

**Constitution of
First Baptist Church
Los Altos, CA**

Revised September 2003

ARTICLE I - NAME, OBJECT, AND GOVERNMENT

Section 1 - Name

The name of this corporation is the First Baptist Church of Los Altos.

Section 2 - Object

The object of this Church shall be the preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the conversion of sinners, the edification of the fellow believers and the propagation of Christianity throughout the world.

Section 3 - Government

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it and is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes the value of mutual counsel and cooperation among Conservative Baptist churches, and to that end may maintain fellowship with the Conservative Baptist Association.

ARTICLE II - SEAL

The corporate seal shall consist of a circle having within its circumference the words, "First Baptist Church of Los Altos, Incorporated October 8, 1947

ARTICLE III - DOCTRINAL STATEMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

- * We believe the Bible as God's inspired and inerrant Word is of final authority in faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:21).

- * We believe, based on this Word, in one God, existing eternally in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 8:6; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 8:6).

- * We believe Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit and is true God and true man (Matthew 1:20-23; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Romans 9:5).

- * We believe the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, makes believers children of God through new birth, assures believers of their salvation and, by His indwelling presence, enables believers to live a godly life (John 10:28,29; 16:8; Romans 8:38,39; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12,13; Ephesians 1:13,14).
- * We believe man was created in God's image, but sinned, incurring spiritual death which has passed upon all the race (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:10,23; 5:12-19).
- * We believe that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that all who trust Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood (Acts 13:38,39; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:22,26-28).
- * We believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and His present ministry in Heaven for us (Matthew 28:5-7; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Hebrews 9:24).
- * We believe the personal, premillennial return of Christ is our "blessed hope" (Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:1-6).
- * We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost (John 5:28,29; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Revelation 20:11-15).

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led by the Spirit of God, I have received Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. I have according to the Scriptures (John 1:12), repented of my sin (Romans 3:23; I John 1:9), been born again through the Holy Spirit, and have publicly confessed my faith in word (Romans 10:8-10) and in baptism (Romans 6:3-5). I subscribe to the Doctrinal Statement of this church and do now enter into covenant with its other members as one body in Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). I promise by the aid of my Savior (Philippians 2:13):

1. To walk lovingly (John 13:34-35) and humbly with my brethren (I Peter 5:6), to

pray for them (James 5:16), to separate myself from worldliness and unchristian practices (Titus 2:12) and to walk in a manner so as not to offend my brother (I Corinthians 10:23,24);

2. To pray (James 1:5-6) for the advancement of this church in knowledge, spirituality and fruitfulness (John 15:8, 16), to uphold its program of worship, training and teaching, to observe its ordinances (Matthew 28:19-10; I Corinthians 11:24-27) and to affirm its doctrines (I Peter 3:15; Jude 3);

3. To give regularly and cheerfully as God prospers, for the support of an evangelical ministry among us (I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:7), for the relief of the needy (Mark 14:7; Proverbs 19:17) and for the spread of the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20);
4. To serve faithfully in some activity of the church (James 1:22-24; 2:18), taking care to assume only such duties as can be effectively performed (I Corinthians 4:2) and to improve my abilities in service by prayerful study of God's Word (II Timothy 2:15);
5. To maintain family worship, encourage family prayer, Bible study and Christian nurture of any under my care (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6), "that we may grow in the image of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord" (Ephesians 4:11-15; II Timothy 1:9; II Peter 3:18);
6. To endeavor by example (Matthew 5:16) and effort (Matthew 28:19-20) to win souls to Christ (James 5:20) and to enlist unchurched believers for membership in the church (Acts 2:47);
7. To follow the New Testament as my rule of faith and practice (II Timothy 3:16-17; Galatians 5).

ARTICLE IV - ORGANIZATION OF THE CORPORATION

Section 1 - Board of Directors

The Board of Deacons shall be the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

Section 2 - President

The Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall be the President of the Corporation.

Section 3 - Vice-President(s)

The Vice-Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall be the Vice-President of the Corporation.

Section 4 - Secretary

The Church Clerk shall be the Secretary of the Corporation.

Section 5 - Treasurer

A Treasurer shall be appointed from the Board of Deacons.

Section 6 - Duties

The duties of the Board of Directors and Officers of the Corporation shall be to transact all legal business in behalf of the Church, as provided for in the Constitution or laws or regulations or as directed by the Church meeting in qualified business session.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Qualifications

Any baptized believer professing faith in Jesus Christ, giving testimony of being born again and adopting the faith and practice of this Church, may be admitted to membership.

Section 2 - Admission of Candidates to Membership

Any person so qualified can become a member of this Church by recommendation of the Board of Deacons and a majority vote of the members present at any regular worship service or prayer meeting.

- A. Upon statement of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and subsequent baptism by immersion,
- B. By letter from another Baptist church of like faith and practice, or
- C. By restoration.

Section 3 - Duties of Members

All members are required to adhere to the Doctrinal Statement and are encouraged to live by the Covenant as stated in Article III.

Section 4 - Associate Members

Students or military personnel who are not permanent residents of this area and who wish to retain membership in their home churches, may become associate members. An associate membership must meet the regular membership requirements. Associate members have all the rights, privileges and duties of members, except that they shall not be eligible to vote in Church business meetings. They retain membership in their home churches and their membership here is automatically terminated when they move away from this area.

Section 5 - Transfers and Removals

A Letter of Transfer to another church may be granted by the Board of Deacons. Members wishing to unite with other than Baptist churches may receive a Certificate of Christian Character and their names shall be removed from the roll.

All applications for Letters or Certificates shall be made through the Board of Deacons.

A period of one year unexplained absence from the Church shall be sufficient grounds for Board action to remove a member from the Church roll.

Section 6 - Discipline of Members

Behavior that is not in harmony with the Church Covenant or is detrimental to its testimony may result in disciplining of members.

All cases of discipline, whether of private or public character, shall be conducted in the spirit of and in accordance with the procedure of the New Testament teachings (Matthew 18:15-17).

The Board of Deacons shall constitute a committee on church discipline. The Deacons are empowered to make inquiries into matters of church discipline, and a member put under discipline by three-fourths vote of all Deacons is prohibited from rights of membership. A restoration committee shall be appointed by the Board to seek to restore the member under discipline to fellowship with God and to full membership.

If it becomes necessary, because of lack of repentance on the part of a member under discipline, the board may dismiss that member from membership by three-fourths vote of all Deacons. The dismissed member will be notified of the Board action in writing. The person dismissed from membership shall be given the opportunity to appeal the Board's decision and appear at a Board meeting on his own behalf to resolve the issue.

Restoration to membership would require majority vote of the Board. If appeal to the Board does not result in restoration, a dismissed member may also request a special business meeting to appeal the dismissal from membership. A majority vote by secret ballot of the voting members present at a special meeting called for this purpose will be required to reinstate membership of a person dismissed for disciplinary reasons.

The voting church membership will be notified in writing whenever a member has been dismissed for disciplinary reasons.

ARTICLE VI - ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

Section 1 - Officers

The officers are the Pastor, Associate Pastors, Assistant Pastors, Deacons, Deaconesses and Financial Secretary. Officers appointed by the Board of

Deacons are Treasurer, Church Clerk and such assistants as may be determined by the Board of Deacons. All officers shall be members of this Church.

Section 2 - Selection, Terms and Duties of Officers

A. The Pastor shall be an ordained Baptist minister of the Gospel. He shall be called by a three-fourths vote of the voting members present at a special meeting of the membership called for that purpose. He shall serve for an indeterminate term. The pastoral relation shall be dissolved by a majority vote of the voting members present at a special meeting of the membership called for that purpose either by the Pastor or by the Board of Deacons. All matters of discipline concerning the Pastor shall be handled in accordance with Article V, Section 6.

The Pastor, as spiritual leader of this Church, shall preach the Gospel, administer the ordinances, visit and counsel with members of the congregation, and shall be a member of the Board of Deacons and an ex-officio member of all committees of the Church.

B. Associates and Assistants to the Pastor may be called, or the pastoral relation dissolved by the Board of Deacons upon recommendation of the Pastor. Assistants and Associates to the Pastor shall perform such duties as the Pastor and Board of Deacons may direct.

C. The Board of Deacons shall consist of not less than twelve and not more than fifteen elected men. They shall be at least twenty-one years of age and members in good standing. The Deacons shall be elected for a term of three years; one-third of the Board shall be elected each year. Deacons may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms, but may be re-elected after an absence from the Board of Deacons of at least one year. The Board shall appoint committee heads in consultation with the Pastor. Failure to attend, without reasonable cause, the regular meetings of the Board, or conduct tending to impair his efficiency as a Deacon shall be considered cause for removal.

The procedure for removal of a Deacon from the Board shall be the same as for disciplining of a member (Article V, Section 6).

The Board of Deacons shall be responsible for the management of both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church. It shall be subject to the authority of the membership as expressed in Article I. It shall submit a complete report of its stewardship to the membership at each Annual Meeting. The Board may carry out its work largely through standing committees, other committees and the Deaconesses. When necessary, it may act as a Pulpit Committee, or it may appoint a Pulpit Committee from the membership. The Board shall serve the Lord's Supper and assist in counseling.

D. The Board shall select its Chairman and Vice-Chairman in consultation with the Pastor. They shall serve for the period of one year, or until their respective successors are appointed and assume office.

The Chairman of the Board shall preside at all meetings of the Board and of the membership. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall preside. The Chairman shall also have the power to appoint any member of the Board of Deacons to preside.

E. The Board of Deaconesses shall consist of not less than twelve and not more than 15 elected women. The qualifications, terms of service and removal from office shall be the same as for the Board of Deacons.

The Deaconesses shall be responsible for preparing the Communion Table, taking care of the Communion linen and trays, sending flowers and other tokens to the sick and providing suitable remembrances for funeral services. They shall assist the Pastor in visitation and other duties as he may direct. They shall assist Deacons in counseling.

F. The Financial Secretary shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the membership and shall serve for one fiscal year or until his elected successor assumes office.

G. The Treasurer shall be appointed from the Board of Deacons.

H. The Church Clerk shall be appointed from the Board of Deacons. He shall serve for a period of one fiscal year or until his successor assumes office.

I. Assistants: All assistant officers, except assistants to the Pastor, shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.

J. All officers of the Church shall be required to affirm their agreement with the Doctrinal Statement and Church Covenant annually.

Section 3 - Surety Bonds

All officers charged with the duty of handling funds shall be bonded in such amounts as the Board of Deacons deems proper.

Section 4 - Removal of Officers

Any officer elected by the Church may be removed by the same procedure as removal of a Deacon. Any officer appointed by the Board may be removed by the Board.

Section 5 - Other Officers

All other officers shall perform such duties of their respective offices as outlined and directed by the board of Deacons. They shall be subject to the authority of the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE VII - STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1 - Function

Standing committees shall be established by the board of Deacons to oversee the various areas of activity in the Church. This includes, but is not limited to finances, missions, nominating of Church officers, personnel and schools.

Section 2 - Membership

Chairmen of all standing committees must be members of the Board of Deacons and appointed by the Board in consultation with the Pastor. Other members of each committee, with the exception of the Nominating Committee (see Article VII, Section 3), are chosen by each chairman from the membership. All members chosen must first be approved by the Board of Deacons before they are asked to serve. All terms are for one fiscal year.

Section 3 - Nominating Committee

A. Membership

The Nominating Committee shall consist of one Deacon and five representatives from the membership, appointed by the Board of Deacons. They shall be appointed to serve for one year. No member shall serve more than two consecutive years.

B. Duties

1. Four weeks before the Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee shall distribute by mail to all voting members of the Church, nomination ballots with the name of one eligible and scripturally qualified nominee for each elective office vacancy. Space will be provided on the nomination ballot for the writing in of one additional name for each elective office.

2. Only ballots with write-in names shall be returned to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee not later than two weeks before the Annual Meeting. Write-in nominees for any office must receive at least twenty-five write-in nominations and be eligible, scripturally qualified and willing to serve. Nominees receiving the highest number of write-in nominations will be selected first. A maximum of two such nominees for the office of Deacon, two for the office of Deaconess and one for each other elective office will be placed on the official election ballot to be voted upon by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

3. The Nominating Committee shall prepare for submission to the Church membership the slate of candidates for elective offices to be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

4. The Board in consultation with the Nominating Committee shall appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term of any vacated elective office. This appointment must be confirmed by a vote of the voting members at the next Annual Meeting.

5. Scriptural qualifications, as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Titus 1:5-9, of all suggested candidates must first be reviewed by the Board of Deacons prior to determining their willingness to serve.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH PROPERTY

No real property shall be purchased, nor shall property used in the ministry of the Church be sold, assigned or pledged as collateral or security unless such action is first approved by the membership. Such approval shall be had only by a three-fourths vote of the voting members present at a special meeting of the membership for that purpose.

ARTICLE IX - ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH

The Church regards as integral parts of itself all organizations within the Church formed for the purpose of carrying out any of the Church activities and all such organizations shall be under the direction and supervision of the Pastor and board of Deacons. Such organizations shall be formed and exist only by recommendation of the Board and approval of the membership. Officers of all such organizations shall be members of the Church.

Section 1 - Day School and Day Care Center

The Church may operate a Day School and Day Care Center as ministries of the Church. Consistent with the objectives of the Church, the schools shall serve as an outreach ministry and as a means of offering a Christ-centered education to the young people of the Church and the community.

ARTICLE X - MEETINGS

Section 1 - Voting Membership

All members in good standing 18 years of age and above, shall have equal rights to vote in any meeting of the membership.

Section 2 - Annual Business Meeting of the Membership

The Annual Meeting of the membership shall be held in September. The exact time, date and place shall be determined each year by the Board of Deacons and announced from the pulpit at each worship service on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of such meeting.

The purpose of the meeting shall be the election of officers, the hearing of the annual report and the transaction of any other business of which notice has been given in the manner required for a special meeting. Matters not so specified may be brought up for discussion and referred to the Board of Deacons for further study. No nominations from the floor will be received at the Annual Meeting. No voting by proxy will be allowed.

Section 3 - Special Meetings

A special meeting of the membership may be called at any time by the Pastor or the Board of Deacons and must be called by the Board upon written request of any fifty voting members, except that a special meeting to consider dissolution of the pastoral relationship shall require a written request of 200 voting members.

Unless otherwise specified elsewhere in this Constitution or required by law, notice of any special meeting shall be given by announcement from the pulpit at each worship service on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of such meeting, or by ten days' written notice to the membership. As much relevant information as practical shall be made available in writing, at the time of the meeting announcement, to the membership regarding issues to be voted upon at the special business meeting.

No matters may be acted upon at any special meeting unless such matters are specified in the notice, but matters not so specified may be brought up for discussion and referred to the Board of Deacons for further study.

Section 4 - Quorum

Unless otherwise specified elsewhere in this Constitution, a quorum shall consist of not less than thirty percent of the voting membership as kept by the Church Clerk at the beginning of the fiscal year during which the meeting occurs.

ARTICLE XI - FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church shall commence on September first and end on August thirty-first of each year.

ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended or rescinded at any meeting of the membership provided that due notice is given that such action is to be introduced

at such meeting. For the purpose of this article, due notice shall consist of either thirty days' written notice or announcement from the pulpit at each regular worship service on three Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. Coincident with the announcement from the pulpit or the thirty days' written notice, a notice specifying particulars of the proposed amendments or modifications shall be prominently posted in the Church. Amendments to the Constitution shall require a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of those votes cast except for changes to the Doctrinal Statement which will require a unanimous approval.