

CURRENTLY

Constitution First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama

PREAMBLE:

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Missionary Baptist Denomination and for the purpose of the preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this Church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this Constitution.

I. Name

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama.

Section I. The purpose of the First Baptist church of Fairhope, Alabama shall be to carry out the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, and Acts 1:8, and to develop Christian fellowship among the saints and their growth in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

Section II. The First Baptist church, Fairhope, Alabama has been Incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Alabama governing religious bodies, and the handling of Property shall be in accordance with such laws.

Section III. The covenant that binds the First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama in fellowship shall be the covenant generally in use in Baptist Churches, which is included in this document, and Adopted by the body at the time of its constitution.

Section IV. The Cooperation of the First Baptist Church of Fairhope shall be with the Baldwin Baptist association, the Alabama Baptist State Convention, or such similar Baptist bodies as the church May hereafter become affiliated with, so long as such cooperation does not violate the autonomy of the local church, and the Doctrines adopted by the first Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama

II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. The Scriptures

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain, and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

2. God

There is but one God, the Maker, preserver, and Ruler of all things having in and of Himself all perfection, and being infinite in them all and to Him all creatures owe the

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CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA, INC.

These Amended and Restated Constitution and Bylaws govern the affairs of the First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama, Inc., an Alabama religious non-profit corporation (the "Church"). These Constitution and Bylaws amend and restate, in its entirety, the previous Constitution and Bylaws of the Church, as amended.

*****CONSTITUTION*****

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith and to the end that this body is subject to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and governed in an orderly, democratic manner and process consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Denomination and churches, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the Church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith and order, we do declare and establish this our Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE I: Name and Principal Office

The name of this Corporation is the "FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA, INC." This corporation will be further referred to in the Bylaws as the "Church." The Church will maintain its principal office at 300 S. Section Street, Fairhope, Alabama 36532. The Pastoral Leadership Team shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another as needed on a temporary basis.

highest love, reverence, and obedience.

3. The Trinity

God is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each with distinct, personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

4. Providence

God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass and perpetually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and all events: yet so as not in any wise to be the author or approver of sin nor to destroy the free will and responsibility of intelligent creatures.

5. Election

Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life - not because of foreseen merit in them but of His mere mercy in Christ - in consequence of which choice they are called, justified, and glorified.

6. The Fall of Man

God originally created man in His own image, and free from sin; but, through the temptation of Satan, he transgressed the command of God, fell from his original holiness and righteousness; his posterity inherit a nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law, and under Condemnation, and as soon as they are capable of moral action, become actual transgressors.

7. The Mediator

Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, is the divinely appointed Mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the law, suffered and died upon the cross for the salvation of sinner. He was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended to His Father, at whose right hand He ever liveth to make intercession of His people. He is the only Mediator, the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church, and Sovereign of the Universe.

8. Regeneration

Regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who quickeneth the dead in trespasses and sins, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. It is a work of God's free and special grace alone.

9. Repentance

Repentance is an evangelical grace, wherein a person being, by the Holy Spirit, made sensible of the manifold evil of his sin, humbleth himself or it, with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self abhorrence, with a

ARTICLE II: Church Facility Usage

First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Inc.'s property and facilities may be used only for purposes consistent with the Church's doctrinal beliefs as reflected in the Bible and the Church's Statement of Faith, including its Statement on Marriage and Sexuality.

Property and facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the Church's religious teachings as reflected in the Bible and the Church's Statement of Faith, including its Statement on Marriage and Sexuality. First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Inc.'s Pastoral Staff and / or Properties Committee shall be the final decision-making authority regarding whether any proposed facility/property use is in conformity to the Church's doctrinal beliefs.

ARTICLE III: Handling of Property

The First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama, Inc. has been incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Alabama governing religious bodies, and the handling and disposition of real property and assets shall be in accordance with such laws.

ARTICLE IV: Mission and Purpose

The Mission and Purpose of the Church is to be a Biblically-based community of believers dedicated to impacting our community and world with the good news of Jesus Christ. We are committed to carrying out the purposes of Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Service, and Evangelism as we seek to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18 – 20 and Acts 1:8) and live out the two Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40).

purpose and endeavor to walk before God as to please Him in all things.

10. Faith

Saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatever is revealed in His word concerning Christ, accepting and resting upon Him alone for justifications, sanctification, and eternal life. It is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and is accompanied by all saving graces, and leads to a life of holiness.

11. Justification

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal sinners who believe in Christ, and from all sin, through the satisfaction by them, but on account of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ,

12. Sanctification

Those who have been regenerated are also sanctified, by God's Word and Spirit dwelling in them. This sanctification is progressive through the supply of divine strength, which all saints seek to obtain, pressing after a heavenly life in cordial obedience to all Christ's commands.

13. Perseverance of the Saints

Those whom God hath accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified by His Spirit; will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they fall through neglect and temptations, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the Church, and temporal judgments on themselves, they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation.

14. The Church

The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all his true disciples, and in Him is invested supremely all power for its government. According to His commandment, Christians are to associate themselves into particular societies or churches; and to each of these churches hath given needful authority for administering that order, discipling, and worship which He hath appointed. The regular officers of a Church are bishops or elders and deacons.

15. Baptism

Baptism is an Ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in the water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of

ARTICLE V: Cooperation and Affiliation

The Church will seek to carry out its Mission and Purpose by cooperating with other like-minded Christian churches, ministries and organizations so long as such cooperation does not violate the autonomy of the local Church and the doctrines adopted by the Church. The cooperation of the Church will include affiliations with the Baldwin Baptist Association, the Alabama Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE VI: Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of the Church; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly through tithes and offerings to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel to all nations and people groups; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of God.

We will seek to maintain family and individual devotions; to educate our children in matters of our faith; to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances; to walk with integrity in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our responsibilities, and exemplary in our lifestyle; and to avoid those

the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ of remission of sin, and of his giving himself up to God live and walk in newness of life. It is prerequisite to Church Fellowship, and the participation in the Lord's Supper.

16. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is an Ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be observed by His churches until the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designated to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge, and renewal of their Communication with Him, and of their Church fellowship.

17. The Lord's Day

The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance and should be employed in exercise of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, resting from worldly employments and amusements, works of necessity and mercy only expected.

18. Liberty of conscience

God alone is Lord of the conscience; and He hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of man, which are in anything contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Civil magistrates being ordained of God, subjection in all lawful things commanded by them ought to be yielded by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

19. The Resurrection

The bodies of men after death return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God -The righteous to rest with Him; the wicked to be reserved under darkness to the Judgement. At the last day, the bodies of the dead, both just and unjust will be raised.

20. The Judgment

God hath appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world by Jesus Christ, when everyone shall receive according to his deeds, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment; the righteous unto everlasting life.

III. CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy spirit, we do most solemnly and joyfully enter covenant with one

things which fulfill the lust of the flesh and are contrary to our daily walk in the Spirit with Christ as written in Holy Scripture. **Also, while the Bible does not expressly prohibit the consumption of beverage alcohol, for the sake of wisdom and our witness, we strongly encourage one another to abstain from its use and to abstain from the use of illegal drugs.**

We further engage to watch over one another in Christian love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in our feeling and Christian courtesy in our speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the commands of our Savior to do so without delay.

We moreover commit that when we cease to attend this Church that 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.

**ARTICLE VII:
Statements on Sanctity of Human Life,
Marriage, and Religious Liberty**

Because we believe that the sanctity of human life, the dignity of biblical marriage as the union of one man and one woman, and the freedom of conscience and religion are foundational principles of justice and the common good, and are clearly-taught principles in the Bible; and because these vital principles are being compromised in our society to the detriment of the common good, the congregation of First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama, Inc. is compelled by our Christian faith and convictions to speak and act in their defense.

another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of the Church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to 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 secret devotion; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch one another in brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, and 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 Savior to secure it without delay.

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

IV. CHARACTER

Section I. Polity -

Its government is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual and Cooperation which are common among Baptist churches.

Section 2. Doctrine -

It receives the Scriptures and its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the Baptist churches as indicated in the Articles of faith herewith.

Statement on Sanctity of Human Life

“So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.” Genesis 1:27 (HCSB)

We believe that God created every human being in His image and that life, in all its stages and conditions is precious to God, we the Church will be united and untiring in our efforts to protect the lives of the unborn from abortion, as well as to bring assistance, comfort, and care to pregnant women in need and to those who have been victimized by abortion, even as we stand resolutely against the corrupt and degrading killing of their unborn children. Our message is, and ever shall be, that the just, humane and truly Christian answer to problem pregnancies is for all of us to love and care for mother and child alike.

We will insistently call on those who have been entrusted with temporal powers to fulfill the first responsibility of government: to protect the weak, the vulnerable, the disabled and the dependent against violent attack, and to do so with no favoritism, partiality, or discrimination. The Bible calls upon us to defend those who cannot defend themselves and to speak for those who cannot themselves speak. We will be ready to defend and speak for the unborn, the disabled, and the dependent.

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

“Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is like him.’ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his own ribs and closed the flesh at that place. Then the LORD God made the rib He had taken from the man

Section 3. The Constitution

The Constitution may be amended by two thirds majority of members present; provided the proposed amendment has been presented to the Church in Business Meeting sixty days prior to the vote and has been read at a regular Business Meeting a second time thirty days prior to the vote.

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into a woman and brought her to the man. And the man said: 'This one, at last, is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called woman for she was taken from man.' This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh." Genesis 2:18, 21-24 (HCSB)

We believe that God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man and a woman; therefore the Church will only recognize marriages between one biological man and one biological woman. Further, the Pastors and staff of the Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman.

This Statement on Marriage and Sexuality specifically gives the Church the right to restrict the use of Church facilities and property to uses consistent with its Statement of Faith and Statement on Marriage and Sexuality, as solely determined by the Church.

Statement on Religious Liberty

"Therefore, give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's"
Matthew 22:21 (HCSB)

First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama, Inc. "takes seriously the biblical admonition to respect and obey those in authority. We believe in law and in the rule of law. We recognize the duty to comply with laws whether we happen to like them or not, unless the laws are gravely unjust or require those subject to do something unjust or otherwise immoral. The biblical purpose of law is to preserve order and serve justice and the common good; yet laws that are unjust – and especially laws that purport to compel citizens to do what is unjust – undermine the common good, rather than serve it."

Through the centuries, Christianity has taught that when the Laws of God and the laws of man conflict, “*We must obey God rather than men.*” (Acts 5:29) “Because we honor justice and the common good, we will not comply with any edict that purports to compel the Church to participate in, or support abortion; nor will we bend to any rule purporting to force the Church to bless immoral sexual partnerships, or perform same-sex or multiple marriages in the Church.” We will also not comply with any edict that purports to compel the Church and / or any Pastors of the Church to refrain from proclaiming the truth, as we know it in any medium, about morality and immorality and marriage and the family.”

*Quotations, other than Scriptures, are taken from the *Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience* released on November 20, 2009.

ARTICLE VIII: CHARACTER

1. Polity

The Church’s government is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual love and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist churches.

2. Doctrine

The Church receives the Scriptures and **accepts** its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of

Southern Baptist churches as indicated in the Statement of Faith contained in Article IX.

3. The Constitution

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of members present provided the proposed amendment has been presented to the Church in a Business Meeting sixty (60) days prior to the vote and has been read at a regular Business Meeting a second time thirty (30) days prior to the vote.

ARTICLE IX: Statement of Faith

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God and as the only basis for our beliefs and practices. The Church accepts the *Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted June 14, 2000 by the Southern Baptist Convention as an affirmation of our basic Christian beliefs and as a general statement of our faith. The *Baptist Faith and Message* does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all we believe as interpreted through the life and words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We do believe, however, that the *Baptist Faith and Message* accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore is a model of belief and behavior for all members in the following areas:

- The Scriptures
- God
- God the Father
- God the Son
- God the Holy Spirit
- Man
- Salvation

- God's Purpose of Grace
- The Church
- Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- The Lord's Day
- The Kingdom
- Last Things
- Evangelism and Missions
- Education
- Stewardship
- Cooperation
- The Christian and the Social Order
- Peace and War
- Religious Liberty
- The Family