

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS
of the
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
ASHBURN, GA

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 preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

A. Name

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Ashburn, Georgia.

B. 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 perfections, and being infinite in them all; and to Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence and obedience.

(3) **The Trinity.** God is revealed to us a 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 into 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, he transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his posterity inherit a nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law, are 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 sinners. He was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended to His Father, at whose right hand He ever liveth to make intercession for His people. He is the only mediator, the prophet, priest, and king of the church, and the sovereign of the universe.

(8) **Regeneration.** Regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who quickeneth the dead in the 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 for it, with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrence, with a purpose and endeavor to walk with God so as to please Him in all things.

(10) **Faith.** Saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatsoever is endeavor in His Word concerning Christ; accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification, sanctification and eternal life. It is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and is accompanied by all other saving graces, and leads to a life of holiness.

(11) **Justification.** Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners, who believe in Christ, from all sin, through the satisfaction that Christ has made; not for anything wrought in them or done by them, but on account of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith.

(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) **The 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 may fall, through neglect and temptation, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the church, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet 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 He hath given needful authority for administering that order, discipline and worship which He hath appointed. The regular officers of the church are bishops or elders (pastors) and deacons.

(15) **Baptism.** Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as in a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ, of remission of sins, and of his giving himself up to God, to live and walk in newness of life. It is prerequisite to church fellowship, and to participation in the Lord's Supper.

(16) **The Lord's Supper.** The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and wine, and to be observed by His churches to the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion 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 exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, resting from worldly employments and amusements, works of necessity and mercy only excepted.

(18) **Liberty of Conscience.** God alone is Lord of the conscience; and He hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to His work, 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 in Him; the wicked, to be preserved under darkness to the judgment. At the last day, the bodies of all 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, into everlasting life.

C. The 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 faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, 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.

For the Advancement of this Church

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advance of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines.

As Christian Stewards

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.

Alone and at Home

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

Before the World

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, 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; to use our influence to combat both the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our savior.

Toward One Another

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

When We Move

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

SOME BELIEFS WE CHERISH

1. We believe that the Bible is God's Word to men, and that it is the only sufficient authority as the rule of doctrine and practice.
2. We believe in a regenerated church membership, and that the conversion experience is prerequisite to church membership.

3. In the New Testament the candidate was taken to the water, not the water brought to the candidate; the candidate was placed in the water, not the water put on the candidate' so we believe in immersion only as answering Christ's command of baptism and symboling the heart of the gospel message – death, burial, resurrection.
4. We believe in the New Testament order of baptism and the Lord's Supper. New Testament Christians were baptized before taking the Lord's Supper.
5. We believe in the responsibility of each member of the church to take part in it s government, plans, and discipline.
6. We believe in the total independence and separation of church and state.

D. CHARACTER

Section 1. Policy. 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, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches.

Section 2. Doctrine. This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the beliefs of Southern Baptist Churches as indicated in the articles of faith herewith and the Baptist Faith and Message adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention (1963).