

Constitution

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this body shall be, The First Baptist Church of Cedar Springs, Michigan.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

We are a community of believers in Christ Jesus who, by the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, are committed to bringing glory to God by nurturing and multiplying disciples of Christ through worship, edification, service, and evangelism.

ARTICLE III - AUTONOMY

The First Baptist Church of Cedar Springs, Michigan may participate in fellowship and activity with other churches, organizations or associations as long as the participation does not infringe upon the First Baptist Church's autonomy and the group remains in agreement with the First Baptist Church's doctrinal statement.

ARTICLE IV - ARTICLES OF FAITH

The attached statement of our faith generally adheres to those adopted by the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.(See Appendix A)

ARTICLE V - CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the 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 strive, therefore, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to seek the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the needs of the body, and the spread of the gospel to all nations.

We also strive to maintain family and personal devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior; to walk with integrity in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our commitments, and exemplary in our behavior, and to glorify God in all that we do.(1

Corinthians 10:31 “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”)*

We further strive to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to develop Christian grace and mercy, and be respectful in our speech; to be slow to take offense, always ready for reconciliation, and to secure it without delay.

We moreover strive that when we leave this body of believers, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other body of believers where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

*: Please consult Policy Manual re: Standards of Christian Conduct

ARTICLE VI - THE ORDINANCES

Paragraph A:

Anyone professing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior may be baptized. Baptism shall be by immersion, in accordance with the scriptural teaching (Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19; John 3:23; Acts 8:36, 38-39). The ordinance shall be administered by either the Pastor or a person authorized by the Board. Baptism is a prerequisite to Church Membership.

Paragraph B:

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be administered on the first Sunday of each month, unless the Pastor in consultation with at least one Deacon shall for some special reason, change the date temporarily. The ordinance shall be administered by either the Pastor or a person authorized by the Board.

ARTICLE VII - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Admission of Members

Paragraph A:

The Membership Committee shall consist of the Pastor(s) and the Board for the purpose of examining the candidates.

Paragraph B:

Every candidate for admission to the church by baptism, experience, or letter, shall relate his or her Christian conversion to the membership committee.

Paragraph C:

The candidate shall be required to subscribe to the Articles of Faith and the Covenant of this church before receiving the privilege of membership.

Paragraph D:

The Board, having satisfied themselves that the candidate (having reached the age of 10 years) is eligible for membership, shall recommend to the church that the candidate be received, and candidates so recommended may be received at any regular meeting of the church, as well as at any business meeting, by a majority vote of the members present and voting.

Section 2: Associate Membership

Associate membership shall be available to persons who are residents of the community but who desire to retain their membership in their prior church for extenuating reasons (such as missionaries who desire to remain affiliated with their sending church or students who desire to

remain members of their home church).It is understood that this only pertains to such cases and is not more generally applied.

Applicants must meet the standard for membership as stated in ARTICLE VII, ### Section 1, and must be members of a Church of like faith, from which we would receive a letter stating their membership is in good standing.

Associate members have all the rights of regular members, are subject to the discipline of the church, but do not have the right to vote or hold any elective position.

Section 3: Duties of Members

The duties and obligations of members are set forth in general in the Church Covenant.

Section 4: Discipline of Members

Paragraph A:

A Covenant Committee, consisting of the Board with the Pastor(s) shall handle all violations of the Church Covenant that call for disciplinary action.(Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; Romans 15:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

Paragraph B:

In cases of personal differences between members of the church, the Covenant Committee shall recommend that the persons involved endeavor to settle their differences in accordance with the instruction of Christ as recorded in Matthew 18:15-17 - "Moreover if your brother sins against

you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector." Refusal on the part of anyone to comply with these instructions shall make them liable to discipline, whether responsibility in the first instance was theirs or not.

Paragraph C:

If a believer is unrepentant when lovingly confronted first by another believer, then by one or two witnesses, and finally by the entire church, he or she is to be treated as an unbeliever. The church family should discontinue fellowship with him or her. Discipline serves as a way to express genuine love and to practice accountability in the body of Christ. Therefore, the entire discipline process (see Policy Manual on Church Discipline) should be motivated by and carried out with love. The goal of discipline is the complete restoration of the disobedient believer to fellowship with God and the church body.

Paragraph D:

Dismissed members may be restored to membership upon recommendation of the Board to the church, after such members have given to them a satisfactory explanation, or acceptable evidence of honest repentance. Full restoration shall be available by the same procedure found in Article VII, ### Section 1.

Section 5: Dismissal of Members

Paragraph A:

Open letters (i.e., letters addressed to no particular church) will not be granted.

Paragraph B:

Notice of death, or becoming a member of another Church, will be considered as severing the member's connection with this church.

Paragraph C:

Members, who for a period of six (6) consecutive months absent themselves habitually from the regular services of the church without valid reason, shall be placed on the inactive list without right of franchise by the Board. The inactive member shall be contacted by the church leadership and given notice of such action. After an additional six (6) months of inactivity, membership shall be terminated by action of the church. Inactive status can be appealed to the Board for restoration.

Paragraph D:

If a member due to relocation ceases to maintain a vital contact with the church, he or she may be removed from membership by action of the church.

ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

Paragraph A:

The fiscal year of the church shall close on the last day of December.

Paragraph B:

The annual business meeting of the church for the election of officers by ballot shall be at the October Quarterly Meeting. Presentation of an annual expense and missionary budget shall be presented to the congregation for approval prior to the beginning of its fiscal year.

Paragraph C:

Quarterly business meetings shall be held in the month following the close of each quarter (January, April, July, and October) with the date being set by the Board.

ARTICLE IX - QUORUM

Paragraph A:

Twenty percent of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum for all business meetings.

Paragraph B:

Only active members present and at least eighteen (18) years of age shall be qualified to vote in any business meeting and the quorum shall be determined by a count of the qualified voters.

ARTICLE X - OFFICERS

Section 1: Officers in General

The officers of the church shall be Pastor(s) and Deacons and shall be known as the Board. Agreeable to the provisions of the Act of Incorporation and the laws of the State, the Board shall from its members, appoint a Trustee Chairman and three men to the office of Trustee.

Section 2: The Pastor(s)

Paragraph A:

The Senior Pastor shall be elected at a special or regular meeting of the church, public notice of such action having been given from the pulpit two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the date of meeting, and three-fourths (3/4) of the ballots cast shall be necessary for a call to be extended.

Paragraph B:

The Pastor will recommend a prospective Assistant/Associate candidate to the Board. The Deacons will serve as the investigative body and will, when appropriate, recommend the candidate to the Church by announcing the candidate from the pulpit for two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the date of meeting. The voting shall be by ballot and three-fourths (3/4) of the ballots cast by the active members shall be necessary for extending a call.

Paragraph C:

The Pastor(s) shall continue in office until resignation. The Board may request the Pastor(s) resignation by unanimous decision that may be appealed to the congregation. Resignation may be requested by the congregation in the following manner: The question of severing the Pastoral

relationship may be considered at any regular or special business meeting provided the Deacons have received a written request for such action by at least 25% of the voting membership, and provided, further, that public notice of such meeting shall have been given on two (2) successive Sundays just prior to such meeting. Grounds for dismissal are related to failure to fulfill the responsibilities of and/or qualifications for this office. A majority vote shall decide the question.

Paragraph D:

The Pastor(s) shall be ex-officio member(s) of the Board and of all other boards and standing committees and the Senior Pastor shall preside at all business meetings. The duties associated with each position shall be specified in the job descriptions.

Section 3: Deacons

Paragraph A:

The Church shall elect from its membership the Deacons: these men shall be elected to serve for a term of three years. The number of Deacons is to be determined by the Deacon Board in relation to the size of the Church membership. The election shall take place in the following manner: At least six (6) weeks prior to the annual meeting for the election of officers, the Pastor shall mail to each family in the church a short exposition of the New Testament requirements for Deacons (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). The congregation shall nominate candidates from whom the Nominating Committee will formulate a ballot (See Article XI, ### Section 5). All of those placed in nomination for the office of Deacon shall have been a member of this Church for a period of at least one (1) year.

Paragraph B:

It shall be the duty of the Board to supervise the work of the church in all its departments, to seek out such members as need special help and encouragement, to inquire into the fitness and qualifications of applicants for baptism and membership, to visit the sick, to serve the elements of the Lord's Supper, and to assist the pastor generally in the management of the church and shepherding of the flock.

Paragraph C:

The Board shall constitute the Covenant Committee, in accordance with Article VII, ### Section 4.

Paragraph D:

The Board shall constitute the Pulpit Committee, whose duty it shall be to select and present to the church a candidate for the pulpit, and provide for all Senior Pastoral responsibilities in his absence.

Paragraph E:

As soon as feasible after the annual election, the Board shall organize by electing a chairman, vice-chairman, and a secretary.

Paragraph F:

The Board shall hold regular meetings (suggested at least once a month) at such times and places as may be deemed advisable and for the best interest of the church.

Paragraph G:

It shall be the duty of the Board to present to the congregation prior to the fiscal year, a current expense and missionary budget for the ensuing year. These budgets become operative only when adopted and approved by the church.

Paragraph H:

It shall be the duty of the Board to oversee the budget of the Church and the disbursing of all Church funds. They shall keep good communication with the membership and shall seek Congregational approval for expenditures that exceed a total of one (1) percent of the operating expense budget per year without congregational approval.

Paragraph I:

The Board shall be authorized to appoint the chairman of each standing committee as well as the Sunday School Superintendent and the Awana Commander annually. The Board shall have the authority to create temporary committees as needed and appoint assistants for elected positions. The chairman of each committee will then recommend qualified persons to fill the open positions of their respective committees. These shall be appointed for one-year terms subsequent to Board approval. Each Chairperson shall monitor their expenditures and decisions with accountability to the Board. Every effort should be made to allow a balance of age and gender on each committee.

The Board shall be authorized to fill all Deacon and other elected position vacancies. Such appointments shall be in effect only until the next Annual Election.

Paragraph J:

It shall be the responsibility of the Board to maintain, review and update the Policy Manual when necessary. It shall be the Board Secretary's responsibility to ensure that all current policies are included in the Policy Manual.

Paragraph K:

No Deacon after two (2) consecutive terms shall succeed himself for a period of one year.

Section 4: Trustees

Paragraph A:

The Trustees shall serve for a term of one year. In the case of any vacancy occurring during the year, the unexpired term shall be filled in accordance with the provisions of Article X, ### Section 3, #### Paragraph I.

Paragraph B.

It shall be the duty of the Trustees to hold in trust the property of the church, to sign such mortgages and notes as the church may require, to see to the insurance on the church property, and to fulfill all requirements of civil law respecting the Trustees of a corporation not for profit, subject always to the instructions of the church.

Paragraph C:

It shall be the responsibility of the Trustees to oversee the maintenance, appearance and any approved alterations of the facilities. They shall also be responsible for facilitating the custodial staff and work.

Section 5: Terms of Officers

The terms of the officers of the church shall coincide with the fiscal year.

ARTICLE XI - ELECTED POSITIONS & COMMITTEES

Only church members in good standing shall be considered for chairman or members of the following elected positions and committees. The Board shall approve committee appointments. The Board shall appoint the chairman of each standing committee who shall be responsible for submitting reports (minutes) of committee meetings to the Board on a regular basis.

Section 1: Deaconesses

Paragraph A:

The Church shall elect from its membership the deaconesses: These deaconesses shall be elected to serve for a term of two years with half their number being elected annually. The number of deaconesses is to be determined by the deaconesses in relation to the size of the Church membership.

Paragraph B:

The Deaconesses shall annually elect a chairperson from their membership who shall be responsible to submit meeting minutes to the Board.

Paragraph C:

The Deaconesses are to serve the body of Christ in the areas of hospitality and encouragement of women through various ministries. This would include (but not limited to) assistance with baptism, planning funeral dinners, and preparing for communion.

Section 2: Clerk**Paragraph A:**

At each annual election the church shall elect from its membership a clerk to serve for the ensuing year.

Paragraph B:

The Clerk shall keep a fair record of the proceedings of the church, have charge of the statistical records and minutes of business meetings, keep a register of all the members, and perform such other duties as may be required by the church. Original records should be maintained on the premises in a secured location.

Section 3: Treasurer**Paragraph A:**

At each annual election the church shall elect from its membership a Current Expense Treasurer.

Paragraph B:

The Current Expense Treasurer shall be responsible for an accurate and permanent record of all regular receipts and disbursements. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the disbursal of funds only by check as authorized. Monthly reports shall be made to the Board and a summary report to the church at each quarterly meeting.

Section 4: Auditors

The Auditors shall consist of two (2) non-Board members who shall be elected at the annual meeting. They shall examine the books of the Treasurer together with all necessary vouchers and shall make their report at the January quarterly meeting.

Section 5: Nominating Committee

Paragraph A:

The Pastor shall appoint the chairman of the Committee, and the church at the third quarterly meeting shall elect four (4) members.

Paragraph B:

Each member who is qualified to vote may return to the church office a nomination list of those who, in the judgment of the member, are best qualified to serve in the various elected roles. The

number of names submitted by any one member shall not be limited, but each list must be plainly signed by the one submitting it.

It shall be the duty of this Committee to determine the nominees for Deacons in the manner specified in Article X, ### Section 3, ##### Paragraph A: to suggest names for all other positions to be elected by the church, and to interview all nominees with a view to obtaining their consent to serve if elected. A ballot shall then be prepared and submitted to the Board for review and then presentation to the congregation at the annual election.

Section 6: Music & Media Committee

The Music & Media Committee shall consist of the chairman and a minimum of four (4) members and shall be responsible for the scheduling of music for the Church services, including instrumentalists. They shall have the care of the musical instruments and of the music library, and of all media equipment. The committee shall be responsible for the oversight and implementation of technology and equipment used in public services and other church activities to enhance sound and incorporate media. They shall be responsible for training and scheduling persons to operate the equipment.

Section 7: Christian Education Committee

The Christian Education Committee shall consist of the chairman and a minimum of four (4) members. The membership shall include the Sunday School Superintendent, the Awana Commander and may include representatives from each relevant department.

The committee shall give unification and correlation to all educational programming in the church. They shall be responsible for:

1. Planning of calendar.
2. Determining and evaluating of overall objectives.
3. Recruitment, training and encouragement of workers.
4. Selection and approval of curricula.
5. Administration of equipment, materials and facilities used in the various educational programs.
6. Developing and recommending the annual Christian Education budget.
7. Such other duties that shall further the educational ministry of the church.

Section 8: Missionary Committee

The Missionary Committee shall consist of the chairman and a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall be responsible for:

1. Working with the Pastor in the scheduling of missionary speakers.
2. Elevating interest in and providing current information.
3. Adhering to the church's mission policy.
4. Developing and recommending the annual missions budget.

5. Scheduling and planning periodic missionary conferences and events.
6. Interviewing and evaluating potential missionary support candidates and currently supported missionaries returning from the field.
7. Such other duties that shall further the missionary outreach of the church.

Section 9: Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee shall consist of the chairman and a minimum of three (3) members. The committee shall be responsible for the development and coordination of various community compassion outreaches. Among these may be outreach activities at various community events (such as the Red Flannel Festival, etc.)

They shall also assure the consistent effort to enhance the welcoming of visitors at services and events, the follow-up contacts of those visitors, and all other activities that will encourage this ministry outreach.

They shall encourage and/or schedule compassionate outreach to homebound or otherwise limited members of the church.

Section 10: Terms of Service

The terms of service of those holding elected positions or committee assignments shall coincide with the fiscal year. Open applications may be submitted annually for each standing committee.

ARTICLE XII - POLICIES

Approved Policies are intended to allow the First Baptist Church of Cedar Springs, MI to fulfill its mission and therefore reflect the primary principles declared in its Constitution. These policies shall be reviewed by the Board at least every third year. It shall be the responsibility of the Board Secretary to ensure that all current policies are included in the Policy Manual. Copies of the Policy manual will be maintained in the Church Office, with the Pastoral staff and each serving Deacon.
