Holy Scriptures and to assure responsibility for the propagation of the gospel to all the world (Matt. 28:19-21; Acts 1:8).

We believe that it is the responsibility of all believers to remember the work of the local church and its extension ministries in prayer, to support it with their tithes and offerings as the Lord prospers them, to participate in all the regular services of the church as the Lord enables, and to voluntarily submit to the watchcare and the discipline of the local church (1 Cor. 16:2; Heb. 10:19-25; 13:17-18).

N. **Creation.** We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, "each after its own kind," by direct act in six (6) twenty-four (24) hour days, and not by any process of evolution (Gen. 1 & 2; Col. 1:16-17; John 1:3). In light of God's creative design, we believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is the joining of one man and one woman and that sexual intimacy is to be expressed only within the bonds of a Biblically defined marriage. Any other form of marriage or sexual intimacy is immoral and a perversion of God's gracious will. (Gen 2:18, 24, 25; Matt 19:4–6; Rom 1:24–29; 7:2; 1 Cor 6:19, 20; 7:1–5; Eph 5:22–33; Heb 13:4)

O. **Last Things.** We believe in the imminent return of Christ to take those in Christ to heaven. Following this shall be a period of tribulation upon all the earth. At the end of this time of tribulation, Jesus Christ shall come back to earth in power and glory with His church to establish the promised Davidic kingdom. He shall reign for one thousand years, during which time peace and righteousness will cover the earth, Satan shall be bound and Israel shall be established in her own land. At the end of this glorious reign Satan shall shall be loosed and will lead a rebellion against Christ, but shall be forever banished to the lake of fire. The wicked dead shall be judged at the Great White Throne, and shall be condemned to everlasting conscious punishment in hell. The righteous shall enjoy the eternal conscious blessedness of presence with the Lord. (John 14:3; Matt. 24:21; Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-15; Ezek. 39:25-29; 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:51-57; 1 John 3:1-3).

SECTION II. DECLARATION OF POSITION

We believe ourselves to be Baptistic rather than Interdenominational, Conservative rather than Liberal in Doctrine, Dispensational rather than Covenant in Theology, Fundamental rather than New Evangelical in Outreach, Autonomous rather than Ecclesiastical in church government, Separated rather than Worldly in Christian Living, Local Church centered rather than Ecumenical in Polity, and Pre-tribulational and Pre-millenial rather than Post-tribulational and Amillenial in Eschatology.

ARTICLE IV. OUR CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior,

And, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

We do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort;

To promote its prosperity and spirituality and to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines;

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances;

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment;

To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger;

to abstain from the sale of, and use of, intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love;

To remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech;

To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this church is open to anyone who has received by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior; has been born to a living hope through the Holy Spirit; manifests himself as a true Christian; desires to share in the fellowship and ministry of this church; has received, or is willing to receive, the ordinance of water baptism by immersion and agrees to be governed as a member by its constitution.

ARTICLE VI. PASTOR

SECTION I. SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS

His qualifications shall reflect the requirements as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-6 and Titus 1:5-9 (cf. 1 Tim. 6:10-12; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:17-35).

SECTION II. SELECTION OF A NEW PASTOR

A. The Deacons, deaconesses, and two (2) members elected from the body shall constitute the Pulpit Committee to secure possible candidates for the pastorate when such has been vacated, or when calling an assistant. They shall interview each candidate and endeavor to hear him speak before recommending him as a candidate. Each candidate must be in full agreement with the doctrinal position of this church. Candidates for assistant pastor must have the recommendation of the pastor.

B. Each candidate shall preach in one or more of the public services of the church.

C. Each candidate shall be voted upon before considering another. No vote shall be taken until at least one week has expired following the candidate's appearance at the church.

D. The pastor shall be called by a ¾ vote of the members present and voting. Notice of the meeting shall be given by the church clerk in at least two regular services of the church prior to the election. The vote shall be by written ballot.

E. The Pulpit Committee shall be responsible to notify the pastor-elect, to report his decision to the congregation, and to make arrangements for his moving and housing.

SECTION III. DUTIES OF THE PASTOR

A. Upon assuming his duties as pastor he shall become a member of this church and shall be the moderator of this church and ex-officio member of all boards and committees and co-equal with the chairman of all boards and committees.

B. The Senior Pastor shall have oversight of all the work of the church.

C. It shall be the duty of the Senior Pastor to devote himself and his time to the service of the church, preaching the Word of God, and administering the ordinances. He shall watch over himself and his flock, visiting, as far as time permits, all the members of the church, especially the sick and shut-ins. He shall lead the church in the work of evangelism and shall make himself available for pastoral counseling when needed.

SECTION IV. PASTORAL BENEFITS

A. Parsonage. The church shall supply a parsonage adequate for the pastor and his family, incurring, in mutual agreement with the pastor, all expenses for repair, maintenance, improvement and insurance of the property. The parsonage shall be considered the pastor's home without being subject to use for church activities, except by invitation.

B. Salary. The pastor shall receive a salary adequate for meeting the financial needs of his family, a sum agreed to by mutual agreement between the pastor and the church and paid in accordance with mutual arrangement.

C. Vacation. The pastor shall be granted an annual vacation with pay, away from the church work and meetings for three (3) weeks, designated as 20 days including two (2) Sundays. The time of the vacation shall be at the discretion of the pastor. He shall arrange for pulpit supply during his absence.

D. Day off. The pastor shall take one (1) day off each week from church duties and activities.

E. Evangelistic meetings. It shall be the privilege of the pastor to be absent from the field for two (2) weeks, including (2) Sundays, each year, without the loss of pay, to preach in revival meetings. The time of absence shall meet with approval of the deacons. He shall arrange for pulpit supply during his absence.

F. Annual meetings. The pastor's expenses will be paid to the annual meetings of the local, state, and national association of church with which this church is affiliated.

SECTION V. PASTOR'S TERM OF OFFICE

A. He shall serve for an indefinite period of time with the reciprocal rights to terminate his services upon thirty (30) days written notice.

B. Accusations against the pastor shall be submitted to the Deacons, and shall not be considered unless supported by the testimony of two (2) or more witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19). If he errs in doctrine or conduct, the deacons shall, in brotherly love, attempt to correct him (Gal. 6:1). If this is not effective, the matter shall be referred to the church which alone has the authority to act.

C. The pastor may be dismissed by majority vote of the eligible members present and voting; after it has been announced at two successive Sundays immediately prior to this meeting. The vote shall be by written ballot.

D. If the pastor is dismissed, he shall vacate the pulpit and pastoral and administrative duties immediately but shall receive four (4) weeks pay. He shall vacate the parsonage within thirty (30) days of his dismissal, or at the discretion of the church. If the pastor is dismissed for heresy or immorality, he shall receive two (2) weeks pay and shall vacate the parsonage within thirty (30) days.

SECTION VI. ASSISTANT PASTORS (if any)

A. He shall assist the pastor in carrying out his duties and shall, therefore, seek conscientiously to achieve the objectives and purposes of this church and to defend the statement of faith.

B. He shall serve the church under the direct supervision of the pastor, and be responsible to the deacons through the pastor. He will serve as an ex-officio member of the deacon board.

C. He may be assigned as deemed necessary by the pastor to needed ministries in the church.

D. He shall be selected in the same manner as the pastor.

E. Tenure - Terms of salary, housing, methods of termination, areas of responsibility, etc., shall be defined in a written working agreement.

ARTICLE VII. LICENSING AND ORDAINING

SECTION I. LICENSING

A. Any male member, who, in the judgment of this church, has given evidence by his piety, zeal and aptness to teach, that he is called of God to the work of the ministry, after having preached in the hearing of the church, may be licensed to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, provided ¾ of the members present and voting at any regular church meeting shall agree thereto.

B. The license shall be terminated by majority action of the church for conduct adjudged unbecoming a licensed preacher of the Gospel or upon request by the individual, or upon his removal of his membership from the church.

SECTION II. ORDAINING

A. Requirements for Ordination.

This church recognizes the fact that only God can call a man to the ministry of the Gospel but believes it both Scriptural and wise to have such a man commended to the ministry of the Gospel by a local church. The following are some of the normal qualifications to be met by those seeking ordination by this church:

1. A personal knowledge of Christ as Savior.
2. A high moral character with an evidence of spirituality in daily life.
3. His academic preparation shall be adequate, normally consisting of three years of seminary work and of sound spiritual and mental aggressiveness. The requirements may be waived if, in the judgment of the council and the church, the candidate merits exception.
4. A complete agreement with the doctrinal position of this church and its constitution and covenant.
5. A written statement of belief and practices regarding the doctrine of the Bible to be presented to all members of the examining council.
6. An oral examination before the examining council in which questions shall be asked relative to the candidate's Christian experience, his call to the ministry, and his knowledge of the Bible and Christian doctrine.

B. Procedure for Ordination.

1. If this church, by a majority vote of its members present at any regular church service, decides that one of its members possesses the Scriptural qualifications for full ordination, then the church shall proceed in routine manner to call an examining council. Ministers and messengers from surrounding churches who are of like faith and practice may be invited to assist in the examining council.
2. Upon the recommendation of the examining council, the church may ordain the candidate, inviting other churches to assist in the service also.
3. Such ordination may be revoked for doctrinal defection and/or immorality by a majority vote of the church.

ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

SECTION I. WORSHIP SERVICES

A. The church shall meet regularly every Sunday for the public worship of the eternal God and the proclamation of the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

B. Midweek Bible Study and Prayer Meeting.

C. Any other meetings as the church designates.

D. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at such regular intervals as the church may designate.

SECTION II. BUSINESS MEETINGS

A. The church shall have an annual business meeting, quarterly business meetings, and other business meetings as may be deemed necessary.

B. All Annual and Quarterly business meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

ARTICLE XII. CHURCH BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

SECTION I. USE OF BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES

A. The church buildings and facilities shall be used only for such meetings and activities as shall promote the gospel and honor of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

B. Chairs and other items may be used by members and friends of the church upon securing permission from the pastor or trustees.

SECTION II. AUTHORITY FOR USE OF BUILDINGS

A. The Pastor and the Deacons shall exercise the authority to permit the use of the buildings and grounds and shall refuse the use of the building for any meeting or activity contrary to church policy and belief.

B. The Deacons shall establish the obligations of the one using the facilities, including honorariums to the caretake and musicians.

SECTION III. WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

A. Weddings. The church facilities may be used by members in good standing for weddings. Others desiring the use of the church must have the consent of the deacons.

B. Funerals. The church facilities may be used by member families for funerals. Others desiring the use of the church facilities must have the consent of the deacons.

SECTION IV. PROFIT MAKING

A. The buildings and facilities of this church shall not be used for profit making.

B. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered.

SECTION V. PROPERTY RIGHTS

A. The church shall have right to own, buy, or sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through properly elected and authorized officers.

B. Persons dismissed or who have withdrawn from the membership of the church have no right to make claim upon any of the church property and any such property in their possession shall be returned immediately.

ARTICLE X. CONVENING A COUNCIL

In case of difficulty, for the decision of which the church desires the advice and wisdom of disinterested brethren, letters may be sent out to neighboring Baptist churches by the church clerk at the request of the church, asking them to appoint messengers to meet messengers from this church on a specified day. To this council, when organized, the case shall be referred and their advice shall be laid before the church by the deacons at the following business meeting for further action.

ARTICLE XI. ASSOCIATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

This church is an autonomous Baptist church under the headship of Christ and the leadership of God-given pastors. Affiliation shall be only with such organizations and associations that manifest both by statement and practice their agreement with the faith and practice set forth in this constitution. Upon an announcement made at least two (2) successive Sundays prior to the date of voting and upon a majority vote of members present and voting, the church may choose to affiliate of disaffiliate with any local, state, or national association of churches; or it may for reasons known to itself, choose to remain unaffiliated with any group of churches. In the event that it does affiliate with any association of churches, such affiliation shall be understood to affect in no way the rights, powers, and privileges of the church, either as relates to its property or the operation of its affairs. Withdrawal from any and all affiliations shall in no wise jeopardize its property.

ARTICLE XII. FINANCIAL POLICY

This church shall be supported by the voluntary giving of tithes and offerings by God's people. We believe that every Christian should seek to give systematically, regularly, proportionately, sacrificially, and cheerfully of his substance to the Lord's work through the local church (2 Cor. 9:6,7; 1 Cor. 16:1 & 2). No means such as raffles, suppers, rummage sales, or other similar methods shall be used by the church to raise money for its support.

ARTICLE XIII. MISSIONS

This church supports missionary causes and educational institutions consistent with its own belief and practices. All missionaries supported by this church shall be in full agreement with the doctrines and practices of this church.

ARTICLE XIV. DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH

In the event of dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members, but shall irrevocably be dedicated by a majority vote of the remaining members to such other nonprofit religious organizations or corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of this constitutional statement of faith, as described in ARTICLES II and III, and in conformity with the requirements of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (Section 501(c)3) or any subsequent amendments thereto. This church shall be considered dissolved when its membership has been reduced to five (5) resident members.

ARTICLE XV. AMENDMENTS

Suggested amendments or additions to this constitution shall be presented to the pastor and deacons for their prayerful consideration. Upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons any amendment may be presented to the congregation at a regular quarterly business meeting. Proposed amendments or additions shall be posted in the church for thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which they are discussed. The proposed amendment shall then be voted on at the next quarterly business meeting. Amendments or additions may be adopted by a (¾) majority vote of the voting membership in good standing who are present and voting.

BY-LAWS
OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Morris, Minnesota
As Revised July 22, 2018

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION I. ADMISSION OF MEMBERS

A. Persons desiring membership in this church shall make their desire known. The Pastor and deacons interview the applicant with regard to his salvation and spiritual life. Finding the applicant eligible, announcement shall be made of his recommendation for membership at least one (1) week prior to the time the vote is taken. Each applicant shall give his testimony of salvation to the congregation prior to the time of voting.

B. Should a member object to the applicant, he must immediately appear before Pastor and deacons and state Scriptural reasons supporting his objection, upon which the Pastor and deacons shall rule whether valid of invalid and so report to the business meeting if valid. The objection having been ruled valid, the application shall be held in abeyance pending further investigation and attempted correction by the Pastor and deacons.

C. Individuals may become members of this church on one (1) of four (4) ways: (1) by baptism; (2) by statement of Christian experience or testimony (having been previously baptized); (3) by a letter of church of like faith and practice, and; (4) by restoration.

D. A majority vote by church members present and voting is required for acceptance of the applicant into membership of the church. Membership will become effective upon favorable vote of the church)if previously baptized or a member of a church granting a letter), or upon baptism. Baptism will be administered only to those desiring to become members of this local church. Members may be voted in at any regular meeting of the church.

E. Newly accepted members shall be welcomed into the fellowship of the church at any worship service (known as 'giving the right hand of fellowship').

SECTION II. RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERS

Every member shall consider the responsibilities and obligations placed upon him by the Word of God and the church and shall strive to abide by the church covenant.

SECTION III. NEGLIGENT MEMBERS

A. Any member who for three months is willfully negligent toward his church duties or demonstrates lack of interest through absence from services or failure to contribute to the support of the church shall be subject to forfeiture of membership. The Pastor, deacons, and deaconesses shall together be responsible for personal visitation of all such negligent members, seeking first by the grace of God to achieve a return to full fellowship in the church. Failing in this, they shall inform the member regarding the finality of his continued negligence and present the matter at any

regular business meeting of the church. The church shall then act upon the recommendation as it sees fit. The vote may be taken at any business meeting of the church. Majority vote rules.

B. Any member being negligent in the above manner shall forfeit his voting privileges until such time as restoration is achieved.

SECTION IV. ERRING MEMBERS

If a member err in conduct or doctrine, the member who has that knowledge, shall in brotherly love, attempt to correct him. If he does not heed this advice, the Pastor and Deacons shall be notified who shall also admonish him. If this fails, the Pastor and deacons shall report the case to a business meeting of the church. The accused shall be notified of the time and place of the church business meeting at which time these charges shall be preferred and shall be invited to answer these charges. A general announcement of the purpose and time of the meeting shall be made at least (1) week prior to it. The vote shall be by secret ballot and majority vote rules.

SECTION V. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

A. Members shall be granted a letter of transfer to a church of like faith and practice upon request from the church and vote of this church.

B. Upon notice that a member has joined a church of not like faith and practice, the church shall vote to grant a letter of dismissal to the member.

C. Any member who moves to another community and fails to report his removal shall be contacted by correspondence regarding his membership. His membership shall be terminated at the discretion of the church.

D. Any member who so desires shall upon application to the Pastor and deacons be granted a letter of dismissal upon vote of the church. If disciplinary proceedings have been initiated for negligence or error, this shall be noted in the Clerk's records.

E. Members may be removed for continued negligence in support of the church (as defined in Article I, Sec. III of the By-Laws), or for erring in doctrine or Christian conduct (Article I, Sec IV, of the By-Laws).

ARTICLE II. DEACONS

SECTION I. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

A. Their character shall reflect the requirements as stated in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13. No officer of this church may be a member of any secret order or lodge nor may he use tobacco or alcoholic beverages in any form, nor may he use drugs illegitimately. No divorced person may hold the office of a deacon

B. They shall be members of this church and shall subscribe whole-heartedly to its doctrinal statement and constitution.

SECTION II. THE ORGANIZATION OF DEACONS

There shall be a minimum of four (4) male members of the church serving as deacons, if there are this many who possess the qualifications and are willing to serve. Additional deacons shall be added at the rate of one (1) deacon for each 50 members after the resident membership has reached 100.

SECTION III. THE DUTIES OF DEACONS

A. The Pastor and the deacons shall supervise the spiritual and material works of the church. The deacons serve as spiritual advisors to the Pastor.

B. The Deacons shall elect a chairman from among themselves, and they shall be responsible for the leadership of church services in the Pastor's absence. They shall also elect an assistant chairman who shall act as secretary and preside in the absence of the chairman.

C. The Pastor and Deacons shall interview and examine applicants for church membership.

D. The Pastor and chairman of the deacons shall call special business meetings when necessary, which shall be announced for two successive Sundays.

E. The Deacons shall assist the Pastor in administering the ordinances, visitation, caring for the needy and sick and such other duties as the church may delegate to them.

F. The Pastor and Deacons shall be in charge of all disciplinary measures and shall carry out such in accordance with provisions of this constitution.

G. Subject to the will of the church, the deacons shall set the hours for all public services.

H. The deacons shall have chart of the Deacon's Fund.

I. The deacons, with the deaconesses and two (2) persons elected from the body, shall constitute the pulpit committee when the need arises.

J. The deacons shall rule on the use of church facilities as designated under Article IX of the constitution.

K. The deacons shall make appointments to and oversee the work of the committees delegated to them.

L. The deacons shall be members of the Christian Education Committee.

M. The Deacons shall direct the financial needs of the church, exercise proper supervision over church property, arrange for payment of church salaries, submit an inventory of all church properties to the annual meeting of the church. The trustees shall not make disposition of, or purchase any property for the church except as has been budgeted by the church. Repairs and other disbursements not exceeding two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00) may be made by the deacons each year except as already indicated in the budget.

N. The Deacons shall annually appoint Financial Review committee to review the Treasurer's books after the close of the fiscal year. A report shall be made to the church at the next Quarterly business meeting.

O. The deacons shall supervise the work of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary and shall decide how the books shall be kept. They shall decide which records shall be kept and how they will be stored.

P. The deacons shall appoint two (2) people, in addition to the Treasurer, who shall be authorized to sign all checks.

Q. The deacons shall be on the budget committee and shall initiate and supervise the work on the annual budget.

SECTION IV. TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office shall be three (3) years. He may succeed himself in office.

ARTICLE III. TRUSTEES

The deacons shall serve as trustees of this corporation

ARTICLE IV. DEACONESSES

SECTION I. THE QUALIFICATION OF DEACONESSES

A. Their character shall reflect the requirements as stated in 1 Tim 2:9-12; 3:10; and Titus 2:3-5. No deaconess of this church may be a member of any secret order or lodge, nor may she use tobacco or alcoholic beverages in any form, nor may she use drugs illegitimately.

B. They shall be members of this church and shall subscribe whole-heartedly to its doctrinal statement and constitution.

SECTION II. THE ORGANIZATION OF DEACONESSES

A. There shall be a minimum of three (3) female members of the church serving as deaconesses, if that are this many who possess the qualifications and are willing to serve. Additional deaconesses may be chosen on the basis of one (1) for each fifty (50 members after the resident membership reaches one hundred (100).

B. The deaconesses shall choose a chairman and an assistant chairman, who shall preside in the absence of the chairman and act as secretary, from among their number.

SECTION III. THE DUTIES OF DEACONESSES

A. The deaconesses shall assist the Pastor and deacons in visitation, caring for the needy and sick, and other duties assigned them by the church. They shall prepare the elements for the Lord's Supper and assist the lady baptismal candidates.

B. They, with the deacons and two (2) persons elected from the body, shall constitute the Pulpit Committee when the need arises.

SECTION IV. THE TERMS OF OFFICE

The term of office shall be three (3) years. She may succeed herself in office.

ARTICLE V. CHURCH WORKERS

SECTION I. QUALIFICATIONS OF CHURCH WORKERS

A. They shall give evidence of personal salvation and dedication to the Lord and His work and shall be members of this church (or a church of like faith and practice when serving in a temporary capacity such as Vacation Bible School, etc.) and shall subscribe wholeheartedly to its doctrinal position and constitution.

B. They shall be faithful in attendance at a majority of the church services. Failure to do so, unless Providentially hindered, shall constitute reason for review by the deacons. If warranted, the deacons shall recommend to the church that the position be vacated in the case of an elected office.

C. No elected or appointed worker shall be a member of any secret order or lodge, nor use tobacco or alcoholic beverages in any form, nor use drugs illegitimately. All workers shall be adorned in hair style and dress as befits good Christian testimony as described in 1 Corinthians 11:14 and 1 Timothy 2:9-10.

D. All elected personnel, including deacons and deaconesses, must have been a member in good standing for at least six (6) months prior to the time of taking office.

SECTION II. QUALIFICATIONS OF CHURCH WORKERS

The New Testament teaches that there are two classification of church officers: Pastors (elder, bishops) and deacons. In addition to these the church may elect or appoint others to serve in various ways. The following workers shall be provided, and others may be provided as the church so desires:

A. Elected by the church:
   1. Deaconess
   2. Church Treasurer
   3. Financial Secretary
   4. Church Clerk
   5. Sunday School Superintendent
   6. Assistant Sunday School Superintendent
   7. Music Committee
   8. Two (2) members of the Pulpit Committee as needed.

B. Appointed by the Pastor and deacons:
   1. Ushers
   2. Social Committee
   3. Choir Director, Organist, Pianists, Song Leaders, and their substitutes.
   4. Various committees and positions as deemed necessary.
   5. All appointed offices shall be effective until the end of the church ministry year (Annual Meeting).
   6. Duties of appointed offices or committees shall be defined by the Pastor and deacons or by the appointing body
   7. Performance of all appointed positions may be reviewed at any time.

C. Other appointments:

1. Financial Review Committee - by deacons.
2. Sunday School Staff, Vacation Bible School Staff, Children's Church, Youth Workers, etc. - Christian Education Committee.

SECTION III. DUTIES OF CHURCH WORKERS

A. Church Treasurer
   1. Shall maintain an accurate and auditable record of the finances of the church.
   2. Shall make a quarterly report of receipts and disbursements to the church.
   3. Shall withdraw, transfer, and disburse all funds as directed by the church and deacons.
   4. Shall, with the Financial Secretary or another officer, count all offerings before they are removed from church premises.

B. Financial Secretary
   1. The Financial Secretary shall not be in the immediate family of the Church Treasurer.
   2. Shall be responsible to the deacons for the counting and crediting in their proper forms in books provided for this purpose all monies and offerings received by the church.
   3. Shall, with the Treasurer or another officer, count all the offerings before they are removed from the church premises.
   4. Shall deposit all funds and furnish a report to the Treasure for his records.
   5. Shall make envelopes available to those who desire them and shall keep an accurate record of such contributions that come in by envelope for tax purposes. Shall furnish a statement to envelope contributors by the end of January.
   6. All contributions are to be kept in the strictest confidence.
   7. The deacons shall have access to the records only if recommended by the Pastor and deacons or by church action.

C. Church Clerk
   1. The clerk shall keep full minutes of all transactions of the church at its business meetings and shall enter these minutes in the official book within two weeks.
   2. Shall keep an accurate record of church membership.
   3. Shall keep record of the names of all who are baptized with the date of baptism.
   4. Shall keep a record of the admission, dismissal, and death of members, showing the date of the event and briefly note the same on the register.
   5. Shall correspond with non-resident members concerning their membership status.
   6. Shall present annually a terse written report of the state of the church, giving account of the members received, dismissed, and deceased.
   7. Shall write letters of transfer or dismissal upon recommendation of the church.
   8. Shall conduct the correspondence of the church when so instructed.

D. Sunday School Superintendent
   1. He shall have the general supervision of the Sunday School.
   2. He shall call and preside at the meetings of the Sunday School Staff.
   3. He shall, with the Christian Education Committee, select Sunday School staff and materials.
   4. He shall determine the physical needs of the Sunday School and present the needs to the Christian Education Committee.
   5. H shall have authority to arrange classroom changes as necessary.
   6. He shall be a member of the Christian Education Committee.

E. Assistant Sunday School Superintendent
   1. He shall be responsible for the duties of the Superintendent when he is absent.
   2. He shall be a member of the Christian Education Committee.
   3. He shall have other duties designated by the Superintendent or the Christian Education Committee.

F. Sunday School Secretary-Treasurer
   1. Shall keep the Sunday School attendance and offering records and shall order all necessary Sunday School supplies.
   2. Shall have other duties designated by the Superintendent or the Christian Education Committee.

H. Head Usher
   The Head Usher and his assistants shall promote order, comfort, reverence, and unity in the public services in the church. They shall constrain latecomers from disturbing the services, seat worshippers, collect the offering, keep accurate records of attendance at all services, and help maintain the dignity of the house of worship. The Head Usher shall appoint a substitute in his absence and shall be responsible for selecting and training ushers to work in the services.

I. Pulpit Committee
   1. The deacons, deaconesses, and two (2) adult members elected from the body and not in the immediate family of other committee members.
   2. Upon notice of the Pastor's resignation, the chairman of the deacons (of the Pastor when calling an assistant pastor) shall call a meeting of the church to elect two (2) members from the church to serve on the committee.
   3. The Pulpit Committee shall select candidates for the office of pastor or assistant pastor according to Article VI of the Constitution.
   4. The Pulpit Committee shall exist only when and while it is needed.
   5. They shall select a chairman and secretary from among themselves.

J. Nominating Committee
   1. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Pastor and the deacons and deaconesses who are not going out of office.
   2. In the event there are no deacons or deaconesses who qualify, or less than three (3), the church shall choose at a business meeting enough to give a minimum of three (3) plus the Pastor.
   3. This committee shall meet at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual Meeting to select two (2) nominees, if possible, for each office.
   4. The committee shall choose the nominees from pre-nomination ballots received from the church members, those persons qualified for each office who will serve if elected.
   5. The proposed ballot shall be posted conspicuously on the church premises at least two (2) Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting.
   6. Objections to any candidate should be made to the Pastor or the chairman of the committee in private. Any such objections will receive a fair hearing by the committee.
   7. No nominations may be made from the floor in the business meeting. The church, however, may reject all or part of the report and instruct the committee to present a new report or partial report to a later meeting. Names may be suggested to the committee for consideration.
   8. Nominations for Pulpit Committee may be made from the floor in the meeting called to elect those persons.

9. The Nominating Committee shall meet when a vacancy occurs to present two (2) nominees, if possible, to the church.
10. The shall elect a chairman and a secretary from among their number.

K. Budget Committee
1. The Budget Committee shall be composed of the Pastor, the deacons, and the Treasurer.
2. This committee shall recommend the budget for approval at the Annual Business Meeting and shall furnish a copy for each member two (2) Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting.
3. The chairman of the deacons shall be the chairman of the committee.
4. The shall elect a secretary from among themselves.

L. Music Committee
1. The Music Committee shall provide a spiritual special music program for the church.
2. They shall establish standards of dress, hairstyle, conduct, and quality for those taking part in the ministry of special music. These standards shall be consistent with the Constitution and the Word of God.
3. Three (3) shall serve on this committee.

M. Christian Education Committee
1. This committee shall consist of the Pastor, deacons, Sunday School Superintendent, and Assistant Sunday School Superintendent.
2. This committee shall appoint Sunday School staff, Vacation Bible School staff, Christmas Program director, and any other personnel required to carry out Christian education except Pastor.
3. They shall examine and approve all materials used in the various programs.
4. This committee shall promote the work of missions throughout the church
5. They shall elect a chairman and secretary from among themselves.

N. Social Committee
1. This committee shall be responsible for planning the serving at special events and to arrange for meals for visiting speakers.
2. This committee shall be appointed by the Pastor and deacons.

O. Financial Review Committee

The Financial Review Committee shall audit the Treasurer's books after the close of the fiscal year and submit a report to the deacons who shall report their findings at the next Quarterly Business Meeting.

ARTICLE VI. ELECTIONS

SECTION I. ELECTED OFFICERS AND THEIR TENURE

A. All Offices of elective status, except for Pulpit Committee, shall be filled at the Annual Meeting of the church.

B. Tenure of the office shall be one (1) year except for deacons and deaconesses who shall be elected for a period of three years.

C. An individual may be elected to more than one office provided he is qualified and can fulfill all the responsibilities of each office held.

D. Officers begin their term of office at the time of election.

SECTION II. VACANCIES

Upon vacancy of an office, the Nominating Committee shall convene and present two (2) nominees, if possible, to the church

SECTION III. REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTION

Candidates must receive a majority of the votes cast to be elected.

SECTION IV. VOTE BY BALLOT

Elections shall be by written ballot. The chairman of the meeting shall appoint tellers who shall collect and count the ballots and report the results to the church.

SECTION V. RIGHT TO VOTE

Members in good standing (Article I, Section III of the By-Laws) who are sixteen (16) years of age and over shall have the right to vote.

SECTION VI. QUORUM

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the voting age resident members in good standing shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VII. BUSINESS MEETINGS

SECTION I. ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

A. The Annual Business Meeting shall be held in April.

B. The fiscal year shall be April 1 through March 31

SECTION II. OTHER BUSINESS MEETINGS

A. Quarterly business meetings shall be held soon after the first Sunday of each quarter.

B. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor, the chairman of the deacons in the absence of the Pastor, or by a fifteen percent (15%) of the voting age resident membership who are in good standing (Article I, Section III of the By-Laws), giving proper notice for two (2) consecutive Sundays at the regular services of the church. Such notice shall state briefly the purpose of the meeting and shall be listed in the bulletin or posted conspicuously on the church premises.

C. Minor matters of business may be taken care of at any regular meeting of the church if a quorum is present.

D. A quorum consisting of twenty-five percent (25%) of the voting age resident members in good standing (Article I, Section III of the By-Laws), is required to conduct any business.

SECTION III. ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board, consisting of the Pastor, deacons, deaconesses, Clerk, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Sunday School Superintendent and Assistant, and any assistant pastors, shall meet before each regular business meeting to discuss and recommend what action should be taken on proposals and what shall be brought before the church at the meeting. It is recommended that all items of business come before the Advisory Board before being presented to the church. A negative decision of the Advisory Board does not mean that a member cannot present the matter to the church at the business meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. SUBSIDIARY CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

It is recognized that this church may have within it various organizations such as Sunday School, men's and women's fellowship, youth groups, choirs, and other organizations.

SECTION I. RELATION OF THESE GROUPS TO THE CHURCH

A. All such groups shall be considered arms of the church and shall exist for the purpose of extending the ministry and outreach of the church for evangelism.

B. All such groups shall be governed by the Constitution of the church, and any individual constitutions and procedures shall in no wise conflict with that of the church.

C. All such groups shall be under the supervision of the Pastor and shall be responsible to the church as a whole. The church may call for a report from any subsidiary organization at any time, and may dissolve such organization by a majority vote of qualified voting members present after posting a two (2) week notice.

D. All officers of such church organizations shall be members in good and regular standing in this church. Any person ceasing to be a member in good standing shall automatically forfeit any office he holds in any church organization and shall return within one (1) week after notification any moneys, books, minutes, or other property of the organization.

SECTION II. FINANCES OF SUBSIDIARY ORGANIZATIONS

A. All monies received in such organizations shall be recorded in an accurate and auditable manner. A financial report shall be given by each organization at the Annual Business Meeting of the church.

A. If an organization supports a missionary, mission agency, educational institution, or any other project by way of monetary gifts or material goods, that person, organization, or project must be in agreement with or consistent with the purpose of the Constitution of this church.

ARTICLE IX. MEMORIALS

Memorials may be received by the church. The Pastor and Deacons shall supervise the details regarding memorials, and shall appoint a committee to consult with the donor or donors regarding details. All memorials involving real or personal property must be approved by the Pastor and the deacons before being received.

ARTICLE X. MISSIONS

SECTION I.
This church supports missionary causes and educational institutions consistent with its own belief and practices. A representative from each educational institution and all missionaries supported by this church shall indicate full agreement with the doctrinal position of this church. Designated gifts will be honored if the recipient is in harmony with the doctrines of this church.

SECTION II.
Missionary support (for foreign missionaries) shall be reviewed at the completion of each term, and this shall be clearly stated to missionaries whom the church supports. At the end of each foreign missionary's term on the field, shall meet with the Pastor and deacons to be questioned concerning his doctrinal position and work. When a personal interview proves impossible, detailed questions shall be submitted by mail to the missionary. No missionary shall receive further support from the church who does not satisfactorily answer such questions as may be asked, who refuses to answer, or who evidences a departure from the faith and practice of the church.

SECTION III.
This mission support of home missionaries normal shall be reviewed every four (4) years, but the church may review their work at any time it deems necessary. It is to be expected that home missionaries supported by this church shall visit this church at least once in a four (4) year period and will be interviewed by the Pastor and deacons in the manner of foreign missionaries. Should this prove to be impossible, questioning shall be done by mail.

SECTION IV.
The church shall support missionaries who are members of a fundamental, Baptist church not in fellowship with any convention or association that permit apostasy, and are engaged in some type of missionary endeavor which is directly or indirectly contributing to the establishment of like faith and practice churches.

SECTION V.
Institutions, associations, and other organizations supported by the church under its missionary budget shall be reviewed by the Pastor and deacons at least every four (4) years and oftener if the situation warrants.

SECTION VI.
When the Pastor and deacons discover that foreign or home missionaries or any institutions or organizations supported by this church have departed from like faith and practice, these facts shall be presented to the church at a business meeting, and the church will vote concerning the matter.

ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS

Suggested amendments or additions to these By-Laws shall be presented to the Pastor and the Deacons for their prayerful consideration. Upon recommendation of the Pastor and the deacons any amendment or addition may be presented to the church at a quarterly or special business meeting. Proposed amendments or additions shall be posted in the church for thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which they are discussed. The proposed amendment shall then be voted on at the next quarterly or special business meeting. Amendments and additions may be adopted by a majority vote of the voting members present. Amendments or additions to Article III may be adopted by a majority vote of the members in good standing who are present and voting.