



Constitution and Bylaws
of
First Baptist Church
Griffin, Georgia

Constitution (Adopted 08/17/2008)
Seven Pages

Bylaws (Adopted 10/27/2009)
Ten Pages

CONSTITUTION

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GRIFFIN, GEORGIA, INC.

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this organization may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the general tenets common among Baptist people, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member and the freedom of action of this organization with respect to its relation to other churches, we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I—NAME

First Baptist Church is incorporated under the name First Baptist Church of Griffin, Georgia, Inc., as a nonprofit religious and charitable organization under the provision of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States.

ARTICLE II—PURPOSE

We, the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GRIFFIN, GEORGIA, INC., under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and following the model of the New Testament Church are united:

To WORSHIP publicly the one true God.

To WITNESS to all people of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ.

To NURTURE the members' growth in Christian maturity through a ministry of Christian education.

To MINISTER to the joys, hurts and needs of people within and beyond the church.

To COOPERATE with other churches and Christian groups in promoting the Christian faith.

ARTICLE III—BELIEFS

SECTION A: PRIMARY ARTICLE OF FAITH

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain, and authoritative standard by which all human conduct, beliefs, and religious opinions are to be tried. The criterion by which the Scriptures are to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

SECTION B: ACCEPTED BELIEFS

The beliefs of this church are in general accord with beliefs characteristic among Baptist people. The statement of faith adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on May 9, 1963, is an accepted illustration of these characteristic beliefs. See Appendix A.

SECTION C: STATEMENT OF BAPTIST IDEALS**1. Authority:**

- (a) *Christ as Lord.* The ultimate source of authority is Jesus Christ the Lord, and every area of life is to be subject of His Lordship.
- (b) *The Scriptures.* The Bible as the inspired revelation of God's will and way, made full and complete in the life and teachings of Christ, is the authoritative rule of faith and practice.
- (c) *The Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit is God actively revealing Himself and His will to man. He therefore interprets and confirms the voice of divine authority.

2. The Individual:

- (a) *Worth.* Every individual is created in the image of God and therefore merits respect and consideration as a person of infinite dignity and worth.
- (b) *Competence.* Each person is competent under God to make personal moral and religious decisions and is responsible to God in all matters of moral and religious duty.
- (c) *Freedom.* Every person is free under God in all matters of conscience and has the right to embrace or reject religion and to witness to personal religious beliefs, always with proper regard for the rights of other persons.

3. The Christian Life:

- (a) *Salvation by Grace.* Salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, conditioned only upon trust in and commitment to Christ as Lord.
- (b) *The Demands of Discipleship.* The demands of Christian discipleship, based on the recognition of the Lordship of Christ, relate to the whole of life and call for full obedience and complete devotion.
- (c) *The Priesthood of the Believer.* Each Christian, having direct access to God through Christ, is his or her own priest and is also under obligation to become a witness for Christ on behalf of other persons.
- (d) *The Christian and the Home.* The home is basic in God's purpose for human well-being, and the development of Christian family life is a supreme concern of all believers in Christ.
- (e) *The Christian as a Citizen.* The Christian is a citizen of two worlds--the kingdom of God and the State--and is responsible to obey the law of the land as well as to obey the higher law of God.

4. The Church:

- (a) *Nature.* The church, in its inclusive sense, is the fellowship of persons redeemed by Christ and made one in the family of God. The church, in its local sense, is a fellowship of baptized believers, voluntarily banded together for worship, nurture and service.
- (b) *Membership.* Membership in the church shall consist of regenerated persons who voluntarily accept baptism and commit themselves to faithful discipleship in the body of Christ.

- (c) *Ordinances.* Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the two ordinances of the church, are symbolic of redemption, but their observance involves spiritual realities in personal Christian experience.
- (d) *Government.* The church is an autonomous body, subject only to Christ, its head. Its democratic government properly reflects the equality and responsibility of believers under the Lordship of Christ.
- (e) *Relation to the State.* Church and state are both ordained of God and are answerable to Him. They should remain separate, but they are under the obligation of mutual recognition and reinforcement as each seeks to fulfill its divine function.
- (f) *Relation to the World.* The church is to be responsible in the world; its mission is to the world; but its character and ministry are not to be of the world.

5. **The Church's Continuing Task:**

- (a) *Centrality of the Individual.* The individual's worth, needs, moral freedom and potential for Christ have primary consideration in the life and work of the church.
- (b) *Worship.* Worship, which involves an experience of communion with the living and holy God, calls for an emphasis on reverence and orderliness, on confession and humility and on an awareness of the holiness and majesty and grace and purpose of God.
- (c) *The Christian Ministry.* Every Christian is under obligation to minister or to serve with complete self-giving, but God in His wisdom calls many persons in a unique way to dedicate their lives to a full-time church-related ministry.
- (d) *Evangelism.* Evangelism, which is primary in the mission of the church and in the vocation of every Christian, is the proclamation of God's judgment and grace in Jesus Christ and the call to accept and follow Him as Lord.
- (e) *Missions.* Missions seek the extension of God's redemptive purpose in all of the world through evangelism, education, and Christian service and call for the utmost dedication on the part of Christians to this task.
- (f) *Stewardship.* Christian stewardship conceives the whole of life as a sacred trust from God and requires the responsible use of life, earth's resources, time, talents and substance--personal and corporate--in the service of God.
- (g) *Teaching and Training.* The nature of Christian faith and Christian experience and the nature and needs of persons make teaching and training imperative.
- (h) *Christian Education.* Christian education grows out of the relation of faith and reason and calls for academic excellence and freedom that are both real and responsible.
- (i) *Self-Criticism.* The church, if it is to remain healthy and fruitful, must accept the responsibility of constructive self-criticism.

ARTICLE IV—CHARACTER

SECTION A: POLITY

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body or secular organization.

SECTION B: RELATIONSHIPS

The church recognizes and accepts the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation with other churches and religious groups. Consistent with the principle of voluntary cooperation, the church maintains relationship with other churches and organizations that seek to serve God and humanity in the name of Jesus Christ. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, the Flint River Baptist Association, the Georgia Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia and Baptist World Alliance.

SECTION C: DOCTRINE AND AUTHORITY

The church receives the Scriptures as its authority in all matters of faith and practice. The accepted beliefs and ideals set forth in Article III express common religious convictions, drawn from the Scriptures, but are only guidelines in interpretation, and have no authority over the conscience.

ARTICLE V—AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by three-fourths of the members present and voting at a meeting specially called for this purpose at the conclusion of the Sunday morning worship services, said proposed amendment having been laid before the church in writing at a business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action and a copy printed in the church bulletin at the morning worship services on the Sunday preceding such vote.

APPENDIX A**The Baptist Faith and Message****Historic Version: Adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention May 9, 1963****I. The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all-powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of man, and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

III. Man

Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image, and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by His Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence; whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God. B. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the

believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life. C. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the State of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation members are equally responsible. Its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and by refraining from worldly amusements, and resting from secular employments, work of necessity and mercy only being excepted.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

XII. Education

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian schools is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people. In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose, in the spirit of Christ, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put and end to war. The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

BYLAWS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GRIFFIN, GEORGIA, INC.

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION A: QUALIFICATIONS

The membership of First Baptist Church shall consist of persons who confess faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and who commit themselves to faithful discipleship to Christ as Lord, who express agreement with the purposes and beliefs of the church as described in its Constitution, and who are received into membership by an affirmative vote of the church according to the procedures set forth in these Bylaws.

SECTION B: CANDIDACY

1. Persons may be received into full membership who present themselves to the church consistent with the qualifications set forth in Section A, and who request membership in the church in any one of the following ways:
 - a. Upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord and baptism by immersion.
 - b. Upon transfer of membership by letter from a Baptist church.
 - c. Upon statement of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord and prior baptism.
2. Members in full standing may share equally in the democratic government of the church and may act and vote in all transactions of the church. Such members shall be entitled to full participation in the programs and activities of the church and its organizations, as provided in these Bylaws.

SECTION C: RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

1. Persons who present themselves for membership in response to the invitation of the church shall be greeted by the Pastor or someone designated by him. The Pastor shall present to the congregation the names of such persons and the nature of their requests.
2. The congregation shall vote in response to requests for church membership either immediately or at a subsequent church conference.
3. Exception to these procedures may be made by the church upon recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons with due regard for unusual circumstances that justify a change from normal practices.

SECTION D: RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership in the church is a sacred responsibility and involves full commitment to Jesus Christ and to the purposes of the church. Each member is expected to practice faithful discipleship as taught in the New Testament, and to strive for the realization of the ideals set forth in Article III of the Constitution.
2. Members are expected to be faithful in all the duties essential to the church membership: to attend habitually the worship services of the church, to contribute regularly for its support and its causes, and to share in its organized work.

3. Members who move to another community are encouraged, as soon as possible, to transfer membership to a church in their new community, where they may continue to exercise the responsibilities of Christian discipleship.

SECTION E: INACTIVE AND NONRESIDENT MEMBERS

1. Members of the Church who fail to attend any of its services or to contribute to its support for one year, except for ill health, confinement, or other valid reasons shall be classified as inactive members and their names placed on an inactive membership roll. Inactive members can neither hold elected office nor vote on church matters.
2. Members of the Church who move from the Griffin area and who are therefore unable to fulfill the duties of church membership shall be classified as nonresident members, and their names placed on a nonresident membership roll.

SECTION F: TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be terminated in any of the following ways:

1. Membership in another church.
2. Personal request.
3. Death.
4. Exclusion by action of the Church.

ARTICLE II – MEETINGS

SECTION A: WORSHIP AND EDUCATION

1. Services for worship, open to all persons in the community, shall be conducted each Sunday and at other specially designated times.
2. Bible study and spiritual formation programs shall be conducted weekly.
3. A prayer and worship service and correlated activities shall be held each Wednesday.
4. The celebration of the Lord's Supper shall be observed on a regular basis.

SECTION B: CHURCH CONFERENCES

1. Regular Church conferences shall be scheduled at least four times each year.
2. The Pastor or Deacon Chair may call special business conferences and must do so when requested by the Deacons, standing committees or councils. Such special conferences, however, shall be limited to matters of significance and shall be held only after notice has been printed in the church newsletter and the Sunday worship bulletin at least one week in advance.
3. A special conference for the purpose of extending a call to a pastor shall be announced at Sunday worship service(s). The active, resident membership of the Church shall be notified by mail prior to such a conference.
4. In all matters of parliamentary procedure governing its deliberations, the Church shall follow the common rules of procedures set forth in the most current *Roberts Rules of Order*.
5. Each active church member may cast one and only one vote on any motion before the Church.

- a. Any vote by simple majority of those voting shall be the act of the Church, except as may be otherwise specifically provided by the Constitution or these Bylaws.
- b. At the discretion of the moderator, voting shall be by voice, by show of hands or by written ballot.
- c. Whenever vote is by written ballot, absentee ballots shall be available to active members who are physically unable to attend the conference at which the vote is scheduled. To be included in the official tabulation, completed absentee ballots must be returned to the Church office by the Friday immediately before the Sunday election.

ARTICLE III – GENERAL CHURCH OFFICERS

SECTION A: GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. No person shall be elected as a deacon, trustee or the chief leader of the educational or service organizations who has not been an active member of this Church for at least one year preceding the election.
2. Unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, all officers of the Church and its organizations shall be elected to serve for a one-year term.
3. Any person elected to any position of leadership in the Church or its organizations shall be reasonably regular in attendance at the worship services of the Church and demonstrate a cooperative attitude with the program adopted by the Church.
4. Ministerial Staff positions may be established by the Church as need is determined. Ministerial Staff, other than the Pastor, shall be elected by the Church in conference upon recommendation by the Pastor and Deacons. The Church shall determine their duties and conditions of employment and shall act on their resignation or termination.
5. All other employees shall be engaged by the Personnel Committee as needed and funded by the annual budget of the Church. The Personnel Committee shall determine their duties and conditions of employment and shall act on their resignation or termination.

SECTION B: PASTOR

1. Selection

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. A Pastor Search Committee shall be elected by the Church to identify and recommend a prospective pastor. The Pastor Search Committee shall be elected and function as specified below:

- a. The Deacon Officers shall nominate to the Church the person to serve as Chair of the Pastor Search Committee.
- b. The Pastor Search Chair and Deacon Officers shall nominate to the Church other members to serve on the Pastor Search Committee.
- c. The committee shall represent a diverse mix of Church demographics and ministry participation.
- d. Throughout the search process, the committee shall welcome input from the congregation and seek advice and counsel from the Deacons.

2. Election

- a. The Pastor Search Committee shall recommend only one candidate at a time to the Church for consideration as Pastor.

- b. A special Church conference shall be held to extend a call to the recommended candidate as described in Article II, Section B, Paragraph 3.
- c. An affirmative vote of three-quarters (3/4) of active members present and voting shall be necessary to elect the Pastor.

3. Duties

- a. The Pastor shall be responsible for the general welfare and oversight of the Church including conducting the worship services, guiding the entire ministry, presiding at all meetings (except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws), focusing on the spiritual formation and well-being of the congregation, and cooperating with the elected leadership of the Church and its organizations.
- b. As chief spiritual leader of the Church, the Pastor shall be *ex officio* member of all committees, teams, councils and organizations. The Pastor may delegate a staff member to serve as liaison to each ministry group.
- c. The Pastor shall supervise all ministerial staff members and other Church employees. Instead, the Pastor may delegate a staff member to serve in this capacity.

4. Tenure

- a. The Pastor shall serve for an indefinite period. The pastoral relationship may be terminated, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, either by the Pastor or by the Church.
- b. In the event of the perceived necessity to terminate the pastoral relationship, the Deacons shall attempt redemption and reconciliation by following the principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1, and I Timothy 5:19. If such efforts fail, the Deacon Chair shall call a special Church conference, as outlined in Article II, Section B, Paragraph 2, to address the issue.

5. Vacancy

During a period when there is no Pastor, or in the event of the Pastor's disability,

- a. The Deacon Chair shall provide spiritual leadership.
- b. The Deacons shall be responsible for securing guest preachers for the worship services.
- c. The Deacons may recommend to the Church the election of an interim Pastor.

SECTION C: DEACONS

1. Qualifications

Persons, male or female, elected to the office of Deacon shall have qualities of character consistent with the teachings of Acts 6:3-5 and I Timothy 3:8-13. They shall be members of this Church, regular in attendance and supportive of the services of the Church, faithful in the practice of Christian stewardship, cooperative in attitude, and influential in strengthening the witness of the Church.

2. Election

- a. The Deacons of the Church shall consist of at least 48 persons, 12 of whom shall be elected annually to serve respectively, for four-year terms, plus those persons elected by the Church to serve as Life Deacons.
- b. After serving a term of four years, or any portion of a term of two years or more, no deacon shall be eligible for re-election to the Deacons until the lapse of at least one year, unless such deacon shall have been elected to serve as a Life Deacon.

- c. The persons chosen to fill regular terms as members of the Deacons will be sometimes referred to as “active deacons” and shall be elected by the Church to assume office on the first day of January each year. The following procedure shall be observed in such elections:
- (1) The members completing their regular term shall constitute the Election Committee and shall be responsible for making the necessary preparations for conducting the election and for tabulating the ballots.
 - (2) Deacons shall be nominated in August of each year. Notice shall be placed in the Church newsletter announcing the date for the deacon nominations. On the announced Sunday, active Church members present in the morning worship services may nominate, by written nomination form, up to 12 persons to serve four-year terms. In addition, the Deacons shall nominate up to 12 persons. The names of those receiving at least five congregational nominations or Deacon nomination shall be so notified by the Election Committee. Upon expressed consent, such nominee’s name shall be forwarded to the Deacon Qualifying Panel, which includes the Pastor, Deacon Officers, Church Clerk, and one non-deacon Church member appointed by the Pastor. The Deacon Qualifying Panel will schedule two meetings for the candidates to inform them of the duties and the biblical and spiritual requirements of deacons. Failure to attend one of these meetings will disqualify a nominee from being placed on the ballot. Within seven days of the last meeting, the candidates must notify the Deacon Chair in writing whether or not their name should be placed on the ballot. No person’s name shall be placed on the ballot until such person has made a written commitment to the Church to strive to exemplify the characteristics of the office as set forth in the Scriptures and the Constitution and Bylaws.
 - (3) Deacons shall be elected by written ballot. The names of all nominees shall appear on the ballot in alphabetical order and those persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. See Article II, Section B, Paragraph 5.c. regarding absentee ballots.
 - (4) Immediately after such election and before the results are announced, the Deacon Chair shall notify each person elected. If any person so elected chooses to withdraw at this point, the nominee who received the next highest number of votes shall be elected instead.
 - (5) Whenever a deacon vacancy occurs, the Deacons may nominate to the Church a person to fill the vacancy. The nominee shall be so notified by the Chair or Vice-chair of the Deacons. Upon expressed consent, the nominee’s name shall be submitted to the Church for election as an active deacon by following the same procedure as for the annual election of deacons. The nominee thus elected by the Church must complete the expired term of the deacon creating the vacancy.

3. Duties and Expectations

Consistent with the meaning of the word “deacon” and the practice of the New Testament, the Deacons, along with the Pastor, are spiritual servant-leaders of the Church.

- a. Deacons shall guard zealously the unity of spirit within the Church; oversee the moral, spiritual and temporal welfare of the Church; minister to the needs of Church members; lead in worship; model Christ-likeness; assure that the will of the Church is accomplished; administer the financial affairs of the Church; and act for the Church in emergency matters between Church conferences. Their decisions shall always be subject to the affirmation of the Church in conference.
- b. Deacons elected by this Church, active or inactive, shall serve the Lord’s Supper.
- c. The Deacons shall meet monthly at a time and place, both of which they shall determine.

- d. Failure to attend nine monthly meetings during one year without providential cause will result in termination of a deacon's active service.

4. Officers

Deacons shall elect their own officers, which shall include, but not be limited to, a Chair, Vice-chair and Secretary. Officers shall be elected for a one-year term and may succeed themselves. Deacon Officers shall be active deacons.

5. Life Deacons

Upon being nominated by the Deacons, Life Deacons, without restriction in number, may be elected by the Church.

- a. Deacons who are at least 60 years of age and have served as an active deacon of this Church a total of at least 20 years are eligible to be elected as Life Deacons.
- b. Life Deacons may serve with all the rights and responsibilities of an active deacon as long as they are Church members.

SECTION D: TRUSTEES

1. The Church shall have three trustees. In odd-numbered years and upon consultation with the existing Trustees, the Deacon Officers shall nominate one trustee for election by the Deacons. The election results shall be reported to the Church. The newly elected trustee shall serve a six-year term beginning the following January. Trustees may succeed themselves.
2. The Trustees shall take control of, hold, manage and administer, invest, reinvest and distribute all funds, securities and properties of any trust and/or bequest given to, acquired, or received by the Church which specifically state that the Trustees of the First Baptist Church of Griffin shall control, hold, manage and/or administer the trust and/or bequest. The Trustees must comply, to the best of their ability, with the directives and stipulations as contained in the trust and/or bequest documents.
3. The Deacons shall annually name the three trustees currently serving as Church trustees as trustees of the Nora English White Trust.

SECTION E: CHURCH OFFICERS

1. Church Moderator

The Pastor shall serve as the Moderator for Church conferences, except when matters concerning the office of pastor are considered. The Deacon Chair shall serve as Assistant Moderator and shall preside in the absence of, or upon the request of, the Moderator.

2. Church Clerk

In consultation with the Deacon Officers and subject to approval by the Deacons, the Nominating Committee shall nominate a Church Clerk and Assistant Clerk for election by the Church. The Assistant Clerk shall serve in the absence of the Church Clerk. The Church Clerk and Assistant Clerk shall serve a term of one year and may be re-elected. The responsibilities of the Church Clerk, with the assistance of a Church Secretary, shall include:

- (a) Keeping accurate and suitable records of all actions of the Church.
- (b) Preserving all communications and written official reports.

- (c) Giving legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary.
- (d) Maintaining an accurate register of Church membership.
- (e) Certifying messengers to the annual meetings of local, state, national and international Baptist bodies.
- (f) Serving as Secretary of the Corporation.

3. Church Treasurer

In consultation with the Deacon Officers and subject to approval by the Deacons, the Nominating Committee shall nominate a Church Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer for election by the Church. The Assistant Treasurer shall serve in the absence of the Church Treasurer. The Church Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall serve a term of one year and may be re-elected. The Church Treasurer shall be assisted by the Financial Secretary who is employed by the Church for this purpose. The responsibilities of the Church Treasurer shall include:

- (a) Signing checks. Checks require two signatures. In addition to the Church Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, the Finance Chair and the Deacon Officers may sign checks.
- (b) Supervising the receipts and disbursement of all monies paid or given to the Church, according to the procedures established by the Deacons.
- (c) Supervising the payment of all salaries and accounts according to the annual budget of the Church. Any other expenditure shall be made upon authorization of the Finance Committee.
- (d) Assuring that the books are reviewed annually by the audit team. In years divisible by five, a **certified public accountant** will conduct a compilation of the **financial statements**, with disclosures, and an agreed-upon procedures to cover those areas of concern as determined by the Church. At any other time, a compilation, review, or audit may be requested by the **Finance Committee**, Deacon Chair, or the Deacons.
- (e) Reporting monthly receipts and disbursements to the Finance Committee, the Deacons and to the Church in conference. The format of the report shall be determined by the Finance Committee.
- (f) Serving as Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation.

4. Other Church Officers

Other Church officers may be elected to serve with such duties as may be determined by the Church.

SECTION F: CORPORATE OFFICERS

The following Church officers shall serve as officers of the corporation, First Baptist Church of Griffin, Georgia, Inc.:

Deacon Chair	Chief Executive Officer
Church Treasurer	Chief Financial Officer
Church Clerk	Secretary
Church Clerk	Agent of the corporation

ARTICLE IV—COMMITTEES, TEAMS, COUNCILS AND ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION A: GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Church, upon recommendation of the Deacon Chair, may establish committees, teams and councils, which shall collectively be called ministry groups. Such ministry groups shall exist until dissolved by the Church, upon recommendation by the Deacon Chair.
2. All ministry groups shall report to the Deacons and then to the Church in conference.
3. Job descriptions of ministry groups shall be maintained in the Policy and Procedures Manual of the Church.
4. An individual may serve as chair of only one ministry group at a time.
5. Chairs of ministry groups shall be enlisted by the Nominating Committee, in consultation with the current chair of that group, and approved by the Church in conference.
6. Chairs of ministry groups may serve only two consecutive years. However, upon request of the Deacon Chair, the Nominating Committee shall recommend to the Church that the term of a ministry group chair be extended for up to two years.
7. Service as a deacon, deacon officer, any Church organization leader or officer, or any other general Church officer shall not disqualify an individual from serving as the chair of a ministry group.
8. An individual may serve as a member of only one standing committee at a time. An individual may serve on only one *ad hoc* committee at a time. However, an individual may serve on one standing committee and one *ad hoc* committee simultaneously. There are no restrictions to service on teams and councils.
9. All members of ministry groups, including *ex officio* members, shall have voting privileges. The Pastor and Deacon Chair shall serve as *ex officio* members of all ministry groups.
10. Unless otherwise specified, ministry group members shall be members of the Church.
11. Unless otherwise specified, ministry group terms shall be based upon the calendar year.

SECTION B: COMMITTEES

1. Standing Committees
 - (a) Standing committees may have up to ten rotating members (including the chair of the committee). At least three members shall be elected annually.
 - (b) Members of standing committees shall serve for three-year terms. Upon the expiration of a committee member's term that committee member shall be ineligible for membership on that committee for at least one year. However, committee membership may be extended one year beyond the usual three-year term in order to serve as chair for two consecutive years.
 - (c) Standing committees shall include, but not be limited to, Finance, Personnel, Properties and Nominating.
2. *Ad hoc* Committees
 - (a) The Deacon Chair may establish *ad hoc* committees. Each *ad hoc* committee shall function until its purpose is accomplished.
 - (b) An *ad hoc* committee may have as many members as the Deacon Chair feels is appropriate.

- (c) The Deacon Chair shall specify the manner in which each *ad hoc* committee will submit its reports.
- (d) Chairs of *ad hoc* committees shall be appointed by the Deacon Chair after consultation with the Nominating Committee to ensure eligibility for service.
- (e) *Ad hoc* committee members shall be appointed by the Deacon Chair after consultation with the Nominating Committee to ensure eligibility for service.

3. Nominating Committee

- (a) Nominating Committee terms shall begin in September and end in August so that the work of enlisting ministry group chairs and standing committee members can be completed prior to January each year.
- (b) Nominating Committee members shall be nominated by the Pastor, the Deacon Officers and two at-large Church members (one at-large member selected by the Pastor and the other by the Deacon Chair). New members of the Nominating Committee shall be approved by the Church in conference.
- (c) The Nominating Committee, in consultation with each committee chair, shall enlist the members of all other standing committees and present a list of such nominees to the Church in conference for the Church's approval.

SECTION C: MINISTRY TEAMS

- 1. Ministry teams shall not be limited to a certain number of members.
- 2. There is no limitation on the length of time that an individual may serve on a ministry team.
- 3. Ministry team members may volunteer for service or may be enlisted by team chairs.
- 4. Members of teams must be Church members unless otherwise specified in the team's job description.
- 5. Team chairs shall report the membership of their teams to the Nominating Committee by February 1 each year in order to facilitate a Nominating Committee report to the Church of the membership of all teams.

SECTION D: MINISTRY COUNCILS

1. General

- (a) Ministry councils function to coordinate between the various ministry groups in a particular area of ministry. The ministry groups represented on each ministry council shall be specified in that council's job description.
- (b) Members serve on councils as the representative of other ministry groups. The chair of each ministry group to be represented on a council shall designate that group's representative on the ministry council, unless specified otherwise.
- (c) Councils may select at-large members at the discretion of the chair.
- (d) There is no limitation on the length of time that an individual may serve on a ministry council.

2. Church Council

- (a) The Church Moderator shall be the Chair of the Church Council.
- (b) The Church Council shall be composed of the following:

- Ministerial Staff
- Program Directors
- Committee Chairs
- Council Chairs
- Church Officers

SECTION E: CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

The Church may, as need is determined, establish organizations or departments of work, specifying the purpose of the organization and defining the duties of its officers. All organizations of the Church shall be accountable to the Church. All officers and leaders of the organizations shall be members of this Church and shall be elected by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee. All organizations shall make regular reports to the Church.

ARTICLE V — USE OF PROPERTY, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

Church facilities may be used by members and organizations subject to guidelines determined by committees and teams charged by the Church with such responsibility.

ARTICLE VI — MINISTERIAL LICENSING AND ORDINATION

The Church may grant a license to preach to any person who gives evidence that he or she is called of God to preach the gospel. In addition, the Church may ordain a person as a Minister of the Gospel who gives satisfactory evidence of his or her call to vocational Christian ministry and of scriptural qualifications for ordination. The Church shall for this purpose call an Ordaining Council, which shall examine the qualifications of the candidate and bring recommendations to the Church concerning the ordination.

ARTICLE VII — CHURCH YEAR

The fiscal year shall be the calendar year. The year for Church officers, Deacons, Trustees, Church Clerk and Church Treasurer shall be the calendar year. The year for education, missions and music programs shall coordinate with the local school year.

ARTICLE VIII — AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a regular business meeting of the Church, said proposed amendment having been laid before the Church in writing not less than one month before the time of the proposed action with printed copies available at the morning worship services on the Sunday preceding such vote.

ARTICLE IX — REPEAL

All Bylaws, Rules of Order, and policies and procedures in conflict herewith as adopted by the Church are hereby superseded and repealed.