

Adopted December 8, 1985

**CONSTITUTION  
of the  
First Baptist Church of Salem  
Salem, Oregon**

**PREAMBLE**

Reposing our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, believing in the teaching and the practices of the Baptists and those great distinctive principles for which they ever stood, namely:

1. The Lordship of Jesus Christ
2. The Bible, the standard of faith and practice
3. Regenerated membership
4. Believer's (baptism by) immersion
5. Progressive sanctification
6. Soul liberty
7. Congregational government and the autonomy of the local church
8. Separation of church and state;

We band ourselves together as a body of immersed believers in Jesus Christ and adopt, ordain and establish for our government and plan of worship and service the following declaration of faith, church covenant and bylaws:

**ARTICLE 1 – DECLARATION OF FAITH**

**THE WORD OF GOD** – We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, complete as the revelation of God's will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in all matters to which they speak.

**THE TRINITY** – We believe in one God, Creator and Sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that these are equal in every divine perfection and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

**GOD THE FATHER** – We believe in God the Father – an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

**JESUS CHRIST** – We believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son, and has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe further that He is not only true God, but true man,

conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We also believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His priestly intercession on behalf of His people, and His personal, visible, premillennial and imminent return from Heaven.

**HOLY SPIRIT** – We believe in the Holy Spirit, His personality, and His work in regeneration, sanctification and preservation. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, to implement Christ’s work of redeeming the lost and to empower the believer for godly living and service.

**MAN** – We believe God created man—male and female—in the image of God and free from sin. We further believe that man became and is now a sinner by nature and choice and is therefore spiritually dead. We also believe that those who repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

**SALVATION** – We believe in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. We further believe that this salvation is based upon the sovereign grace of God and was purchased by Christ on the cross, and is received by man through faith, apart from any human merit, works or ritual. We further believe salvation results in righteous living, good works and proper social concern. We believe, on the basis of John chapter 10 and Romans chapter 8, that this salvation once experienced by the individual is eternally secure.

**THE CHURCH** – We believe that the church is the spiritual body of which Christ is the head. We believe that the true church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We believe that this body expresses itself in local assemblies whose members have been immersed upon a credible confession of faith and have associated themselves for worship, for instruction, for evangelism and for service. We believe that the two ordinances of the local church are believer’s baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Supper.

**SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE** – We believe that each local church is self-governing in function and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. We further believe that every human being is directly responsible to God in matters of faith and life and that each should be free to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.

**CHRISTIAN CONDUCT** – We believe that the supreme task of every believer is to glorify God in his life; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself the full stature of maturity in Christ.

**LAST THINGS** – We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved and the lost, the eternal existence of all men either in Heaven or Hell, in divine judgments, rewards and punishments.

## **ARTICLE 2 – CHURCH COVENANT**

**Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and having accepted the Bible as our sole authority for faith and practice, 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 promised by the aid of the Holy Spirit to forsake the paths of sin and to walk in the ways of holiness all the days of our lives. With this view, we engage to strive together for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; 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 relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.**

**We also endeavor to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; to be faithful in our engagements, and to be exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all things having the appearance of evil and to abstain from those practices which may cause another to stumble.**

**We further engage to walk together in Christian love and watchfulness, giving and receiving admonition with meekness and affection; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.**

## **ARTICLE 3 – OFFICERS**

**The scriptural officers of this church as distinct from officers of the corporation are pastors and deacons. Their election, term and succession are determined by the bylaws. The church shall elect and appoint to the various forms of service as indicated by their titles and as defined by the bylaws such other officers as are deemed advisable. This church also may have other officers as provided by the bylaws.**

## **ARTICLE 4 – MEETINGS**

**Meetings for worship, prayer, praise, fellowship, business and special purposes shall be held as set forth in the bylaws.**

#### **ARTICLE 5 – RELATIONSHIPS**

**Believing in the sovereignty of the local church as an autonomous body of believers under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, this church, by official action, shall determine the maintaining of fraternal fellowship and cooperation with churches of like faith and practice, or with organized groups of Baptists or inter-church relationships when our cardinal beliefs will not be compromised.**

**To such groups this church may send statistical reports and may be represented in their meetings.**

#### **ARTICLE 6 – AMENDMENTS**

**This Constitution which is effective January 1, 1986 may be amended by a three-fourths vote of qualified members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting provided such amendments have been submitted in writing to the membership at the preceding regular or special business meeting.**