

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND STRUCTURE DOCUMENT

First Baptist Church, Boerne

The purpose of this **Statement of Faith and Structure Document** is to provide First Baptist Church, Boerne, with an effective and orderly decision making structure to accomplish the mission of the church, which is

...to be a Spirit-led and prayerful family of faith who has been changed and empowered by Jesus Christ to love Him and all people through Biblical service.

This document states the vision, process, and setting that make up the mission of FBC, and articulates the statement of faith and doctrines that we believe as a body of believers under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ. It discusses the importance of unity within the body. The balance of the document then describes the purpose, responsibilities and basic policies related to the major elements of the church organization including the Church Council, Business Council, Ministry Council and Deacons. The organization of Committees and Ministry Teams that carry out various aspects of the vision is defined and described.

August 2015

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BOERNE

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of First Baptist Church, Boerne, is to be a Spirit-led and prayerful family of faith who has been changed and empowered by Jesus Christ to love Him and all people through biblical service.

The FBC vision is described in Mark 12:30-31 and Matthew 6:33: "Seeking Christ... Serving People".

We pray that the impact of this vision would be Life Transformation – that everyone would have the opportunity to accept the love of God and experience God's reconciliation provided through His Son Jesus Christ and thus being transformed into God's adopted sons and daughters (Romans 8:15-16, Galatians 2:20).

The process that results in transforming lives is as described in Ephesians 4:11-13 by:

- **Evangelizing** (Christ in me *Sharing*)
- **Equipping** (Christ in me *Shaping*), and
- **Engaging** (Christ in me *Serving*)

as God's Word and His Spirit lead us.

Acts 2:42-47 describes the setting for Life Transformation:

- **Personal connection**
- **Powerful prayer**
- **Biblical revelation**
- **Ministering/Serving/Giving**

We seek to apply the needs and tools for sharing the vision found in Philippians 3:10-12:

- **Gratitude**
- **Excitement**
- **Intentionality**
- **Urgency**

STATEMENT OF FAITH OVERVIEW

“Baptists are a people who profess a living faith. This faith is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ who is ‘the same yesterday, today, and forever.’ Therefore, the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ whose will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures.”

Most of the STATEMENT OF FAITH section is quoted directly from *The Baptist Faith and Message, a Statement Adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000* (Nashville, LifeWay Press, 2000) (available at www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp), with minor modifications, which reflect our unique identity as a Baptist body. Our Statement of Faith clearly states our beliefs regarding the following 19 items:

1. THE SCRIPTURES
2. GOD
3. MAN
4. SALVATION
5. GOD’S PURPOSE OF GRACE
6. THE CHURCH
7. BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER
8. THE LORD’S DAY
9. THE KINGDOM
10. LAST THINGS
11. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS
12. EDUCATION
13. STEWARDSHIP
14. COOPERATION
15. THE CHRISTIAN AND SOCIAL ORDER
16. PEACE AND WAR
17. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
18. THE FAMILY
19. MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

STRUCTURE DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to provide the church with an effective and orderly decision making structure to accomplish its mission.

This is a congregational church. In that respect, each member is equally responsible for the welfare of the church and has an equal voice in matters brought before the church. Each member of the church should be provided the maximum freedom and encouragement in developing their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Communication is the lifeblood of this organizational structure. It is absolutely necessary that communication and consultation exist between all the members of the structure.

This structure provides for a dynamic leadership being shared in cooperative partnerships between the laity and ordained clergy of the church. In this manner, the church can take full advantage of all the leadership and spiritual gifts which God has provided it.

This document describes the purpose, responsibilities and basic policies related to the major elements of the church organization including the Church Council, Business Council, Ministry Council and Deacons.

MEMBERS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BOERNE

CHURCH COUNCIL

- *Senior Pastor*
- *One Staff Member*
- *Five Lay Members*
 - Spiritual Direction
 - Vision
 - Overall Planning

BUSINESS COUNCIL

- *One Staff Member*
- *Five Lay Members*
- Secular Business Matters
- Administration
- Finance
- Personnel
- Legal
- Insurance
- Property Acquisition
- Building Maintenance

DEACONS

- *Elected from membership of church*
- *No specified size of the Deacon body*
- Peacemakers
- Service Ministries:
 - Widows
 - Benevolence
- Discipline
- Serve Lord's Supper
- Recommend Pulpit Committee
- Recommend Nominating Committee
- Restoration or Cancellation of Inactive Members

MINISTRY COUNCIL

- *Ordained/Licensed Staff Members*
- *Ministry Lay Chairpersons/Directors*
- Communications
- Coordination
- Assessment
- Organization

Section I

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section I: STATEMENT OF FAITH ¹

We have based the following statement of faith on the report adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000, with minor modifications, which reflect our unique identity as a Baptist body. Questions about any of these doctrinal elements should be addressed to the Senior Pastor.

We affirm the following portion of *The Baptist Faith and Message* by Herschel H. Hobbs to describe the context of our statement of faith:

“Baptists are a people who profess a living faith. This faith is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ who is “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Therefore, the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ whose will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

“A living faith must experience a growing understanding of truth and must be continually interpreted and related to the needs of each new generation. Throughout their history Baptist bodies, both large and small, have issued statements of faith which comprise a consensus of their beliefs. Such statements have never been regarded as complete, infallible statements of faith, nor as official creeds carrying mandatory authority. Thus this generation of Southern Baptists in historic succession of intent and purpose as it endeavors to state for its time and theological climate those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us.

“Baptists emphasize the soul’s competency before God, freedom in religion, and the priesthood of the believer. However, this emphasis should not be interpreted to mean that there is an absence of certain definite doctrines that Baptists believe, cherish, and with which they have been and are now closely identified.”²

1. THE SCRIPTURES

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is 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. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. 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. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17;

¹ Most of the STATEMENT OF FAITH section is quoted directly from *The Baptist Faith and Message, a Statement Adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000* (Nashville, LifeWay Press, 2000) (available at www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp), with only minor changes. All Scripture references cited in support of each summary Statement come directly from *The Baptist Faith and Message* and are included although some may be more obviously supportive of the summary Statement than others.

² Hobbs, Herschel H., *Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1971), pp. 4-5.

Acts 2:16ff³; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

2. 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. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune 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 knowing, 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.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:1-2, 6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

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 human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary 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, fully God, fully man, 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.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:11-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

³ The abbreviation “ff” used in this section means “two or more verses following Scripture reference”.

C. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. 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 guarantee that God will 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.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6, 5:22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

3. MAN

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's 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. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they 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 person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

4. SALVATION

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

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 Saviour.

B. *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 unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. *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 maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. *Glorification* is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

5. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, 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 the 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, and 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.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:31-34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

6. THE CHURCH

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

7. 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 Saviour, 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.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the body of Christ, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

8. 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 include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:Iff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

9. 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.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

10. 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.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

11. 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. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

12. EDUCATION

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, 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 education 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.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-13; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:2-4,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

13. 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.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42-46; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

14. COOPERATION

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified,

and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:1-5; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18; 2:1-5.

15. THE CHRISTIAN AND SOCIAL ORDER

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives 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 Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. 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.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16-17; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35-36; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:13-19; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8-10.

16. 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 an 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. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33-34; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:17-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

17. 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.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

18. THE FAMILY

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

19. MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: marriage is a lifelong commitment ordained by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality is contradictory to God’s design for sexuality and marriage and is therefore sinful and offensive to God. Sexual immorality includes acts such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one’s gender or disagreement with one’s biological gender.

We believe that we must preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community. To do this it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as lay leadership abide by and agree with the Structure Document statement on Marriage and Sexual Orientation and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking God’s mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:15-25; Psalm 139; Matthew 5:27-32; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 5:21-33; Hebrews 13:4

We believe that every person in accordance with scripture and the doctrines of the church must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. We believe that we are all sinners saved by grace through the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. Further we believe that hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual or groups are to be repudiated.

The facilities and properties of the First Baptist Church of Boerne, Texas are available to individuals and groups for use/rental only according to the beliefs outlined in our Structure Document.

Any visiting minister or officiant is allowed to conduct wedding ceremonies, worship services or activities in any of our facilities or on the properties of the First Baptist Church of Boerne, Texas only if they are in complete compliance with our Structure Document statement on Marriage and Sexual Orientation, and have the permission of our ministerial staff.

Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 2:14-17; Ephesians 5:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:22-24

Section II

STRUCTURE DOCUMENT

Section II: STRUCTURE DOCUMENT

1. CHRISTIAN UNITY

In John 17:21, Christ prayed for all believers *“that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*⁴ The members of FBC Boerne believe that unity is a part of God’s will for the body of Christ. Each member of this body is responsible for maintaining this atmosphere of unity. God grants unity as all members of this body focus on Christ, as we yield to His lordship, and serve together under His power.

A. IMPORTANCE

We believe that Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23) and that Christ lives in each believer. This commonality of faith gives us hope of unity no matter how we may differ. We strive for unity, but not uniformity. We believe that a diversity of perspectives that fall within the foundational beliefs described in the scripturally based Statement of Faith and Message strengthens the fabric of the church and helps us to know Christ’s divine will more fully through each other. We choose to follow the directions found in Ephesians 4:32 and *“be kind to one another, be understanding, as willing to forgive others as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven [us]”* (Phillips).

B. DECISION MAKING THROUGH CONSENSUS TO REACH ONENESS AND UNITY

In John 13:35 Christ tells us, *“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”*. To assist us in showing this love, it is intended that consensus be the basis for all decisions made within the structure described. Consensus means individual “general agreement or accord” with the overall group. Consensus is not a majority vote, but leads toward unity of purpose and action. To reach oneness and unity in all decisions through consensus based upon Philippians 2: 1 – 11, each member of a decision-making body prayerfully seeks God's wisdom through God's Word, prayer, and the power of the Holy Spirit to move forward, pursue action, or not.

The process of reaching consensus involves prayerfully seeking through God’s Word His wisdom and leadership (James 1:5, 3:17-18, and 4:15). Consensus requires perseverance but provides a powerful opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak through a group as it comes into agreement. Consensus is critical to the integrity of the structure described in this document. Council, Deacon, Committee or Ministry Team decisions will solely be made on the basis of consensus, and will never be based on majority and minority positions.

Each member of a decision-making body of the church is responsible for participating in the process of consensus, seeking through prayer and God’s Word His wisdom regarding the issue and resolution at hand. Should some have questions during this process, it is their responsibility to voice those questions as the process moves forward under God's leadership.

⁴ All Scripture quotes in this document are from *The Holy Bible, New International Version*®, © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society, unless otherwise indicated.

Each member of a decision-making body agrees he/she will not hold up a decision to proceed unless it is the Lord's leading. Through the process of consensus a decision will be deferred if one member disagrees based upon the Lord's leading. To reach consensus, the chairperson/moderator will take appropriate steps, such as: entering into a season of prayer, presenting appropriate information, facilitating discussion, and/or consulting with others. This process will continue until consensus is reached either to move forward or not to pursue action. For significant issues requiring a timely decision in which consensus is not being reached, the Church Council will be informed and the process will continue.

C. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In seeking unity within the church, conflicts may arise because we as believers have not already achieved the goal of being Christ-like. Conflicts are to be resolved at the lowest appropriate level in the body of Christ – that is at the personal level. (Matthew 5:23-24.) Conflicts within a ministry will be first addressed by the responsible ministerial staff member and then, if necessary, the senior pastor. The Church Council will address conflicts in the event that the normal organizational structure is not effective in resolving a particular conflict. If necessary, the Church Council may initiate the involvement of the Deacon body.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE

The purpose of this document is to provide the church with an effective and orderly decision making structure to accomplish its mission. The document shall be made available to all church member family units.

This is a congregational church. In that respect, each member is equally responsible for the welfare of the church and has an equal voice in matters brought before the church. Each member of the church should be provided the maximum freedom and encouragement in developing their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The appropriate perspective of each church leader is as a servant for the benefit of the overall congregation. Accordingly, the responsibility and authority of leaders are limited to that which has been expressly assigned by the congregation in this document or by other specific action.

This document describes the purpose, responsibilities and basic policies related to the major elements of the church organization including the Church Council, Business Council, Ministry Council and Deacons. Likewise, it is expected that as committees and ministry teams are formed, their purpose, responsibilities and policies will be clearly articulated. In this manner, this structure will empower effective decisions at the lowest possible level in the church's organization.

For the purposes of this document, the term "structural policies" means the specific policies and procedures described in this document. The term "operating policies" refers to operating ground rules for the day to day activities of the church. This document is not intended to be a detailed operating policy document but rather one which describes an organization which will determine effective operating policies. The few structural policies stated are designed to provide an effective structure which will encourage a dynamic leadership, made up of spiritually mature believers, to develop operating policies to match the situation as it changes.

Communication is the lifeblood of this organizational structure. It is absolutely necessary that communication and consultation exist between all the members of the structure. No member of the structure can be effective if they are isolated from the others for any reason. Likewise, each component of the structure should seek every opportunity to communicate with the congregation.

As servants of the congregation, leaders should encourage and respond to input from the church membership. Church members should be provided access to all elements of the decision making structure described in this document to express their input, opinions, concerns and ideas. All significant decisions should involve input from the congregation and the decisions themselves should be reported to the congregation.

Annually, the Church Council shall determine that ongoing church operations are compliant and consistent with the agreed upon procedures in the structure document. If a structure document revision is required, the church council shall request the nominating committee to nominate a temporary committee representative of the diversity of the church body to determine and recommend such revisions. The committee shall include at least one member who has knowledge of the structure document's history and purpose. While it is desirable that this member be one of the original structure document authors, this may not be feasible

and is not required. Revisions will be approved first by the church council and then by the entire church body in a called business meeting.

This structure provides for a dynamic leadership being shared in cooperative partnerships between the laity and ordained clergy of the church. In this manner, the church can take full advantage of all the leadership and spiritual gifts which God has provided it.

MEMBERS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BOERNE

CHURCH COUNCIL

- *Senior Pastor*
- *One Staff Member*
- *Five Lay Members*
- Spiritual Direction
- Vision
- Overall Planning

BUSINESS COUNCIL

- *One Staff Member*
- *Five Lay Members*
- Secular Business Matters
- Administration
- Finance
- Personnel
- Legal
- Insurance
- Property Acquisition
- Building Maintenance

DEACONS

- *Elected from membership of church*
- *No specified size of the Deacon body*
- Peacemakers
- Service Ministries:
 - Widows
 - Benevolence
- Discipline
- Serve Lord's Supper
- Recommend Pulpit Committee
- Recommend Nominating Committee
- Restoration or Cancellation of Inactive Members

MINISTRY COUNCIL

- *Ordained/Licensed/Commissioned Staff Members*
- *Ministry Lay Chairpersons/Directors*
- Communications
- Coordination
- Assessment
- Organization

3. LIFESTYLE COVENANT

The leadership of First Baptist Church Boerne shall be asked to live by this lifestyle covenant as a condition of serving as a leader. The membership of the church shall be encouraged to seriously consider living by this covenant.

"I covenant with God and those who join with me to be accountable in the following areas of my life:

- I will take time for personal devotions on a regular basis to get alone with God for the purpose of developing my relationship with the Father, seeking spiritual guidance and maturity in my faith.
- I will be an active member of the church and its various activities.
- I will avoid allowing resentments and animosity to separate me from other members of the congregation.
- I will serve with the gifts God has given me by regularly sharing generously with the church and the community my time, talent and resources.
- I will financially support the church on a regular basis, giving unselfishly and generously.
- I will maintain a sexually and morally pure lifestyle.
- I will seek to live my personal, home and business life in a manner consistent with the example of Jesus Christ and as a Christian maturing in His likeness.
- I will give the vision of the church and the needs of the congregation a priority over my individual needs and opinions when they differ. I will persevere as those differences occur.

I invite those who have voluntarily entered into this covenant with me to confront me if any of these areas of my life appear to be compromised."

4. CHURCH COUNCIL

A. PURPOSE

The Church Council will provide the overall spiritual direction, vision and planning for the church. Through prayer and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, it is charged with keeping the church on course to achieve its mission.

B. RESPONSIBILITY

The Church Council is responsible for operating policy decisions related to the overall allocation of the church's financial, physical and human resources to assure that they are employed most effectively to meet ministry and program needs.

The Church Council will provide advice and counsel to the pastor concerning his effective use of the church's decision making and implementation structure.

The Church Council will assure that the congregation is openly communicated with concerning the church's activities and ministries.

The Church Council will assure that conflicts are resolved at the lowest appropriate level in the organizational structure. It will initiate Deacon involvement in the event that the normal organizational structure is not effective in resolving a particular conflict.

The Church Council will set and publish the date and time of regular and special business meetings. They will also establish and publish the agenda for business meetings and appoint a moderator to conduct these meetings.

The Church Council will assure that a spirit of teamwork and cooperation exists between the Business Council, Deacons, Ministry Council, staff and itself. In this respect, it will strive to surface and resolve any conflict among these groups.

The Church Council will initiate and respond to operating policy recommendations as it carries out its responsibilities. Operating policies which are developed by the Church Council itself should be minimized. As issues arise, the Church Council should assign responsibility for operating policy recommendations to the Business Council, Deacons or Ministry Council. Likewise, these groups must submit the operating policies which they originate to the Church Council for its approval. It has the authority on behalf of the church to enact and amend operating policies, except those which are specifically provided for in this document. In the event that it desires to amend structural policies provided for in this document, the matter must be brought before the congregation for a vote of affirmation.

C. MEMBERSHIP MAKEUP AND APPOINTMENT

The Church Council shall be composed of seven members consisting of both men and women. Members will consist of the Senior Pastor, an ordained staff member, Deacon representative, and four at-large members.

The Senior Pastor will serve as chairman of the Church Council.

In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the other Church Council staff member will act as coordinator for the Church Council. During a long-term absence of the Senior Pastor or when the position is vacant, the Church Council will lead as the corporate Senior Pastor,

augmented by the Ministry Council Coordinator, chairman of the Business Council, and the chairman of the Deacons. The Church Council staff person and one of the four at-large members will share the responsibility of coordination for the expanded Church Council.

The Deacon representative will be designated by the Deacons, the ordained staff member will be designated by the Senior Pastor, and the at-large members will be designated by the Nominating Committee. These appointments will be approved by a vote of affirmation of the congregation.

D. TERM OF SERVICE

Lay members of the Church Council will serve a three year term and may not be re-appointed until three years has passed since the expiration of their previous term of service. To insure continuity, terms of lay members will be staggered.

If a member's term is not completed due to death or resignation, a replacement will be appointed to serve the remainder of the term. The party responsible for the original appointment will designate the replacement subject to a vote of affirmation by the congregation.

E. QUALIFICATIONS

Members of the Church Council will be members of FBC, should be individuals who are well known in the church, are spiritually mature, have demonstrated leadership ability, are willing to make decisions based on consensus, are willing to attend meetings regularly and are willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant. The parties responsible for appointments to the Church Council should consult among themselves in an attempt to balance the membership to include individuals who are motivated in the following areas of spiritual leadership:

- Establishing new ministries
- Able to hear and articulate God's Word
- Minister to spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the church
- Equipping God's people for discipleship
- Spreading the Gospel

5. BUSINESS COUNCIL

A. PURPOSE

The Business Council will administer the secular business affairs of the church. It has a service responsibility and will seek opportunities to serve the church by taking on the burden of administrative duties so that staff and other lay leaders can be free to be as effective as possible. Its areas of responsibility include finance, personnel, legal, insurance, property acquisition, and maintenance functions. The Business Council will assure that church business is handled efficiently and effectively and that the church has integrity in its business dealings with its members, employees, and the community at large.

B. RESPONSIBILITY

The Business Council will design the appropriate committee structure to carry out the responsibility for particular operating functions such as personnel, budget and finance and any others deemed necessary. It will inform the Nominating Committee concerning this committee structure so that necessary personnel may be recruited. It will also describe the spiritual gifts, education and experience desired for respective committee members in order to provide clarity to the selection process.

The Business Council will develop clear descriptions of the responsibility and decision making authority for each committee. It will also communicate the overall plan and operating policies established by the Church Council to each committee so that committee members will have a comprehensive perspective. It will describe the reports and feedback desired from the respective committees.

The Business Council will develop and implement strategies to effectively communicate its significant decisions with all constituencies and members of the church. It will also solicit input and feedback from the church concerning its areas of responsibility.

The Business Council will appoint the appropriate officers necessary to carry out its responsibilities, including Trustees. A member of the Business Council or Church Council will not be eligible to serve as one of these officers. These appointments will be approved by the Church Council.

The Business Council will assure that membership records are kept which reflect dates of professions of faith, baptism, transfer of membership in or out, and cancellation of membership due to inactivity. The Business Council will also have the responsibility to furnish the Deacons with a list of inactive members generated through the resources of the church as requested.

The Business Council will establish and amend the operating policies through which it carries out its responsibilities, subject to the approval of the Church Council.

C. MEMBERSHIP MAKEUP AND APPOINTMENT

The Business Council shall be composed of six members consisting of both men and women. Members will include a staff person and five lay persons. The staff person will be designated by the senior pastor. The lay persons will be recruited by the Nominating Committee and approved by a vote of affirmation of the congregation.

The Church Council will annually designate the chairperson and the vice-chairperson from among the lay members of the Business Council.

D. TERM OF SERVICE

Lay members of the Business Council will serve a three-year term. A member cannot be re-appointed until three years has passed since the expiration of their previous term of service. To insure continuity, terms of lay members will be staggered.

If a member's term is not completed due to death or resignation, a replacement will be appointed to serve the remainder of the term by the Nominating Committee, subject to a vote of affirmation of the congregation.

E. QUALIFICATIONS

Members of the Business Council will be members of FBC, should be individuals who possess spiritual gifts in the area of administration, are well known in the church, are spiritually mature, have demonstrated leadership ability, are willing to make decisions based on consensus, are willing to attend meetings regularly, and are willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

6. MINISTRY COUNCIL

A. PURPOSE

The Ministry Council exists to promote, provide for, and assess the ministries in accordance with the vision of First Baptist Church through communication, coordination, collaboration, and consensus in the body of Christ in and through First Baptist Church of Boerne.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities addressed by the Ministry Council include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Communicate to and from the staff and with the church body about ministries in an on-going manner, both formally and informally.
2. Coordinate event and activity schedules.
3. Assess ministry area effectiveness.
4. Process ideas for new programs and needs for ministry surfaced by members of the congregation.
5. Assist in organizing ministry teams, including spiritual gifting, resource allocation, training and experience desired.

These responsibilities will be carried out through regularly scheduled quarterly and annual Ministry Council meetings. The Church Council may also call Ministry Council meetings as needed as a part of their responsibility for overall planning.

Members of the congregation are encouraged to surface needs for ministry and to generate ideas for new programs that are in concert with the vision of First Baptist Church. Ideas for new ministry programs should be presented to the staff. The new ministry idea will be assigned to the appropriate staff member who will work with the originating party to develop clear objectives and a plan of action. The Ministry Council will assist the staff in processing and organizing new ministry ideas thru collaboration and consensus.

The Ministry Council will communicate the overall plan and operating policies established by the Church Council to each team so that team members will have a comprehensive perspective. The Ministry Council will describe the reports and feedback desired from the ministry teams.

The Ministry Council will establish and amend the operating policies through which it carries out its responsibilities, subject to the approval of the Church Council.

C. MEMBERSHIP MAKEUP AND APPOINTMENT

The Ministry Council shall be composed of all ordained/licensed/commissioned staff members and their respective ministry area lay chairpersons and directors. The lay chairpersons and directors of the ministry teams and committees will be recruited by the Nominating Committee and approved by a vote of affirmation of the church body.

The chief administrative staff person serves as the coordinator of the Ministry Council.

D. TERM OF SERVICE

The term of service for ordained/licensed/commissioned staff members on the Ministry Council is indefinite. This provides continuity for the ministry areas. The term of service for the ministry area lay chairpersons/directors will be concurrent with their term of service on the ministry team/committee on which they serve.

E. QUALIFICATIONS

Members of the Ministry Council will be members of FBC and should be individuals who possess spiritual gifts appropriate to the areas of ministry which they lead, are well known in the church, are spiritually mature, and have demonstrated leadership ability. They should be willing to make decisions based on consensus, be willing to attend meetings and participate regularly, and be willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

7. DEACONS

A. PURPOSE

The Deacons will preserve and protect the spiritual integrity of the church and its leadership. Their responsibilities include peacemaking and discipline. They will also assure that the church has spiritually mature leaders. Deacons will be model servants for the congregation.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES

The basic Deacon responsibility is one of servant rather than a position of authority or esteem. Deacons should always be open to ways to serve both the church congregation and its leadership.

Deacons are peacemakers as described in Ephesians 4:3: *“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace”* and should always seek to keep unity in the congregation. They should be both sensitive to the needs of the congregation and assertive in protecting the church. When issues of conflict arise that are not resolvable within the normal organizational structure of the Church, the Church Council will initiate Deacon involvement to settle the dispute. The Church Council will also call upon the Deacons if there is conflict involving the church and any group or individual in the community at large.

The Deacons serve as the liaison between members of the congregation and church leaders (both laity and clergy), assuring that lines of communication are always open.

Ministry to church widows and widowers is a particular service responsibility of the Deacons. Widows will be assigned to an individual Deacon who will be responsible to monitor their situation and assure that their needs are ministered to.

Church benevolence funds will be administered by the Deacons. Church staff and members should bring benevolence needs to a Deacon’s attention.

The Deacons are responsible for church discipline as described in [Section II, SubSection 18](#).

Deacons will serve the Lord’s Supper and may be assisted by other members.

The Deacons will be responsible for recommending a Pastoral Search Committee for affirmation by the congregation as described in [SubSection 12](#).

The Deacons will be responsible to form the Nominating Committee described in [SubSection 8](#) and designate its chairman.

The Deacons will make a recommendation to the congregation if an individual’s church membership should be cancelled due to inactivity. This is described in [SubSection 13 C](#).

The Deacon Body will establish and amend the operating policies through which it carries out its responsibilities, subject to the approval of the Church Council.

C. QUALIFICATIONS

Deacon candidates will be qualified based upon the criteria set forth in I Timothy 3:8-12:

- vs 8...”*Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.*”

- vs 9...*“They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.”*
- vs 10...*“They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.”*
- vs 11...*“In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.”*
- vs 12...*“A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.”*

The phrase “...*the husband of but one wife...*” in verse 12 is interpreted such that an otherwise qualified candidate would not be disqualified because of divorce or the death of his wife or remarriage following one of those events. Prospective Deacons will be a male member of FBC, should be well known in the church, spiritually mature, willing to participate regularly in meetings, willing to make decisions based on consensus and willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

D. SELECTION PROCESS

1. Nomination

Upon the initiation of the Church Council or the Deacon body itself, the current active Deacons, with the advice of the senior pastor, will develop a list of men to be considered to serve as Deacon. The congregation will also be invited to nominate men to serve. Deacon nominees must be supported by a consensus of the active Deacons to be further considered. A person who has served as a Deacon in another church may be considered as a candidate but is not automatically entitled to serve as a member of this Deacon body.

2. Screening

Nominees will be notified in writing by the Deacon Chairman that they are candidates. This notification will describe Deacon qualifications, responsibilities, term of service and the selection process. Nominees will be asked to search their hearts concerning their calling to serve in this capacity and to notify a specified active Deacon about their willingness to be further considered. Candidates will then be interviewed by at least one active Deacon. Subjects to be discussed in the interview should include the candidate’s testimony, sense of calling to serve, spiritual gifts and willingness to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

Candidates who complete the screening process will be presented to the church body for a vote of affirmation.

E. ORDINATION

Deacons will be ordained by “laying on of hands” (Acts 6:6) at a worship service.

F. TERM OF SERVICE

Deacons will commit to serve on an annual basis when they indicate to the Deacon Chairman their desire to serve for the next year. Deacons who so commit will be termed “active”. Ordained Deacons who refrain from an annual commitment will be termed “inactive”. Reinstatement of Deacons who have been inactive for multiple years or are inactive due to lifestyle covenant issues or issues related to Deacon qualifications described in 1 Timothy

3:1-12 will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Deacon body and the senior pastor. All other “active” and “inactive” Deacons will be given the opportunity to commit each year. Interim changes will not be made from “inactive” to “active” status. If a Deacon is removed from service as a result of discipline, he will not be considered “inactive”.

G. SIZE OF DEACON BODY

There will be no size limitations to the Deacon body.

H. DEACON OFFICERS

The Deacons will annually select a chairman and a vice-chairman from among themselves who will organize and lead them to accomplish their responsibilities.

8. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Spiritually mature leadership is essential to the proper function of the church's ministry and operations. The Nominating Committee will be responsible to screen and recruit the chairperson for the various church committees and to approve the committee members recruited by the committee chairperson. Committee job descriptions, the criteria for selecting committee members (including secular abilities and spiritual gifts), and the deadline for selection will be furnished by the Ministry Council and the Business Council for their respective committee and ministry team structures.

The Deacons will select a seven member nominating committee composed of both men and women and at least three Deacons. The Deacons will also appoint its chairman and vice-chairman. These individuals will be members of FBC, well known in the church, familiar with the broad church membership, spiritually mature and committed to the Lifestyle Covenant. The term of service on the Nominating Committee will be three years.

The Nominating Committee shall solicit input from the congregation and staff as it carries out its responsibility.

9. TRUSTEES

A. RESPONSIBILITY

The trustees will execute legal documents in behalf of the church. They will be furnished with documentation which provides evidence that such action has been properly approved and is consistent with the structural policies stated in this document.

B. APPOINTMENT

Three trustees will be appointed by the Business Council, subject to the approval of the Church Council. When a trustee is no longer able to fulfill his responsibilities (resignation, no longer a member of FBC, etc.) the Business Council will appoint a new trustee to finish the trustee's term

C. TERM OF SERVICE

The trustees will serve a one-year term, reviewed annually, and may serve successive terms.

D. QUALIFICATIONS

The trustees will be members of FBC and will be individuals with reputations of integrity who are willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

10. MODERATOR

A. RESPONSIBILITY

The moderator will lead the business meetings of the church.

B. APPOINTMENT

The moderator will be appointed by the Church Council.

C. TERM OF SERVICE

The moderator will serve a one-year term of service and may serve successive terms.

D. QUALIFICATIONS

The moderator will be a church member who is knowledgeable of Robert's Rules of Order, knowledgeable of this document and willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

E. ALTERNATE MODERATOR

The moderator may appoint an alternate who would meet all qualifications as described in D above as a stand-in in the event the need should arise.

11. COMMITTEES AND MINISTRY TEAMS

A. CHAIRPERSON

1. Responsibility

The chairperson will schedule, convene, set the agenda, and conduct meetings to carry out the responsibility assigned to the committee/ministry team. Also, the Chairperson shall at the beginning of the year discuss with the members of the committee/ministry team the Lifestyle covenant, Christian Unity as outlined in the Structure Document, and the charter or purpose of the committee/council.

The chairperson will recruit members subject to the approval of the Nominating Committee.

2. Appointment

The chairperson will be appointed annually by the Nominating Committee.

3. Qualifications

The chairperson will be a member of FBC, should have the spiritual gifts and abilities described by the Council to whom the committee or ministry team reports. This individual should have demonstrated leadership ability and be willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

B. VICE CHAIRPERSON

1. Responsibility

The vice chairperson should assist the chairperson with the responsibilities assigned to the committee/ministry team.

2. Appointment

The vice chairperson will be approved annually by the Nominating Committee and should be prepared to serve as the next chairperson.

3. Qualifications

The vice chairperson will be a member of FBC, should have the spiritual gifts and abilities described by the Council to whom the committee or ministry team reports. This individual should have demonstrated leadership ability and be willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

C. COMMITTEE AND MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS

1. Responsibility

Members will attend meetings and carry out the responsibilities assigned to the committee or ministry team.

2. Appointment

Members will be appointed by their respective chairperson, subject to the approval of the Nominating Committee.

3. Term of Service

The term of service for a member varies according to the committee/ministry team.

4. Qualifications

The member will be a member of FBC, should have the spiritual gifts and abilities described by the Council to whom the committee/ministry team reports, be willing to participate regularly in meetings, and be willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES

The staff minister for each ministry area will name and assign the scope, responsibilities and term of service for Committees and Ministry Teams to help carry out the ministry. One responsibility common to all Committees and Ministry Teams is to assist the church body in maintaining Christian Unity as described in [Section II, SubSection 3](#). The ministry area staff pastor or minister and the Committee or Ministry Team is the first level of addressing and attempting to resolve any concerns or issues arising from Church Members in the ministry area of the Committee or Ministry Team.

Committees and Ministry Teams will support their staff pastor or minister and execute their ministry responsibilities by operating on the basis of consensus; no decisions will be based on majority and minority positions.

12. PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

A. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Pastoral Search Committee will be responsible to screen candidates for senior pastor of the church in accordance with Scriptures such as 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, and select the man that they believe God is calling to serve in this position. Once a candidate has been selected, the Pastoral Search Committee will expose that individual to the broadest possible representation of church leadership and membership in order to build consensus among the congregation. The Pastoral Search Committee will be the liaison between the candidate and the church in all respects, working out the details of the hiring and transition of leadership. The chairman of the Pastoral Search Committee will formally present the candidate to the congregation when the vote of affirmation occurs.

B. MEMBERSHIP MAKEUP AND APPOINTMENT

The Pastoral Search Committee shall be composed of seven members who are members of FBC, consisting of both men and women. The members of the committee shall be recruited and selected by the Deacons, subject to a vote of affirmation by the church membership. The members of the Pastoral Search Committee will select a chairperson from among themselves.

C. QUALIFICATIONS

Members of the Pastoral Search Committee will be well known in the church, spiritually mature, willing to participate regularly in meetings and willing to commit to the Lifestyle Covenant.

13. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. BECOMING A MEMBER

Any person desiring church membership who makes a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ at a worship service and has been baptized by immersion is qualified to be considered for church membership. It is important that church members be committed to the mission statement of the church and understand the responsibilities of membership. The senior pastor has the sole discretion to determine whether church membership should be extended to an individual. The senior pastor also has the sole discretion to determine if it is appropriate to waive the requirement for baptism by immersion in instances such as physical disability. The senior pastor will submit new members for a vote of approval at a regularly scheduled business meeting once he is satisfied that such action is appropriate.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

Church members are responsible to participate in the life and activities of the church by:

- Attending worship services regularly.
- Participating in Sunday School, Bible study or some form of Christian education.
- Giving financially to support church ministries, programs and activities.
- Serving the Kingdom of God with their spiritual and natural gifts.

C. CANCELLATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Church membership may be cancelled if there is no evidence of participation in church activities. The purpose for membership cancellation is to prevent the membership roll from becoming swollen with inactive members.

The Deacons will determine if church membership should be cancelled due to inactivity. In this regard, the Deacons will review a list of inactive members furnished by the Business Council. The Deacons will attempt to determine the reason for the lack of a member's participation in church activities and decide if restoration to active status is possible. Special consideration will be extended where an individual desires to maintain membership but is prevented from participation for reasons such as being physically impaired, serving in the armed forces or being a college student. If the Deacons determine that inactivity is due to death, relocation from the area or a general lack of interest in the church, they may recommend that the individual's membership be cancelled. The congregation will vote to affirm membership cancellation at a regular business meeting.

D. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

If a church member requests that their membership be transferred to another church, the action will be presented to the congregation for a vote of affirmation at the next regular business meeting.

14. DECISIONS REQUIRING AFFIRMATION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Certain decisions require an affirmative vote of 80% of church members in attendance that chooses to vote at a properly called business meeting. These decisions are the following:

- Pastoral Search Committee selection ([Section II, SubSection 12](#))
- Hiring the senior pastor
- Hiring ordained clergy
- Termination of employment of senior pastor or ordained clergy
- Approve new members ([SubSection 13. A](#))
- Transfer or cancellation of membership ([SubSection 13. C & D](#))
- Discipline action ([SubSection 18](#))
- Annual budget
- Changes in the annual budget over 10% in aggregate
- Individual capital expenditures exceeding 1% of the annual budget
- Asset dispositions exceeding 1% of the annual budget
- Debt to be incurred exceeding 1% of the annual budget
- Church Council selection ([SubSection 4. C](#))
- Business Council selection ([SubSection 5. C](#))
- Ministry Council selection ([SubSection 6. C](#))
- Deacon selection ([SubSection 7. D](#))
- Changes to the structural policies stated in this document

15. BUSINESS MEETINGS

The purpose of business meetings is:

1. For the church membership to take action on any item requiring its vote of affirmation;
2. To communicate activities, important issues and decisions to the congregation; and
3. To provide a forum for church members to express their ideas, issues, or opinions.

Regular business meetings will be scheduled each quarter. The Church Council will publish the date and time of the quarterly meetings for the current calendar year by January 31 of that year. The Church Council will have the discretion to call a special business meeting for a vote of affirmation as issues requiring such decisions arise.

The Church Council will be responsible for establishing and publishing the agenda for a business meeting.

Official Church publications are the newsletter, which is periodically mailed to the church membership, and the bulletin which is distributed at Sunday worship services. The Church Council will use either of these publications to announce at least twice, the date, time and agenda of a business meeting.

The Church Council will appoint a moderator (described in [Section II SubSection 10](#)) who will call to order and conduct the business meeting. Votes will normally be taken by voice. A written secret ballot will be used at the discretion of the moderator or upon the request of any member present. Only church members are eligible to vote.

A membership quorum consists of those in attendance at the business meeting.

16. COUNCIL, DEACON, COMMITTEE, AND MINISTRY TEAM MEETINGS

The Church Council, Ministry Council, Business Council, Deacons and their respective committees and ministry teams will meet regularly. The church office staff will be kept informed concerning the dates, times and location of these meetings. All significant decisions made at these meetings will be communicated to the congregation in the most appropriate manner.

17. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVES

If a member of the Church would like to have input to express an opinion or share an idea, they should contact the appropriate ministry leader. Then, if desired by the member, the chief administrative staff person will place them on the agenda of the appropriate committee or council. In such instances, the respective committee or council is obligated to consider the member's input and give the member timely feedback concerning the action taken. If the member is not satisfied with the committee or council decision, they can appeal to the Church Council who will also give the member timely feedback concerning its decision on the matter. In the event that the member is not satisfied with Church Council's decision, they can appeal the decision to the congregation by requesting that the Church Council place the issue on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled business meeting. At that meeting, the church member will be given the opportunity to present their case to the church and the Church Council will explain their decision on the matter. An affirmative vote of 67% of the members in attendance is necessary to sustain the decision of the Church Council.

18. DISCIPLINE

Discipline is one of the most sensitive responsibilities in the church and is assigned to the Deacons. In this respect, the purpose of discipline is to protect the church in the areas of (1) moral integrity of leadership (both clergy and laity) or (2) divisiveness within the church. Concerning moral issues, the Lifestyle Covenant serves as the standard. The Church Council is responsible for initiating Deacon involvement. In the event that the subject of discipline is a member of the Church Council, the Deacons may initiate action on their own. Deacon intervention is appropriate only if one of the two areas cited above is involved.

The objective of discipline is always twofold: (1) protecting the spiritual integrity of the church; and (2) restoration of the individual. This responsibility should be undertaken cautiously and prayerfully, yet decisively and boldly, following scriptures such as Matthew 18:15-17. All action should be based upon prayerful consensus of active Deacons and consultation with the Church Council. If a discipline issue involves a staff member, the Business Council and its personnel committee should also be consulted. To the extent possible, any action taken with a staff member should be handled through their appropriate supervisor. All administrative means possible should be exhausted prior to Deacon intervention with a staff member.

If restoration and reconciliation is not possible, the Deacons are authorized to temporarily suspend an individual, including another Deacon, from the rights of church leadership, church membership or employment. Such a suspension will be for a period of up to 45 days and will be reported to the congregation. A person so suspended has ten days from the date of suspension to notify the Deacons of their desire to have a hearing before the congregation. In that case, the Church Council will set the time and place of the hearing, within the suspension period, as well as the procedure to be followed. A vote of affirmation of 80%, of the church membership in attendance at the hearing, is necessary to make the Deacon action permanent. If a hearing is not requested by the individual suspended, the suspension will become permanent at the end of the ten-day period. Once a person has been so removed, their restoration to leadership, membership or employment must be approved by consensus of the active Deacons.

19. CHURCH YEAR

The church year will be the calendar year for the purposes of this document, January 1 to December 31.

