

**CHURCH CONSTITUTION  
& MINISTRY BYLAWS**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF CALVERT COUNTY**

# ARTICLE 1 - NAME AND PURPOSE

## SECTION 1.01 - NAME

This congregation of believers shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Calvert County.

## SECTION 1.02 - PURPOSE

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States revenue law), including, but not limited to, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, daycare centers, and camps. The Church shall ordain and license men to the gospel ministry, evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; and maintain missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country; and engage in any other ministry the Church may decide to pursue in obedience to the will of God. The purpose for which this church is established and ordained shall be to bear united witness to the Faith of its members in the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God; to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ and the faith once for all delivered to the saints; to aid missionary work and to win the lost to the Lord Jesus Christ; and to build up its constituency in the most holy faith.

# ARTICLE 2 - STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

## SECTION 2.01 - STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of this church and its members.

- (A) **The Holy Scriptures.** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible, and God-breathed. They are, therefore, the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning [The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official translation used by the church.] (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- (B) **The Godhead.** We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 14:10, 26; 2 Cor. 13:14).

**(C) The Person and Work of Christ.**

1. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8).
2. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 2:24).
3. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9-10; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2).

**(D) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.**

1. We believe the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14).
2. We believe He is the divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and enables us to appropriate the Scriptures and it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to let the Holy Spirit direct and control their lives (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).
3. We believe God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly so they can do the work of the ministry (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12).
4. We believe the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. Ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22).

- (E) The Total Depravity of Man.** We believe man was created in the image and likeness of God; but due to Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19).

**(F) Salvation.**

1. We believe the obtaining of salvation is in part dependent upon God. God the Father, before the foundation of the world, designed a plan to make repentant sinners (1) holy before Him, (2) children of Him, and therefore (3) accepted by Him (Eph. 1:4-6). Those who are saved are sometimes called the elect or chosen (1 Pet. 1:2). God the Son provided the way of salvation by securing for a repentant sinner (1) payment of sin, (2) release from sin, and (3) assurance of salvation (Eph. 1:7-12). God the Holy Spirit secures a repentant sinner's salvation by first convicting the sinner with the truth of God's Word (John 16:1-13), and then, by making Himself the down payment of salvation within each believer until his entrance into heaven (Eph. 1:13-14).
2. We believe the obtaining of salvation is impossible apart from a personal voluntary choice of the sinner (John 3:16) based upon a complete reliance upon God's way of salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). At the moment a sinner repents from sins and trusts Christ as his Savior, the sinner is united to Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) and regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). This turning from sin (Ps. 51:3-4) to Christ as Savior (Rom. 10:9-10) is called conversion. At conversion, God declares the sinner righteous (justified) because of the blood of Christ, a payment that satisfies the eternal penalty of sin (Rom. 8:1). Consequently, the sinner is made alive spiritually (John 3:36) and is reconciled to God's favor (Rom. 5:1-2, 10) thereby becoming holy. The sinner is thus made a saint.
3. We believe the Scriptures teach regeneration, or the new birth, is a change in the soul wrought by the Holy Spirit by which a new nature and spiritual life are imparted. The person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; and without regeneration salvation is impossible (John 3:3-6; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 1:23; Titus 3:5).
4. We believe the salvation of every believer is secure for all eternity from the moment of regeneration. This security is guaranteed to each believer by the promise, the keeping power of God, the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the interceding ministry of Christ (John 5:24, 10:27; Rom. 8:1, 35-39; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30).
5. We believe justification is the judicial act of God, whereby He declares us to be righteous through faith in Christ Jesus. Justification includes Jesus' payment of sin and the imputation of God's righteousness. It is bestowed not in consideration of any good works which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood and sacrifice on Calvary's cross (Isa. 53:4-7; Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1-9; 8:1; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:15-21).

**(G) The Church.**

1. Concerning the Local Church - We believe a local church is a voluntary group of baptized believers, with Christ as its head; that joins together for worship, ministry, prayer, and teaching; that it is a pure democracy; it is independent [i.e. not required to join or align with any group or movement]; it has the power and right within itself to confess its own faith in accordance with the New Testament; and it is autonomous [i.e. each congregation recognizes its own self-contained government as its highest human authority for governing according to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ] (Acts 20:17; 1 Cor. 3:10-17; 5:1-5; 11:2; 12:12-27; Col. 1:18, 24; 3:15-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-15; Titus 1:5-11; Rev. 2:3;).
2. Concerning the Christian and the Local Church - We believe the local church is the center of God's redemptive program for this age. Every Christian is bound by Scripture to give their unhindered cooperation to the furtherance of the Gospel into all the world, and to the evangelistic efforts of their local church. It is the responsibility of all believers to remember the work of the local church and its extension ministries in prayer, to support it with their monetary offerings as the Lord prospers them, to participate in all the regular services of the church as the Lord enables, and to voluntarily submit to the watch care and discipline of the local church (1 Cor. 16:2; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 10:19-25; 13:17).
3. We believe there are two ordinances of the church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are simple acts of obedience and offer no special grace or merit with God.
4. We believe immersion is the only form of baptism revealed and commanded in the Scriptures; it has NO saving power, but is only for those who are already saved. The new birth, which comes through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Scriptural prerequisite to baptism; therefore, only those who are old enough to believe for themselves should be baptized (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5).
5. We believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the death of Christ and only those who have been saved through faith in His atoning blood and are walking in obedient fellowship with Him ought to partake (1 Cor. 11:23-32).
6. We believe there are two officers of a New Testament church, pastors (elders and bishops being different names for the same office) and deacons (Acts 6:1-7; 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13).
7. We believe one pastor shall be the overseer, president, and shepherd of the flock. The assistant pastor(s) is his assistant in the spiritual domain. The deacons are spiritual helpers in the mundane (Acts 6:1-7; 20:17, 28).

**(H) Separation.** We believe all the saved are called into a life of separation. This separation is in at least three areas: moral, personal, and ecclesiastical.

1. Moral: The Ten Commandments are God's perfect standard for a perfect man that no one has been or will be able to obey. We are commanded to strive for holiness (2 Cor. 7:1) in the fear of God. The believer is never to suffer as an evildoer (1 Pet. 4:15); but is commanded to be clean in body and in mind (2 Cor. 10:5).
2. Personal: Romans 14 explains there are going to be areas where believers are going to disagree in matters which they call sin. The stronger brother will be able to do things that the weaker cannot. The weaker will do things the stronger will not. In matters of eating, holy days, etc., every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind (Rom. 14:5b).
3. Ecclesiastical: While recognizing the unity of all true believers, it is also evident that unbelief and error in many organized fellowships have developed to the point where recognized and indisputable apostasy exists. We, therefore, disavow the position of the World Council of Churches, the National Association of Evangelicals, and any other association or fellowship sympathetic with them. We stand in opposition to the Ecumenical Movement, New Evangelicalism, Inter-Denominationalism, and cooperative evangelistic programs between churches and people not of like precious faith (Luke 12:51; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11-12).

**(I) The Second Advent of Christ.** We believe in the blessed hope, the personal, imminent return of Christ, who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6).

**(J) The Eternal State.**

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13).
2. We believe the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6).
3. We believe the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15).

- (K) **The Personality of Satan.** We believe Satan is an actual being, the author of sin. He is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10).
- (L) **Creation.** We believe in the Genesis account of creation. We accept it literally, not allegorically or figuratively. Man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness. Man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species. All animal and vegetable life was created directly by God and God's design was that they should bring forth only "after their kind" (Gen 1:1, 11, 24, 26-27; Ex. 20:11; Jer. 10:12; Neh. 9:6; Rom. 1:20; Acts 4:24; 17:24; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3; Rev. 10:6).
- (M) **Civil Government.** We believe God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: (1) the home, (2) the church, and (3) the government. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the government are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).
- (N) **Human Sexuality.**
1. We believe God has commanded no intimate sexual activity outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance (Gen. 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).
  2. We believe the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23).
- (O) **Family Relationships.**
1. We believe men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is the leader of the home, and men are the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).
  2. We believe God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them

through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18, 22:15, 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33, 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

- (P) **Divorce and Remarriage.** We believe God disapproves of divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. We believe divorced and remarried persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service but may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:10-17; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).
- (Q) **Abortion.** We believe human life begins at conception and the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental wellbeing of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24, 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5, 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).
- (R) **Euthanasia.** We believe the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus we believe an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment (Ex. 20:13; 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28).
- (S) **Love.** We believe we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward unbelievers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids stirring up strife, taking revenge, or threatening violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10, 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18).
- (T) **Lawsuits Between Believers.** We believe Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, a Christian may seek compensation for damages or injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (Matt. 18:15-17, 21-22; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32).
- (U) **Missions.** We believe God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the gospel to all nations so there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to foreign nations and not wait for them to

come to us (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20).

**(V) Giving.**

**1. Belief.**

- a. We believe God established the Old Testament tithe as an example for the New Testament church. In the Church Age, "grace giving" is taught, meaning every Christian should give offerings sacrificially, faithfully, and cheerfully. We believe the financial support of every Christian is for the general operations of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the gospel at home and abroad.
- b. We believe every Christian should make a special offering to support missionaries involved in worldwide evangelization.

**2. Specific Practice of First Baptist.**

- a. Financial gifts received in church offerings, that are not designated, are for the support of the local church and those in need.
- b. Financial gifts for missions must be designated at the time of giving.

(Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17) [Federal law requires a Christian relinquish all rights to direct the use of their offering once the gift has been made.]

**SECTION 2.02 - AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all we believe. We believe the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and is binding upon all members. All literature used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.

**SECTION 2.03 - COVENANT**

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

We promise, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and effectiveness; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also promise to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from such worldly amusements which bring reproach on our testimony before the world; to be free from all oath-bound secret societies and unequal partnerships with unbelievers; to acknowledge our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and are dedicated to the glory of God, which therefore requires us to use wisdom concerning anything which harms the body or our minds such as tobacco in any form, narcotic drugs, or intoxicating drink; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

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

We moreover promise, when we leave this church, 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.