

# **CONSTITUTION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH PORT ORCHARD, WASHINGTON**

## **Preamble**

We declare and establish this constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and that this body may be governed in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this Church and the autonomy of this body in its relation to other churches.

### **I. Name**

This body shall be known as First Baptist Church of Port Orchard, located in Port Orchard, Washington.

### **II. Statement of Faith**

The Holy Bible is the inherently inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the most recent edition of "The Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention and First Baptist Church of Port Orchard. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of this Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We adopt, and consider as part and parcel of our Statement of Faith, the supplementary statement adopted by each Church in fellowship with the Northwest Baptist Convention, as a prerequisite and condition to not be repealed nor amended by this church, and in case of doctrinal division resulting in contention over the church property, the property shall belong to that portion of the members abiding by the confession of faith including the supplemental statement adopted in this section, whether the portion of the members remaining true to the faith shall be a majority or a minority.

The supplemental statement adopted is as follows:

"We, as Baptists, believe in: a verbally inspired Bible; the Blessed Trinity; The Deity, Virgin Birth, Vicarious Death, Bodily Resurrection, Second Coming of Jesus Christ; the Fall of Man and Eternal Judgment for sin; Salvation by Grace through Faith unto Justification, Regeneration, and Preservation; Immersion upon the authority of a New Testament Baptist Church, of those who profess faith in Christ, and as a prerequisite to fellowship in the Church, and to the Lord's Supper; Separation of Church and State; Resurrection and Eternal Bliss of the Saints."

### **III. Church Covenant**

Having been led, as we believe by the Holy Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord 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 realize that in accepting Christ as our Savior, following Him in baptism and becoming a member of this local body of believers, we have made a commitment to profess our faith among the brethren, our families, friends, acquaintances, and strangers.

We covenant to be an example that would encourage others to want to know about Jesus and to be more like Him; to abstain from acts, lifestyles, and language that would discredit our witness.

We further covenant with the Lord and our church to study God's word, pray frequently, and guide our families in the teachings of the Lord.

We further covenant to regularly attend church, serve in positions of ministry as called by the Holy Spirit, and to contribute generously to the purpose and work of the church through tithes and offering.

We further covenant to demonstrate our Christian ministry by actively showing and expressing our concern for one another's spiritual and physical well-being.

We further covenant that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with another New Testament Church.

#### **IV. Character**

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist Churches. Insofar as is practical, this Church will cooperate with and support the Olympic Baptist Association, the Northwest Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

This Church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of other Southern Baptist Churches.

# **BY-LAWS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **I. Membership**

### **A. General**

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of the Church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church, and the conditions of such membership. The membership shall be divided into the following categories:

1. Resident, Active  
Those members who are active in the support and work of the Church and have regularly attended worship (once a month or twelve times in a year) or the entire time of their membership, whichever time is shorter, regardless of where they live.
2. Resident, Inactive  
Those members living within a 50 mile radius of where the Church meets who are not active in the support and work of the Church and have not regularly attended worship services (as per section I.A.1).
3. Non-Resident or No Record  
Those inactive members who live outside of a 50 mile radius of where the Church meets.

The Pastor, Outreach Leader, Sunday School leaders, and Deacons shall strive to maintain all resident members in an active status. When a member has been inactive for six months, he/she shall be contacted by the church with the purpose of resuming fellowship and to indicate concern for the person's well being. It will then be at the determination of the leadership mentioned above as to the status of the individual. Students, military, chronically ill, or people otherwise temporarily relocated due to profession or health will maintain their active status until such time they request otherwise.

### **B. Candidacy**

#### **1. General Member**

Any person may become a general member by any of the following ways at any regular worship service:

- a. By profession of faith and baptism according to the policies of this Church
- b. By promise of letter from or by statement claiming membership in another Church that practices New Testament patterned baptism (baptism by immersion). The baptism of those coming from a church not affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention will be reviewed by the Deacons and Pastor.

## 2. Voting Member

Any person may offer himself/herself as a candidate for voting membership. Candidates may present themselves to the Church at any regular worship service. Before offering himself/herself as a candidate, the person must first meet all of the following requirements:

- a. The person must be at least twelve years of age
- b. The person must be a resident active member, as described in section I A 1 of the by-laws
- c. The person must have successfully completed an orientation class designed by the Pastor (persons who are already members of this Church at the time of the adoption of this document are exempt from this orientation).

Any person presenting himself/herself for voting membership will be introduced to the congregation at the service which he presents himself. The current voting members will then vote on accepting the candidate's application for voting membership at the next regularly scheduled business meeting.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the Church at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. A three/fourths vote of those present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to voting membership.

## C. Discipline

Should there be any unhappy differences among members, the aggrieved member shall, in a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, follow the procedures in Matthew, Chapter 18. If the differences cannot be reconciled, the aggrieved member shall bring the matter to a (the) deacon(s) for resolution. Referring to Matthew, Chapter 18, the deacon(s) will attempt to restore harmony between members in the most confidential manner possible.

All proceedings should exhibit Christian kindness and forbearance with the goal to be restoration of the member to a right relationship with Christ and the Church. The procedures should remain in confidence of the deacon body until such time that the Church needs to vote on recommended action. The recommendation should be made to the Church without going into detailed report. (See I.D.5.A.)

## D. Termination of membership

Membership is terminated in the following ways:

1. Death
2. Transfer of membership by letter to another Baptist Church
3. Affiliation with a church of another faith or denomination
4. At the written request of a member
5. Exclusion by action of this church

a. In the event a member exhibits disruptive behavior or harmful criticism of an ongoing nature that causes discord in the fellowship of the church, the matter shall be referred to the deacons. The deacons, following the instructions in Matthew, Chapter 18, in Christian

love and concern, shall attempt to determine the cause of the problem and bring about reconciliation. If the member is unwilling to change, the deacons may call for termination of membership at a special called business meeting by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting by secret ballot.

b. Should a member become an offense to the Church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, public scandal, or gross breach of covenant, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the pastor or deacons. The deacon body will be responsible to investigate the nature and validity of the allegations and take appropriate action. If the alleged offense is true, the deacons will make faithful efforts to bring the member to repentance and a genuine change of attitude and behavior, using Matthew, Chapter 18, for guidance. If the member is unrepentant, the deacons will call for a special business meeting to terminate his/her membership by a three-fourths majority vote of those present and voting by secret ballot.

c. If the deacons deem it necessary for the protection of the Church, the services, or the property, a second vote may be taken to give a notice of no trespass onto church property. A three-fourths majority vote of those present and voting by secret ballot will be required to put this action into effect.

d. Any person whose membership has been excluded by action of this church may be restored to membership upon his/her request, showing evidence of repentance, Christian attitudes and behavior. The request will be forwarded to the deacons for verification. If the deacons find the request justified, they will call for a special business meeting to recommend reinstatement of membership. A three-fourths majority vote of those present and voting by secret ballot will be required to restore membership.

## **II. Church Officers**

All Church officers must be members of the Church. Paid staff (secretary, janitor, nursery workers) are not considered church officers. The principle officers of the Church shall be as follows:

### **A. Pastor**

#### **1. Responsibilities**

The pastor is the spiritual leader of the Church under the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. He is to foster a commitment in the members of the church to fulfill the great commission and a desire in nonchristians to know the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. To accomplish this, he is responsible for the training and equipping the church members to utilize their spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11-13) in the following functions of the church: Worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and ministry.

In worship, he is responsible for planning the services, always incorporating prayer. He is also responsible for proclaiming and delivering the ordinances

In evangelism, the pastor shall oversee the training of members in evangelism and shall lead the Church in regular evangelism events.

In discipleship, he is responsible for helping others to express their faith, leading others to recognize and develop their spiritual gifts, developing a Christian lifestyle in families through training courses, and to oversee all Bible teaching and Education Ministries.

In fellowship, the pastor is responsible for promoting and encouraging Church members in forming and maintaining Christian relationships with one another. He shall serve as moderator at all Church business meetings and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, both regular and ad-hoc.

In ministry, he shall lead the Deacons in visitation, bereavement, counseling, hospital ministry, benevolence, and conflict resolution. He shall also conduct weddings and funerals at his discretion.

## 2. Calling a Pastor

On announced departure of the pastor, the church shall form a pastor search committee. Nominations for membership on the committee shall come from the church council and the deacons. The chairman of the deacons shall preside over church council in preparing a nomination list. The names of the nominated in the form of a motion, made and seconded, from the church council shall be presented at a regular business meeting. The pastor search committee nominations shall be voted on at a regular business meeting by secret ballot. The pastor search committee shall be composed five to seven members.

The pastor search committee (duties as described in the Procedures manual) shall diligently and with much prayer seek God's man for the pastorate. They shall present this man to the church in manner that allows the church and the pastor to be acquainted with each other prior to the vote and/or acceptance by the pastor.

The election of the chosen pastor shall be at a special called business meeting for that purpose, to be held after the main Sunday morning worship service by secret ballot. The special called business meeting shall be announced from the pulpit during the Sunday worship services for the two Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. A quorum for the calling of a pastor shall be fifty percent of the voting membership of the church, (see bylaws I.B.1) and an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present and of absentee ballots properly submitted to the church clerk prior to the vote shall be required to call the pastor. Absentee ballots will be accepted from voting members who cannot attend the special called meeting due to extenuating circumstances (illness, travel, etc.). The absentee votes shall be on a single sheet of paper with a "yes" or "no" and identifying the vote with the words to the effect: "calling a pastor". The vote shall be in a sealed envelope with the written signature of the voter on the outside with the reason for voting absence. The deacons shall collect the absentee ballots and tally all votes, both absentee and regular.

## 3. Termination of Pastor

The pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or by the request of the Church. If the relationship is terminated by the church, the procedure shall start with the deacon body investigating the need for terminating the relationship. The deacon body shall present their findings and recommendation to the pastor before seeking church action to give the pastor time for a personal decision. If the deacon body finds no reason for termination, there will be no further action. If there is reason for termination, the chairman or other deacon shall request a special called business meeting to present their recommendation to the church for action. The

special called business meeting shall be announced two weeks prior to the meeting. A quorum of fifty percent of the voting membership shall be required and  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority of those voting to terminate the relationship.

### **B. Vocational Ministerial Staff**

This shall include personnel in the areas of associate pastor, education, music, youth and other areas as needed to accomplish the mission of the church. In the absence of a senior pastor, the associate pastor shall assume day to day responsibility for the church. If there is no associate pastor, the ministerial staff member with the most seniority shall assume the day-to-day responsibilities.

When a position becomes vacant or is formed, the nominating committee shall form a special committee of church members for the purpose of finding God's person for the position. The church must approve a written job description and financial package before the search begins. The committee shall present one nomination at a time to the church body. The vote to call the person shall be taken at a regular business meeting. A three-fourths affirmative vote of those voting members present shall be required to call the proposed candidate.

All ministerial staff personnel shall serve until the relationship is terminated by either the individual or by a joint decision of the senior pastor and personnel committee.

### **C. Deacons**

The deacons shall be ministering servants of the church cooperating with the Senior Pastor in the following pastoral ministries: benevolence, hospital visitation, bereavement, conflict resolution and ordinances. They are to assist the Pastor in setting a tone and direction for the church body and in the following functions of the Church: worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship. Deacons shall encourage and support the Pastor. They shall also support the general activities and organizations of the Church with attendance, prayers, and tithes. The deacon body will rotate with  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the active deacons coming off every year. After their rotation time of one year they may petition the active deacon body for re-admittance to deacon service.

The primary qualifications for a deacon shall be those listed in Acts 6:1-8 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In addition to those, a candidate for deacon shall be a voting member of the Church. Nominees for deacons shall be submitted to the deacon body by members of the Church. The deacons shall then, after much prayer and consideration, select a candidate(s) from the nominees and present the candidate to the Church. A candidate for deacon that has not been ordained shall serve for a six month probation period prior to a vote. Deacons shall be elected at a regular business meeting of the Church by secret ballot. An affirmative vote of no less than three-fourths of the voting members shall be required for election. Any unordained candidate elected shall then be ordained by laying on of hands.

### **D. Church Council**

The Church Council shall serve the church by coordinating and integrating the ministries and organizations of First Baptist Church. The Council shall lead in developing long-term plans, short-term plans and administration of non-financial church resources.

The council shall plan so as to provide a harmonious relationship between ministries and individuals.

Each Committee and Ministry shall make reports and recommendations for action to the Church Council monthly. Upon approval the committee or ministry shall present the recommendations to the church for action.

The Church Council shall be the leadership ministry of First Baptist Church. It shall consist of all ministerial staff, the leaders of each ministry, and the chairperson of each team (committee).

The Council shall have authority in matters of procedure, policy and activities unless otherwise instructed by the church (in Business Meeting).

### **III. Committees (Teams)**

#### **A. Nominating Team**

The nominating team is the volunteer staffing and leadership recruitment ministry. This team shall yearly recommend candidates to the church to fill leadership positions. In addition they shall meet whenever need arises to make a recommendation for a vacant leadership position.

#### **B. Finance Team**

The finance team develops and recommends annually a budget to be approved by the church. The Finance team shall lead the church to plan for the expenditures and resources needed to conduct ministry and meet the purposes of the church. They shall set policies for how funds are distributed to ministries and for all church related expenses. They shall coordinate and function with the team leaders and staff to meet the objectives of the church financially. The Finance team shall implement and oversee a comprehensive stewardship plan that encourages tithing and generous giving to church causes.

The team may request an audit of the church's financial records.

The team shall review expenditures periodically regarding budget allocations. It shall be responsible to call attention to the church membership concerning shortfalls, surpluses, and pressing financial needs.

The church treasurer and financial secretary shall be ex-officio members of the team.

#### **C. Recreation Team**

The recreation team shall lead in fellowship ministry and coordinate with other ministries and leadership as needed.

#### **D. Kitchen/Food Service Team**

The kitchen team shall insure the kitchen is properly stocked. They are also to oversee and manage church potlucks, funerals, and other activities involving use of the kitchen.

#### **E. Welcome Team**

The Church shall have welcomers. It is the duty of the welcomers to greet people as they enter, provide bulletins and other materials, be attentive to the needs of the congregation and ministerial team during the worship service, and provide ushers.

## **F. Personnel Team**

The personnel team is responsible for the selection, termination, and overseeing of non-ministerial staff.

## **IV. Purpose Ministries**

### **A. General**

All ministries of the Church shall be under church control, all officers and leaders being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

### **B. Worship**

The church will worship every Sunday under the leadership of the senior pastor and worship team. The purpose of worship is exalting and praising God. Worship is not a performance, show, or for human benefit. Worship belongs to God.

### **C. Discipleship**

The church shall have an education ministry, led by an education director, who is elected by the church. All Bible teaching ministries fall under discipleship ministry. This includes, but is not limited to, small group Bible studies (Sunday School) and leadership development.

### **D. Fellowship**

Fellowship ministry shall be led by the recreation and kitchen/food service teams. There shall be at least one fellowship activity per quarter. Fellowship shall be employed in a variety of ways.

### **E. Evangelism**

The church shall conduct ongoing evangelistic training under the leadership of the (senior) pastor and a church elected evangelism director. In addition, a missions team shall lead the congregation to adapt strategies for world wide evangelization (missions) and local strategies in the Northwest and in the community.

### **F. Ministry**

Pastoral care shall be conducted by the deacons. The education ministries shall elect small group care leaders. The church shall actively seek to minister to the community using the resources the Lord has provided.

## **V. Ordinances**

### **A. Baptism**

Baptism is a symbolic act of obedience, whereby the start of the Christian life is demonstrated (Matthew 3:13-17). A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes Him publicly at any worship service; and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received as a candidate for baptism.

Baptism shall be by immersion in water and shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.

### **B. The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby the Church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the preparation and administration of the Lord's Supper.

## **VI. Licensing and Ordaining**

Any member, who in the judgment of the Church, gives evidence of a call from the Lord may be licensed to the gospel ministry.

With the agreement of the deacon body, any licensed minister may be ordained. A council of ministers of like faith and order and deacons from First Baptist Church shall be called to examine the qualifications of the candidate and to present a recommendation to the body of the church. The candidate shall then be ordained at a regular worship service provided a majority of members present agree.

## **VII. Administrative**

### **A. Business Meetings**

Regular business meetings shall be held quarterly and calendared by Church Council at least a month in advance.

A special called business meeting may be held to consider special matters of a significant nature. A one-week notice of subject, date, time, and location must be given during a regular Sunday worship service for the meeting unless urgency renders such notice impractical. Every attempt will be made to inform voting members of business to be conducted if one-week notice cannot be given.

### **B. Quorum**

No business shall be conducted in the absence of a quorum. A quorum shall consist of fifteen percent of the voting membership, unless otherwise required by this Constitution and By-Laws. (i.e., calling a Pastor, terminating a Pastor)

### **C. Parliamentary Rules**

The most recent edition of "Robert's Rules of Order" is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church. And the Bible shall be followed as the pattern for behavior.

## **VIII. Church Finance**

### **A. Budget Team (Financial Secretary)**

The finance team, in consultation with the church council, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive and detailed budget, indicating the resources required to conduct ministries and fulfill its purpose.

### **B. Accounting Procedures**

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the church treasurer, and be properly recorded on the books of the church.

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the finance team. This should include a Financial Secretary who shall be responsible for recording contributions and preparing and distributing records to donors at the close of the fiscal year.

**C. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>, and end on December 31<sup>st</sup> yearly.

**IX. Church Operations Manual**

The church shall have an Operations Manual describing Church policies and procedures. This manual shall be voted on by the church. The Operations Manual shall be kept in the church office at all times and made available to any member of the church.

**X. Amendments**

Changes in the Constitution and By-Laws may be made at a special called business meeting of the Church following a Sunday morning worship service, provided each amendment shall have been provided in writing to the voting members. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of the voting membership of the Church present is necessary to approve the change.