

Constitution & By-Laws



Building Together On Christ Alone

“...Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

Ephesians 2:20-22 ESV

First Baptist Church
La Grande, Oregon

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
of La Grande, Oregon
CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE: We, as Bible-believing individuals who profess our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and who have been immersed in water as a statement of our faith, do hereby join ourselves together as a Baptist Church, and adopt and establish for our government and plan of worship and services the following Statement of Faith, Covenant of Fellowship, Constitutional Articles and By-laws.

ARTICLE I - OUR NAME: The name of this organization, a corporation, shall be **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LA GRANDE, OREGON.**

ARTICLE II - OUR MISSION AND VISION:

A. Our Mission: First Baptist Church, a God-centered community of believers surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, is committed to bringing people to new life and maturity in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scripture for the glory of God and the joy of God's people.

B. Our Vision: Our vision is to work together under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scripture to develop a spiritually vibrant and growing congregation that is passionately committed to loving God and loving people, sensitive to the needs of one another and of our community, unified in spirit, equipped and trained for ministry, and actively involved in presenting Christ to our community and to our world.

ARTICLE III - OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR MEMBERS: We have joined together as members of this Baptist Church because we share in common the following foundational beliefs:

A. SCRIPTURE ALONE: We believe the Bible is God's absolute truth for all people, for all times; it is our final authority for discerning truth.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

B. GRACE ALONE: We believe that sinners are saved by God's grace alone because apart from His grace we do not have the ability nor the desire to please Him or earn His favor.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved." (Ephesians 2:1-5)

C. FAITH ALONE: We believe that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone apart from any human merit, works or ritual. Genuine faith produces Christ-glorifying fruit in the people of God for the glory of God.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:8-10)

D. CHRIST ALONE: We believe that we are saved by Christ alone, who is fully God and fully man. Christ was our substitute who died for our sins on the cross and was raised from the dead on the third day.

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

E. GLORY TO GOD ALONE: We believe in the triune God who exists in three distinct Persons (Father, Son, and Spirit) who created, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and to whom belongs all the glory forever and ever.

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.” (Romans 11:36)

ARTICLE IV – OUR COVENANT OF FELLOWSHIP: Having accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior, and having entered into fellowship with God and with one another, we do solemnly covenant together that we will endeavor, through the power of the Holy Spirit:

A. To love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind. (*Matt. 22:37*)

B. To love one another and thus fulfill the law of Christ. (*James 2:8*)

C. To walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (*Eph. 4:1-3*)

D. To put away from us bitterness, wrath, anger, and clamor, and slander with all malice, and instead to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other even as God in Christ has forgiven us. (*Eph. 4:31-32*)

E. To speak the truth in love, to grow up in Christ, to individually fit in and function with other members of Christ's Body for growth and the building up of the Body of Christ in love. (*Eph. 4:15-16*)

F. As strangers and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. (*1 Pet 2:11*)

G. As we have opportunity, to do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (*Gal.6:10*)

H. To have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. (*Eph. 5:11-12*)

I. To contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered unto the saints. (*Jude 3*)

J. To bring our children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (*Eph 6:4*)

K. To not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the habit of some is; to keep the ordinances as they were delivered unto us, and to give regularly for the support of the ministry and the furtherance of the Gospel both here and around the world. (*Heb. 10:25, 1 Cor. 1:2, 2 Cor. 8-9, Phil. 4:13-14, Mal. 3:10*)

L. To remember those who lead us, who speak the Word of God to us, and considering the outcome of their way of life, to imitate their faith; to obey our leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over our souls as those who will give an account. (*Heb. 13:7,17*)

M. To discipline ourselves for the purposes of godliness, being diligent to present ourselves approved unto God, workmen who do not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. (*1 Tim. 4:7, 2 Tim. 2:15*)

N. Whatever we do, in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father; doing all to the glory of God. (*Col. 3:17, 1 Cor.10:31*)

O. To commit ourselves to a life of growth in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Word of God. (*2 Pet.3:18, Heb.5:11-14, 2 Tim. 2:2*)

P. As each one has received a special gift, to employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (*1 Pet. 4:10*)

Q. Moreover we will, relying upon the grace of God, endeavor to make our walk conform to this covenant; and not to it alone, but to all of God's revealed will for holy living and service as contained in the Word of God. (*2 Tim. 3:16-17*)

ARTICLE V - OUR MEMBERSHIP: This church shall consist of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who take the Holy Bible as their only rule for faith and practice and who have been baptized by immersion and who acknowledge agreement with the church's Statement of Faith for Members and Covenant of Fellowship.

ARTICLE VI - OUR ASSOCIATIONS: This church shall establish fellowship and cooperation with churches of like faith and practice. We are in fellowship with the Conservative Baptist Association of America, the Northwest Conservative Baptist Association, and the Blue Mountain Conservative Baptist Association.

ARTICLE VII - OUR MEETINGS: Meetings of worship, prayer, praise, fellowship, business, and special purposes shall be held under the supervision of the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE VIII - OUR AUTHORITY AND ORGANIZATION: This church is a self-governing body of believers, independent of any ecclesiastical authority outside this church. Ultimate authority resides with God and has been designated specifically to Christ, the Head of the church. Following the leadership of Christ is the goal of our church government. We will strive to balance congregational authority and the authority delegated by the congregation to a plurality of elders within the church. This carefully balanced form of elder and congregational authority reflects the teaching of the New Testament and the practice of the early church. The elders will be affirmed by and accountable to the congregation. The elders are to lovingly lead the church family, not lording it over those allotted to their charge. (*1 Peter 5:3*) The congregation is to honor and be supportive of their shepherds, the elders. (*1 Timothy 5:17, Hebrews 13:17*)

ARTICLE IX - OUR CHURCH'S OFFICERS: The scriptural officers of this church are the elders and deacons. Those who function as elders are Biblically qualified men who are affirmed by the congregation. The Council of Elders shall be comprised of both paid (pastor) elders and unpaid (lay) elders. The elders have the responsibility and the authority to lead the congregation in discerning the mind of Christ as they shepherd the flock of God. The deacons are Biblically qualified men and women (deaconesses) affirmed by the congregation to assist the elders in caring for needs and leading key areas of ministry in the church. The Council of Elders shall be and act in all respects as the Corporation's Board of Directors. The Chairman of the Council of Elders shall be the President of the Corporation. The Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders shall be the Secretary of the Corporation. The President and the Secretary shall execute in the name of the Corporation all contracts, deeds, bonds, notes, mortgages, and deeds of trust, bills of sale, and all other instruments of every kind and nature authorized by the church.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS TO OUR CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS:

A. The Church's Constitution may be amended at the Annual Member's Meeting of the church by a three-fourths vote of the voting members present. Notice of the meeting in which action is to be taken on a proposed amendment shall have been given for one month prior to the time of voting.

B. The By-Laws to the Church's Constitution may be amended at any Member's Meeting of the church by a three-fourths vote of voting members present. Notice of the meeting in which action is to be taken on a proposed by-law shall have been given two successive Sundays prior to the time of the voting.

ARTICLE XI - DISSOLVING OUR CHURCH: In the event that our church should dissolve, from which may God in His mercy save us, all the property of this church shall be transferred to the Northwest Conservative Baptist Association or its successor.

BY-LAWS

I. Church Membership:

A. Qualifications for becoming a member: To qualify for membership a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ, baptized by immersion following conversion, and in agreement with the church's Statement of Faith for Members and Covenant of Fellowship.

B. Procedure for becoming a member: All persons applying for membership must be approved by the Council of Elders. At least two elders will interview each candidate for membership based upon the above qualifications and then make a recommendation to the Council.

C. Categories of membership:

Active: Members who live in the area and currently demonstrate their interest by attendance, giving, etc.

Non-Resident: Those members who have moved from the area, but who want to maintain their membership at First Baptist Church (e.g. missionaries, students on extended absence).

Inactive: Members who attend another church regularly or have ceased attending First Baptist Church for at least six months. Inactive members have no voting privileges.

D. Responsibilities of membership:

Each member shall be privileged and expected to faithfully participate in and financially contribute to the ministry and life of the church. It is important for believers to study together, pray together, worship together and gather together to care for one another and spread the gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth to the glory of God.

E. Voting Privileges:

In order to vote at a church business meeting, one must be an active member, present at the meeting, and sixteen years of age or older.

F. Withdrawal from membership:

1. Members may withdraw membership upon written notification to the Council of Elders.
2. Members involved in disciplinary procedures may withdraw subject to approval by the Council of Elders.
3. Inactive members may be dropped by the Council of Elders.

G. Purpose and procedure for disciplinary action:

1. The primary purpose for disciplinary action is not punishment but restoration, although it also promotes purity and protection in the church family. Scripture provides guidance for the discipline of members in the following areas:

- a. False Teaching (*Titus 1:9, 1 Timothy 4:1-6*)
- b. Immorality (*1 Corinthians 5:1-13*)
- c. Unethical Conduct (*Acts 5:1-11, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12*)
- d. Unruly Behavior (*2 Thessalonians 3:6-15*)
- e. Divisiveness (*Titus 3:9-10*)

Discipline of members in our church fellowship shall be according to Scripture and in the spirit of Christian love. The church earnestly desires that our obedience to the commands of Christ in the area of discipline will result in the member's restoration to fellowship. (*Galatians 6:1, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, Hebrews 12:7-13, 2 Timothy 3:16-17*)

2. The procedure for discipline within the church will be as follows:

- a. One member to confront another member privately (*Matthew 18:15, Galatians 6:1*)
- b. Two or three members to confront the member (*Matthew 18:16*)
- c. The church body to be informed and take necessary action. (*Matthew 18:17*) The process of “telling it to the church” should be guided by the shepherds of the church, the elders. It is desirable in the case of public sin that a public confession be made before the church at a specially called members’ meeting so that the church can affirm forgiveness.

II. Doctrinal Statement for Church Leaders: Agreement with (or acknowledgement to not teach contrary to) the following doctrinal statement shall be a requirement for all church leaders including the Senior Pastor, Pastoral Associates, Ministry Staff, Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses, Ministry Action Team Leaders, small group leaders and all teachers.

A. THE BIBLE: We believe the Bible is God’s absolute, objective truth for all people for all times.¹ It is without error in concept or detail in the original writings.² It is breathed out in its entirety by God, divinely preserved and, therefore, trustworthy.³ We believe the Holy Spirit superintended human authors so that, through their individual personalities and literary styles, they composed and recorded God’s Word.⁴ It is God’s written revelation complete in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.⁵ It is the supreme authority in all matters to which it speaks and is sufficient for life, conduct, and

¹ 2 Sam. 7:28; Ps. 25:10; 33:4; 119:160; Jn. 17:17; Titus 1:2

² Jn. 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16

³ Matt. 5:18; Jn. 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21

⁴ 1 Cor. 2:12-13; 2 Peter 1:20-21

⁵ Deut.4:2; 12:32; 1 Cor.14:37; Gal.1:11-12, Rev. 22:18-19

practice – understandable by every believer.⁶ We believe Scripture must be understood through the literal, contextual, grammatical, and historical method of interpretation, and applied under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We believe that Bible translations should strive to preserve the precise, word-for-word meaning of the original text.⁷

B. THE TRINITY: We believe in the one personal, transcendent, immanent, living God – the creator, sustainer, and sovereign ruler of all things.⁸ He is self-existent, immutable, and works all things according to the counsel of His will in order to bring glory to Himself.⁹ God’s foreknowledge is exhaustive and not dependent on human decisions and actions.¹⁰ He eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹¹ They execute distinct but harmonious roles in creation, providence, redemption, and consummation.¹² They are equal in nature, attributes, and perfections.¹³ The holy triune God is worthy of our worship, confidence, and obedience.¹⁴

C. GOD THE FATHER: We believe in God the Father: one in essence with the Son and the Spirit.¹⁵ He is an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in all His attributes.¹⁶ He is the creator, sustainer, and sovereign ruler of all things through His Son Jesus Christ.¹⁷ We believe that He concerns Himself perfectly in the affairs of humanity.¹⁸ His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with the redeemed.¹⁹ Everything He does is in accordance with His perfect will, though His sovereignty does not eliminate or minimize human responsibility.²⁰ The Father adopts as His own, through Jesus Christ, all those He calls to Himself.²¹

D. GOD THE SON: We believe in God the Son: one in essence with the Father and the Spirit.²² He is the one and only eternal Son of God, the preeminent revelation of God.²³ At the right time He emptied Himself, taking

⁶ Is. 8:20; Matt. 5:17-19; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 14:17, 37; 2 Tim. 3:15-17

⁷ 1 Cor. 2:10-16; 2 Cor.3:14-16; 2 Peter 1:20

⁸ Deut. 6:4; Psalm 83:18, 139:1,7:7-10; Is.6:1; 33:10; 40:22; Jeremiah 10:10; Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 3:4; James 2:19

⁹ Gen.1:1; Ex.3:14; Num.23:19; Ps. 19:1; 33: 9-10; 102:26-27; Ps. 104; Is.14:24; Malachi 3:6; Romans 8:28; Eph. 1:11 ; Heb. 13 :8; Js. 1:17

¹⁰ Ro.8:29-30; Ps. 139:1-6, 13-17; 147:5; John 6:64; Is. 40:13

¹¹ Matt. 28:19; Jn 15:26; 1 Cor. 3:16; 8:6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:5-6

¹² Genesis 1:1-2; Job 26:13; Ps. 104; Matt. 28:19; Luke 3:22; Jn 1:3; 5:17; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; Eph. 2:18; Col. 1:16-17

¹³ John 10:30; 14:23; 17:5,10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Phil. 2:5-6

¹⁴ Is. 6:3; Jer.2:12-13; Mark 12:30; Rev. 4:11

¹⁵ Matt. 28:19; Jn. 15:26; 1 Cor. 3:16, 8:6

¹⁶ Ex. 3:14; John 4:24; 14:7

¹⁷ Gen. 1:1; Ps. 19:1; Ps. 104; Acts 17:28; Col.1:17

¹⁸ Ps. 8:4-6; Matt. 5:45; 6:26-32; 10:29-31

¹⁹ Matthew 6:1,4; 10:20; Jn 20:17, 21; 17:2; Eph 1:2-3; Col 1:2-3

²⁰ Ro. 1:18-20; 8:29; Col. 1:10

²¹ Jn. 6:44; Ro. 8:23; Eph. 1:5

²² Matt. 28:19; Jn. 15:26; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 13:14

²³ Jn. 1:1; 8:58; Phil. 2:5-6; Rev. 1:8

the form of a bond-slave.²⁴ He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as Jesus, the Christ – fully God and fully man.²⁵ We believe in His sinless life, His voluntary submission to His Father’s will that culminated in His substitutionary death on the cross, His burial, and His bodily resurrection.²⁶ He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father.²⁷ His death on the cross atoned for our sin and satisfied the righteous demands of the holy God.²⁸ He is the Mediator between God and man.²⁹ He is Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Savior of His Church; the Heir of all things; the Judge of all the world; and the exact representation of God the Father.³⁰ We believe in the personal return of Christ for His Church and in the establishment of His millennial Kingdom on earth.³¹

E. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT: We believe in God the Holy Spirit: one in essence with the Father and Son.³² He was sent by God the Father and God the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.³³ The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ and implements Christ’s work of redemption and baptism.³⁴ He regenerates, baptizes, seals, gifts, and indwells all believers at conversion, progressively sanctifying, and securing them in Christ forever.³⁵ The Spirit fills, leads, comforts, and intercedes for believers, empowering them for godly living and service.³⁶ His presence is evident by the fruit of the Spirit and the building up of believers into the body of Christ, the Church.³⁷

F. HUMANITY: We believe that humanity, male and female, is sacred in God’s eyes and was uniquely created by Him, in His image and for His glory, to exercise dominion over the earth and to enjoy a relationship with Him forever.³⁸ Every human being is directly responsible to God in matters of faith and life.³⁹ After sin entered the world, humans still possess the image of God, though tainted by sin.⁴⁰ God’s will for humanity is that they love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and love their neighbors as themselves.⁴¹

²⁴ Matt. 1:23; Phil. 2:6-7

²⁵ Matt. 1:20; 9:2; 12:8; Luke 1:35; Jn. 1:1, 14; 8:58; 10:30; 14:7; Ro. 9:5; 2 Cor. 5:19; Phil. 2:5-8, Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:3

²⁶ Luke 19:10; Heb. 4:15

²⁷ Acts 1:9; Col.3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1

²⁸ Is. 53:4-12; Matt 20:28; Ro. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Heb 9:13-15; 1 John 2:2; 4:10

²⁹ John 1:1-14; Heb. 4:14; 12:24; 1 Tim. 2:5

³⁰ Ps. 2:6; Acts 3:22-23; Ro. 10:9-11; Heb. 1:3, 8:4, 14, 2-5

³¹ 1 Thess. 4:14-17; Rev. 20:4

³² Jn. 15:26; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 3:16-17

³³ Jn. 16:8-11

³⁴ Jn. 3:5; 16:14; Acts 1:5; Ro. 8:2-16; 1 Cor. 12:13

³⁵ Jn. 3:5; 14:17; Acts 19:5-6; Ro. 11:29; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 12:4-31; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; Hebrews 13:5; Jude 24:25

³⁶ Ex. 31:3; 1 Sam. 16:13; Joel 2:28-29; Jn. 14:26; 16:13; Acts 2:17-18, 4:31; 6:5; 9:31; Ro. 8:26; Eph. 5:18

³⁷ Ro. 5:5; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 2:22; 3:14-21; 1 Jn. 5:4

³⁸ Gen. 1:26-31, 2:7; 7:22; 5:1-2; 9:6; Ps. 100:3; 119:73; Is. 43:7; 45:12; Acts 17:26; 1 Cor. 11:7; Js. 3:9

³⁹ Ecc. 3:17; 12:14; Jer. 17:10; Ro. 1:20; 3:19; Heb. 4:13; 9:27; Rev. 20:11-13

⁴⁰ Gen. 5:1; 9:6; Ecc. 7:20; Ro. 3:10-18, 23; 1 Cor. 11:7; Js. 3:9

⁴¹ Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:30-31; Ro. 13:8-10

G. FAMILY: We believe that in God's design for humanity, life begins at fertilization.⁴² He established the institution of family through the union of one man and one woman in marriage.⁴³ His design for the continuance of humanity is through the procreation and discipleship of children within the marriage union.⁴⁴ Marriage is to be an example of the relationship between Jesus Christ and His church.⁴⁵

H. SIN: We believe that sin is any action or attitude that is contrary to the nature or Word of God, which constitutes a rejection of His authority, resulting in alienation from God.⁴⁶ Sin entered the world when Adam, representing humanity, disobeyed God.⁴⁷ As a result of the one sin of Adam, his descendents – the whole human race – are separated from relationship with God, spiritually dead, and therefore in a fallen state. Being sinners by nature and choice and utterly unable to remedy their lost condition, humanity is in need of salvation.⁴⁸

I. SALVATION: We believe that salvation is a gift of God, received by grace alone through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone to the glory of God alone. Salvation was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, and it is received by faith alone apart from any human merit, works, or ritual.⁴⁹ Salvation is based upon the sovereign, free election of God before the foundation of the world apart from foreseen faith. God elects according to the purpose of His will thus manifesting the glorious display of His goodness and grace. Election utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, purity, prayer, praise, assurance, evangelism, and global missions to unreached peoples.⁵⁰ Regeneration is the sole work of the Holy Spirit that brings God's elect to repentance and faith.⁵¹ All who repent and believe in Jesus Christ are forgiven of all their sins, justified in God's sight by the merit of Christ's righteousness, adopted into His family, and have equal access to God.⁵² As a result, the progressive sanctifying work of salvation leads to newness of life that is evidenced by righteous living, good works and biblical social concern, or God's corrective discipline.⁵³ The consummation of salvation is that those who have accepted God's gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ shall be

⁴² Ps. 51:5; 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5; Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:31, 34-36, 41,44

⁴³ Gen. 2:23-24; Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Tim. 3:2

⁴⁴ Gen. 1:27-28; 9:1

⁴⁵ Eph. 5:22-32

⁴⁶ Lev. 4:27; Matt. 5:28; Js. 4:17

⁴⁷ Ro. 5:12, 17-19; 1 Cor. 15:21-22

⁴⁸ Ps. 51:5; Ro. 3:23; 5:12-21; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:22

⁴⁹ Acts 4:12; 15:11; Ro. 3:24, 28; 4:4-5; 6:23; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:5-9; Phil 3:9; Titus 3:5-7

⁵⁰ Jn. 6:44, 65, 15:16; 17:2,9; Acts 13:48; Ro. 8:29-30; 9:10-24, 11:1-10; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Gal. 1:15,16; Eph. 1:3-6,11; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:8-10; Js. 1:18, 1 Peter 1:1-3, 2 Peter 1:10,11; 1 Jn. 4:10; Rev. 5:9

⁵¹ John 1:13; 3:3, 5-8; Acts 11:18; Ro. 5:5; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:17; 7:10-11; Eph. 2:8; Phil. 2:13; Titus 3:5-7; Js. 1:18; 1 Jn. 4:7

⁵² Acts 10:43; 13:39; Ro. 1:15-17; 3:24-26; 4:23-25; 5:1-2,9,11,17,19,21,; 8:1; 10:9; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Eph 4:32; Col. 2:13-14; Titus 3:5-7

⁵³ Acts 11:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:21; 7:1; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:26-27; Phil. 2:12-13; 3:12-16; Col. 1:28-29; 3 :5-17; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 12:14; 2 Peter 1:3, 5-8; 3:18

resurrected, and glorified.⁵⁴ They shall receive their inheritance in the Kingdom of their Father, whom they shall enjoy throughout the ages.⁵⁵

J. THE CHURCH: We believe that the New Testament Church is composed of all persons who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit since Pentecost.⁵⁶ We believe that the Church is the spiritual body of Christ, of which He is the Head.⁵⁷ We believe that this body expresses itself in local assemblies in which believers are in a covenant relationship.⁵⁸ Biblically that relationship is expressed corporately through hearing the Word of God proclaimed; engaging in worship; practicing the two ordinances of believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper; building up each other's faith; holding each other accountable through biblical love and discipline; and engaging in local and world evangelization.⁵⁹ Biblically designated officers must meet the biblical qualifications for their office and submit to the headship of Christ, emulating His servant leadership.⁶⁰ We believe the function of eldering is reserved for biblically-qualified males.⁶¹ Each local church is to choose, support, and submit to those who function as elders.⁶²

K. ANGELS: We believe God created angels as spirit-beings possessing power and intellect, to worship and serve Him and to minister to believers.⁶³ Satan is a fallen angel who masquerades as an angel of light.⁶⁴ The scope of Satan's power is subject to God's will.⁶⁵ By subjecting Adam and Eve to temptation and sin he has extended his rebellion against God and he continues by deceit, seduction, and destruction.⁶⁶ While Satan and his demons are powerful, they are subject to Christ's authority and judgment.⁶⁷ Satan and his demons have been defeated for eternity by Jesus Christ through His death on the cross and victorious resurrection, sealing their everlasting damnation.⁶⁸ At the time of final judgment, they will be consigned to eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire.⁶⁹

L. LAST THINGS: We believe in the sudden, visible return of the Lord.⁷⁰ He will return with His saints from heaven, with power and great glory, on a

⁵⁴ Jn. 5:25-29; Acts 24:14-15; Ro. 8:17; I Cor. 6:14; Phil 3:20-21; Col. 3:4; I Thess. 4:13-17; I Jn. 2:25; Rev. 20:5-6

⁵⁵ 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 21:6-7; 22:3-5

⁵⁶ Acts 2; 1 Cor. 12:27; 2 Cor. 6:16

⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:18

⁵⁸ 1 Cor. 12:27

⁵⁹ Matt.18:15-17; 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Jn. 3:22; 4:1-2; Acts 2:38, 41-42, 47; 8:12, 36-39; 16:32-34; 18:8; 1 Cor. 11:23-25; Eph. 4:11-13

⁶⁰ Matt. 20:25-28; 1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:7-9

⁶¹ Titus 1:5-6; 1 Peter 5:1-3

⁶² Acts 6:36; 15:22; Heb. 13:17

⁶³ Deut. 6:13; 10:20; Matt. 4:10

⁶⁴ Ez. 28:13-16; Luke 10:18; 2 Cor. 11:14; Rev. 12:7-9

⁶⁵ Job 1:6-7, 12; John 14:30; 16:11

⁶⁶ Gen. 3:1-7; Matt 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 12:7; I Thess. 2:18

⁶⁷ Phil. 2:10; Js. 4:7; 1 Peter 3:22; 2 Peter 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:12-14; 5:18; Rev. 20:10

⁶⁸ John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Ro. 16:20

⁶⁹ Rev. 20:10

⁷⁰ Mark 13:32-37; Titus 2:13; Rev. 20:2-6

day known only to God.⁷¹ We believe that those who have accepted God's gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, at the point of physical death, enter into God's eternal glory.⁷² They shall be resurrected and transformed to His body of glory, and they shall receive their inheritance of glory in the Kingdom of their Father.⁷³ They shall be made fully blessed in the presence and service of God, Whom they shall enjoy throughout the ages.⁷⁴ We believe that all unsaved persons, at the point of physical death, are destined for eternal damnation.⁷⁵ They will be resurrected, separated from the righteous, judged, and cast into an existence of eternal punishment where they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.⁷⁶ We believe it is imperative for the Church to work and wait in sober watchfulness, that it may be found ready at His coming.⁷⁷

III. Church Ministry Structure:

A. The Senior Pastor:

1. Qualifications: The Senior Pastor must meet the qualifications of an elder as set forth in I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and I Peter 5:1-4. The Senior Pastor shall subscribe fully and freely to the Constitution of this church and the Doctrinal Statement for Church Leaders without reservation.

2. Election and Call: A candidate shall be elected as Senior Pastor for an indefinite term at any regular or specially called business meeting of the church. The purpose of the meeting shall have been publicly announced from the pulpit at least two weeks prior to the meeting and each active member shall be notified through the mail. A three-fourths affirmative vote of the members present and voting by secret ballot shall be necessary for election. If the candidate is elected, a "letter of call" should be sent by the church clerk.

3. Relationships and Responsibilities: The duties of the Senior Pastor shall be to preach the Gospel, to teach the whole counsel of the Word of God, to administer the Ordinances, to shepherd the flock in tenderness, to guide pastoral associates and staff, to supervise the interests of the church, and to develop its strength for the best possible service. The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of the Council of Elders except in areas of conflict of interest. He shall function as a servant leader amongst equals and he shall be accountable to the Council of Elders and to the congregation.

⁷¹ Matt. 24:30, 36; 25:31; Mark 13:32-37; John 14:3; Titus 2:13

⁷² Jn. 10:28; Ro. 8:38-39; 2 Cor. 5:8; Heb. 9:27

⁷³ Is. 26:19; Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:25-29; Acts 24:14-15; 1 Cor. 6:14; Phil 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; Rev. 20: 5-6; 21:6-7

⁷⁴ 1 Thess. 4:17; Heb. 12:22-24; Rev. 22: 3-5

⁷⁵ Heb. 9:27

⁷⁶ Dan. 12:2; Matt 25:31-46; Jn. 5:25-29; Acts 24:14-15; Rev. 14:10-11; 20:10; 21:8

⁷⁷ Matt. 24:42-44; 25:13, Mark 13:33-37; Heb. 10:25

4. Senior Pastor's Provisions: Financial considerations including benefits shall be fixed at the time of the Senior Pastor's "call" and shall be reviewed annually by the Council of Elders.

5. Change of Senior Pastor/Church Relations:

a. One month's notice: The Senior Pastor/church relationship may be dissolved by either the Senior Pastor or church by submitting one month's written notice. The one month requirement may be waived by mutual consent.

b. Termination process: Any recommendations by the membership to dismiss a Senior Pastor shall be referred to the Council of Elders for their consideration. In such a case the procedure stated in Scripture (*1 Timothy 5:19-20*) shall be closely followed. If after study, the Council finds there are possible grounds for dismissal, it shall present its findings to the Senior Pastor. If such grounds are substantiated and dismissal is warranted, the Council of Elders shall present the matter and a recommendation to the church for action. Active members of the church must be notified through the mail at least one week prior to this special business meeting. The termination of the pastoral relationship by the church shall require a simple majority taken by secret ballot at a business meeting called for this purpose.

6. Pulpit Committee for Senior Pastor:

a. Nomination and Election: When a vacancy in the office of Senior Pastor occurs, the Council of Elders shall select a list of nominees from the church membership. In a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting the church shall elect from this list of nominees a Pulpit Committee of at least five members, including at least two Elders.

b. Organization and duties: The Committee when elected shall organize by electing a Chairman and a Secretary. The Pulpit Committee shall thoroughly search for a potential candidate for Senior Pastor whose doctrinal position is in agreement with the Statement of Faith for Members and for Church Leaders. The Committee shall investigate and evaluate each prospective candidate's spiritual, educational, theological, and experiential qualifications to serve the pastoral needs of this church. Only one candidate for the office of senior pastor will be presented to the church at a time. The Pulpit Committee may consult with the Council of Elders at any time during the search process. The Committee shall present a unanimously supported recommendation to the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders must approve the candidate before his name is presented to the congregation for vote. If a candidate is not elected, or if a call is declined by the candidate, the Pulpit Committee will continue to work until an elected candidate accepts the call extended by the church.

7. Licensing and Ordaining:

a. Licensing: The Council of Elders may issue a license for the work of the ministry in recognition of God's special calling and gifting of a certain member for the work of the gospel ministry. A license concludes when the holder leaves the church. A license can be annulled or withdrawn at any time by the Council of Elders.

b. Ordaining: A certificate of Ordination to the Ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be given to a candidate by this church in accordance with the following procedure:

- (1.) The Council of Elders calls for an Ordination Council to examine the candidate's conversion, character, call, and doctrinal statement.
- (2.) The Ordination Council, after examining the candidate, makes a recommendation to the church.
- (3.) If Ordination is recommended, it must be affirmed by a majority of those church members present and voting.
- (4.) Ordination is permanent in nature, but may be rescinded at some later date by the church if the minister disqualifies himself morally, ethically, or doctrinally.

B. Pastoral Associates:

1. Qualifications: Associate Pastors shall meet the Biblical qualifications of an Elder as set forth in *1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5:1-4*. They shall fully and freely subscribe to the Constitution of this church and the Doctrinal Statement for Church Leaders without reservation.

2. Election and Call: Pastoral Associates shall be recommended to the church by the Council of Elders to accomplish the mission, goals, and ministries of the church. The recommendation shall require approval by three-fourths of the members voting.

3. Relationships and Responsibilities: The duties of the Pastoral Associates shall be specified by the Senior Pastor and the Council of Elders in a job description at the time of the call. Associates shall receive direction from and be accountable to the Senior Pastor and the Council of Elders. Pastoral Associates shall be voting members of the Council of Elders except in areas of conflict of interest.

4. Provisions: The call shall be for an indefinite term. Salary and benefits shall be fixed at the time of the call and shall be reviewed annually by the Council of Elders.

5. Change of Relationships: The working relationship may be dissolved by the individual or the church by submitting one month's written notice. The one month requirement may be waived by mutual consent. This person may be dismissed for cause by the Council of Elders. In this event, this person shall be compensated with one month's salary after this notice is given. In

the event that a new Senior Pastor is called, Pastoral Associates shall terminate on the day the new Senior Pastor begins his ministry unless retained by the new pastor with the approval of the Council of Elders.

C. Church Staff Employees:

1. Hiring Procedure: Staff shall be hired by the Senior Pastor with affirmation from the Council of Elders and the appropriate Ministry Action Team. Positions will be established as deemed necessary and within budgetary constraints.

2. Duties: The duties of each staff member shall be specified by the Senior Pastor and Council of Elders in a job description at the time of hiring. The staff shall receive direction and be accountable to the Senior Pastor, unless this responsibility is delegated to another person by the Council of Elders.

3. Provisions: Salary and benefits shall be established at the time of hiring by the Council of Elders. Salary and benefits shall be reviewed at least once a year by the Council of Elders.

4. Change of Relationships: Staff members may dissolve this working relationship by giving two weeks' written notice. Staff members may be dismissed for cause with the concurrence of the Senior Pastor and Council of Elders. In the event of dismissal the staff person shall be compensated by receiving two weeks' salary from the date of dismissal.

5. Heidi Ho School Staff: All staffing issues regarding school personnel shall be conducted by the School Director under the supervision of the School MAT.

D. The Council of Elders:

1. Organization: The Council of Elders will strive for at least five lay elders. Additional members may be added, but should not exceed 12 lay elders. There must be at least twice as many unpaid (lay) elders as paid (pastor) elders. All elders both paid and unpaid, shall be voting members of the Council of Elders except in areas of conflict of interests. The Council shall select a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and appoint a church moderator from its membership. The Moderator will preside over all church members' meetings. In the absence of the Moderator the Council of Elders will select an alternate from its membership.

2. Qualifications: Elders must meet the Biblical qualifications set forth in *1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5:1-4*. They shall fully and freely subscribe to the Constitution of this church and the Doctrinal Statement for Church Leaders without reservation.

3. Nomination and election: The Council of Elders shall function as the Nominating Committee for potential candidates. The congregation may suggest names to the Council for consideration. Nominations will be posted

one month prior to voting to give opportunity for concerns to be expressed by the congregation to the Council. Elders will be elected by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at a members' meeting.

4. Term of office: Lay Elders will serve three year terms with approximately one-third of their number being elected each year. A lay elder may serve two consecutive terms (6 years), but then he must be off the Council for one year before he is eligible for re-election. In some cases, an elder may be elected to a term shorter than three years as decided by the Council.

5. Meetings: The Council of Elders will hold regular monthly meetings. Special meetings can be called at any time by the chairman, senior pastor, or upon the request of a majority of the Council members. A simple majority (51%) of the Council will be required for a quorum to conduct business.

6. Responsibilities:

- a. The Council of Elders shall function as a plurality of shepherd-leaders devoted to the ministry of the Word and prayer.
- b. They shall shepherd the spiritual life of the church by personal example, prayer, preaching and teaching the Word of God and leading with Christ-like love.
- c. They shall seek the mind of Christ for direction, planning and decision making, being sensitive to the input of the congregation and responsible for the welfare of the congregation.
- d. They shall provide for the pastoral care of the congregation.
- e. They shall supervise church membership, which includes admission of new members, discipline and restoration, identifying non-resident and inactive members, transfer of members, etc.
- f. They shall oversee all requests for licensing and ordination.
- g. They shall participate in periodic evaluation of all the elders and annual evaluation of the paid (pastor) elders.
- h. They shall oversee the work of the Deacons and Deaconesses and Ministry Action Teams.
- i. They shall set the agenda for members' (business) meetings.
- j. They shall oversee the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- k. They shall appoint the Church Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Clerk, Chairman and Vice-chair of the Deacons and Deaconesses, and the team leaders of the Finance MAT, Property MAT, Missions MAT and School MAT.
- l. They shall appoint an elder to serve as a member of the Heidi Ho School MAT.
- m. They shall serve as the nominating committee to present names to the congregation for the office of Elder, Deacon and Deaconess.
- n. They shall review staff salaries annually and approve the final draft of the proposed annual budget to be presented to the congregation.
- o. They shall, whenever there is a vacancy in the senior pastorate, present names to the congregation for the formation of a Pulpit Committee.

- p. They shall be responsible for pulpit supply and they shall endorse special speakers.
- q. They shall recommend to the congregation any major changes in the budget, property acquisitions or disposals.
- r. They shall be sensitive to hear and consider the needs, suggestions and grievances of the church membership.
- s. They shall be responsible to protect the church family from false doctrine, impurity and divisiveness.
- t. They shall seek to equip the church for the work of the ministry by encouraging the use of spiritual gifts.
- u. They shall make sure that the whole counsel of God is being taught and believers are being trained to follow Christ.
- v. They shall model and promote a passion for Christ-centered evangelism and world missions for the glory of God and joy of all peoples.
- w. They shall periodically review the Constitution and By-laws to insure compliance and recommend changes.

7. Termination from the Council: Any Elder failing to attend the regular meetings of the Council or worship services of the church without reasonable cause, or willfully neglecting his duty, or impairing his service through misconduct, may be removed by a three-fourths majority vote of the Council.

E. Deacons and Deaconesses:

- 1. Organization:** Deacons and Deaconesses shall be organized to assist the Elders in meeting needs primarily within the church, but also in the community. The Elders will appoint a chairman from the Deacons and a vice-chair from the Deaconesses. The Deacons and Deaconesses shall elect a sub-committee of four (two Deacons and two Deaconesses) to oversee the Fellowship Fund.
- 2. Qualifications and Election:** As many Deacons and Deaconesses as are needed and Biblically qualified according to *1 Timothy 3:8-13*, shall be nominated by the Council of Elders to the congregation. They shall fully and freely subscribe to the Constitution of this church and the Doctrinal Statement for Church Leaders without reservation. They shall be elected by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at a business meeting.
- 3. Term of Office:** Deacons and Deaconesses shall serve for three year terms. They may serve two consecutive terms (6 years), but then they must be off for one year before they would be eligible for re-election.
- 4. Meetings:** Deacons and Deaconesses shall have an organizational joint meeting in January each year and special meetings as needed or whenever requested by the Council of Elders.
- 5. Responsibilities:**
 - a. General Focus:** The Deacons and Deaconesses shall be ready to assist the Elders in meeting a variety of different needs that may arise. They shall be especially sensitive to the poor, the elderly, the widowed, the sick, and the newcomers within the church family.

b. The Deacons: The Deacons shall serve and help mobilize the church to meet pressing needs such as helping the widowed and the elderly with homecare, yard care, auto care, snow removal, transportation, etc. They will also mobilize the church to help those who are moving. They will assist as needed with baptisms, Lord's Suppers, visitation and special events. They will be available to serve in crisis situations or wherever help is needed.

c. The Deaconesses: The Deaconesses shall serve and help mobilize the church to provide food and clothing for the poor, meals for the sick, encouragement for the lonely and hospitality to new comers. They shall assist with baptisms, preparing the elements for the Lord's Supper, visitation and special events. They will be available to serve in crisis situations or wherever help is needed.

d. Fellowship Fund Committee: The committee, made up of two Deacons, two Deaconesses and one pastor Elder, shall appoint a chairperson and a treasurer. The committee should meet at least once a month to review any financial needs within the church family. They shall give a quarterly report to the Council of Elders regarding disbursement of the funds.

e. Team Leaders for key MAT's: Deacons, Deaconesses or Elders shall be appointed by the Council of Elders to serve as team leaders for the Finance MAT, Property MAT, Missions MAT, and School MAT and other key areas of ministry as deemed necessary by the Elders.

6. Termination of Deacons and Deaconesses: Any Deacon or Deaconess who fails to be faithful in attendance or fails to display the qualifications for the office, may be removed from office by a three-fourths majority vote of the Council of Elders.

F. Church Appointed Positions: The following positions shall be appointed annually by the Council of Elders from within the active church membership:

1. Church Treasurer: The Church Treasurer shall be a voting member of the Finance Action Team. The Treasurer will be responsible to the Council of Elders for the oversight of all church finances.

2. Church Financial Secretary: The Financial Secretary shall receive general and special funds and shall transmit to the Bookkeeper all monies received. All bank deposits shall be made and kept in the name of the church. The Financial Secretary shall keep a confidential record of all income received from individuals, and make such information available annually to the individual or upon request. The Financial Secretary shall be a voting member of the Finance Action Team.

3. Church Clerk: The Church Clerk shall keep an exact record of all business conducted at the business meetings of the church and a complete record of the membership roll.

G. Ministry Action Teams:

1. Formation of MAT's: Ministry Action Teams will be established or dissolved by the Council of Elders.

2. Description of MAT's: A Ministry Action Team is put together by design, working with shared concern toward meeting needs.

The word "Ministry" describes the "work."

The word "Action" describes the "working."

The word "Team" describes the "workers."

3. Authority of MAT's: Ministry Action Teams will be responsible to the Council of Elders for a specific area of the church's ministry and will have authority commensurate to their assigned ministry delegated to them by the Council of Elders.

4. Participation on MAT's:

a. All members of Ministry Action Teams shall be faithfully attending the church's corporate worship services and shall be "in good standing" with the Council of Elders.

b. Finance Action Team members must be members of the church, faithful tithers to the church and approved by the Council of Elders.

c. Non-members of First Baptist Church may serve on the church's various Ministry Action Teams, except for the Finance Action Team.

d. Each Ministry Action Team is free to recruit its own team members in accordance with the above guidelines.

5. Leaders of the MAT's:

a. A Ministry Action Team leader must be an active church member.

b. The Council of Elders will annually appoint a Deacon or Deaconess or Elder to be the team leaders of the Finance MAT, the Property MAT, the Missions MAT and the Heidi Ho School MAT, and may appoint other team leaders if necessary.

c. Other MAT leaders will be chosen annually by the members of each Ministry Action Team.

6. Job Descriptions for MAT's: Job descriptions for all Ministry Action Teams are available, along with governing policies in the Ministries Manual for the La Grande First Baptist Church.

IV. Membership Meetings:

A. Annual Members' Meeting: A business meeting will be held in October to elect Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses, review the current financial report and vote on a proposed budget for the upcoming year.

B. Other Members' Meetings: Other special business meetings may be called by the Council of Elders as needed.

C. A written **Annual Report** will be provided to the congregation in January.

D. Business Meeting Agendas: All items or issues to be considered by the congregation will first be reviewed by the Council of Elders. Recommendations will then be made by the Council of Elders for church action. Recommendations concerning the annual budget, and major property acquisitions or disposals shall be announced to the congregation two weeks prior to a vote of the membership.