

**THE CONSTITUTION  
OF  
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
EDNA, TEXAS**

Approved December 8, 2013

**PREAMBLE**

We establish this constitution to express the principles of our faith  
and to guide this church in an orderly manner.

**I. OUR NAME**

The name of this church is **First Baptist Church**.  
We are located in Edna, Jackson County, Texas.

**II. OUR PURPOSE AS A CHURCH**

- A. IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**, we are to love Him through faithfulness in worship and prayer, by obeying His Word, and by becoming more like Christ
- B. IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FELLOW BELIEVERS**, we are to love one another as God has loved us by helping one another, by maintaining Christ like fellowship with one another, and by equipping and encouraging one another to do the work of God.
- C. IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD**, we are to be verbal and living testimony of God's salvation by making Christ known to those who do not know Him.

**III. OUR COVENANT<sup>1</sup> WITH GOD AND WITH EACH OTHER**

Because God First loved us through His Son Jesus Christ,  
And because He has poured out His love into our hearts by His Spirit,  
We, the First Baptist Church family,  
Joyfully enter into this covenant with God and with each other.

- A. WE AGREE THAT IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, WE WILL...**
  - 1.** Love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.
  - 2.** Become more like Christ in our values, attitudes, words and behavior.
  - 3.** Gather together faithfully to worship Him.
  - 4.** Grow in our relationship and fellowship with Him through frequent prayer and the regular study of His Word.
  - 5.** Teach, cherish and obey His Word as the only standard and authority for our faith and conduct.
  - 6.** Serve Him faithfully by helping to meet spiritual, physical and other needs in the lives of other people.
  - 7.** Testify that Jesus Christ is God's only provision for eternal life and work to bring others to faith in Him.

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<sup>1</sup> 1. Covenant: an agreement or promise made by one party to another, or by two parties to each other, to accomplish some purpose, goal or action.

8. Faithfully and cheerfully give our tithes and offerings to Him through His church.

**B. WE AGREE THAT IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER, WE WILL...**

1. Love each other as God has loved us.
2. Pray for, serve, encourage, bear with, forgive, admonish and accept each other.
3. Share each other's joys and bear one another's burdens and sorrows.
4. Build our marriages and families on the solid foundation of Christian love and biblical values.
5. Live in Christ like manner before our children so they may be led to know, love and obey Him.
6. Be good and faithful stewards of the resources and abilities God has given us.

**C. WE AGREE THAT IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WHO DO NOT KNOW CHRIST, WE WILL...**

1. Live in a Christ like manner before them so they can see the difference Jesus makes in us.
2. Seek to lead them to faith in Jesus.
3. Seek to provide those beyond our reach with the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Christ and be saved through our prayerful and financial support of the work of foreign, home and state missionaries.

The scriptural principles which provide the foundation for this covenant are detailed in the following section, *What We Believe*. As a body, we affirm and support these principles.

## **IV. WHAT WE BELIEVE<sup>2</sup>**

**A. WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD**

1. **His Nature and Attributes:** We know there is one eternal and infinitely perfect God, because He has revealed Himself to us through His Word. God exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the Godhead, there is perfect unity in essence and in eternal purpose, yet the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct in personal attributes and activities. Though we understand God's revelation of Himself only in part, what we know is enough to move us to love, honor and serve Him as the triune God He is. God knows all, possesses all power and is present everywhere. He never changes in character, nature or purpose. He is holy, just, good and faithful. God is love.

**a. God the Father ...**

1. Is Spirit, not flesh; He actively seeks people to worship Him in spirit and in truth.
2. Created the world from nothing by the power of His Word.
3. Sustains His creation and creatures through His providential care.

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<sup>2</sup> Introductory Note: The Bible is the only authority and standard for our faith and conduct. This confession of our beliefs is an attempt to express and summarize our understanding of some of the key teachings of the Scriptures. The purposes of this confession are (1) to aid members of this church family in understanding and applying God's Word to their lives; (2) to assist those considering membership in this church, whether saved or lost, to know what we believe and (3) to help those who do not know Christ to gain wisdom from God which will lead them to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ. Two appendices (*Scripture References*, and *Glossary of Christian Words*) follow the main portion of this confession. These are designed to be used as aids to studying this confession and in verifying the statements made in it.

*What We Believe*, like *The Baptist Faith and Message*, does not take the place of Scriptures; it is not a creed to which any believer must subscribe. God has given each of us the freedom and ability to understand, to interpret and to apply the Scriptures to our lives. The fact that sincere believers differ in their understanding of some teachings of Scripture (divorce and remarriage, the nature and timing of Christ's return, for example) is reflected in several sections of this confession. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate Teacher of Truth – the individual believer is accountable to God, not to this body, for his or her understanding and application of His Truth.

4. Guides the flow of human history in accord with His eternal purpose to redeem mankind from sin.
5. Is Father to all who become His children through faith in His Son.

**b. God the Son ...**

1. Took on a human body when conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. Uniquely the Son of God, Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man.
2. Lived without sin throughout His earthly life, though He was tempted in all points as we are.
3. Gave His life on the cross as a sacrifice to God the Father for our sin. He died and was buried, then arose physically from the grave on third day.
4. Appeared to His disciples over a period of forty days before ascending back to Heaven.
5. Is man's only Way of salvation from sin and its consequences.
6. Sits enthroned at the right hand of God, where He, as our Advocate, intercedes for us.
7. Will return physically to earth in great glory and power at the end of the age. Only God knows the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and the details regarding other events (rapture and millennium, for example) related to His coming and the end of this age. Though we may differ in our understanding of what the Bible teaches regarding these events, of this we are sure: Jesus is coming. The basis for our fellowship with each other is Christ, not our understanding of these events. We are to remain in a state of readiness for His return, which is the blessed hope of every believer.

**c. God the Holy Spirit ...**

1. Is a person, not an impersonal "it", "force", "power" or "influence".
2. Testifies to the lost about Christ through God's Word and seeks to bring them to salvation.
3. Causes all who believe in Christ to be born again (made alive spiritually) and have eternal life.
4. Indwells (comes to live in) and seals every believer and assures us that we belong to God forever.
5. Guides, develops, exhorts and empowers us for Christian living and service.
6. Teaches us and reminds us of the eternal truths of the Word of God.

2. **His Word:** The Old and New Testaments are the inerrant, inspired, unchangeable and eternal Word of God. The Bible is God's tool to reveal Himself, His ways and His purposes to us, to bring us to faith in Jesus Christ, to transform and renew our lives, to equip us for service to Christ and to prepare us for eternity. The Bible is our sole and all-sufficient rule of Christian faith, practice and authority. It is to be interpreted in the light of the Person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

**3. His Judgments**

- a. Physical death is the consequence of sin. God has appointed that every person die once. At death the spirit/soul of man is separated from the body. The body is returned to the grave to await the resurrection. The spirit/soul of each believer is taken immediately to be with Christ (the Bible does not teach "soul sleep"). The spirit/soul of every unbeliever is kept by God for the Day of Judgment.
- b. God has appointed a Day on which Jesus Christ will judge the world in righteousness. Before the final judgment, there will be a bodily resurrection of all mankind. The final judgment will have no bearing on whether any person will spend eternity in Heaven or Hell. Every person's eternal destination is fixed before death, according to his or her response to God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ.

- c. We who have believed in Christ will either be rewarded by Christ, or will lose reward, according to our stewardship of the Gospel and other resources He entrusted to us. We will spend eternity with the Lord in the place He has prepared for us. There we will see Christ, face to face, as He is.
- d. Those who die without faith in Christ will be judged, then will be separated from God and punished forever in Hell. Scripture does not teach any opportunity to be saved from sin after death (purgatory, reincarnation, baptism for the dead, etc.).

## B. WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD'S CHURCH

1. **Our Nature:** First Baptist Church is a local, visible body of born-again, baptized believers in Jesus Christ.
  - a. We are built as a church on the foundation of Jesus Christ, through the Word of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - b. We are independent of any human or denominational hierarchy, self-governing under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and accountable only to Him. As part of His world-wide church, we voluntarily cooperate with other churches, associations and conventions to further the work of Christ.
  - c. We are the people of God, purchased by Him with the blood of His Son Jesus.
  - d. Collectively, we are the body of Christ; individually, we are members of His body.
  - e. We are the family of God, adopted by Him as His children, through faith in Jesus Christ.
  - f. We are all saints (holy ones), the temples of the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us.
2. **Our Worship:** Our highest privilege and responsibility is to love the Lord or God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. As a community of faith, we willingly gather together at His house to worship Him on Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection, and at other times. We are *all* priests who offer up spiritual sacrifices (worship, praise, thanksgiving, prayer, confession, tithes and offerings, for example) to God through Jesus Christ, our High Priest. We do not need the help of a human intermediary (priest or pope, for example) to approach God in prayer.
3. **Our Mission:** We have been entrusted by God with the Good News (Gospel) of Christ and are to proclaim it to the uttermost parts of the earth, beginning in Edna. Our dual aim is to bring those who have no relationship with God to faith in Jesus Christ, and to enable all who do believe in Christ to become His disciples. Our power to accomplish our mission comes from Christ, not ourselves. *All* of us are to be vessels – witnesses – through whom God touches the lives of others.
4. **Our Ministries:** God has placed us in the body of Christ as it pleased Him, so we might serve Him under His direction. We are *all* to be ministers (servants) who labor to meet the needs in the lives of other people. When every member does his or her share of the work of Christ, the body (church) grows and is built up in love.
  - a. To enable us to accomplish His purpose in the world, God gives each of us, as He wills, one or more spiritual gifts, or special abilities beyond our normal human abilities. These gifts (teaching, leadership, giving, service, mercy, faith, exhortation, wisdom, for example) are given to us for the good of the body, not for the benefit of the individual member. We are to use these gifts in particular ministries of helping others (bereavement, jail ministry, hospital visitation, benevolence, new member encouragement, evangelism, teaching, for example) as good stewards of the grace of God.

- b. We believe that God gave the “sign” gifts (speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, healings and miracles) to the Apostles and their followers so that Jesus Christ might be confirmed to be the Son of God, Savior, Christ and Lord. These gifts were used to validate the truth of the Gospel in its infant stages and to enable the conversion of thousands of unbelievers to faith in Christ while the New Testament Scriptures were being completed. The gift of speaking in tongues is a Biblical enablement which included the ability to speak unlearned foreign languages. There is no Biblical evidence to show that the exercise of this gift, nor any other gift, is necessary for the assurance of salvation.
- 5. **Our Leaders:** God has set apart our pastor, staff and deacons to be servants of and examples to His church. Our pastor, assisted by our staff and deacons, oversees God’s work through His church, tends to our spiritual and other needs, and equips us for our work of ministry to others. Though our pastor, staff and deacons alone are ordained, we elect many other workers, teachers and leaders to assist in the work of Christ through First Baptist Church.
- 6. **Our Ordinances**
  - a. We **baptize**, by immersion in water, those who have believed in Christ, according to the command of Christ. Scriptural baptism is required for membership in First Baptist Church. The baptism of a believer pictures (1) the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and (2) the believer’s death to an old way of life, the beginning of new life in Christ and faith in the believer’s future resurrection from the dead. Baptism in water also depicts the washing away of sin from the heart of the believer. Baptism does not secure salvation, nor is it for those who are too young to personally believe in Christ.
  - b. Through the **Lord’s Supper** we remember Christ’s Sacrifice on our behalf, anticipate His second coming from heaven for us and renew our fellowship with Him. Christ is the Host of His Supper – we are His guests. Only born-again, baptized believers are to partake of His Supper. His Table is to be approached prayerfully and reverently. The bread of the Supper symbolizes His body nailed to the cross; the wine symbolizes the blood He shed for our sins.
- 7. **Our Brotherhood:** Through our relationship with God in Christ, we have fellowship with each other and are members of each other in His church. Our relationship to Christ as His disciples is shown as we love, serve, encourage, pray for, bear with, forgive, admonish, support and accept one another.
- 8. **Our Stewardship:** All we are and all we have is by the grace of God. We have a spiritual debt to Him, to each other, and to the world to be good stewards of our time, possessions, abilities and spiritual gifts. We give our tithes and offerings to the Lord, through His church, so that others may come to know Christ and that we may mature as His disciples. Our giving is a matter of the heart – we give faithfully, cheerfully, willingly and generously in proportion to His blessing to us. The Lord loves a cheerful giver.
- 9. **Our Families:** With the creation, God established the family as the primary unit of human society. The strength of First Baptist Church and of our community lies in the strength of our families.
  - a. God established marriage as a sacred union of one man and one woman, who commit themselves to a lifelong and exclusive relationship of love, companionship and service to one another.

- b. Marriage is to be entered into very carefully and prayerfully as both individuals seek to understand God's will for their lives. The Bible teaches that those who have trusted Christ are to marry other believers so the two can walk together with Him and serve Him in common faith. The marriage of a believer to an unbeliever falls short of God's ideal for marriage and creates an unhealthy stress in the husband-wife and family relationships. When a believer has married an unbeliever or when one partner has been saved after marrying an unbeliever, the prayer and hope of the believing mate must be that his or her spouse will come to know Christ.
- c. Though marriage is a normal and natural relationship between men and woman, singleness is God's will for some individuals. Jesus and others in the Scriptures never married.
- d. Children are God's gift to parents. He has entrusted children to us so that we might raise them to know and love Him and to honor Him by living in obedience to His Word. Children are to learn to honor and obey their parents in the Lord. The Bible teaches that all human life, including the life of unborn babies is sacred. There is no sanction in the Scriptures for the widespread practice of abortion in this country.
- e. God made us sexual beings not just for having children, but also for fulfillment in and strengthening of marital relationships. God designed sexual relationships for marriage between one man and one woman only. Any sexual union outside of marriage, whether heterosexual or homosexual, is sin in His eyes.
- f. Though God made provision for divorce because of the hardness of human hearts, He hates divorce. Divorce falls short of His ideal for marriage, as it ends the marital relationship, tears apart families and weakens His church and society. Though sincere Christians differ on what are valid grounds for divorce, believers should do all that is possible to avoid divorce. Divorce is not an unforgivable sin since God's forgiveness through Christ covers all sin. Sincere Christians also differ about the appropriateness of remarriage after divorce. As in all matters of faith and conduct, the individuals involved must make their own decision, knowing they are accountable to God for the decision made. Those who are widowed are free to remain single or if they desire, to marry another believer.

## C. WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT MAN, SIN AND SALVATION

1. **Man's Creation:** Mankind was created by a special act of God, as the pinnacle and climax of His creation, apart from any process of evolution. We are not divine in any way and will never become God or gods. We were created in the image of God. This image is not physical; rather it is rational, emotional, moral and spiritual. We were made for fellowship with God and are capable of response to God. God has given us the freedom to follow His will and experience the blessings of fellowship with Him, or to go our own way and suffer the temporal and eternal consequences of separation from Him. Every person, whether saved or unsaved, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.
2. **Man's Need of Salvation**
  - a. **Man's fall into Sin:** Adam and Eve were real persons who chose, when tempted by Satan, to disobey God's command. Their sin brought them immediate alienation from God and physical death afterward as God had promised. Through Adam we inherit an inclination to sin – we are *all* sinners by nature. When we become capable of moral action, we willingly do wrong – we are *all* sinners by choice.

- b. **Man's Lostness:** Because God is holy, He hates all sin; because He is just, He must punish our sin. He has decreed that the consequences (or wages) of sin is death. Until the moment of salvation, every person over the "age of accountability"<sup>3</sup> is lost, spiritually dead, separated and alienated from God, being destroyed by sin and condemned to spend eternity in Hell.
- c. **Man's Helplessness:** We can do nothing on our own to save ourselves from condemnation. If we could secure or obtain God's favor by being good or by doing good things (good works, church membership, baptism, keeping the Ten Commandments, tithing, etc.), we could boast before Him about what we did to achieve our own salvation. This God will not allow. We can be saved only in the Way He has provided.

### 3. **God's Provision of Salvation**

- a. **The Eternal Purpose of God:** Before creation, God foresaw both our sin and our need to be saved. Since He desires that no one perish, He purposed to rescue us from condemnation, to bring us into a personal, love relationship with Himself, and to conform us to the likeness (image) of His Son Jesus Christ. In God's heart and mind, Christ was slain on the cross before the world and mankind were created. When the time was right, God accomplished His eternal purpose to redeem us, through His Son Jesus Christ.
- b. **The Love of God:** God resolved that mankind's sin could be forgiven in only one way: One innocent of any sin must die to pay the penalty (that is, be punished) for *all* the sins of *all* mankind. God so loved the world that he sent His Son to the cross for this purpose; Christ so loved us that He willingly laid down His life there in our behalf. Because His death satisfied God's wrath against our sin, God can be just and merciful in fully forgiving *all* who personally repent of (turn from) sin and believe in Christ. Jesus Christ is God's one and only provision for salvation. No person can be reconciled to a right relationship with the Father except through faith in Christ. Any religion which proclaims any other way of attaining salvation or eternal life is offering a false hope to its followers.
- c. **The Grace of God:** We do not deserve forgiveness from God for our sin. Our salvation is solely by the grace, or unmerited favor, of God. God gives His free gift of eternal life to any person who comes to Him through Christ.

- 4. **God's Invitation to Salvation:** We can be saved only because God desires to save every person. The Holy Spirit works to convince us of our guilt and condemnation before God, and to persuade us of our urgent need for God's forgiveness. He seeks to bring sorrow to our hearts for our sinful, self-directed lives, and bids us to turn to God for forgiveness. The Spirit testifies to us of the sole provision God made for our salvation through Jesus Christ. He seeks to lead us to absolute confidence in and

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<sup>3</sup> Notes on the Accountability of Children: Children naturally and willingly do wrong things as they grow up. Parents have the God-given responsibility to help their children, from early childhood, to see their actions from a moral point of view – some behaviors are right and others are wrong. Children need to learn that their behaviors, whether good or bad, affects not only themselves, but also their relationships with others. As children mature, they begin to understand right and wrong (sin) from a spiritual perspective. They become aware of God personally and can understand that the wrong they do separates them from a relationship with God. They can comprehend the basic truths of the Gospel of Christ and learn how those truths relate to them personally. They are able to respond to God and to His offer of salvation, either affirmatively in faith or negatively in unbelief.

The age when a child becomes accountable to God for sin varies with the child. It depends on a number of factors – maturity, age, understanding, upbringing and exposure to the Gospel, for example. Parents must know their children well and be patient with them as they develop morally and spiritually. The true conversion of children to Christ cannot be hurried by parents, but it can be cultivated. Parents must lead their children by teaching and by example – in daily living, in family and other relationships and in involvement in the work and church of Christ. Children who experience the importance of faith in Christ in their parents will be better and more quickly prepared to respond to the Gospel themselves. Parents must also wait on the Lord, that is, trust Him, as He brings their children to the age of accountability and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Until this time and moment, children are provided for within the grace of God.



dependence on Christ as our Savior, and to full submission to Him as Lord and Master of our lives. God offers full forgiveness of sin and His gift of eternal life to *all* people, but gives it only to those who personally receive Christ. He promises that whoever calls upon Him to be saved will be saved.

5. **The New Life of Believers:** At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit makes us alive spiritually in Christ and brings us peace with God. He assures us that we are the children of God and “*joint heirs*” with Jesus Christ. He calls us to live a life worthy of what Jesus did for us and works in us to give us the desire and ability to do what pleases God. We are to earnestly strive to grow in our relationship with God through prayer and through the obedient application of truths of His Word to our daily lives. God has given us everything we need to accomplish His earthly purpose for us and to grow to be like Christ. He has not promised us a life without problems, trials or temptations; nor has He promised us perfect health, material wealth or worldly success. Rather, He promised He will never leave us or forsake us and will enable us to overcome any adversity or temptation and will turn all things we experience in our lives – even the bad – into some manner of blessing for us.

6. **The Security of Believers**

- a. All who are redeemed (saved) by Christ are eternally secure in Christ. Jesus said, “*I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand.*” He keeps us by His power for the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Any verse of Scripture that seems to contradict this truth is to be interpreted in light of what Jesus said.
- b. The Holy Spirit who seals and indwells every true believer is God’s guarantee that we will inherit all He has promised us through Christ, and that God’s work in us will be completed. We will be glorified – made perfect – when God finishes our salvation in Heaven.
- c. Our eternal security gives us no license to sin. We may sin after we are saved through disobedience or neglect. In doing so we grieve the Holy Spirit and bring unnecessary troubles on ourselves and others. That sin hinders our fellowship with God, but our relationship with Him remains intact. When we turn from and confess our sin, God faithfully forgives and cleanses us and restores us to unhindered fellowship with Him.
- d. The evidence we are truly saved is not found in our “profession of faith”, “baptism”, “church membership”, “service” or in “special gifts” of the Spirit (speaking in tongues, for example). We show we are truly Christians through the visible development of the life of Jesus Christ (His words, deeds, attitudes, values, purpose) in us, by the presence and power of His Spirit.

## APPENDIX I

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

#### A. WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD (Pages 2 – 4 of Constitution)

1. **His Nature and Attributes:** One God: Deuteronomy 4:39, Isaiah 44:6; Eternal: Psalm 90: 1-2, Revelation 1:8; Perfect: Deuteronomy 32:4, Psalm 18:30, Matthew 5:48; Trinity: Matthew 28:19, John 14:26, 15:26, 1 Peter 1:2; All-Knowing: Hebrews 4:13, 1 John 3:20; All-Powerful: Job 42:2, Isaiah 43:13, Matthew 19:26; All-Present: Psalm 139:7-12, Jeremiah 23:23-24, Acts 17:27; Unchanging: Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17; Holy: Exodus 15:11, Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 15:4; Just: John 5:30, Romans 2:2, 3:19-26; Good: Psalm 25:8, Matthew 19:17, Romans 2:4; Faithful: Deuteronomy 7:9, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Hebrews 6:18; Love: John 3:16, 1 John 4:7-10, 4:19, 2 Thessalonians 3:5
  - a. **God the Father:** Spirit: John 4:24; Creator: Genesis 1:1, Acts 17:24, Hebrews 11:3; Care: Matthew 6:25-32, Luke 12:7, 1 Peter 5:7; Guides History: Revelation 1:19, Romans 1:2; Purpose: 1 Timothy 2:4, John 3:16, Ephesians 3:11, Romans 8:29-30; Father: Romans 8:15, Galatians 3:26
  - b. **God the Son:** Deity: John 1:1; Humanity: Galatians 4:4, John 1:14; Conceived of the Spirit: Luke 1:31-35; Fully God and Fully Man: Romans 1:3, 8:3, 1 Timothy 3:16; Sinless: 2 Corinthians 5:21; Tempted: Hebrews 4:15; Sacrifice: Galatians 1:4, Hebrews 10:8-10; Death, Burial and Resurrection: 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Appearances: Acts 1:3, 1 Corinthians 15:5-8; Only Way: John 14:6, Acts 4:12; God's Right-Hand: Romans 8:34; Intercessor: Hebrews 7:25, 1 John 2:1; Physical Return: Acts 1:11, Revelation 22:12-13, Titus 2:13, Luke 12:40, Matthew 24:27, 24:36
  - c. **God the Holy Spirit:** Person: John 14:16-17, 14:26, 16:13; Purpose: John 15:26, 16:7-11; Gives Life: John 6:63, Romans 8:11; Indwells: 1 Corinthians 3:16, Galatians 4:6, 1 John 4:13; Guides and Develops: John 16:13, Galatians 5:22-23; Teacher: John 14:26, 16:13, 1 John 2:27, 1 Corinthians 2:9-16
2. **His Word:** Eternal: Psalm 119:89, Matthew 24:35, 1 Peter 1:25; Inspired by God: 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21; Powerful: Romans 1:16, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Acts 20:32; Sacred: Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Life-Giving: Matthew 4:4, Psalm 119:50, Romans 15:4; Perfect: Psalm 19:7; Truth: Psalm 119:160, John 8:31-32
3. **His Judgments**
  - a. Death and the Consequences of Sin: Romans 6:23, Hebrews 9:27; Separation: Ecclesiastes 12:7; Destination: Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 5:6, 2 Peter 2:9
  - b. Day of Judgment: Acts 17:30-31, John 5:28-29, Luke 13:3, Matthew 25:31-46; Destination Fixed: Luke 16:26
  - c. Judgment of Believers: 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Romans 14:12, 2 Corinthians 5:9-10
  - d. Judgment of Unbelievers: Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8

#### B. WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD'S CHURCH (Pages 4 – 6 of Constitution)

1. **Our Nature:** Foundation: 1 Corinthians 3:11, Matthew 7:24-25; Independent, Cooperative: Colossians 1:18, Acts 11:29-30, 2 Corinthians 8:1-6; Purchased: 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 Corinthians 6:20; Body: Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Family: Galatians 3:26, 1 John 3:1-2; Saints: 1 Corinthians 1:2, 1 Peter 1:13-16

## APPENDIX I

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

2. **Our Worship:** Privilege: Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Matthew 22:36-37; Gatherings: Hebrews 10:23-25, Psalm 122:1, Acts 2:42-47, 20:7; Priests: 1 Peter 2:4-10; Approach Directly: Hebrews 4:14-16, 10:19-22
3. **Our Mission:** Entrusted: 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, 1 Thessalonians 2:4; Commissioned: Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, John 20:21; Power: John 15:4-8, Philippians 4:13; Witnesses: 2 Timothy 2:21, John 15:26-27
4. **Our Ministries:** Placed in the Body for Service: 1 Corinthians 12:13, 18, Ephesians 2:10, Titus 2:14; All are Ministers: Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Peter 4:10-11
  - a. Spiritual Gifts: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Romans 12:6-8
  - b. Sign Gifts: 1 Corinthians 14:20-22, 14:23-28, Acts 2:4-11, 10:34-48
5. **Our Leaders:** Pastor: 1 Peter 5:1-4, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Acts 20:28; Deacons: Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13
6. **Our Ordinances**
  - a. **Baptism**: Mark 1:9-11, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:38-41, Romans 6:3-4, Colossians 2:12
  - b. **The Lord's Supper**: Matthew 26:26-30, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-26, Acts 2:42
7. **Our Brotherhood**: John 13:34-35, Ephesians 4:2, 4:32, Galatians 5:13-14, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 4:18, 5:11, James 5:16, Romans 12:10, 15:7
8. **Our Stewardship**: Leviticus 27:30, Malachi 3:6-12, Exodus 35:5, 35:21-22, Acts 20:35, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8
9. **Our Families**
  - a. **Marriage**: Established by God for One Man and One Woman: Genesis 2:18-25; Lifelong: Mark 10:9
  - b. **Marriage to Believers**: God's Will: 1 Corinthians 7:39, 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, Amos 3:3; Marriage to Unbelievers: 1 Kings 11:1-3, 1 Peter 3:1-2, 1 Corinthians 7:12-16
  - c. **Singleness**: God's Will for Some: Matthew 19:10-12, 1 Corinthians 7:32-35
  - d. **Children**: God's Gift: Psalm 127:3-5; Sacred Trust: Deuteronomy 6:4-7, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4; Obedience: Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 6:1-3; Sacredness of Life: Psalm 8:3-5, 139:13-16, Jeremiah 1:5
  - e. **Sexual Relationship**: In Marriage Only: Genesis 1:27-28, 2:22-25, 4:1, Proverbs 5:15-20, 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Outside of Marriage: Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:27-30, Hebrews 13:4, Leviticus 18:6-18, Deuteronomy 22:25-27; Homosexuality: Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
  - f. **Divorce and Remarriage**: Malachi 2:14-16, Matthew 5:31-32, Mark 10:2-12, Romans 7:2-3, 1 Corinthians 7:10-16; Remarriage of Widows: 1 Corinthians 7:39

#### C. WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT MAN, SIN AND SALVATION (Pages 6 – 8 of Constitution)

1. **Man's Creation**: Created by God: Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7, 2:21-22, Psalm 8:5, 95:6; Fellowship with God: John 14:23, 1 John 1:3-4

## APPENDIX I

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

#### 2. Man's Need of Salvation

- a. **Man's Fall into Sin:** Genesis 2:16-17, 3:1-7, Romans 5:12-21
- b. **Man's Lostness:** Ephesians 2:1-3, 2:12, Romans 3:10-12, 3:23, 6:23, John 3:17-20, 3:36, 1 Corinthians 1:18
- c. **Man's Helplessness:** Romans 4:1-2, 5:6-8, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, Acts 4:12, John 14:6

#### 3. God's Provision of Salvation

- a. **The Eternal Purpose of God:** John 1:1, 1 Timothy 2:3-4, 2 Peter 3:9, Ephesians 3:8-12
- b. **The Love of God:** Romans 5:5-8, John 3:16, 1 John 3:1, 3:16, 4:9-10
- c. **The Grace of God:** Romans 3:21-26, Ephesians 2:4-9, 1 Timothy 1:15-16

#### 4. God's Invitation to Salvation: Desire: 1 Timothy 2:3-4; Guilt: Ephesians 2:1-3, John 16:7-11; Provision: 1 John 2:2, Acts 4:12; Plea: Acts 16:30-31, Romans 6:23, 10:9-13, Isaiah 55:1-3, Matthew 11:28-30, Deuteronomy 30:19-20, Acts 2:36-39

#### 5. The New Life of Believers: Made Alive: Ephesians 2:5-7, 2 Corinthians 5:17; Peace: Romans 5:1; Assurance: Romans 8:1, 8:15-17; Worthy Life: Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10, 3:1-4; Growth: 1 Peter 2:1-3, Philippians 2:12-13; Provision: 2 Peter 1:3-11, John 14:15-18; Promise: John 16:33, Hebrews 13:5, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Romans 8:28

#### 6. The Security of Believers

- a. Assured by Jesus: John 10:27-28, Matthew 10:32
- b. Guaranteed by the Spirit: 1 John 4:13, 1 Corinthians 15:51-54, Ephesians 2:13-14, 4:30; Secured by the Father: Philippians 1:5, John 10:29
- c. Sin by Believers: Roman 6:1-23, Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 4:6-8, Hebrews 12:4-11, 1 John 1:9
- d. Evidence of Salvation: James 2:18-26, Colossians 4:5-6, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Roman 8:9, 14-17

## APPENDIX II

### GLOSSARY OF CHRISTIAN WORDS

This listing of commonly used Christian words is given to help you understand more about the Christian life. Use it as you study your Bible and this constitution.

**Abide** – to remain or continue; keeping or staying in fellowship with Christ.

**Accountability** - (see steward) obligation to accept responsibility and give account to God for one's actions.

**Adoption** – the act of God in which He makes a believer His child.

**Advocate** – one who pleads the cause of another; an intercessor.

**Apostle** – one sent by another as an ambassador or representative.

**Ascension** – Jesus's return to Heaven after His resurrection.

**Baptism** – the immersion in water of one who has believed in Jesus Christ.

**Baptism with the Holy Spirit** – the act, occurring at the moment of salvation, by which a person is made a part of the body of Christ.

**Believer** – (believe, unbeliever; see faith) one who is persuaded of the truth about Christ and is relying upon Him alone for full forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

**Body of Christ** – used symbolically of the church. Christ is the Head of the church and each believer is an individual member of His body.

**Born Again** – (new birth, regeneration) the one-time act of God in which He makes a person alive spiritually through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Child of God** – (see adoption) one adopted by God as His own on the basis of faith in Christ.

**Christ** – Messiah; the One God promised, sent and anointed.

**Church** – people God has called out of the world to Himself, for His purposes, through faith in Jesus Christ; made-up of baptized believers only.

**Confession** – (confess) agreeing with God about a matter, by a confession (statement) of faith or confession of sin, for example.

**Creation** – (Creator, creature) revealed truth that all that is was created by God; the believer in Christ is a “*New Creation*” a term denoting the believer's new life in Christ.

**Deacon** – a servant; one who labors with the pastor in service to God's church.

**Death** – *physically*, the separation of the spirit/soul from the body; *spiritually*, the separation of a person from God in time and in eternity (the second death).

**Disciple** – a learner; one who is taught by a teacher (Jesus, e.g.) and practices what he is taught.

**Edify** – (edification) to build-up God's church through the spiritual growth of believers.

**Encourage** – (encouragement, comfort, persuade) to call along and upward; lift the spirit of another by a helping hand, kind work or example. God is the God of all comfort. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter or Helper of believers.

**Endurance** – (overcome, victory) perseverance in faith and service to God in spite of trials, troubles and temptations.

**Equip** – to prepare or furnish for spiritual service.

**Eternal Life** – the free gift of God to believers of a relationship with God; indicates both *quantity* of life (forever) and *quality* of life (new, abundant, meaningful).

**Faith** – (trust, confidence in) believing and acting on the Word of God.

**Faithful** – (trustworthy, faithfulness) being dependable, reliable; true to one's word; God is faithful. Believers are to be steadfast in their allegiance to Him.

**Family of God** – all who are related to God through faith in Christ; sometimes referred to as the “*household of faith*”.

**Fear of God** – attitude of respect and reverence for God.

**Fellowship** – (brotherhood, communion) sharing; having things in common with God or others.

**Filling of the Holy Spirit** – enabling or empowering of a believer by the Holy Spirit to tell the lost about Jesus and to live the Christian life.

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**Forgiveness** – (forgive) the canceling of a debt owed because of sin; choosing to treat a person in the present as though no wrong had been done in the past. God’s forgiveness is based on the death of Christ for sinners.

**Freedom** – (choose, set free, liberty) the God-given capacity to make choices; true freedom comes from being related to God through Christ and learning to live a life which pleases Him.

**Gift** – the nature of salvation God offers through Christ; contrasted in the Scriptures with that which is earned by human effort (works).

**Glorify** – (glorification) to recognize and openly express the worth or value of God (or others) for His character and deeds; believers will be glorified (made perfect) in eternity.

**Glorify** – the honor given God because of His character and deeds; a synonym for Heaven. Believers are to bring glory to God by how we live.

**Good Works** – (see service) acts of kindness done by believers for others.

**Gospel** – (evangelize, preach) – the Good News of the Bible, that God’s love for every person, is revealed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ through His death on the cross, and resurrection from the grave, for the purpose of reconciling, rejoining, and reconnecting, man to Himself through salvation; the Good News that believers are to share with others.

**Grace** – the unmerited favor shown by God to sinners in giving them what they do not deserve which is forgiveness of sin and eternal life; the continued favor shown by God to His children.

**Guilt** – the sense of shame or burden felt for having done wrong.

**Heart** – figurative word for man’s entire mental and moral activity; seat of the emotions, reason and will.

**Heaven** – the eternal home of the saved.

**Heir** – one entitled to an inheritance; believers are “*joint heirs*” with Jesus.

**Hell** – the eternal dwelling place of the unsaved.

**Holy** – (holiness, hallow, sacred; see saints) signifies separation or to be “*set apart*”. God is Holy; separate from and above His creation; separate from sin (morally pure). Believers are to be holy in personal conduct.

**Hope** – the assurance that what the “*God of hope*” has promised, He will do. The “*blessed hope*” of believers is the second coming of Jesus.

**Image** – of Christ, the perfect expression and representation of the reality of God; of man, corresponding to the Creator that was marred by sin, but is restored in Jesus Christ.

**Incarnation** – revealed truth that in Jesus Christ, God became flesh (human) and dwelt on earth among us.

**Indwell** – term used to express the truth that the Holy Spirit comes to live within the believer at the moment of salvation.

**Inspiration** – the supernatural influence of God upon those He moved to record His Word; used of the Scriptures in contrast to other writings.

**Intercede** – (intercession) to pray on behalf of other people

**Interpretation** – an explanation or understanding of meaning; the Scriptures have one true interpretation, but many applications to Christian living.

**Invitation** – an offer made by God to receive what He desires to give.

**Jesus** – Savior, the Lord saves.

**Joy** – condition or state of inner blessedness or pleasure; delight in Jesus and what He has done. Contrasted to happiness based on circumstances.

**Judgment** – (judge) a judicial decision, including the pronouncing and execution of a sentence. Believers are not qualified to finally judge anyone; only God knows all the facts.

**Justice** – (just, fair) the impartial giving to a person what is deserved for good or bad actions.

**Justification** – God’s act of bringing individuals into right (righteous) relationship with Himself through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus.

**Lord** – master, owner; signifies one who has power and authority.

**Lord's Supper** – a memorial service in which believers remember Jesus' death for them and the promise of His second coming.

**Lost** – (perishing, destruction) condition of being spiritual dead, separated from God, being destroyed by sin and condemned because of sin against God; in eternity, lostness is the loss of all well-being, not the end of being.

**Love** – the nature of God; His care for all men shown through the sacrifice that Christ made by dying on the cross to pay the penalty of sin; believers are to love others in the same way He loves us.

**Member** – used metaphorically to describe believers as individual parts of the body of Christ.

**Mercy** – (compassion) God's not giving to individuals what they deserve (death, judgment, hell); an action arising out of compassion for others in need.

**Millennium** – an era of universal peace and righteousness. **Premillennialists** believe Christ at His second coming will establish a 1,000 year kingdom on earth. Then God will renovate the heavens and the earth and the eternal age will begin. **Amillennialists** believe the millennium is the eternal age which begins at the second coming of Christ. **Postmillennialists** believe the millennium will be established on earth by the church through the preaching of the Gospel. Jesus will then usher in the eternal age.

**Ministry** – (minister; see Servant) the activity of meeting the needs of others.

**Mission** – the assignment Christ has given His church to spread the faith by sharing the Gospel; also referred to as "*The Great Commission*".

**Nature** – inherent character; the basic constitution of a person, group or thing.

**Obedience** – (obey, command) hearing and doing what God commands out of love for Christ.

**Offering** – a freewill gift to the Lord above the tithe for general or special purposes.

**Ordain** – to set apart; the church's affirmation of one called by God to special service.

**Ordinance** – a command given by Jesus to His church. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances (ceremonies) which symbolize or picture what God has done and bring to a believer's mind the importance of those events.

**Pastor** – (shepherd, elder, overseer) one called by God to oversee the spiritual needs of His flock. Jesus is the "*Chief Shepherd*", a pastor is an "*under-shepherd*".

**Peace** – the state of being in right relationship with God. Inner calm in spite of outward difficulties achieved as a result of a person's relationship with God.

**Penalty** – the punishment or loss deserved by a person for wrong done; wages, consequences.

**Perish** – see lost.

**Power** – God's ability, strength and might displayed in creation and redemption. Strength given by God to believers to accomplish His purposes.

**Praise** – see Worship.

**Prayer** – communication and communion with God by seeking Him and His will.

**Predestination** – (election, foreknowledge, choose) revealed truth that God has determined to save and to perfect all who trust in Jesus.

**Priest** – (priesthood, priesthood of believers) one called by God to worship Him by offering Him spiritual sacrifices (see spiritual sacrifice) and by telling others about Him. Every believer is a priest and Jesus is our great "*High Priest*".

**Promise** – an oath given to do or give something.

**Propitiation** – (see sacrifice) Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for man's sin where God's just demand that sin be punished was satisfied. He punished Jesus for every person's sin. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, God can be merciful to sinners and accepts all who trust in Jesus as His children.

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- Reconciliation** – God’s act of changing a person’s relationship with Him from that of an enemy to one of friendship and peace, on the basis of faith in Christ.
- Redemption** – (redeem, purchase) God’s work of purchasing and setting free those in bondage to sin and death through the sacrifice of Jesus.
- Repentance** – (repent) a turning away from sin toward God, produced by sorrow over sin; a change in heart, mind and life which is completed with faith in Christ.
- Resurrection** – (resurrect, raise-up) to cause to stand up; describes the physical resurrection of Jesus from the grave and of future physical resurrection of the saved and unsaved.
- Return** – see Second Coming.
- Revelation** – (reveal, mystery) God’s disclosure or unveiling of Himself, His will and purposes to man through His Word; God’s initiative in revealing truth that cannot be understood or discovered in any other way; a term used of the second coming of Christ.
- Reward** – (rewarder) wages, recompense or recognition given in this life or in eternity.
- Righteousness** – God’s standard of what is right or just; the perfect, sinless record of Jesus given to every believer at the moment of salvation; right living produced in believers by God through His Word.
- Sacrifice** – an offering made to God in worship of Him, either material or spiritual.
- Saint** – (see Holy) a “*holy one*” whom God has “*set apart*” or chosen for Himself. Every true believer is a saint.
- Salvation** – (save, saved, Savior) rescue or deliverance, on the basis of faith in Christ from the destruction deserved because of sin against God. Salvation is God’s free gift to believers whom He has promised to perfect (glorify) and to keep eternally.
- Sanctification** – (sanctify) the process of spiritual growth in a believer; sanctification brings about an increase of holiness and decrease of sin in the believer’s life.
- Seal** – used metaphorically to describe the work of the Holy Spirit in “*marking*” believers at the moment of salvation to signify God’s ownership, to show their authenticity as a child of God and to give them assurance of eternal security.
- Second Coming** – (see Millennium) the promised return of Jesus Christ; called in the New Testament as: His appearing, His coming, His revelation.
- Service** – (servant, serve; see Ministry, Deacon, Good Works) the act of helping another person for the glory of God.
- Sin** – (iniquity, rebellion, transgression, lawlessness, disobedience) missing God’s target; falling short of behavioral standards God has set; an attitude in the heart which is revealed in acts of disobedience.
- Son of God** – a title of Jesus used to signify His Deity, His eternal relationship with the God the Father and His uniqueness as both God and Man.
- Soul** - (see Heart) immortal essence of a person; immaterial, invisible part of man; man’s seat of will and purpose.
- Spirit** – (spiritual) the nature of God; the part of man which relates to God after the new birth. Things which are spiritual are invisible but are the very essence of life. The spiritual man is led and developed in character by the Holy Spirit.
- Spiritual Gift** – (prophecy, teaching, serving, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy) a supernatural and spiritual ability given by God to His children to be used to help others in the body of Christ; each believer has one or more of these gifts; no believer has them all.
- Spiritual Growth** – (see Sanctification) the process of maturing spiritually and humanly as a child of God; becoming more like Jesus.
- Spiritual Sacrifices** – the offering of praise, thanksgiving, prayer, worship, service and more to God.
- Steward** – (stewardship; see Accountability) one entrusted to manage the resources of another. God has entrusted believers with His resources. One day we will give an account to Him for our stewardship of those resources.
- Submission** – the voluntary placing of oneself under the authority and leadership of another.
- Symbol** – (symbolic) a means of representing or picturing spiritual truth.



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**Temptation** – a luring to do wrong caused either by the desires within a person’s heart or by worldly or Satanic influence.

**Testament** – (covenant) a binding obligation on the part of one or more persons or entities. The New Testament is God’s fulfillment of the old covenant which was the promise of a Savior as prophesied in the Old Testament. Thus the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. God has obligated Himself to honor every promise He has made to believers.

**Thanksgiving** – the expression of gratitude to God for what He has done.

**Tithe** – the giving of 10% of one’s gross income back to the Lord as an expression of faith and thanksgiving.

**Trial** – a testing of one’s faith in God through adverse circumstances or other problems.

**Truth** – that which is actual, real and genuine. The highest expression of truth is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior to those who trust Him to be their Lord.

**Witness** - (testimony) one who tells what he knows, has seen or has experienced; every believer is to bear testimony to others about Jesus Christ.

**Word of God** - (Scripture) God’s written revelation of Himself, His ways and His purposes to man; complete in the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament.

**Worship** – (praise, adoration) the offering of reverence and adoration to God because of who and what He is.