

# Constitution of First Baptist Church of Milford

Revised, January 25, 2015

## Section 1 – Purpose

First Baptist Church of Milford exists to share the Gospel of Christ with our community, and to challenge our church family to actively live their faith.

## Section 2 – Doctrinal Statement

### 2.1 The Bible

We believe the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired; that it has truth without any mixture of error for its matter; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

- (a) The Holy Bible: That collection of sixty-six Books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written, does not convey the Word of God, but is the very WORD OF GOD.
- (b) Inspiration: The Books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally inspired and free from error, as no writings have been or ever will be inspired. (Psalms 117:2 and 119:60; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 24:35; Romans 3:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18-19.)

### 2.2 The True God

We believe there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, inexpressively glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love. We believe that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. (Psalm 147:5; Mark 12:29; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5.) He is One God in Three persons: (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 1 John 5:7).

### 2.3 The Devil or Satan

We believe that Satan was once holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the malignant prince of power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy; the lord of the anti-christ, and the author of all the powers of darkness – destined however to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and to

the judgment of the eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels. (Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Matthew 4:1-3; 25:41; Revelation 20:10.)

## 2.4 Creation

We believe in the Genesis account of the creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made direct, and God's established law was that they should bring forth after their own kind. (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7, 21-23.)

(a) Creation by God – Genesis 1:1

(b) Creation by the Son – John 1:3

(c) Creation by the Holy Spirit – Job 33:4

## 2.5 The Fall and Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which, all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice; and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse. (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10,19,23; 5:12; Galatians 3:22.)

## 2.6 The Virgin Birth

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God, and God the Son. (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:1-2, 16-25; Luke 1:28-35; Galatians 4:4.)

## 2.7 The Blood Atonement for Sin

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior. (John 3:16; Romans 3:24-26; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:8; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 9:12-15; 1 John 2:2.)

## 2.8 The New Birth or New Creation

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by the will of man, nor by character, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life. (John 1:12-13; 3:3,6-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17.)

We then have two natures: Romans 6:6-13; 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-17; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-10; 1 Peter 1:4-16; 1 John 3:5-9.

## 2.9 The Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation. (Matthew 11:28; John 3:16; 6:37.)

## 2.10 Justification

We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such that believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed unto us. (Acts 13:3-39; Romans 5:1; Titus 3:2-7.)

## 2.11 Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior. (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; Romans 10:9-11.)

## 2.12 The Church

We believe that a local Church of Christ is a congregation of immersed, baptized believers, associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers or ordination are Pastors, Deacons, and Elders, whose qualification, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). We believe the true mission of the church is found in the Great Commission: FIRST, to make individual disciples; SECOND, to build up the church; THIRD, to teach and instruct, as He commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order. We believe in the Security of the Believer (John 10:27-30; 3:16; Phillippians 1:6; Hebrews 7:25; Jude 24.)

We believe that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will the local church is final. (Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 5:21-23.)

(a) Giving - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

(b) Missions – Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8

(c) Christ the Head – Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-24; Colossians 1:18

(d) Separation – James 4:4; Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 Timothy 6:1-5; 2 John 1

(e) Church attendance – Hebrews 10:25

## Section 3 – Affiliation

This church will be an independent Baptist church. She will cooperate and affiliate with organizations providing such relationships do not conflict with the purpose and basic teachings spelled out in this constitution.

## Section 4 – Membership

Any individual who professes a relationship with God through Jesus Christ by repentance and faith, has subsequently been baptized by immersion, demonstrates evidence of that relationship, and is willing to submit to the authority of the church in matters of spiritual life and discipline may become a member of First Baptist Church of Milford.

All applicants must be in agreement with the Doctrinal Statement of this church (Section 2). They will provide a written and/or verbal testimony of conversion to be heard or read by current Elders of the church. The Elders may then make a recommendation to the congregation.

Dual or associate church memberships are not allowed.

One's membership can be terminated upon recommendation of the Elders to the congregation based on a member's request, geographic relocation, excessive absence (allowing for physical limitations), or continued misconduct in accordance with guidelines of Matthew 18:15-20.

## Section 5 – Church Government

### 5.1 Church Body

Organizational authority in the church will reside in the members of the congregation. The members will elect Deacons and Elders for a two-year term, and other elected positions for a one-year term. Once this election takes place, the authority of the congregation will be considered to reside with the Church Board, except for admission or dismissal of members, call or dismissal of the Senior Pastor, the creation of paid ministry positions, the call of pastoral staff, the call and support of missionaries, interim election of Board members, the annual budget, non-budget expenditures which exceed 5% of annual general fund revenues; the purchase, sale or encumbering of real property, or the amending of this Constitution, and any other items the Church Board may deem necessary to bring to the voting members.

### 5.2 Church Board

On a practical level, the church will be governed by a group of godly persons called the Church Board. Authority for the day-to-day ministry matters will reside in their hands. The Church Board will meet as often as is necessary to adequately govern the church. The Church Board shall be a self-disciplining board (in accordance with Matt. 18:15-20 and 1 Tim 5:19-20) and self-organizing (parceling out various administrative duties among themselves). The Church Board will maintain a Policy Manual to guide the operations of the church. The Policy Manual will not violate the Constitution at any point.

The Church Board will be comprised of the Senior Pastor, Pastoral Staff members, Deacons and Elders, and Directors of areas of ministry, as appropriate, elected by the voting members to a one-year term. The number of Deacons and Elders shall match or exceed the number of Directors. A majority of the Board members shall constitute a quorum for conducting business. The Senior Pastor will serve as Chairman to preside over the Board meetings and

Congregational Business meetings. In the event of the absence of the Board chairman, the Deacon chairman will preside.

## Section 6 – Senior Pastor

### 6.1 Qualifications of the Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor will be a godly man who manifests the qualifications of New Testament local church leadership or eldership (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9).

### 6.2 Selection of the Senior Pastor

In the event of a vacancy in the position of the Senior Pastor, the Church Board will appoint a Search Committee consisting of at least three Board members and at least three members at large. The Search Committee will then make recommendations to the Deacons and Elders, who will submit their selection to the congregation as a candidate.

The call of the senior Pastor may take place at any regular or special congregational business meeting. A Senior Pastor must receive three-fourths of the votes cast at such a meeting in order for a call to be extended.

### 6.3 Term and Termination of the senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor will be called for an indefinite period of time. If the Senior Pastor desires to resign, one month's notice will be given in writing. In the case of an accusation against the Senior Pastor, the matter will be taken to the Church Board for investigation and resolution. If either the Church Board or congregation desires his termination, the termination of the Senior Pastor will be decided by a simple majority of the voting members present at a regular or special congregational business meeting. Upon termination, pastoral duties will be suspended immediately, and he will receive a severance of one month's salary.

## Section 7 – Deacons and Elders

Deacons will share accountability with the Senior Pastor for the pastoral care of the congregation, and will manage the Deacons' Fund. Elders will share accountability with the Senior Pastor for the spiritual oversight of the church, and will make oversee the teaching of the church, and make recommendations concerning membership. Both Deacons and Elders will serve as the nominating committee for all elected positions.

### 7.1 Qualifications of Deacons and Elders

Deacons and Elders will be godly men who manifest the qualifications of New Testament local church leadership (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Titus 1:5-9).

## 7.2 Selection of Deacons and Elders

Deacons and Elders will seek biblically qualified men to serve as Deacon and Elders. If after prayerful screening and evaluation the Deacons and Elders believe that the candidates meet all the qualifications they will then recommend them to the congregation for election. The requirements of the office must not be lowered to insure a particular number of candidates. The candidate must receive three-fourths of the votes cast to be confirmed at the Annual Meeting.

## 7.3 Termination of Deacons and Elders

In the case of an accusation against a Deacon or Elder, the matter will be taken to the Church Board for investigation and resolution. A Deacon or Elder must resign when a majority of the Church Board agrees that it would be in the best interest of the church.

## Section 8 – Pastoral Staff and non-Pastoral Staff

Pastoral Staff will consist of those who assist in pastoral and administrative duties of the church and work under the supervision and direction of the Senior Pastor.

Pastoral Staff members will be non-voting members of the Church Board. If a Pastoral Staff member desires to resign, one month's notice will be given in writing. The Church Board will be responsible for terminating members of the Pastoral Staff. Upon termination, pastoral duties will be suspended immediately, and he will receive a severance of one month's salary.

Other Support Staff are those who are not regarded as Pastoral Staff, but are essential for the operation of the church. The Support Staff will work under the supervision and direction of the appropriate Church Board members. The Church Board will be responsible for hiring and terminating members of the Support Staff.

## Section 9 – Corporate Officers

The four officers of the church, who will act officially as the Officers for the Church Corporation, will be the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary and the Treasurer. Each of the individuals must be voting members.

### 9.1 President

The Chairman of the Church Board will serve as the President of the Corporation.

## 9.2 Vice-President

The Chairman of the Deacons, elected chairman each year by the Deacons, will serve as the Vice-President of the Corporation.

## 9.3 Secretary

The Church Clerk, elected to that position by the voting members each year, will serve as the Secretary of the Corporation. The Secretary will be responsible to keep accurate records of membership and minutes of all the congregational business meetings of the church.

## 9.4 Treasurer

The voting members will elect the Treasurer to that position each year. The Treasurer will serve on the Church Board. The Treasurer shall be responsible for overseeing all disbursements according to the provisions of the Annual Budget and to submit financial statements to the Church Board. The Treasurer will inform the congregation of the financial position of the church at each Congregational Business Meeting.

9.5 The voting members will elect the Financial Secretary to that position each year. The Financial Secretary will be responsible for overseeing the counting, processing, and deposit of all funds received. The Financial Secretary will also keep confidential giving records and will make records of personal giving available to each member soon after the close of each calendar year.

## Section 10 – Business Meetings

### 10.1 Annual Business Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting will be held in the Month of January. At this meeting the voting members will consider approval of the annual budget and elect officers for the coming year. The fiscal year will be the calendar year, and elected positions will take effect at the beginning of the new year.

### 10.2 Regular Congregational Business Meetings

At least 2 times a year, other than the Annual Business Meeting, the Church Board will call for a congregational business meeting where matters of concern are discussed.

### 10.3 Special Congregational Business Meetings

Special Congregational Business Meetings may be called by action of the Church Board. The Church Board must convene a Special Congregational Business Meeting within one after receiving a request for that purpose signed by 20% of the voting membership.

#### 10.4 Notice of Congregational Business Meetings

Notice for all congregational business meetings will be published and announced for two consecutive weekends at the regularly scheduled worship services.

#### 10.5 Congregational Business Meeting Protocol

All matters in regular and special congregational business meetings will be decided by two-thirds of the votes cast, unless otherwise specified herein. Call or dismissal of the Senior Pastor, election of Church Board members, and amending the Constitution shall be decided by secret ballot. When requested, any other issue will also be decided by secret ballot.

#### 10.6 Quorums for Congregational Business Meetings

A quorum at any congregational business meeting requiring a vote will consist of at least 20% of the voting members.

#### 10.7 Voting Rights at Congregational Business Meetings

Voting members must be at least 18 years of age.

### Section 11 – Property Rights

The voting members will have the power to buy, own, and sell real property in the name of the First Baptist Church of Milford. Should conditions arise where, for any reason, the church cannot continue to exist, the church property will be dispersed to a Christian ministry, as selected by a simple majority of the voting members.

### Section 12 – Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at any regular or special congregational business meeting by two-thirds of the votes cast, after said proposed amendments have been presented in written form to the Church Board for consideration and approval. Proposed amendments must be distributed in writing to the voting members two weeks prior to the congregational business meeting.

All other previous Constitutions and bylaws are null and void.