

CONSTITUTION

First Baptist Church

308 E. Broadway

Gainesville, Texas

FBCG

Founded May 14, 1871

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PREAMBLE

As followers of Jesus Christ, joined together as one body, we profess our living faith in Him as our sole spiritual authority. Jesus Christ reveals Himself to us by His Holy Spirit and through the Holy Bible, which provides the foundation for the following guidelines. These guiding principles exist to create a framework to protect the rights and privileges of the individual church members as well as the freedom of action of this church body in its relation to other Baptist churches and organizations. This constitution and these following bylaws amend and restate, in its entirety, the previous constitution and bylaws of the church as amended.

ARTICLE I. NAME

This body shall be known as First Baptist Church of Gainesville (FBCG), Texas

ARTICLE II. OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

The mission and purpose of this church shall be to know Christ, to make Him known to all people, and to seek the salvation of all souls everywhere. The objectives of this body are as follows:

- A. To worship in prayer, thanksgiving, and praise, responding in obedience to His leadership;
- B. To fellowship with God and fellow believers;
- C. To nurture our members through a program of Christian education;
- D. To promote missionary endeavors, family unity, love, and the development of character that is centered in Christian principles; and
- E. To minister unselfishly in the name of Jesus to persons in the community and the world.

ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The *Baptist Faith and Message* adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963 represents a consensus of our membership, and it is suitable for general instruction and guidance.

We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture. The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, acting as the source of authority over morality, our beliefs, Christian lifestyle, and our conduct.

ARTICLE IV. MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

Since the Holy Bible speaks to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

We believe the term *marriage* has only one meaning: that marriage is sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends for sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married

to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, pornography, an attempt to alter one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, are sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin and seek His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that *every* person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward *any* individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

FBCG affirms that all marriage ceremonies performed in the name of this church and using its facilities, as well as any related celebrations or activities, shall be for unions that meet the standards named in this church Constitution and all other guiding church documents to which it refers.

To achieve the *Objectives and Purpose* (Article II, of this Constitution), as well as to provide a biblical role model to church members and the community, FBCG requires that all church employees and volunteers abide by and conduct themselves according to these precepts.

ARTICLE V. RELATIONSHIPS

The governing of this church is vested in the body of believers under the lordship of Jesus Christ. FBCG is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. However, we recognize the benefits of cooperation with other churches and organizations who promote the cause of Christ in local and world initiatives. FBCG may voluntarily affiliate with these churches, associations, denominations and institutions in the promotion of moral, benevolent, and religious causes, but it shall retain its full independence and shall not surrender any of its doctrines, prerogatives, power or sovereignty. Actions taken regarding any of these affiliations – monetary contributions, delegates, pastor services, adoption of recommendations by outside alliances, etc. – will require FBCG approval.

ARTICLE VI. COVENANT

Led by the Spirit of God to accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and having entered into the fellowship of His Church, we prayerfully make this covenant with our Heavenly Father and with one another.

By God's grace, we agree to seek prosperity for our church by upholding its doctrine, its ordinances, and its discipline; 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; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our behavior; to maintain sobriety in our habits, integrity in our businesses, purity in our lives, and Christian courtesy in our attitudes.

By the aid of the Holy Spirit, we agree to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; and to be slow to take offense, always striving to forgive, and to seek reconciliation if possible.

We also agree that when we remove from this place we shall, as soon as possible, unite with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.

Finally, we agree to be bound by the FBCG Articles of Incorporation, and the FBCG Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE VII. CONSTITUTION & BYLAW AMENDMENTS

The **Constitution & Bylaws Committee** shall be the custodians of the church *Constitution and Bylaws*. In general, the **Constitution & Bylaws Committee** shall perform the duties defined in the church *Committee and Team Handbook.*, meeting as needed to resolve issues.

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the church by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present, provided:

- A. The proposed amendment(s) have been presented at a previous business meeting and made available to the members at least four weeks before the meeting to act on the amendment; and
- B. The meeting to consider the proposed amendment is announced at all Sunday morning services on two consecutive Sundays before the vote is taken, one of which may be the same day as the meeting.

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws shall be in full force and in effect immediately upon their approval and shall repeal, nullify, and set aside any other articles, sections or language that is contrary to the amendment(s).

ARTICLE VIII. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

Should any conflict or discrepancy arise regarding the Constitution, Bylaws, manuals, stated policies, procedures, and practices, the Constitution takes precedence, with the Bylaws following in order of precedence.

This Constitution supersedes all previous constitutions.