

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
of Elkhart, Indiana, Inc.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - Name

The corporate name of this organization shall be The First Baptist Church of Elkhart, Indiana, Inc.

ARTICLE II - Purpose

The purpose of this church will be to glorify God by equipping the believers to love God, love people and to penetrate our world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In order to accomplish this goal, this church will offer weekly, relevant worship experiences where the Name of Jesus is exalted, the Gospel will be emphasized and the whole counsel of God will be taught. This church will administer the church ordinances and will provide opportunities for fellowship and service for those of like precious faith. This church will do its utmost to exert a moral and Christian influence in its community and the whole world, with the goal of reaching everyone with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Further, this church will have authority to transact any or all lawful business for which not-for-profit corporations may be incorporated under the Indiana Not-For-Profit Corporation Act as amended; as long as such business is being conducted in compliance with the Word of God and this church's constitution and by-laws.

ARTICLE III - Confession of Faith

Section 1 - The Scriptures

We believe that God has revealed Himself truthfully to humans through the inspired texts of the Scriptures. These canonical texts, the Old and New Testaments, are inerrant, infallible, and reliable in detail and in theological content in as much as they reflect the original manuscripts. The Bible, as the sufficient and completed Word of God, has authority over the church and the Christian's life and thought. As divinely inspired texts, the meaning of the biblical authors is to be discerned through careful, textual interpretation guided by the Spirit. *Psalm 19:7-10; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Jude 3.*

Section 2 - The True God

We believe in one God-eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, always present, and perfectly holy, existing as three, co-equal, Persons-Father, Son, and Spirit, one in nature, attributes, power, and glory. God will be glorified by all creation and is worthy of our total worship and obedience. *Genesis 1:1,26; Psalm 104, 148; Proverbs 30:4; Matthew 28:19; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4, 14, 18; Acts 5:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Timothy 2:3-4.*

Section 3 - Jesus

We believe that Jesus is the eternal Son of God. Through the Spirit, He was also born of the virgin, Mary. Therefore, Jesus is both fully God and fully human. As the Word made flesh, the Son is the perfect mediator between God and humanity. *Proverbs 8:22-31; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:14-18, 5:16-29; Philippians 2:6-11; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 1:1-14.*

Section 4 - The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, equal in nature with God the Father and God the Son. The Spirit had an active role in creation and in the inspiration of the Scriptures. He convicts sinners, guides humans into truth and regenerates believers to new life, baptizes them in Christ and serves as their assurance to eternal life. Believers mature in their faith through the work of the Spirit, who produces His fruit in them. The gifts of the Spirit are for ministry to the body of Christ and the "sign gifts" are not intended to be a pattern for today. *Psalm 139:7-12; John 14:16, 17; 16:13,14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:8-10, 28-30; 14:1-40; Galatians 5:22-23; Hebrews 2:3-4.*

Section 5 - Creation

We believe that the Scriptures provide a literal and historical account of God's creation of all things. The climax of the six days of creation was the special, immediate and personal creation of human life. The first humans, Adam and Eve, were directly created, not evolved from previous life forms. God created humans, male and female, in His image. Human life, sexual identity and roles are aspects of God's creative design. From creation, marriage is a covenant between a male and a female that should be marked by sexual purity, by sacrificial male leadership, and by recognizing the divine blessing of children, including preborn children. Adam and Eve, though created in perfection and endowed with free will, sinned by their free choice warranting physical death, spiritual death, and eternal separation from God. Consequently, all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and are sinners in thought, word, and deed. *Genesis 1:1-27; 2:7-25; 3:1-24; Psalm 127:3-5; 139:7-12; Matthew 19:4; Romans 1:18-32, 3:10-19; 5:12-19; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19.*

Section 6 - Salvation

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as the representative and substitutionary sacrifice and rose again for our justification. Only those who repent, believe in Him, and confess Him as Lord are justified on the grounds of His shed blood and are saved by grace through faith wholly apart from human merit and works. Genuine believers, the elect, are the adopted children of God and are eternally secure through the work of God. *John 1:12, 13; 3:3-16; 5:24; 10:28, 29; Acts 13:39; 16:31; Romans 3:21-28; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:8-10; Philippians 1:6; Titus 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:4-11.*

Section 7 - The Church

We believe that the local church is a gathered congregation of believers, associated by covenant, practicing self-governance, and observing the ordinances of believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. The church is to be committed to the authority of the Word of God in matters of doctrine and practice. God calls certain men to be pastors/elders, providing spiritual leadership for the church. Deacons, likewise, minister to the church body through specific acts of service. We believe that the universal church consists of all who have saving faith in Christ. As the body of Christ, the church is to fulfill His mission of making disciples throughout the world. *Matthew 18:15-17; 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 12:12-28; 7:17; 11:16; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:14, 15; 4:11-16; 5:23-32; 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-15.*

Section 8 - Sanctification

We believe that every believer should walk by the Spirit and engage in practices that stimulate spiritual maturity. Christians grow as they worship and serve the Lord, study the Scriptures, pray, and live in fellowship with other believers. Christians are

also to flee evil influences and practices, which hinder a Spirit-filled life. Due to the commission of Christ and the urgency of the gospel, all believers are to engage in gospel conversations, to live God-honoring lives, and to work continuously to spread the gospel to their neighbors and the nations. *Matthew 5:16; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; John 17:18; 20:21; Acts 1:8; Romans 6:1-14; 12:1; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 6:14-7:1; Galatians 5:16-25; Colossians 3:1-17; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17.*

Section 9 - The Devil or Satan

We believe that Satan was once one of God's highest created beings; that through pride and ambition he fell; and that he is now the malignant "prince of the power of the air" and the unholy god of this world; that he is the implacable enemy of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and the accuser of the brethren; that he is the author of all false religions; that he is destined to final defeat at the hands of Jesus Christ, and that he shall be cast into the lake of fire forever and ever. *Ezekiel 28:14-17; Isaiah 14:12-15; Ephesians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:10; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11; Revelation 20:10.*

Section 10 - The Return of Christ

We believe in the literal, bodily resurrection of the crucified Lord, His ascension into heaven, His present life there as our high priest and advocate, and His rapture of the church. He will return bodily and visibly to the earth at the end of the tribulation to establish His millennial kingdom, and to reign as the supreme Lord over all nations. *Luke 24:36-43; John 14:1-6; 20:24-29; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-11; Revelation 1:4-7; 19:11-16; 20:6.*

Section 11 - The Resurrection

We believe in the bodily resurrection and judgment of all the dead. Those people who are in Christ will be saved to a life of eternal glory with God. Unbelievers will suffer judgment and eternal punishment in the lake of fire. *Matthew 10:28; 18:8, 9; 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43-49; John 5:28, 29; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 20:6, 11-15; 21:1-8.*

Section 12 - Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian baptism is a part of the believer's obedience to Christ and involves immersion in water; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Christian baptism provides a solemn and beautiful illustration of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and identifies the believer with the Savior in death to sin and resurrection to new life. We believe that baptism should precede the privileges of church membership and is the public recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper is a memorial service in which the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine remind us of the love of God in Christ Jesus, "Who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all," and that this ordinance is to be observed in anticipation of His coming and preceded always by solemn self-examination. *Matthew 3:6, 16; 28:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; 8:32; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28; Colossians 2:12.*

This confession of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe.

ARTICLE IV Membership

Section 1 - Membership

Membership in a local church involves commitment to worshipping the Lord corporately, building up the body through mutual encouragement and service, cooperating in and supporting the mission, and holding each other accountable to walk in a manner pleasing to the Lord as a witness to the truth of Christ in the world.

The membership of FBC will consist of those who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by living a life that is consistent with their profession, with biblical faith and doctrine, and the practice of this church, and who have been baptized by immersion and have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this church.

ARTICLE V - Church Government

The government of this local church is vested in the body of believers of which it is composed. In keeping with the New Testament Biblical model, this church will be led by its Elders and served by its Deacons. This church is independent and assumes sole responsibility for its actions and decisions. This church may fellowship with other churches and associations which share a common faith with us.

ARTICLE VI - Amendments to Constitution

This church may make any changes in this Constitution which are deemed necessary. A review of the Constitution will be conducted every five years. If and when it becomes the desire of the church to make such an amendment, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Any proposed amendment must be presented by the Elders in writing to the Directors (see By-Laws, Article III, Section 3) for their approval before it is presented to the congregation.
2. Upon approval by the Directors, the proposed amendment will be presented in writing to the church congregation no less than 30 days prior to a regular or specially called business meeting where the amendment will be voted on. Copies must be available for every church member.
3. A two-thirds vote of active regular members, who are present and voting, is necessary for an amendment to be adopted.
4. The amended Constitution takes effect immediately upon the congregation's adoption of the amendment.

**This Constitution was approved by the congregation of
First Baptist Church on October 13, 2019.**

**By: James Bigler, Chairman of the Directors
Attest: Patrick Fox, Secretary of the Directors**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
of Elkhart, Indiana, Inc.**

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - Name, Principal Office, Resident Agent

Section 1 - Name of Corporation

The corporate name of this organization shall be The First Baptist Church of Elkhart, Indiana, Inc.

Section 2 - Principal Office

The principal office of the corporation shall be located in Elkhart County, Indiana at 53953 CR 17, Bristol, IN 46507 as designated in the amended Articles of Incorporation registered with the Secretary of the State of Indiana.

Section 3 - Resident Agent

The Resident Agent for the corporation shall be as designated by the Board of Directors from time to time.

ARTICLE II - Membership

Section 1 - Qualifications for Membership

Any person who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and gives satisfactory evidence of having been born again and having been baptized by immersion, and who accepts the Confession of Faith held by this church, may be received into membership upon recommendation by the Deacons and by a majority vote of the church.

Section 2 - Status of Members

a. Active

1) Definition

In order to be considered an active church member in good and regular standing, a member must be faithful in his worship service attendance, and not be under church discipline. Exceptions apply to shut-ins, missionaries serving in other areas, those who spend brief periods out of state, and other situations which may be approved by the Deacons. Those who fail to make contact with the church during a one-year period, may, by church action, be dropped from the church roll. Only active regular members will have voting privileges.

2) Categories of Active Members

i) Regular Members

Regular members are individuals over the age of 18 who meet the definition of an active member.

ii) Associate Members

Associate membership at First Baptist Church is available to adults who, because of 1) temporary residency, or 2) unique circumstances related to missionary service, desire to maintain their membership at their home church, but also desire to be fully involved in First Baptist Church's ministries.

Associate membership candidates will go through the same approval process as candidates for regular membership. Individuals approved for associate membership will have all of the privileges and responsibilities of regular membership, except for the right to vote and serve in elected offices, while retaining membership in their home church.

If circumstances later change, associate members may choose to request a change of membership status to regular member. They would not be required to go through the membership process again, but their change of status would need to be approved by the First Baptist Church congregation and communicated to the church the individual formerly attended.

b. Inactive

Failure to attend the services as stated in Article II, Section 2a1 will be deemed sufficient grounds for changing the membership status of an individual from active to inactive.

Section 3 - Reception of Members

The names of those recommended by the Deacons for church membership may be presented and voted on at a regular church service or any regular business meeting.

Section 4 - Duties of Members

- a. Each member will be expected to conduct himself in daily life so as to give evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- b. Each member will understand and embrace the Covenant of Membership (Article VII, Section 1) and be in agreement with the Confession of Faith.

Section 5 - Discipline of Members

In all matters of discipline, this church must adhere faithfully to the teaching of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17. All differences between members must be settled by this rule. The Elders must see that this is enforced and investigate all discipline matters.

In the case of continued biblical offenses, and after counsel by the Elders, the erring brother or sister may, upon recommendation of the Elders and the vote of the church, be dismissed from church membership. Prior to

the vote of the church, the member facing disciplinary action will be advised by letter of the pending action.

Section 6 - Termination of Membership

Any member's name will be removed from the church roll when one of the following conditions occurs:

- a. An active member in good standing leaves First Baptist Church and seeks to join another church. In this case a letter of good standing will be granted upon request to the church he is seeking to join. No church action is required, but the removal must be reported at the next regular business meeting.
- b. Upon death.
- c. Upon request of the member. No church action is required, but the removal must be reported at the next regular business meeting.
- d. Continuous inactivity as described under Article II, Section 2-2. Church action is required.
- e. Disciplinary action of the church. Church action is required.

In all cases requiring church action, there will first be a recommendation to the church presented by the Elders or Deacons at any regular church service or any regular business meeting.

ARTICLE III - Leadership

First Baptist Church is a congregationally ruled body of believers led by Elders and Deacons. The character and effectiveness of any church is directly related to the quality of its leadership. That is why the Scriptures stress the importance of qualified church leadership, and delineate specific standards for evaluating those who serve in that sacred position.

Section 1 - Elders

a. Elders Defined

Elders are spiritual leaders of the congregation who serve as shepherds under the authority of Jesus Christ. Scripture uses the terms Pastor, Elder, Bishop, and Overseer interchangeably to refer to the same office.

b. Elder Qualifications

All Elders must fulfill the qualifications for Elders found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 2.

c. Elder Functions

The Scriptures show that the Elders serve in a leadership position involving the spiritual oversight of the congregation. The church's Elders serve together as equals to bring the church to spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4-5).

- 1) They shepherd and care for the Lord's church (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:5; 1 Peter 5:2).
- 2) They are alert to protect the church from attacks, both from within and without (Acts 20:29-31).
- 3) They lead and direct by guiding, not driving (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7,17; 1 Pet. 5:3).
- 4) They preach the Word, teach sound doctrine, and refute those who contradict it, ensuring that church doctrine is biblical (1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:9-11).
- 5) They moderate and arbitrate in doctrinal and ethical matters. (Acts 15:5,6; 16:4).
- 6) They shepherd the church to spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:11-14).
- 7) They seek to restore the believers who have been overtaken in any sin (Gal. 6:1).
- 8) They exercise a ministry of prayer, especially with regard to the sick (Jas. 5:13-16).
- 9) They administer in love and humility the process of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20; 2 Corinthians 2:5-

11; Galatians 6:1-4; Titus 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:17-25; 1 Corinthians 5; Romans 16:17.

- 10) They share in the commendation of gifted men to the work to which God has called them (1 Tim. 4:14).
- 11) They consider the slate of nominees for Deacon and Elder positions presented to them by the Lay Elder and Deacon Selection Committee and present a recommendation to the church in the form of an annual election ballot.
- 12) They determine the duties and qualifications for each church-appointed position.
- 13) They determine the positions to which the Ministry Leaders' Covenant will apply.

d. Elder Roles

1) Lead Pastor

i. Calling

The calling of a Lead Pastor will be voted upon at a special church meeting. The meeting notice will be given to the church two consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting date. A two-thirds affirmative vote by active regular members who are present will be necessary for a call to be issued.

ii. Responsibilities

The duties of the Lead Pastor in addition to those outlined in other portions of these by-laws will be to:

- 1) Be first among equals as a member of the Elders.
- 2) Have the oversight of the total church staff.
- 3) Serve, or appoint another Elder to serve, as an ex-officio member of all church committees and organizations.
- 4) Officiate at such occasions as usually fall to the church's Lead Pastor.
- 5) Serve as moderator of the Elders, and/or Deacons, if he desires.

- 6) Supervise the administration of the ordinances.
- 7) Be responsible for the church's preaching ministry.

iii. Resignation

The Lead Pastor will give to the church at least one month's notice when terminating his duties. The resignation of the Lead Pastor may be submitted to the church at any regular service. A vote by the church is not necessary to make it effective.

iv. Termination of Ministry

The ministry of the Lead Pastor may be terminated in the following manner:

- 1) The Elders and Deacons, by a two-thirds vote, determine that a vote of confidence should be taken by the congregation.
- 2) A special church business meeting is scheduled for a vote of confidence.
- 3) This special meeting is announced two consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the vote.
- 4) At this meeting the Elder Chairman, or someone designated by the Elders and Deacons, will state that a vote of confidence has been called for.
- 5) An appropriate explanation may be given for the taking of the vote of confidence.
- 6) There will be no public discussion of the matter, and the congregation will proceed to take a ballot vote.
- 7) An affirmative vote of confidence of less than two-thirds of active regular members who are present and voting will result in the termination of the Lead Pastor's ministry.
- 8) Should the vote of confidence not be sustained, the Lead Pastor's term of office will cease immediately. In such a case, the Elders and

Deacons will have the responsibility to develop an appropriate severance compensation package.

v. Vacancy in the Lead Pastor Position

It is the responsibility of the Elders to recommend to the church the best way to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Pastor during the search for a new Lead Pastor.

2) Associate Pastors

When the services of additional Pastors are needed in the church ministry, the Elders may recommend to the congregation the creation of such positions, setting forth the title of the position and the general functions to be performed.

The church will then look to the Lead Pastor to recommend to the Elders the person to be employed in the position created. Upon the call of the Elders, the person will be employed for the position. The same procedure will be followed for securing a replacement in the event of a vacancy, if the Lead Pastor or Elders deem the ministry is needed at the time of the vacancy.

As Elders, Associate Pastors serve with the Lead Pastor to give spiritual direction to the church. They oversee their individual ministry as outlined in the job description, reporting to the Lead Pastor. All Associate Pastors are directly responsible to the Lead Pastor in the performance of their duties.

The ministry of an Associate Pastor employed by First Baptist Church may be terminated by the Lead Pastor, usually in consultation with the Elders. In the absence of a Lead Pastor, a majority vote of the Elder Council will be required to terminate the ministry of an Associate Pastor. When an Associate Pastor is dismissed, the Elders and Deacons will have the responsibility to develop an appropriate severance compensation package.

It is also understood by this policy that the employment or dismissal of any Associate Pastor or additional church staff is not subject to church action. The church only votes on the creation of the position and not the person.

3) Lay Elders

The Elder leadership will be comprised of Lay Elders and Paid Elders. The church will affirm the calling of Lay Elders to provide spiritual oversight and care for the body. We believe that God calls men to serve as Elders and gives them both the desire to serve and the gifts required to serve in this capacity. The calling of an Elder is affirmed as long as he remains qualified. Therefore, there will be no term of service for Lay Elders.

To be eligible for selection, a Lay Elder must be an active regular member for at least three years prior to his selection. To be called to this office, each Lay Elder candidate must receive a two-thirds affirmative vote of active regular members who are present and voting.

e. Elder Council

The Elder Council will be composed of the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastors, and Lay Elders. The ratio of Lay Elders to Paid Elders will ideally be one to one (1:1). The Congregation will annually affirm the lay elder members of the council. The council will meet regularly for prayer and spiritual oversight of the ministry. In matters requiring a vote, a majority of the Elder Council must be present. The Elder Council, under the direction of the Lead Pastor, will determine which Elders will be active and inactive. The Elder Council shall annually elect Lay Elders who will serve as chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary.

i. Active Status

The Elder Council will appoint and the Congregation will affirm a sufficient number of Lay Elders for the Elder Council for a given year. The Elders appointed and affirmed will be considered active.

ii. Inactive Status

Inactive Status refers to Elders who are not currently serving on the Elder Council. An Elder may choose to be considered inactive for a season of rest from his labors.

Section 2 - Deacons

a. Deacon Defined

Deacons are men selected from the congregation to assist the Elders in carrying out their responsibilities.

b. Deacon Qualifications

All Deacons must fulfill the qualifications for Deacons found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. To be eligible for election, a Deacon candidate must have been an active regular member for one year prior to his election.

c. Deacon Functions

- 1) They carefully and prayerfully practice the standards set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- 2) They cooperate with and assist the Elders in carrying out their responsibilities .
- 3) They put down murmuring.
- 4) They serve on a committee, as needed. The church's four standing church committees are: Membership, Missionary, Finance, and Property. Appointment to committees will be by the Lead Pastor and Deacon leadership and confirmed by the Deacons.
- 5) They will be involved in meeting people's physical needs.
- 6) They oversee the care of the church's physical properties.
- 7) They oversee the budget as approved by the church. They will have authority, if necessary, to make any expenditures not to exceed 2% of the annual budget.

- 8) They oversee the receiving and disbursing of monies given to the church's Fellowship Fund. Monies for this fund will be received primarily at Communion Services. The administration of the fund will be kept confidential within the Deacons, and an annual fund balance report will be given to the church.

d. Deacon Council

The church will elect at least 15 Deacons to serve for three-year terms. Terms of office will be so arranged that one third expire each year. After a Deacon has completed two consecutive full-terms, he will not be eligible for re-election for one year. To transact business, a majority of the Deacon Council must be present. The Deacon Council will annually elect from their number leadership consisting of a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary.

Section 3 - Directors

The church's corporate affairs will be managed by the Deacons (Directors of the corporation) solely as they are directed by the church's active regular members, as defined in the church's by-laws. The Deacon Chairman and Secretary will be the President and Secretary, respectively, of the corporation. In all matters, the church's active regular members will have final authority.

ARTICLE IV - Support Personnel

Section 1 - Church Staff

Additional staff (ministry directors, secretarial, maintenance, etc.) will be hired as deemed necessary and as allocated in the church budget. These staff members will be hired by the Lead Pastor, or the person he designates. They will perform their duties as outlined in their job descriptions and are responsible to the person designated in that job description. Their term of employment will be subject to the church's needs, the Lead Pastor or his designee, and the performance of their duties.

Section 2 - Officers

- a. Clerk - The church Clerk will be appointed by the Lead Pastor. The Clerk's duties will be to:
 - 1) Keep an accurate record of all church business proceedings.
 - 2) Sign all official church correspondence as authorized by vote of the congregation.
 - 3) Keep a record of the church membership showing membership date, manner of admission, last known address, and manner of removal.
 - 4) Preserve all official church records and documents in a secure location as directed by the Deacons (Directors).

 - b. Treasurer - A Treasurer will be chosen annually by the Finance Committee's recommendation and approval of the Deacons. The Treasurer's duties will be to:
 - 1) Recommend to the Deacons for their approval those to serve as financial secretaries and to supervise their work in receiving/banking monies, distribute envelopes to members and friends, and prepare individual giving records at the year's end.
 - 2) Recommend to the Deacons for their approval bookkeepers to handle the church bookkeeping records and the paying of bills. The Treasurer will supervise their work in the paying of all expenditures approved in the budget and by the Deacons.
 - 3) Render a current report at regular Deacons' meetings, each meeting of the church, and the annual meeting. The reports to the church will be in writing and will show the exact condition of the church finances. The reports will be filed with the church Clerk as a part of the church records. A public accounting firm will be hired annually to examine the church's financial records. The firm to be hired and the type of engagement (subject to regulatory requirements) will be recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the Deacons.
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ARTICLE V - Church Committees

The following church committees will consist of Elders and/or Deacons, and may have members at large appointed annually by the Lead Pastor. All committee appointments will be approved by the Elders and/or Deacons. Each committee will be guided by a written committee policy and procedural manual approved by the Elders and Deacons.

Section 1 - Lead Pastor Candidate Committee

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the Lead Pastor position, the Elders and Deacons will recommend a Lead Pastor Candidate Committee to the congregation for their approval. The committee will be composed of at least two Lay Elders, two Deacons, and four members-at-large from the congregation.

The committee's duties will be to:

- a. Receive from the Elders and Deacons any instructions as to their expectations for the search process.
- b. Establish a Lead Pastor prospect list.
- c. Determine a priority of interest in the individual prospects.
- d. Contact prospects to determine if they are willing to be considered as candidates, and pursue accordingly.
- e. Make a thorough investigation as to the doctrine, ministry history/experience, education, present ministry, etc. of each candidate.
- f. Visit each man in his present location.
- g. Report progress and findings to the Elders and Deacons.

Upon the committee's recommendation, the Elders and Deacons will be responsible to:

- a. Keep the church informed of progress being made on at least a monthly basis.
- b. Review the recommendation of the Lead Pastor Candidate Committee and prioritize the candidates.
- c. Conduct a doctrinal and ministry philosophy review (Elders only).

- d. Meet with the man and his family for exchange of testimony and information.
- e. Vote to recommend a candidate to the congregation (Lay Elders and Deacons only).
- f. Present to the congregation, for approval or disapproval, one candidate whom they recommend.

Section 2 - Lay Elder & Deacon Selection Committee

This committee will consist of five members appointed by the Lead Pastor and approved by the Elders. The committee's duties will be to:

- a. Consider all Lay Elder and Deacon vacancies and prepare a list of recommended nominees.
- b. Solicit names from the congregation to help in preparing this list.
- c. Submit their list of nominees to the Elders for their approval and recommendations.
- d. Contact nominees to determine their willingness to serve in the specified office.
- e. Clearly communicate to each nominee the privileges, duties, and responsibilities of the office. A copy of the officer standards will be supplied to the nominee.
- f. Arrange for each nominee to have an interview with several Elders and/or Deacons to determine if they are suited to serve in the office at this time.
- g. Present to the Elders a complete slate of nominees to bring before the congregation. Affirmation of the nominee for office requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of active regular members, who are present and voting.

Section 3 - Membership Committee

The Membership Committee will consist of only Elders and Deacons. The committee's duties will be to:

- a. Supervise the interview process of all prospective members concerning their personal faith in Jesus Christ and recommend to the Deacons those who should become church members.
- b. Direct the preparation and distribution of the elements of the Lord's Supper and assist in baptismal services.

- c. Oversee the church's membership process.
- d. Assist the Elders in facilitating the care of widows and shut-ins.
- e. Annually examine and update the church membership roll (see Article II, Section 6).
- f. Assist in church discipline matters as requested by the Elders.

Section 4 - Missionary Committee

The Missionary Committee will consist of at least one Elder and three Deacons. Members-at-large may be appointed, as needed. The Missionary Committee's duties will be to:

- a. Recommend missionary projects to the Deacons.
- b. Interview prospective missionary candidates, discussing with them the church's missionary policy, doctrines, and practices.
- c. Meet with those who are returning from service to receive ministry updates and discover special needs and burdens on their hearts.
- d. Consider all increases and changes in the missionary budget and make recommendations to the Deacons concerning such.
- e. Make every effort to mobilize the entire membership in missionary work.

Section 5 - Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will consist of at least three Deacons and three members-at-large. The Finance Committee's duties will be to:

- a. Supervise the handling of funds received. They will assist, when necessary, the financial secretaries in the counting and banking of all monies.
- b. Supervise the church's expenditures in accordance with the church budget. All non-budgeted expenditures will be presented to the Deacons for their approval.
- c. Prepare an annual budget in consultation with the Elders. Upon approval by the Deacons, the budget will be presented to the church.
- d. Recommend to the Deacons for their approval a Treasurer (Article IV, Section 2-2) and auditors (Article IV, Section 2-2-c).
- e. Oversee all financial aspects of the church.

Section 6 - Property Committee

The Property Committee will consist of at least three Deacons and three members-at-large. The Property Committee's duties will be to:

- a. Have the general oversight and care of all properties. They will make recommendations to the Deacons concerning needed improvements and repairs. They are authorized, when necessary, to proceed with repairs within budget limits.
- b. Oversee the property insurance program recommendations for the total church operation.
- c. Develop building use policies and procedures.

Section 7 - Other Committees

The establishment of other committees will be recommended by the Lead Pastor and approved by the Elders as the occasion may require. These committees may be dissolved in the same manner.

ARTICLE VI - Congregational Meetings

Section 1 - For Worship & Discipleship

The church will meet each Lord's Day for worship and teaching, unless otherwise scheduled. Additional opportunities for training and discipleship will be scheduled throughout the week. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper will be observed once a month, unless otherwise scheduled.

Section 2 - For Business

- a. The church fiscal year will close on the last day of December.
- b. The annual church business meeting for officer elections and adoption of church budgets for the ensuing year will be held in the fourth quarter at a time agreed upon by the Lead Pastor and Elders.
- c. The annual church business meeting, for the presentation of annual reports and their business, will be held in the first quarter at a time agreed upon by the Lead Pastor and Elders.

- d. A semi-annual church business meeting will be held in the first quarter and the third quarter at a time agreed upon by the Lead Pastor and Elders.
 - e. Special business meetings which cannot wait for a regular business meeting may be called by the Lead Pastor or the Elders. When possible, all such meetings will be publicly announced on the preceding Sunday when the congregation meets for worship.
 - f. Only active regular members will be entitled the right to speak or vote at any regular or special church business meeting.
 - g. Robert's Rules of Order will be the parliamentary guide in all business matters.
 - h. The Lead Pastor will normally serve as the moderator of all business meetings. If he is absent, another moderator will be appointed by the Elders.
 - i. A quorum will consist of 100 active regular members. Church action will be determined by the majority of those voting except as otherwise specified in the church constitution and these by-laws.
 - j. Ballot voting will be considered on any item of business. It may be called for by the chair or any voting member. It will be the responsibility of the Elders and/or Deacons to consider the matter of a ballot vote when they present their recommendations to the church.
 - k. Alternate voting procedures, such as absentee balloting, or voting at a polling place, may be authorized by the Elders or Deacons, as necessary.
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ARTICLE VII - Covenants

Section 1 - Covenant of Membership

With joy I proclaim that I am a child of God. Led by the Spirit of God, I have received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. In obedience to the Scriptures, I have also publicly professed my faith through believer's baptism, having been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As a believer, and as a member of the Body of Christ, I understand the importance of identifying with a local body of believers. That is why I now humbly and solemnly choose to enter into this covenant relationship with the body of believers at First Baptist Church.

As a member of First Baptist Church, I will actively involve myself in helping this body fulfill its mission to love God, love people, and penetrate the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I commit myself to faithful attendance and regular participation in the financial support of the ministries. I will uphold, follow, and pray for the leaders that God has given to this church, understanding their profound responsibility to shepherd, protect, and serve this congregation.

In my personal life, I purpose to develop habits and patterns that will help me to bring glory to God by becoming increasingly more like Christ. I will seek to maintain a regular personal time with God for fellowship and growth. I will seek to deal with others, both inside and outside the church, with fairness, honesty, and integrity. I will refrain from activities that bring dishonor to Christ, cause a fellow believer to stumble, or hinder a person from coming to Christ. I will seek to live in such a way that Christ is attractive to family members and acquaintances who are lost. In all things, I purpose to give Christ preeminence.

I commit to watch over my brothers and sisters in Christ in love. Through prayer, comfort, encouragement, edifying speech, godly counsel, and practical assistance, I will seek to serve the members of this body. Understanding that, as in any relationship, there will be times of disagreement and conflict, I am committed to being slow to take offense, always ready to reconcile, and committed to seeking reconciliation and restoration without delay.

Section 2 - Ministry Leaders' Covenant

a. Application of Covenant

This Ministry Leaders' Covenant applies to the individuals who are involved in teaching, discipling, and/or leadership roles within the church body and its ministries. This covenant applies to the following individuals and groups of people:

- First Baptist Church Employees
- Elders
- Deacons
- Officers Elected by the Congregation
- Church Ministry Directors

- Counselors/Disciplers (Formal Ministry)
- Life Group Leaders
- Church Ministry Supervisors & Coordinators
- Appointed Committee Members
- Church Bible Teachers
- Elkhart Christian Academy positions of Superintendent, Principal and any other position the Lead Pastor and the Superintendent deem necessary to fall under the Ministry Leaders' Covenant.

b. Review of Covenant

The Elders will review the Ministry Leaders' Covenant annually. Any changes to this covenant must be made in accordance with Article XI.

c. Statement of Ministry Leaders' Covenant

As a member of First Baptist Church, I understand that I have already made a significant commitment to this local body. Having now been given the opportunity to serve the body in a ministry leadership role, and clearly understanding the increased responsibility and accountability that comes with leadership, I willingly enter into this covenant.

As a ministry leader, I commit myself first of all to the awesome responsibility of maintaining this church's unreserved commitment to the authority of the Word of God for future generations. I also pledge my support of the doctrine and operating principles of First Baptist Church as outlined in the church's confession of faith and by-laws. When the church adopts position papers to address debatable issues, I will uphold the church's positions in my personal conduct, private counsel, and public teaching.

I understand and accept my responsibility to live a Christ-like life before both believers and unbelievers. Therefore, I commit to invest my life in those things that will cause me to grow in my relationship with God and in the likeness of His Son. I personally commit to being above reproach in my marriage, family, work, church, spiritual life, entertainment, and recreational activities. In all of these areas, I will exercise great discernment, realizing that everything I do and allow, impacts my testimony for Christ. Concerning areas of personal liberty,

I will display a sensitivity to my weaker brothers and sisters in Christ through a willingness to limit my personal liberty, if need be, so as to not unnecessarily offend, tempt, or confuse others.

Recognizing the importance of leading by example, I commit to faithful attendance at the regularly scheduled church services. Understanding my biblical responsibilities in the area of giving, I commit to give faithfully, cheerfully, and generously to the financial support of the First Baptist Church ministries.

When my ministry involves teaching, I will prepare my lessons with careful study and a dependence upon God in prayer. As a teacher, I will strive to see each of my students come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and I will encourage those who are saved to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I will also seek to secure the faithful attendance of those under my responsibility through personal contacts.

To increase my effectiveness as a ministry leader, and as a member of the overall ministry leadership team, I commit to attending all scheduled ministry leaders meetings and training sessions that apply to my particular ministry. In addition, I will seek to take advantage of other ministry growth opportunities as they present themselves.

Realizing the importance of unity in the body of Christ, I commit to serving alongside other ministry leaders with an attitude of oneness in purpose and spirit. I will willingly submit to those God places in leadership positions over me. They, as well as the entire body of First Baptist, can count on me for constructive evaluation, enthusiastic support, and demonstrated loyalty. Should I at any time not be able to provide these things, I will voluntarily relinquish my ministry leadership role.

I willingly enter into this Ministry Leaders’ Covenant with a strong sense of anticipation and with a strong desire to be used of God to serve the body of believers at First Baptist Church for His Glory.

ARTICLE VIII - Financial Policy

Section 1 - Raising Funds

As a general practice, the church's ministries will be supported by freewill offerings. All offerings will be deposited weekly as directed by the church Treasurer. At times, costs for certain ministries will not be covered by the church budget and will be defrayed by tuition or a fee. Any fund-raising activities for church ministries must be approved by the Elders, in consultation with the appropriate Deacon committees.

Section 2 - Special Offerings and Designated Gifts

All special offerings and designated gifts are subject to IRS regulations and will be distributed, or not distributed, accordingly. Designated gifts to missionaries and missions agencies are restricted to those who have been approved by the church.

ARTICLE IX - Position Papers

Among believers, issues at times will arise that are the subject of debate or disagreement. These debates and disagreements may come from differences in biblical interpretation and/or application, unique cultural sensitivities, or simple preferences. At times, the church may choose to develop and adopt position papers that clearly and biblically address these issues and outline the church's position.

Upon adoption by the congregation, these position papers will become the official position that is taught and promoted in all of our ministries. All ministry leaders will be expected to uphold the church's positions in their personal conduct, private counsel, and public teaching. All adopted position papers will become part of a First Baptist Church Position Papers document. This document will be readily available to First Baptist Church members and will be distributed to everyone seeking First Baptist Church membership.

The procedure for the adoption of position papers is as follows:

- a. Position papers will be developed by the Elders in consultation with the appropriate ministry leaders.
 - b. Position papers will be made available to the congregation at least 30 days prior to a congregational vote.
 - c. When appropriate, sermons or discipleship classes may be utilized to present the content of the position paper prior to a congregational vote.
 - d. A two-thirds affirmative vote by active regular members, who are present and voting, is required for a position paper to be adopted.
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ARTICLE X - Dissolution

At such time as this corporation, for whatever reason, be dissolved, the same will be accomplished in full compliance with the requirements and terms of the Laws of the State of Indiana as the same will then be in effect. Further, in the event of dissolution of this organization, its remaining assets will be assigned to one or more fundamental, independent, Baptist, non-profit corporations, designated by the recommendation of the Deacons and vote of the active regular membership, that are exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. None of the assets shall inure to the benefit of any individual upon dissolution.

ARTICLE XI - Amendments to By-Laws

This church may make any changes in its By-Laws which are deemed necessary. A review of the By-Laws will be conducted every five years. If and when it becomes the desire of the church to make such an amendment, the following procedure will be followed:

- a. Any proposed amendment must be presented by the Elders in writing to the Directors (see By-Laws Article III, Section 3) for their approval before it is presented to the congregation.
- b. Upon approval by the Directors, the proposed amendment will be presented in writing to the church congregation no less than 30 days prior to a regular or specially called business meeting where the amendment will be voted on. Copies must be available for every church member.

- c. A two-thirds affirmative vote of active regular members, who are present and voting, is necessary for an amendment to be adopted.
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ARTICLE XII - Merger

All prior By-Laws are merged herein and replaced hereby. These By-Laws take effect immediately upon approval by the congregation.

**These By-Laws were approved by the congregation of
First Baptist Church on October 13, 2019**

**By: James Bigler, Chairman of the Directors
Attest: Patrick Fox, Secretary of the Directors**