



**First Baptist Church of Wallace, Inc.  
Wallace, North Carolina**

**Statement of Beliefs**

**Members Covenant**

**By-Laws**

**Proposed: September 23, 2016**

**Revised: \_\_\_\_\_**

**(Note: Items not contained in this document, such as committee job descriptions, ministry teams, and church policies would all be moved to a single "Organizational and Policy Manual.")**

# First Baptist Church Statement of Beliefs

*The following statement of beliefs and doctrine represents this church's guiding convictions on these issues of faith and practice.*

## 1. The Scriptures

We believe the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; and it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and, therefore, is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried. We believe that the Bible is the final authority in all matters relating to faith and practice.

## 2. The Nature of God

We believe in one God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit – three persons, yet but one God, whose name is Jehovah.

## 3. The Deity of Christ

We believe in the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ who is none other than God the Son, manifest in the flesh, and in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells forever.

## 4. The Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly by grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God: who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven, and is in every way our compassionate and all-sufficient Savior.

## 5. The Free Gift of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to repent of their sins and receive this gift by placing one's faith in Christ Jesus and Savior and Lord; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; and that life-long rejection of this free gift leads to eternal condemnation.

## 6. Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with genuine repentance,

confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying upon Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

#### 7. The Head of the Church

We believe that Jesus Christ is the one and only Head of the Church; that all believers are equally priests unto God; that ordination, while it recognizes position, bestows no power; that the local church is independent and sovereign.

#### 8. The Basis for Church Membership

We believe in regeneration or the “birth from above” as the basis for church membership.

#### 9. Baptism

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; to show in a solemn and beautiful symbol our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is a prerequisite for membership in this church.

#### 10. The Lord’s Supper

We believe that the Lord’s Supper is a symbolic representation of the broken body and shed blood of our Savior Jesus Christ, given to us as the new covenant. We further believe that all baptized believers are entitled to participate in the observance of this ordinance.

#### 11. The Separation of Church and State

We believe that the government has no role in promoting, evaluating, mandating, or prohibiting the expression of religious faith. The government’s only proper role is in protecting religious freedom for all of its citizens. Therefore we stand for the largest measure of civil and religious liberty.

#### 12. The Lord’s Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day, the day on which Christ was raised from the dead and therefore the standard day of corporate worship for the church. As the “new Sabbath” it is to be a day of rest and worship, “kept holy” unto the Lord. We believe that the weekly assembling of God’s people is a sacred responsibility and privilege and that those believers who are unable to gather for corporate worship still need to observe a day of rest, worship, and holiness in obedience to God.

#### 13. Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; that it is

carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Healer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means – especially the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, prayer, and unselfish service and giving.

#### 14. Stewardship

We believe that God, the creator and owner of all things and persons, has entrusted to the Christian his life, time, talents, influence, money, goods, and all things whatsoever he possesses; that as steward of these possessions he is to administer them under the will of God for the purposes of Jesus Christ; and that as a definite expression of this stewardship he is to continue to systematically and proportionately share of his means to the support of his church and of the missionary and benevolent enterprises of Christ's Kingdom.

#### 15. The Perseverance of Saints

We believe that real believers will endure unto the end; that persevering attachment to Christ is the difficult march, which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

#### 16. Immortality

We believe in life after death, and an eternal destiny that is determined by our response to Christ in this life. We believe in the personal second coming of Christ to judge the world; in the resurrection of the body which for those who die in the Lord shall be like Christ's glorious body; in the eternal life of the saved and the eternal suffering of the lost.

# First Baptist Church Members Covenant

The church is a family of faith. Being a part of that family involves personal and mutual responsibility. To that end, members of First Baptist Church of Wallace are expected to strive to honor the following covenant:

As a member of the First Baptist Church family, I commit myself to aspire to these qualities and pursue these disciplines:

## Personal Life

- To exhibit love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in my words and actions.
- To live with integrity, purity, and spiritual courage as guided by the Holy Spirit and the truths of God's word, and to honor my commitments and vows.
- To be a faithful witness for Christ in my family, friendships, and work relationships.
- To show concern and generosity to those in need, loving my neighbor out of love for God.
- To avoid all gossip, backbiting, contentiousness, or other malicious behavior, and to refrain from the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

## Church Life

- To be regular in worship, faithful in service, generous in support, diligent in studying and obeying God's word, and passionate about the advancement of the gospel and the kingdom of God through witness and Christian mission.
- To promote and guard the unity of the church in my words and actions, and to always seek the will of the Spirit of God over my own.
- To encourage and care for my Christian brothers and sisters, seeking God's best for others in love, as we bear one another's burdens and faithfully pray for one another.
- To exercise my gifts for ministry by finding and fulfilling my place of service in the body of Christ.
- To exercise my personal leadership in harmony with the church's doctrine, vision, and direction.
- To be respectful and supportive of the church's pastors and lay leaders, and to pursue the resolution of any disagreements in a spirit of openness, gentleness, forgiveness, and love.
- To settle our interpersonal conflicts in accordance with our Lord's directions in Matthew 18:15-17.

# By-Laws of First Baptist Church of Wallace, NC

## **1. Purpose:**

The First Baptist Church of Wallace, NC, exists to connect people with the life-changing love of God and grow them into mature followers of Christ.

## **2. Activities:**

To accomplish our purpose, we will focus on three activities: (1) leading people to know Christ as personal Savior and Lord; (2) leading people to grow in Christ toward spiritual maturity; (3) leading people to show Christ to others through personal ministry and mission to the world.

## **3. Core Beliefs:**

We believe that God exists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, the Lord of all creation, and the only means by which we can receive eternal life. We believe that the Bible is the trustworthy record of God's self-revelation and is our authoritative guide to faith and obedient, victorious living. Our church's beliefs are detailed in the Statement of Beliefs.

## **4. Governance:**

This church is an independent, self-governing body. Its governance is invested in the members of the body and the leaders to whom they delegate responsibility. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical authority or body. The frequency and guidelines for the congregation's meetings for decision-making are detailed in the church's Organization and Policy Manual.

## **5. Affiliations:**

First Baptist Church of Wallace has chosen to identify with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as our primary denominational network, and with the Eastern Baptist Association as our local cooperative missions network. We will join in voluntary cooperation with other churches, mission organizations, and Christian groups with whom we find affinity, to the extent that these increase our church's effectiveness and complement our church's purpose and identity.

## **6. Membership:**

6.A - Qualifications: Persons may be eligible for membership into this church on their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and upon a submission to the ordinance of believer's baptism; by statement; by restoration; by letter from a church of like faith and order; following new member orientation.

6.B - Process: The pastor is responsible for new member orientation, and will give prospective members a packet containing a copy of the church by-laws, covenant, and an overview of the church's ministries and groups during new member orientation. After successful completion of new member orientation, new members will be received upon majority vote of members present at a regular church service.

6.C - Expectations: Members are expected, first of all, to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life; and also to attend habitually the services of this church, to give regularly to the support of its causes, and to share in its organized work. A fuller description of the expectation of membership is found in the Church Covenant.

6.D - Termination of Membership: The continuance of membership shall be subject to the rules and regulations of this church and especially as follows:

6.D.1 - Letters of membership shall be granted upon individual request; furthermore, those desiring to unite with another church of like faith and order may do so at will and upon receiving request from such church, a letter of membership will be granted to that church.

6.D.2 - Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of the church covenant, or non-support of the church, the church may terminate his membership, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful effort has been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.

6.D.3 - When notice is given to the church that a member has united with a church of different faith and order, the church shall, upon motion duly made and seconded, vote to drop such member from its roll.

6.D.4 - Any member who changes residence shall promptly notify the church of the new address. If this residence is of such distance that prohibits personal participation in the activities of the church, the member shall unite with a church of like faith within 12 months. In case there is no such church or there are circumstances which render a change inadvisable, it shall be the duty of the non-resident member to make the facts known to the diaconate and to report to the church not less than once a year in person or by letter and contribution.

6.D.5 - A complete record shall be kept of all such actions taken by the church of each and every member whose membership has been terminated for any cause.

6.E - Annual Review: The deacons will review the church roll annually to correct and update membership information and status.

## **7. Officers:**

In addition to the Pastor, the church shall have the following elected officers: deacons, clerk, assistant clerk, treasurer, assistant treasurer, and parliamentarian. The church may elect other officers as needed. The deacon chair or someone appointed by the deacon chair will serve as moderator for church business sessions. The specific guidelines and duties for these officers are detailed in the church's Organization and Policy Manual.

## **8. Board of Directors:**

The church will elect and maintain a Board of Directors consisting of two plus the church treasurer to transact the business of the corporation as officially directed by the church's membership. The guidelines and duties for the Board of Directors are detailed in the church's Organization and Policy Manual.

## **9. Leadership:**

The church will establish and elect whatever staff positions, leadership positions, teams, committees, procedures, policies, and structures it finds vital to the accomplishment of its mission. Procedures, policies, and job descriptions are recorded in the church's Organizational and Policy Manual.

## **10. Church Discipline**

10.A - Whenever an individual member of the church has a grievance against another member, both parties are expected to take responsibility for resolving the conflict, in obedience to the instructions of our Lord explained in Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 18:15-17, and Galatians 6:1

10.B - Church discipline is the church's exercise of authority given by Christ, both in the direction of guidance, control, and nurture of its members and in the direction of constructive criticism of offenders. If any case of gross breach of the Church Covenant or of public scandal occur, the pastor and deacons should act immediately to remove the offense and to protect the integrity and harmony of the church. As the guardians of the spiritual health of the church, the pastor and three deacons will seek resolution with the offender. If their effort fails, they should bring the matter before the church for resolution, or the offender can request that the matter be brought before the church for resolution. (See No. 7 in Statement of Beliefs.)

10.C - If a member or members feel it necessary to bring to the church a complaint against another member or members, this complaint must be presented in writing. The church must vote to entertain the complaint, after which the body will set a reasonable time and place of hearing and notify the person or persons in question, furnishing him/her a copy of the charges as presented.



10.D - At this hearing, the accused member(s) may call any member of church as a counsel. If the person or persons accused do not appear at the time appointed, or give satisfactory reasons for being absent, the church may proceed in his/her/their absence.

10.E - All such proceedings must be handled in the spirit of Christ-like love, exhibiting the Fruit of the Spirit in words and deeds, and with a goal that is redeeming rather than punitive. In their decision, the church may prescribe a plan of restoration, and, if necessary, may remove the offending party(ies) from membership.

10.F - Should there be a dispute in which legal issues are involved, the church will seek appropriate legal counsel before acting.

## **11. Meetings**

### 11.A - Worship, Study, and Fellowship

11.A.1 - The church will meet regularly for worship, teaching, training and fellowship. One or more worship services will be held each Sunday. The church will also have mid-week programming for fellowship, prayer, and study for all ages, making accommodations for holidays, school schedules, and other competing factors.

11.A.2 - Any one-time cancellation or time changes in weekly Sunday services will be made by the pastor and deacon chairperson.

11.A.3 - Long-term adjustments to the schedule of established worship services and Sunday Bible study require a vote of approval by the church.

11.A.4 - Additional services and programs may be offered on days and times appropriate to meet a ministry need or opportunity.

### 11.B - Business Sessions

11.B.1 - The church will hold regular business conferences twice annually. The Spring Conference will be held on or after the first Sunday of May, and the Fall Conference will be held on or before the first Sunday of December, on a day and time that does not interfere with the regular ministry programming of the church, and does not create a program conflict for any church ministry leaders and volunteers. The Fall Conference will include the presentation of all leadership nominations and the proposed budget for the next year for church approval. The pastor and moderator are responsible for scheduling these meetings and publicizing them at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

11.B.2 - At these meetings, reports will be made by the church clerk, treasurer, and any other leaders, committees, or ministry teams with items that warrant a place on the

agenda. Any other business pertaining to the welfare of the church may be transacted. It is the duty of each member to attend.

11.B.3 - Special Business Sessions: The church may be called into special business sessions by the moderator, deacon ministry team, or by twenty members of the church who make a written request to the moderator for such a conference. Any written request must state the purpose or issue needing to be considered. The moderator will set the date and time for any special business sessions, and will see to it that the subject, date, and time of the meeting is publicized at least one week in advance. In a special conference, only the subject(s) publicized may be considered.

## **12. Rules of Order (Parliamentary Procedure)**

12.A - The deacon chairperson will serve as moderator, and the vice-chairperson as vice-moderator. The deacon chair may appoint a substitute moderator, or the church may, by majority vote, elect an alternate person to serve as moderator at any time. Should the chairman, and vice-chairman be absent, the pastor or parliamentarian will preside over the meeting long enough for the body to elect a member to preside as moderator over that meeting.

12.B - The moderator's responsibility is to promote and maintain orderly discussion, to enforce adherence to the rules of order, to restate all motions prior to a vote, to conduct the vote, and to cast the deciding vote in case of a tie.

12.C - In all cases of order the moderator shall decide; but an appeal may be made to the conference and a majority of two-thirds may reverse the decision.

12.D - Only one member shall speak at a time and the preference shall be given to the member first addressing the moderator.

12.E - Every member wishing to speak shall rise and respectfully address the moderator.

12.F - No member shall speak more than once upon the same subject until every member wishing to speak shall have had the liberty to do so, nor more than twice without the official permission of the conference.

12.G - All questions shall be brought before the conference by motion and seconded before they shall be discussed or voted upon, except motions brought by a committee which need no second.

12.H - Members who speak must abstain from unkind personal allusions and will be stopped by the moderator as soon as they manifest any ill temper.

12.I - Business sessions should be opened with a time of prayer, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in pursuit of God's will.

12.J - The By-laws, these Rules of Order, and the Church Covenant should be kept available for reference at all conference meetings, and should be cited as needed.

12.K - All important motions, resolutions and reports of committees shall be submitted in writing.

12.L - All questions of parliamentary law and practice not provided for in the By-Laws shall be decided in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

12.M - The parliamentarian shall refer to the By-Laws and Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, in answering questions on parliamentary laws and procedures.

### **13. Amendments:**

The by-laws of this church may be amended by the church in business session only when the following requirements have been met:

- Proposed changes must have been presented to the church in writing at least one month in advance.
- The membership must be notified of date for voting on changes at least 21 days in advance.
- Changes must receive a two-thirds vote of those present to be adopted.