

Constitution

Of

First Baptist Church

Of

Gallipolis, Ohio

Amended and Revised on February 13, 2022

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ARTICLE I NAME AND ASSOCIATIONS

The name of this assembly shall be the First Baptist Church of Gallipolis, Ohio. It is incorporated as a nonprofit, charitable, 501(C)(3) corporation under the laws of the state of Ohio (#7572). As such it is an independent, self-governing, autonomous church, subject only to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church. It has the right to select its members as it chooses and to cooperate or not to cooperate with other groups as it deems proper.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of the church shall be to glorify God by being active disciples in pursuing spiritual growth by worshiping God, by edifying believers and their children, and by attracting and leading unbelievers, both near and far, to faith in and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. *Matthew 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-16; Matthew 28:16-20*

ARTICLE III DOCTRINE

SECTION 1. BIBLE

We believe that the Holy Bible, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written was verbally and plenary inspired and the product of God through Spirit-controlled men and, therefore, is truth without any admixture of error for its matter. We believe the Bible to be the center of true Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried. Every individual has the duty to search the Scriptures to learn God's truth. *Acts 17:11; II Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21*

SECTION 2. GOD THE FATHER

We believe that there is one true and living God, Jehovah, eternally self-existent in three coequal Persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that God is an infinite Spirit and is holy, sovereign, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, and loving. As the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, He is both transcendent and immanent. *Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 6:4; I Kings 8:27; Psalm 90:2; 139:1-12; Matthew 3:16-17; John 4:24; Acts 5:3-4; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:8; I Peter 1:16; I John 4:8; Revelation 19:6*

SECTION 3. GOD THE SON

We believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; that He eternally co-existed co-equally with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe that He was active in Creation; that He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, is true God and true man. We also believe He lived a sinless life, performed miracles, died a vicarious and atoning death for man's sin, was bodily resurrected for man's justification, ascended into heaven as the believers' advocate, and will return personally in power and glory. *Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:16,18; 4:1-11; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-14; 8:58; 14:3; 20:30-31; Acts 1:11; Romans 4:25; I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:7-8; Colossians 2:9; I Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25; Revelation 19:11-21*

SECTION 4. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Deity of the Holy Spirit as the eternal third person in the Godhead and that He was the agent in producing the Scriptures. His works include creation, bearing witness to Jesus Christ as the Son of God, convicting the world of sin,

regenerating sinners, baptizing and indwelling all believers into the body of Christ at the moment of saving faith, and sealing all believers for all eternity. We believe the Holy Spirit enables believers for service, fills believers, produces the fruit of the Spirit, and teaches them the Biblical truth recorded in Scripture. We believe that the evidence of the Spirit's indwelling and work is obedience to the Word of God and the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance) and that manifestations such as tongues or other spectacular demonstrations are not required, needed, or to be sought after. *Matthew 28:19; John 3:5-8; 14:16; 16:8-14; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 2:10-14; 6:19; 12:1-31; 14:1-40; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:30; II Peter 1:21*

SECTION 5. ANGELS AND SATAN

We believe in literal, personal, spiritual beings called angels who minister to believers. We also believe in Satan, an evil fallen angel who exalts himself as the god of this world, who opposes the work of God along with other evil spiritual beings called demons. His doom is sure, and he will be finally cast into the Lake of Fire. *Genesis 3; Job 1; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 10:18; 11:18; John 12:31; II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 6:11-12; II Timothy 2:26; Hebrew 1:13-14; James 4:7; I John 3:8; 5:18-19; Revelation 20:10*

SECTION 6. MAN

We believe in the creation of man by the direct act of God. We believe that man was created perfect and innocent in God's image but willingly disobeyed God and thus fell into sin with the result that all men are born with a sinful nature so that all men commit sin. Man remains hopeless and helpless deserving only eternal death and Hell apart from the grace of God and can be saved through Jesus Christ alone. We believe that the Bible

specifically defines man and woman, their roles in life, and acceptable lifestyles. God requires that the marriage relationship be between one man and one woman, but He also gives some the gift to remain single. Thus, polygamy, homosexuality, lesbianism and any other contra-Bible relationships are contrary to the Word of God, and we do not accept these as an acceptable alternate life style.

Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7,23-24; 3:1-24; John 3:18,36; 14:6; Romans 1:18-32; 3:23; 5:12,18-19; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; 5:22-23; 6:1-4; I Timothy 2:5

SECTION 7. SALVATION

We believe that a sinner can be saved only by God's grace and that faith in Christ on the basis of His death for sin, whereby He shed His blood, is God's only demand for forgiveness and justification. God, by the inexplicable act of regeneration, imparts eternal life to man, causing him to partake of the divine nature and become a child of God and is thus a new creation in Christ Jesus for all eternity. We believe that faith and repentance cannot be separated and that when man turns to God he must by necessity turn from sin. We believe that man is justified, sanctified, and secured at the moment of salvation; that he is continually sanctified in this life by the work of the Holy Spirit through Bible reading, prayer, worship, fellowship, giving, and witnessing; and that he shall be wholly and perfectly sanctified only in glory. We believe in the priesthood of the believer and that all believers strive against sin until glorification at the end of this present life. *John 1:12-13; 3:16-18,36; 10:27-28; Luke 13:3; Acts 16:31; Romans 3:25; 4:24-25; 5:1,15; 8:15; I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 1:24;5:17; Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 1:5; Philipians 1:6; Colossians 3:16; Titus 3:4-5; I Thessalonians 1:9; 4:3; Hebrews 1:3; 9:10:12,24-25;*

James 5:16; 2:8-9; I Peter 1:4-5,18-19; II Peter 1:4; I John 3:2-3; Revelation 1

SECTION 8. THE CHURCH

We believe that the church as the Body of Christ is a spiritual and physical organization composed of people called out of the world and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Head of the Church as His Body and also Head of each local church, which is a self-governing, independent, autonomous group of professing baptized believers in Christ who have organized themselves to edify and educate believers and to evangelize the lost and to do God's will as revealed in the Bible. We believe that every saved person should be a member of a Bible-believing local church and that the local church has a divine responsibility to confront sin in members' lives, seek to restore them, and if necessary, remove them from the membership. We believe that every born-again person should demonstrate his faith by the act of baptism which symbolizes, by immersion in water, the person's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We believe that every saved person should periodically partake of the Lord's Supper, the elements of which, symbolize the Lord's death and His future return. Scriptural officers of the local church are elders (pastors) and deacons. We further believe it is scriptural for churches to cooperate to do God's will and work and that each local church is the sole judge of the reason and method of its cooperation.

Matthew 18:15-20; 26:26-28; 28:19-20; Acts 2:1-47; 14:23; 15:1-29; 20:28; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 1:2; 5:1-13; 11:17-34; 12:12-14; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 1:22-23; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; I Thessalonians 1:10; II Thessalonians 2:1-17; I Timothy 3:1-10

SECTION 9. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe in the right of the church and state to function as separate institutions, neither controlling the other. We believe that all of life should be governed by the principles of the Word of God, and thus it is appropriate for believers to serve as civil authorities as they freely choose to do so. We believe that civil government is divinely appointed for the good of human society to protect the good and punish the evil. We should pray for those with civil authority, and should obey them, except in things opposed to the expressly revealed will of God in the Bible.

Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-3; I Peter 2:13-14

SECTION 10. HEAVEN AND HELL

We believe in the bodily resurrection and everlasting blessedness of believers in Heaven and in the bodily resurrection of unbelievers to final judgment and everlasting punishment in Hell. By this, we mean that we believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death pass into His Presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body. Further, we believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the final judgment, when soul and body shall be united and cast into the lake of fire to be separated from God and punished forever. *Luke 16:19-31; John 5:29; I Corinthians 15:12-21; II Corinthians 5:1; II Corinthians 5:8; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; II Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 20:11-15*

SECTION 11. GENDER, MARRIAGE, AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

A. FINAL AUTHORITY FOR MATTERS OF BELIEF AND CONDUCT.

These Articles of Faith do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs.

The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, which is the final source of authority concerning beliefs, faith, truth, morality, Christian lifestyle, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe
(*2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3*)

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

In light of recent national decisions which alter the traditional definition of marriage, First Baptist Church herein outlines its long standing, foundational beliefs and doctrines on sexual identity, marriage, human sexuality. First Baptist Church has historically and unswervingly held to the statements of belief and practice which follow. Recent national decisions now compel the clear proclamation of the church's position; furthermore, the church affirms that participating in and/or facilitating in same-sex marriage violates the long-standing position and doctrine of First Baptist Church.

B. SEXUAL IDENTITY

First Baptist Church believes that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person in His Own image as male (man) or female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (*Genesis 1:26-28, 31*). A man, as God created him to be, is determined by his original, biological, birth gender; a woman, as God created her to be, is determined by her original, biological, birth gender.

Rejection of one's original, biological birth gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person. Consequently, First Baptist Church's members must affirm their biological sex and refrain from any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or

disagree with their predominant biological sex by surgery or appearance, including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, or transvestite or transgender acts or conduct (*Genesis 1:26-28;31; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18-20*).

C. MARRIAGE

First Baptist Church believes that at the time God created man and woman, He created the institution of marriage for man and woman to complete one another as husband and wife (*Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:18-25; Mark 10:6-9*). We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the sacred, covenantal uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, ordained by God, as delineated in Scripture (*Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:18-25; Malachi 2:14; Matthew 19:4-9; Mark 10:4-9; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:21-33*). For this reason, First Baptist Church will only recognize a marriage between one man and one woman, a heterosexual, monogamous relationship. The marriage ceremony is an act of worship of the Creator for the blessing of marriage (*Proverbs 18:22; 19:14*). Weddings in the church should rightfully be referred to as worship services.

First Baptist Church is committed to home and family values as set forth in the Bible. These values include the distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children (*Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Ephesians 5:21-6:4; Colossians 3:18-21*). It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual.

D. HUMAN SEXUALITY

First Baptist Church believes that God has given mankind two life-enhancing options for human sexual behavior: either (1) the “one flesh” marital union of one man and one woman, or (2)

celibacy. Both options are gifts from God to be joyfully received and practiced for His glory and our good. Celibacy and faithful singleness are to be celebrated and affirmed within First Baptist Church. We believe that God commands sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (*Genesis 1:26-28, 31: 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-12; Mark 10:4-9; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 7:1-8; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 5:1-2*).

First Baptist Church believes that any form of sex engaged in outside of God's intention is a sinful perversion of God's gift of sex. This includes, but is not limited to fornication, pornography, masturbation, adultery, prostitution, polygamy, polyamory, voyeurism, exhibitionism, incest, bisexuality, homosexuality, lesbianism, sodomy, pedophilia, intersexuality, pansexuality, bestiality, and zoophilia (*Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:18-25; 19:4-13; 26:8-9; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:10-21, 26; Deuteronomy 5:18; Judges 19:22-26; Matthew 5:27-28; 15:18-20; 19:4-12; Mark 10:4-9; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 11; 6:9-11, 18-20; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17-24; 5:3-14, 21-33; Colossians 3:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Hebrews 13:4; Jude 1:7; Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2,8*).

E. HOPE

First Baptist Church believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ alone (*Matthew 11:29-30; John 3:16-18; Acts 3:19-21; 16:31; Romans 3:19-4:5; 6:23; 10:9-13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 10:13; Ephesians 2:1-10; Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16*). We believe that God's grace can wipe the slate of guilt and sin, though the consequences may still be incurred.

First Baptist Church believes that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (*Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31; Romans 12:10; Jude 1:22-23.*) 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 First Baptist Church (*Ephesians 4:29, 30; 5:4; Colossians 3:8; 4:6.*)

First Baptist Church believes that we must preserve our function and integrity as the local Body of Christ, and that we must provide a biblical role model to First Baptist Church's members and the community. The belief and practice of these Articles of Faith are necessary to accomplish our religious mission, goals and purpose. Behavior or counter-witnessing that believes or practices otherwise will impede and burden our integrity and religious mission.

It is imperative that all persons employed by First Baptist Church in any capacity, all members, and all who serve as volunteers, affirm and adhere to this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality to qualify for and maintain membership and/or involvement with the ministry of First Baptist Church (*Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22*). Any person failing to affirm, believe, and adhere to our Articles of Faith including this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality shall be subject to the admonition of the pastors, the discipline of the church, and ultimately removal from the church according to the instructions of our Lord in Scripture (*Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 16:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-11*).

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. COVENANT OF MEMBERS

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour and to profess faith in Him, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We, the members of the First Baptist Church of Gallipolis, Ohio, engage by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid back-biting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and other harmful substances; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

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

SECTION 2. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR MEMBERS

While the Bible does not provide us with a Biblical treatise on membership per se, there is enough evidence in Scripture to suggest that some form of membership was practiced and necessary for the church's operation.

- A. Scripture commands the expectations of church discipline (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:14,15) through which people are removed from the fellowship of the church. Without visibly identifiable membership, there is no way to implement these commands.
- B. Scripture gives evidence that the early local church voted for some actions (Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:1-6; 1 Corinthians 5:4 – 6:8; 2 Corinthians 2:6).
- C. Scripture gives evidence that the early local church kept some lists associated with members, particularly those for whom the church was responsible (Acts 6:1-3; 1 Timothy 5:3-12).
- D. Scripture gives expectations for church leaders, both pastors (elders) and deacons (Acts 6:1-7; 20:18-35; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5) and commands Christians to submit to their leaders (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 13:17). If membership were not identifiable, leadership is not responsible to a particular group.
- E. Scripture gives allusions of the local church being a body

(Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31), building (1 Corinthians 3:9-23; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-6), a brotherhood/family (Ephesians 1:5; 1 Timothy 3:15; 5:1, 2; 6:1,2) and a flock (Acts 20:28, 29; 1 Peter 5:2-4). The parts of the body, the stones of the building, the members of the family, and the sheep of the flock all have a visibly identifiable relationship to the corporate nature of the allusions.

SECTION 3. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERS

A.. To qualify for membership in First Baptist Church, a person must possess:

1. Salvation. One who professes whole-hearted belief in the Lord Jesus Christ's gospel,
2. Articulation. One who can articulate Jesus' gospel,
3. Evidence. One whose life gives evidence of faith and repentance,
4. Baptism. One who has been baptized by immersion, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration,
5. Attendance. One who is committed to the actual fellowship of our church in our services,
6. Statement of Faith. One who agrees to joyfully submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith of First Baptist Church,
7. Covenant. One who promises to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant of First Baptist Church,
8. Constitution. One who is willing to abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of First Baptist Church,
9. Direction. One who is willing to join in the direction of

First Baptist Church, and

10. Desire. One who individually desires and requests to be a member of First Baptist Church.

B. The pastors (elders), shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as they deem appropriate. In all provisions concerning membership in which pastors (elder) are mentioned, if the office of pastor is vacant, deacons may substitute for pastors.

SECTION 4. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

A. Process of Membership

1. Personal Obligations. All persons requesting membership into First Baptist Church must:
 - a. Meet the "Qualifications for Members" as stated above,
 - b. Attend a Membership Class,
 - c. Articulate the Gospel to at least one of the pastors, and
 - d. Give a satisfactory personal testimony of salvation to at least one of the pastors.
2. Church Action. To be admitted into church membership, all applicants for membership shall be recommended by the pastors (elders) and accepted by vote of the members of First Baptist Church at any regular or special meeting of the members.

B. Means of Membership. A person may be received by satisfactorily meeting the qualifications and completing the

reception process listed above. A person may be received into the fellowship by one of the following ways:

1. Personal profession of faith
2. Letter of recommendation/transfer. Members from other churches holding the same faith may be received by letter of recommendation and dismissal from their respective churches.
3. Restoration. Any member who has been removed from membership in First Baptist Church by discipline or non-attendance may, upon confession of his or her errors, making satisfactory explanation to the church, giving satisfactory evidence of repentance, and reinitiating their pursuit of membership, be restored.

SECTION 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

- A. To continue to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ's gospel.
- B. To continue to agree to joyfully submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith of First Baptist Church.
- C. To continue to promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant of First Baptist Church.
- D. To continue to be willing to abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of First Baptist Church.
- E. To walk worthy of our calling, and live distinctly so that the world will see our good works and have cause to glorify God (Matthew 5:13-16; Ephesians 4:1, 17; 5:15; 1 Peter 2:11, 12).
- F. To walk together in Christian love, purity, and unity realizing that we shall differ among ourselves in our

present understanding of parts of God's Word; we shall endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (John 13:34-35; Colossians 3:12-17; Ephesians 4:3, 5:2).

- G. To endeavor to be devoted to the reception and application of the teaching God's Word, to regular fellowship with God's people, to participation in the Lord's Table, and to prayer (Acts 2:42).
- H. To contribute, as the Lord directs, to the financial support of the Church, the relief of the needy and evangelism of all people (1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 9.)
- I. To exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in all our activities and relationships (Galatians 5:19-26).
- J. To strive for the advancement of the gospel among the lost by, word, example, and prayer (Colossians 4:2-6).
- K. To make every reasonable effort to faithfully attend the meetings of the church (Hebrews 10:24, 25).
- L. To submit to and pray for the leadership (Hebrews 13:17-18).
- M. To serve the family of believers with the talents and spiritual gifts that God has given (1 Peter 4:10,11).

SECTION 6. MINOR MEMBERS

Those joining the church as children will attend the membership class when mature as directed by the church. They are entitled to vote in church business meetings if they have attained the age of 18, which makes them no longer minors (children).

SECTION 7. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- A. Any member consistently teaching or insisting on holding false doctrine, persistently conducting himself or herself in a manner inconsistent with Biblical teaching, persisting in disturbing the unity or preaching of the church, or failing to attend services for more than three months without just cause (college education, military service, extended ministry, temporary relocation, extended illness or age), shall be subject to the admonition of the pastors (elders) and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Scripture (Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 16:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 1:8, 9; 6:1, 2; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19, 20; 5:19, 20; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:17, 18; Titus 3:10,11; 2 John 7-11). The person shall be dealt with in the following manner.
1. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. It is the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of an erring member's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct the erring member in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1.
 2. If the erring member does not heed this warning, the warning member shall again go to the erring member

accompanied by one or two other members as witnesses to warn and correct, seeking repentance and restoration. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination, and exercised in a spirit of humility. Matthew 18:16; Galatians 6:1.

3. No matter should be heard by the pastors and deacons of the church unless the steps outlined in 1 & 2 above have been taken, except in the case of public offense.
4. If the erring member still refuses to heed the warning, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the pastors, who, upon careful and prayerful investigation, shall tell it to the church encouraging the congregation to pray for the repentance and restoration of the erring member and make an effort personally to go to the offending member seeking that member's restoration. Matthew 18:17a.
5. If the erring member refuses to heed the warnings of the pastors and the church, he or she shall be dismissed from the church by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. Matthew 18:17b
6. The person shall thereafter be notified by letter of action of the church.
7. The congregation shall be encouraged to pray for the repentance and restoration of the erring member. All contact with him or her from that point forward must be specifically for the sake of restoration (except family members). Pursuant to the Scriptures, the

removed individual shall be treated as an unbeliever.
Matthew 18:17c; 1 Corinthians 5:11.

8. There shall be no appeal of the discipline process or the dismissal to any court.
 9. The discipline process will continue to conclusion even if the erring member leaves the church or otherwise seeks to withdraw from membership.
- B. The action to remove a member by church discipline shall ordinarily, but not necessarily, be at the recommendation of the pastors (elders). All questions herein will be decided by the pastors.
- C. Church discipline will include admonition by the pastors or congregation, removal from any office currently held, suspension from communion, and excommunication (removal from the church roll) (Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5).
- D. The purpose of such discipline should be for:
1. The repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22);
 2. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians

- 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 (note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders); 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25);
3. For the purity of the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelations 21:2);
 4. For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10); and
 5. Supremacy of the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

SECTION 8. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

Since congregational action is required for a person to become a member, congregational action is also required for termination of a person's membership (except for death), by the present active members. Members will be removed in the following ways:

- A. The physical death of the member.
- B. Request of the member. A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the pastors (elders). The church shall have authority to refuse a

member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline or for any other Biblical reason.

C. Letter of Recommendation/Transfer. When it is requested and upon recommendation of the pastors (elders), the church may grant to a departing member in good standing, a letter of dismissal to the fellowship of another church of like faith (Acts 18:27; Romans 16:1,2; 1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 3:1; Galatians 2:9). When such letter has been granted, the church Clerk shall remove the name from the record. If a letter of recommendation is not approved by First Baptist Church, the church clerk shall write a letter notifying the requesting church of such and shall remove the name from the record. No letter may be given to a member who is at the time under the corrective discipline of the church. The pastors may refuse to grant a letter of transfer to any church, which is, in their judgment, disloyal to the gospel (Jude 3).

D. Joining to another church. No member of this church may hold membership in another church. If any member united in membership with another church, that person's membership will be terminated.

E. Non-attendance. If a member habitually absents himself from the stated meetings of the church for more than three months without valid reason

(college education, military service, extended ministry, temporary relocation, extended illness or age), or if due to relocation he ceases to maintain a vital contact with the church, he will be contacted by the church in a manner similar to the church disciple section mentioned above; if his attendance and/or interest in the church is not renewed, he will be removed from membership. If this person applies again for membership, the membership process set forth in this document will again be followed.

F. Church Discipline. Membership may be terminated by at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members (Matthew 18:17-20).

ARTICLE V ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION 1. SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School, being a vital part of the church's work being created by it, is therefore subject to the church. Its purpose shall be to study and teach the Bible and make it relevant to contemporary life with the desired result that all members will be saved, join the church, experience sustained growth, and become active in Christian service.

The Sunday School shall have a Superintendent duly elected by the church as provided for elsewhere in this document. The Superintendent shall recruit teachers and officers to serve the Sunday School with the Deacons' and Pastors' approval.

Sunday School teachers and officers must be members of this

church in good and regular standing and approved by the Deacon Board. With the approval of the Deacons, any person sound in doctrine may be invited to teach as a temporary guest teacher, even though not a member of this church.

The Sunday School literature is subject to review and approval by the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 2. YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

All youth organizations, organized as a ministry of this church, being a vital part of its work, and being created by it, are therefore subject to the church.

The purpose of all Youth Groups shall be to aid parents in edifying and evangelizing young people and to provide Christian service opportunities for them.

All youth leaders and workers must be approved by the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 3. THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Name: The name of the Christian school shall be Ohio Valley Christian School (OVCS).

Nature: Being created by the church in order to help it fulfill its purposes, the Christian School is an integral and vital part of the ministry of the church and is therefore subject to the church through its organizational structures.

Purpose: The mission of OVCS is to help parents, regardless of race or religious creed, to carry out the requirements of God to teach their children Biblically. It provides high quality, coeducational, Christian education in a day school on the elementary and secondary levels with a college preparatory emphasis, which seeks to develop qualified average and above

average students spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically so that they contribute to society as a person with Biblical moral integrity. Students are taught in a Biblically integrated perspective which seeks to lead each student to a voluntary commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice.

Organization: OVCS is operated as a nonprofit educational ministry and shall be administered by an educational administrator as provided for elsewhere in this document, under the guidance of the Christian School Board. The Christian School Board shall be responsible to hire Christian teachers for the school. It shall produce its own manual of operations in accordance with the policies of the church.

SECTION 4. OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Any organization may be duly formed, within the church and operate under the auspices of the church if its purposes parallel those of the church itself. All such organizations must have the approval of the Deacon Board and shall be self-governing, but are subject to the control of the church in accordance with this document.

ARTICLE VI THE OFFICIAL CHURCH FAMILY

SECTION 1. NAMES OF OFFICERS

The following officers, who shall accede to office according to this constitution, shall be the official church family: Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), Educational Administrator, Deacons, Trustees, Christian School Board, Missionary Committee, Deaconesses, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Missionary Treasurer, Music Director, Clerk, Sunday School

Superintendent, Head Usher and Assistant Head Usher, and such others as the church from time to time shall deem necessary.

SECTION 2. QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

No person shall accede to any office who does not demonstrate high standards of Christian character and who is unwilling to subscribe wholeheartedly to the Doctrinal Statement and the Church Covenant and agree to abide by the Church Constitution. All prospective nominees for office shall be asked by the nominating committee concerning their acceptance and support of them. If any officer should during his term of office refuse to subscribe to them, his tenure of office shall immediately and automatically cease. This section applies equally to the Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), Educational Administrator, and all other officers of the church.

Upon retirement or removal from any office, the holder of that office shall deliver to the successor, or the chairman of the appropriate board, all records, files, and/or other papers belonging to the church and shall present the same with all contents complete to the date of surrender of such documents. If an office is vacated before the term is over, the person on the ballot with the next highest number of votes from the last church election shall be asked to fill the office the remainder of the term. When this route is exhausted, the Deacons will nominate a person to fill the office and the name shall be taken before the church for approval.

SECTION 3. PASTORAL STAFF

The Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), and Educational Administrator shall meet the qualifications listed in *I Timothy 3:1-7*. They shall be called by vote of the church for an indefinite period of time in a business session called for that purpose and duly announced in two Sunday services immediately prior to the meeting. The

minimum affirmative vote for the issuance of a call for a pastoral staff member shall be seventy-five percent of all ballots cast. The vote shall be by secret ballot.

The duty of the Pastor shall be to minister the Word of God and the ordinances, to exercise general oversight and coordination upon all church ministries and interests and to preside at all business sessions of the church except when the business directly concerns himself at which time the chairman of the Board of Deacons shall preside. The specific duties and responsibilities of the Pastor shall be decided upon and communicated by the Board of Deacons. The Pastor shall be a regular member of the Board of Deacons, a regular member of the Christian School Board, and a member ex officio of all other boards and committees of the church. It shall further be his duty to supervise for all prospective members a class of instruction concerning belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, the responsibilities of a Christian and church member, basic Bible principles, and the proper use of this manual.

The duty of the Associate Pastor(s) shall be to assist the Pastor in his general duties. The specific duties and responsibilities of the Associate Pastor(s) shall be decided upon and communicated by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons. These duties shall include the planning, organization, implementation, coordination and record keeping of the Youth Ministry, and the supervision of the Sunday School. He shall be responsible to work with all leaders of the various organizations under these areas in recruiting workers, training workers, implementing programs, and securing approval from the Deacons as provided for in this Constitution. The Associate Pastor shall also be a regular member of the Board of Deacons and the Christian School Board and shall work with the Educational Administrator to coordinate the specific aspects of each ministry.

It shall be the duty of the Educational Administrator to carry out the policies made by the Board of Ohio Valley Christian School (OVCS) in the operation of the school. The specific duties and responsibilities of the Educational Administrator shall be decided upon and communicated by the Christian School Board. The Educational Administrator shall be a regular member of the School Board and the Board of Deacons. It shall be his duty to coordinate the specific ministry of the school as it relates to the Church as a whole. He shall seek qualified personnel to recommend to the school board for hiring within the school.

SECTION 4. DEACONS

The Board of Deacons, consisting of seven men, shall be elected from the membership of the church according to the qualifications set down in *I Timothy 3:8-13*. Two shall be elected one year, two the next, and three the next year, each for a three-year term by a majority vote of the church upon recommendation of the nominating committee. After serving one three-year term, an absence of one year from the board shall be required before reelection.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Deacons to share the shepherding of the flock in general oversight and to provide leadership in maintaining programs for continual spiritual growth and personal evangelism. They shall serve as the baptismal committee for men and boys. They shall also act in the capacity of Pulpit committee during any period in which the church is without a pastor, and they shall provide pulpit supply. It shall further be the duty of the Deacon Board to decide for what purposes other than the preaching of the gospel the House of God may be used and to credential any and all individuals and groups functioning within the framework of the church.

No change in the duly established policies and customs of this

church shall be made by any member or members, nor shall any question of such change be brought before any church meeting without knowledge and sanction of the Board of Deacons. Neither shall any solicitation or petition be circulated among the members for any purpose whatsoever without the knowledge and sanction of the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 5. TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees, consisting of seven members of this church, shall be elected with due regard for the high standards of Christian character and fidelity necessary to this office. Two shall be elected one year, two the next, and three the next year, each for a three-year term, by a majority vote of the church upon recommendation of the nominating committee.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Trustees to supervise the treasury and the Treasurer of the church, to appoint tellers to assist the Financial Secretary, to act in an advisory capacity in all financial matters, to approve the recommendations of the Budget Committee, to appoint auditors to examine the Treasurer's books, and to keep the church properties in good repair at all times. The Trustees shall have the authority to hire personnel and purchase equipment for the church. The chairman of the Board of Trustees shall act as the chairman of the corporation in legal matters.

SECTION 6. CHRISTIAN SCHOOL BOARD

The Christian School Board shall consist of three permanent, nonrotating members (the Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Educational Administrator) and four rotating members elected from the membership of the church. The rotating members shall be elected (two one year, one the next, and one the next year, each for a three-year term) upon the recommendation of the nominating committee. Rotating board members may succeed

themselves. In addition, at the unanimous discretion of the School Board, not more than two nonmembers of First Baptist Church may be invited to serve as School Board members for a length of time not to exceed a three year term without rotation. These two School Board members shall not be considered members of the church or part of the official church family. Members of the Christian School Board shall meet high standards of Christian character, agree wholeheartedly with the philosophy of the Christian School, and demonstrate support for the Christian School. It shall be the duty of the Christian School Board to make policies consistent with the policies of the church for the operation of the Christian School. A separate policy manual will be maintained for the school. It shall further be the duty of the Christian School Board to recommend to the church the Educational Administrator who shall be part of the pastoral staff.

SECTION 7. MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

The Missionary Committee, consisting of five members plus the Missionary Treasurer, shall be elected two one year, one the next year, and two the next year by majority vote upon recommendation of the nominating committee. It shall be the duty of the Missionary Committee, upon the Deacon's approval, to plan and implement the missionary program of the church, to regularly present a fresh goal for missionary praying and giving, and to recommend to Deacons for approval new missionaries for support and changes of procedures for selecting and supporting missionaries. The Missionary Treasurer shall also be an additional voting member of the committee.

SECTION 8. DEACONESSES

The Board of Deaconesses, consisting of seven women, shall be elected from the membership of the church according to the qualifications set down in *Romans 16:1-2 and I Timothy 3:11*.

Two shall be elected one year, two the next, and three the next year, for a three-year term, by a majority vote of the church upon recommendation of the nominating committee. It shall be the duty of the Board of Deaconesses to provide supervision for the nurseries during church services, either personally or through volunteers. They will also organize help for bereaved families, make provision for the Lord's Supper, act in the capacity of baptismal committee for ladies and girls, and administer the Fellowship Fund (money given through communion envelopes plus designated gifts).

SECTION 9. CHURCH SECRETARY

The Church Secretary shall be selected by the Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) with the approval of the Deacon and Trustee Boards. The secretary's duties shall include providing secretarial support for the Pastors, Deacons, Trustees, Financial Secretary, and other related duties as determined by the Pastor.

SECTION 10. CHURCH TREASURER

The Church Treasurer shall be elected for a one-year term by a majority vote upon recommendation of the nominating committee. It shall be the duty of the church Treasurer to act as custodian for the general funds of the church, to make disbursements upon the order of the church or its Board of Trustees, and to account all receipts and expenditures. He or she shall make a detailed, fully audited report of the finances of the church for the annual business meeting and shall furnish the Board of Trustees with a statement of the financial condition of the church at the end of each month. The Treasurer shall provide all needed information when the church or Trustees request an audit.

SECTION 11. FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Financial Secretary shall be elected for a one-year term by a majority vote upon recommendation of the nominating committee. It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to account all funds received by the church, to deposit the same in the proper banking account, to maintain accurate records of all such receipts and deposits, and to provide offering envelopes to all members and such others as may request them. The financial Secretary shall provide to anyone requesting it a statement of giving for the year.

SECTION 12. MISSIONARY TREASURER

The Missionary Treasurer shall be a voting member of the Missionary Committee and shall be elected from the membership for a one-year term by majority vote upon recommendation of the nominating committee. The duty of the Missionary Treasurer shall be to act as custodian for the budgeted missionary funds and special missionary funds of the church, to make approved disbursements, and to make account of all receipts and expenditures. He or she shall make a detailed report of the missionary funds for the annual meeting and furnish the Board of Trustees with a statement of the financial condition of the missionary fund at the end of each month.

SECTION 13. MUSIC DIRECTOR

The Music Director shall be selected from the membership of the church by the Pastor for an indefinite period of time, with the approval of the Deacon Board. The duties of the Music Director shall include leading congregational singing, leading the choir, and other related duties as determined by the Pastor.

SECTION 14. CHURCH CLERK

The Church Clerk shall be elected from the membership for a one-year term by a majority vote upon recommendation of the nominating committee. It shall be the duty of the Church Clerk to keep a careful and accurate record of all business transacted by the church, to keep permanent record of the church membership, and to act as the official correspondent to the church, writing all letters of dismissal or recommendation.

SECTION 15. SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

The Sunday School Superintendent shall be elected from the membership for a one-year term by the majority vote upon recommendation of a nominating committee. The duty of the S.S. Superintendent shall be, under the leadership of the Pastor, to assist the Associate Pastor in the organization, implementation, coordination, and record keeping of the S.S. Bible classes. The Superintendent shall have general supervision of the teachers and officers of the Sunday School and may appoint officers, superintendents, teachers and workers upon the approval of the Deacon Board. The Superintendent shall be in charge of receipts and disbursements of the S.S. offerings and shall provide reports monthly and yearly.

SECTION 16. HEAD USHER AND ASSISTANT HEAD USHER

The Head Usher and the Assistant Head Usher shall be elected from the membership for a one-year term by a majority vote upon recommendation of the nominating committee. The duty of the Head Usher and the Assistant shall be to assist the Pastor in the friendly reception of members and visitors to church services, to help seat them, to aid in the taking up of offerings, and to rotate among the ushers the duty of patrolling the building during services for security. The Head Usher and the

Assistant Head Usher are responsible for each service and for maintaining proper decorum in dress and manner.

SECTION 17. INDEMNIFICATION

All those serving in this local church shall be indemnified against all expenses actually or necessarily incurred except in those cases where such worker shall be liable for gross negligence or willful misconduct in the performance of duty.

ARTICLE VII TEMPORARY COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The nominating committee, consisting of five persons, shall be chosen from the membership of the church two months prior to the annual business meeting by nomination and election from the floor. At least two of the five shall currently be on the Deacon Board. It shall be their duty to carefully and prayerfully recommend persons for all offices to be filled, having asked each one concerning his acceptance and support of the Constitution of this church. Their list of nominations shall be approved by the Board of Deacons and shall be posted not less than two weeks prior to the business meeting for election the first Wednesday night in December. Upon the posting of the approved list of nominations, the nominating process for the upcoming election shall be terminated.

SECTION 2. BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Budget Committee, consisting of five persons shall be chosen from the membership of the church two months prior to the annual business meeting by nomination and election from the floor. At least two of the five shall currently be on the Trustee Board. It shall be their duty to appraise the income of the church and to reappraise recommendations for the budget for

the coming year. Their report, approved by the Board of Trustees, shall be posted not less than two weeks prior to the annual business meeting.

ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS AND BUSINESS

SECTION 1. SERVICES

On the first day of the week the church shall meet for the public worship of Almighty God. At least once each week, it shall be the duty of the members of this church to meet for prayer, testimony, and Bible study.

SECTION 2. LORD'S SUPPER

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed by the church upon the first Lord's day of each month, except upon special occasions when it may be changed by the Pastor and Board of Deacons.

SECTION 3. YEAR-END MEETING

A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The annual election of officers shall be the first Sunday night of December by secret ballot. The ballot shall be posted two weeks prior to the vote, thereby terminating the nominating process.

B. APPROVAL OF BUDGET

Church and missionary budgets shall be submitted for vote as provided in this document. The budget shall be posted two weeks prior to the vote.

SECTION 4. ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting of the church shall be held on the third Sunday of January of each year, at which time all departments shall present written yearly reports. Other business may also be considered at this meeting. January 1st shall be considered the beginning of the church year.

SECTION 5. QUORUM AND VOTING PROCEDURES

Those members present at a duly called meeting in good and regular standing shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no voting by proxy. All members shall disclose any possible conflict of interest at the earliest practical time and abstain from voting. A secret ballot shall be used for calling and dismissing Pastors, buying and selling church real property, electing church officers, and at any other time a majority vote calls for a secret ballot. The church has the discretion to ask nonmembers and any nonvoting inactive members to leave at any business meeting.

SECTION 6. SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or the Deacons of the church at any time. Notice of such meetings shall be given from the pulpit and in the bulletin for two Sundays prior to the meeting. Any member may submit a written request for a special business meeting to the Deacons. It shall be left to the discretion of the Deacons whether or not to call such requested meeting.

In the presentation of any matter affecting the polity of this church, whether it be a proposed amendment to this constitution, or the calling of a Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Educational Administrator, the members shall be notified by written church announcements and verbal announcements at least two weeks prior to the date of vote.

SECTION 7. FINANCES

All members are expected to follow the Biblical pattern of giving by giving voluntarily, proportionally, cheerfully, liberally, and regularly to the financial support of the church. No money shall at any time be raised for the support of the church by means of suppers, bazaars, or sales of any kind. This restriction on sales shall not apply to the sale of church property (ARTICLE VIII, SECTION 5) or to the Christian School due to the specific nature of its ministry and means of support.

SECTION 8. RULES OF ORDER

Procedures for all business meetings shall be according to Robert's Rules of Order. If and when this constitution is in conflict with Robert's Rules of Order, this constitution shall take precedence.

ARTICLE IX DISSOLUTION

The church shall be dissolved when its active membership votes to declare dissolution. In the event of such dissolution, the property of the church, real and personal, and its other assets shall be given to some other Christian ministry of like faith and practice which is engaged in like purposes.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

These rules and regulations may be amended at any time, at any duly called business meeting of the church, by the favorable vote of two-thirds of the ballots cast. Notice of such proposed amendment or any matter affecting the polity of this church (including the calling of Pastors) shall be given publicly upon two separate occasions of Sunday worship immediately prior to

the date of vote both in written church announcements and verbally.

SECTION 2.

PRIORITY OF THIS DOCUMENT

All by-laws, regulations, rules and resolutions previously adopted by this church, not consistent with the regulations set down in this document, are hereby repealed.

Amended and Revised on February 13, 2022