

TABLE OF CONTENTS
CHURCH CONSTITUTION: FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
River Falls, WI

PREAMBLE

ARTICLE I: NAME

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

ARTICLE III: ASSOCIATIONS

ARTICLE IV: STATEMENT OF BELIEF

- Section A–The Scriptures
- Section B–The Trinity
- Section C–God the Father
- Section D–The Lord Jesus Christ
- Section E–The Holy Spirit
- Section F–Creation
- Section G–Man
- Section H–Salvation
- Section I–The Church
- Section J–Baptism and Communion
- Section K–Coming Events
- Section L–Israel
- Section M–Angels
- Section N–Satan
- Section O–Personal Separation
- Section P–Ecclesiastical Separation
- Section Q–The Lord’s Day
- Section R–Marriage and the Home
- Section S–Civil Government

ARTICLE V: CHURCH COVENANT

ARTICLE VI: RULES OF ORDER

- Section A–Church Membership
 - Paragraph 1, Reception of Members
 - Paragraph 2, Restricted Memberships
 - Paragraph 3, Responsibilities
 - Paragraph 4, Dismissal of Members
- Section B–Church Discipline
- Section C–Officers
 - Paragraph 1, Qualifications
 - Paragraph 2, Officer Records, Dismissal, and Replacement
 - Paragraph 3, Pastor
 - Paragraph 4, Assistant Pastors
 - Paragraph 5, Deacons
 - Paragraph 6, Trustees
 - Paragraph 7, Deaconesses
 - Paragraph 8, Treasurer
 - Paragraph 9, Financial Secretary
 - Paragraph 10, Church Clerk
 - Paragraph 11, Sunday School Superintendent
- Section D Committees
 - Paragraph 1, Qualifications and Regulations
 - Paragraph 2, Candidate and Pulpit Committee

Paragraph 3, Nominating Committee
Paragraph 4, Ushering Committee
Paragraph 5, Ministry Committee
Paragraph 6, Other Committees/Subcommittees
Section E–Missions
Paragraph 1, Support Policies
Paragraph 2, Supported Missionaries
Section F–Meetings of the Church
Paragraph 1, Use of Church Facilities and Name
Paragraph 2, Meetings of Public Worship
Paragraph 3, Ordinances
Paragraph 4, Business Meetings
Section G–Financial Regulations
Paragraph 1, Fiscal Year
Paragraph 2, Monetary Principles
Section H–Licensing and Ordination
Section I–Amendments and Revisions
Section J–Constitutional Interpretations.
Section K–Incorporation and Dissolution
Paragraph 1, Incorporation
Paragraph 2, Dissolution

**CONSTITUTION
of the
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF RIVER FALLS, WI**

Adopted Jan. 6, 1965–Revised Jan. 29, 1989, Jan. 27, 2002 and April 29, 2018

We the members of First Baptist Church of River Falls, WI, resting our faith on Christ alone for salvation and believing the inerrant teachings of the Holy Bible, do adopt this constitution as a declaration of our convictions so that we may carry on the Lord’s local church ministry in a decent and orderly fashion. We do voluntarily submit to the articles of this constitution.

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of the corporation is First Baptist Church of River Falls–River Falls, WI. This corporation is non-profit pursuant to Wisconsin statutes, chapter 181.

ARTICLE II: Purpose

This church will be an independent, autonomous church, subject only to Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, and to the laws of our country provided they do not conflict with Scripture. Our purpose is to glorify God by conducting a Baptist church that lives in accordance with and teaches the Word of God. Our statement of belief, church covenant, and church constitution are fashioned in recognition that the Bible is the sole authority for spiritual faith and practice. This Bible-believing, Baptist, local church ministry will purpose to evangelize the lost to Christ, edify all believers, administer Biblical ordinances and discipline, and stimulate a Biblical spiritual fellowship among all church members and attendees. We will endeavor to defend the faith, and live out a good testimony of godliness and good works for Christ before our local community. We will furthermore work for the establishment of other Baptist churches of like faith and practice in our own state, and take a vigorous role in worldwide evangelistic missionary outreach and church planting.

ARTICLE III: Associations

As an independent, autonomous local church we will fellowship on a voluntary basis with other fundamental, Biblical churches and organizations which manifest in their faith and practice agreement with our purpose, covenant, and constitution. There will be no cooperation with any group that permits the presence of apostates or apostasy. Termination of fellowship from an erring group or individual will be accomplished by church vote.

ARTICLE IV: Statement of Belief

SECTION A: The Scriptures

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally written were God–breathed, both verbally and in every part. We believe God, Who is Truth, communicated through Spirit-controlled men so that the Scriptures are without error and therefore authoritative in all they teach and in all matters they touch. We believe the Bible is the supreme revelation of God’s will for man and constitutes the only infallible guide for faith and life.

Matthew 5:18; 15:4-6; Mark 12:36; John 10:34,35; Acts 1:16; Romans 3:1-4; Galatians 3:16; II Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; I Peter 1:23; II Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18,19

SECTION B: The Trinity

We believe there is one, and only one, true and living God; that there is indivisible unity in the Godhead, yet existing in three separate persons–the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit–equal in every divine perfection, of the same essence and executing distinct, harmonious, offices in the great work of both creation and redemption.

Matthew 28:19; 3:16,17; John 6:27; Acts 5:3,4; I Corinthians 1:9-14; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:6; Hebrews 1:8

SECTION C: God the Father

We believe God the Father is a spirit infinite, eternal and unchangeable in all of His being, wisdom, power, holiness,

justice, goodness, and truth. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of the universe, and Giver of all life in sovereign authority over all His created beings, the Keeper over the nation Israel, and the Father and Disciplinarian of His chosen in Jesus Christ.

Psalm 139:7–10; Isaiah 46:9; Romans 11:33; Revelation 19:6

SECTION D: The Lord Jesus Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as no other man was ever nor can be born of a woman. He is very God of very God, being “God manifest in the flesh”. He lived a life of absolute sinlessness and in His death made a full and vicarious blood atonement for our sins, dying not as a martyr, but as a voluntary substitute in the sinner’s place. He rose bodily from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest, interceding and preparing a place for believers. He shall appear in the air to rapture His saints and, after seven years, shall come again with the saints to set up the throne of David and establish His millennial kingdom.

Matthew 1:18–25; 28:6; John 1:1; 14:3; 20:27; Acts 15:16; I Corinthians 15:4; I Thessalonians 4:16; II Thessalonians 2:6–8; Hebrews 7:25; 8:6; 12:2; I Peter 2:22; 3:18; I John 2:1; Revelation 3:21

SECTION E: The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person possessing all the attributes of personality and of deity. He is equal with the Father and the Son and is of the same nature. His relation to the unbelieving world is that He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the agent of the new birth, and His work among believers includes His sealing, indwelling, infilling, guiding, and teaching them the ways of righteousness. We believe there is a distinction between the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and His ministry in the New Testament. There is a new and unique work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Body of Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit endues believers with service gifts. We believe the Bible disavows the authenticity of the sign gifts given to men, such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and healing for today, and repudiates the experience-oriented theology and ecumenically-oriented practice of the charismatic movement.

John 7:39; 14:16,17,26; Acts 1:5; Romans 12:3–8; I Corinthians 12:8–13, 28–31; 13:8–12; Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:7–11; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 22:18,19

SECTION F: Creation

We believe the Genesis account of creation as being neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of the Trinity without any evolutionary process.

Genesis 1–2; Psalm 33:9; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16,17; Hebrews 1:2

SECTION G: Man

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created by a direct act of God and not from any previously existing form of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. By voluntary transgression man fell from his sinless state, in consequence of which all men are now sinners by nature and by choice, utterly devoid of the holiness required by God’s law, definitely inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal judgment and everlasting existence separated from God without defense or excuse.

Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23; 5:12–19

SECTION H: Salvation

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christ died for the whole world and that salvation of sinners is divinely initiated, wholly of grace, and accomplished only through the mediatorial work of the Son of God. It is wholly apart from works and is upon the sole condition of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and never without genuine repentance. In order to be saved the sinner must be born again, personally receiving Christ as Savior, being regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith in God’s Word, and becoming the recipient of a new nature. The great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification, that judicial act of God accompanied by the pardon of sin and the imputation of divine righteousness, not because of any works of righteousness on our part, but solely through faith in the Redeemer’s blood. The believer who has exercised personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

is completely justified and in possession of eternal life which is eternally secure.

John 1:11,12; 3:3–6,16; 10:28,29; Acts 13:39; Romans 2:4; II Corinthians 7:9,10; Ephesians 2:8–10; Philippians 1:6; I Timothy 2:5,6; Hebrews 4:2; I Peter 1:18–23; II Peter 1:4; 2:1

SECTION I: The Church

We believe the Scriptures teach that the church of Jesus Christ began at Pentecost and will be completed at the rapture. It must be considered in two aspects: the local church and the “church which is His body”.

1. The local church is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by a covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word. Its Scriptural officers are pastors, sometimes called bishops or elders, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. This definition of the local church leads to these Scriptural distinctives:
 - a. Sole authority of the Scriptures for faith and practice;
 - b. Autonomy of the local church;
 - c. Believer’s baptism by immersion before church membership;
 - d. Two officers, pastor (elder, bishop) and deacon;
 - e. Two symbolic ordinances: baptism and the Lord’s table;
 - f. Individual priesthood of the believer and soul liberty;
 - g. Separation of church and state (not isolation)
2. The “church which is His body” is the entire company of believers in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, regardless of denominational affiliation and present position in heaven or on earth.

Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:5; 2:1–4,41,42; 10:44,45; 11:15,16; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22,23; Titus 1; Hebrews 12:23

SECTION J: Baptism and Communion

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem his identification with the crucified, buried, risen Savior, thus illustrating the believer’s death to sin and his resurrection to a new life. It is a prerequisite to membership and privileges in a local church. We believe that communion is the commemoration of His death until He comes and should be preceded by solemn self-examination and confession of known sin. Observance of baptism and communion must be observed under the authority of the local church.

Acts 8:36–39; Romans 6:3–5; I Corinthians 11:23–28

SECTION K: Coming Events

1. The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting happiness of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

Genesis 18:23; Proverbs 14:21; Malachi 3:18; John 8:21; Matthew 25:34–41; Luke 16:19–31; Romans 6:17,18; I John 5:19

2. The Rapture of the Church

We believe in the “Blessed Hope”, the personal, imminent, pretribulation, and premillennial appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to rapture His redeemed ones of the church.

I Corinthians 15:51,52; I Thessalonians 4:13–18; II Thessalonians 2:1,2; Titus 2:13; I John 3:2

3. The Judgment Seat of Christ

We believe that every saved person of the Church Age will appear before the “Judgment Seat” to be judged by the Lord in regard to his service and receive rewards according to his works.

Matthew 6:2; Romans 14:10; I Corinthians 3:11–15; II Corinthians 5:10

4. The Millennial Kingdom

We believe that Christ will return to earth after the tribulation with His saints to establish the Millennial Kingdom, which literally will be on earth and will be ruled by Christ from the throne of David.

Isaiah 9:6,7; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29,30; II Thessalonians 1:6–12; Revelation 20:1–6, 12–14

5. The Eternal State

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire. The souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when the spirit, soul, and new body are reunited to be forever glorified with the Lord. The souls of the unbelievers after death remain in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with spirit, soul and body reunited they shall appear before the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast in the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment.

Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19–26; John 5:28,29; II Corinthians 5:8,10; Philippians 1:23; Revelation 20:11–15

SECTION L: Israel

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God’s eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. This saved remnant will serve the Lord in the millennium.

Genesis 13:14–17; Romans 11:1–32; Ezekiel 37

SECTION M: Angels

We believe in the personal existence of angels who were created by God to bring honor and glory to His name *and* to serve Him. Those angels who kept their first estate continually serve God and minister to believers in Christ. There were among the hosts those who fell with Satan’s counterfeit system as rulers of darkness, to be resisted by the believer through the armor provided by God. Some of these fallen angels, described in the Bible as demons or unclean spirits, are presently confined in the abyss, while others are actively serving Satan in his devilish work on earth.

Isaiah 6; Matthew 17:18; Ephesians 6:11,12; Colossians 1:16; I Timothy 4:1,2; Hebrews 1:14; I Peter 1:12; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6

SECTION N: Satan

We believe that Scriptures teach that there is a personal devil, a created angel who through pride became the enemy of his Creator, who is “the god of this age” and “the prince of the power of the air”, who is full of all subtlety, who seeks continually to frustrate the purposes of God and to ensnare the sons of men, and who was conquered by Christ on the cross and condemned to everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire.

Isaiah 14:12–15; Luke 10:18; II Corinthians 4:4; 11:13–15; Ephesians 2:2; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 12:9; 20:10

SECTION O: Personal Separation

We believe the Scriptures teach that every believer should be separated unto God from the world, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, should walk in Christian love and holiness, exhibiting qualities of honesty, integrity, forgiveness, and loving-kindness. Every believer should progress toward spiritual maturity as he yields daily to the Holy Spirit’s control, putting off the old nature and putting on the new nature in Christ. We further believe that any achievement in these characteristics will be evidenced by sincere humility and genuine zeal for the advancement of the cause of Christ. We also believe the Scriptures admonish every believer not to love the world or the things in the world, but

rather to flee evil desires, avoid every kind of evil, and refrain from questionable practices which destroy one's testimony, offend one's brother, and fail to glorify God.

Proverbs 15:33; Romans 14:19-21; I Corinthians 6:18-20; 8:9-13; 10:23,33; II Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 4:20-24,32; 5:1,2,7-10,15-20; Philippians 4:8; I Thessalonians 4:7; I Peter 5:5,6

SECTION P: Ecclesiastical Separation

We believe the Scriptures teach that the believer should be separated from apostasy as exemplified in ecclesiastical organizations which include radicals, liberals, and those who sanction theological compromise. This doctrine is based upon God's eternal principle of division between truth and error and His specific command to be separate from unbelievers and disobedient brethren. This truth is to be practiced with an attitude of devotion to God, humility, compassion, and yet with conviction, to create the proper condition and atmosphere for the main objective, i.e. the salvation of the lost through the gospel of God. We believe ecumenical evangelism which involves apostates violates the principles taught in God's Word.

Matthew 10:34-49; 18:15; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:7-13; II Corinthians 6:14; 11:4; Galatians 1:8,9; I Timothy 6:3-6; II Timothy 2:16-18; Titus 3:10,11; II John 9-11

SECTION Q: The Lord's Day

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is to be set aside unto the Lord for worship, fellowship with others of like faith and practice, instruction in the Word of God, and rest from the cares of the world as a testimony both public and private. It is a day of rejoicing in the resurrection of our Lord by giving of our time and resources to further our evangelistic outreach.

Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1,2; Hebrews 10:25

SECTION R: Marriage and the Home

We believe that the home was the first institution God provided for man, and that marriage is a sacred relationship and honorable for all. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Marriage is used as an emblem of the union of Christ and His Church. Children are a special blessing from the Lord. Parents are commanded to raise their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". Marriage, furthermore, is to be a contract and a commitment between a man and a woman. Homosexuality is condemned in the Scripture as a deviant and wicked lifestyle.

Genesis 2:18-24; Psalm 127,128; Mark 10:9; Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 7:2; Ephesians 5:21,23; 6:1-4; Hebrews 12:4

SECTION S: Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society. Those in authority are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Acts 5:29; Romans 3:1-17; 13:1; I Timothy 2:1-3; I Peter 2:13-18; Revelation 19:16

ARTICLE V: Church Covenant

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, and on our profession of that faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and accepting the Word of God as our rule for faith and practice, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We pledge, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, in holiness, and comfort in time of distress; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence in all aspects of our lives; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, and the spreading of the Gospel through all nations.

We also pledge to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the things of Christ; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our responsibilities, and exemplary in our conduct; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, remembering that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and that as Christ is our Lord we should refrain from using our bodies in any way that might grieve the Holy Spirit.

We further pledge to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness, distress, and material need; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior (Matt. 18:15-17) to secure it without delay.

We moreover pledge that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

To these and all other Christian duties we do humbly and cheerfully submit ourselves, promising to perform them not in our own strength, being aware of our weakness, but in the strength of the Lord, whose we are, and whom we serve; to whom be glory in the Church through all ages, world without end. Amen.

ARTICLE VI: Rules of Order

SECTION A: Church Membership

Paragraph 1—Reception of Members

1. Anyone professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, giving evidence of a change of heart from sin and toward God, and declaring himself/herself in accordance with the principles, practices and doctrines of this church, may become a candidate for membership.
2. Candidates may qualify for membership in one of three ways:
 - a. Baptism by single immersion in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Experience: a testimony to the fact that he or she is born again, has been scripturally baptized (by immersion) following his or her salvation, and is living a life which is consistent with the Statement of Belief of this church. Where possible, a letter of reference will be requested from the candidate's prior church and that church will be notified when the candidate becomes a member.
 - c. For persons removed from the membership under Paragraph 4, section 4: Restoration upon recommendation of the deacons, after the excluded person has given acceptable evidence of honest repentance and made full confession of wrong doing.
3. All persons desiring to unite with this church will meet with the church board and will give testimony of conversion and Christian experience, and affirm acceptance of and adherence to the Statement of Belief, Rules of Order, and Covenant of this church.
4. Approved candidates for membership will be presented to the membership of the church by the church board with an appropriate recommendation for reception. Candidates may be presented at any regular stated service of the church, provided at least one week's public notice has been provided of the name of candidates for membership.
5. Candidates will be accepted by two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting.

Paragraph 2—Restricted Membership

1. We realize that there may arise an occasion when an individual, having membership in a church of like faith and practice, finds it impractical to transfer membership (such as temporary residency or employment), yet desires opportunity for service. Such cases will be reviewed by the church board and appropriate recommendations brought before the church body for ratification in accordance with normal membership requirements. These individuals will have all the privileges of membership, except the right to vote or hold elected office, while retaining membership in their home church.
2. Also, those members whose attendance does not meet the provision passed in 1995 (in establishing a quorum: by members in good standing, which is defined as attending on average twice a month) or not actively participating

in worship or financial contributions will be moved to the inactive member list (see Section A, Paragraph 4 Section 3, subsection b, page 10). While still retaining membership, the individual will be excluded from the right to vote, holding leadership positions, or holding elected office(s).

Paragraph 3–Responsibilities

1. Members should attend regularly the services of the church unless providentially hindered, and contribute cheerfully to the financial support of the church and the spread of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.
2. Members should honor those in authority in the church, pray for them, submit to their leadership as the Scriptures command, and assist them with wholehearted cooperation.
3. Every member should cultivate his own Christian life and character so that the unity of the brethren might be preserved and a good testimony might be obtained before those who are without. Members should practice the Church Covenant.
4. Members should volunteer to serve, as invited and directed by the church leadership, in the program of the church. This service should be with priority and wholehearted effort. All members should strive to minister to and fellowship with other church members and visitors, and furthermore, reach out to the unsaved and unchurched.

Paragraph 4–Dismissal of Members

A majority affirmative vote of the quorum is necessary for the dismissal of any individual. For exclusion a two-thirds majority affirmative vote by ballot is required. Persons may be dropped from the membership roll by vote of the congregation under the following circumstances:

1. At the individual's request.
2. When the individual places membership in another church. If a letter is requested, a letter of reference and commendation will be sent provided the other church is of like faith and practice, and the transferring member was in good standing at the time of departure.
3. By erasure.
 - a. Any member who unites with another church without requesting a letter will be dropped by vote of the church.
 - b. The membership list will be reviewed every six months. All inactive members will be contacted by the pastor or a deacon. Any member absenting himself from the church services for the period of one year without an acceptable reason, and not responding to written notification, will be dropped from the roll upon recommendation of the church board and vote of the church.
4. By exclusion—any member guilty of persistent ungodly or immoral conduct, may, after proper Scriptural steps have been taken in an attempt of restoration, have his name dropped from the roll upon recommendation of the church board and vote of the church. An attempt should be made to notify the offending member prior to the church vote.
5. By death (no church action required).

SECTION B: Church Discipline

All matters of offense among members must be handled according to the Scriptural steps given in Matt. 18:15–17. Believers are reminded to approach these situations in hope and love. There may be occasion for the church board to take action other than exclusion (personal admonition, rebuke, reproof, probation) in the case of a believer and unbiblical conduct. Remember, the goal is restoration if at all possible. Scripture references setting the standard of character and quality of life for members are as follows:

Galatians 5:16-26, 6:1-10; Romans 16:17-20; I Corinthians 5; I Thessalonians 5:12-15; II Thessalonians 3; I Timothy 5:17-22, 6:1-5,13,14; II Timothy 2:15-26; Titus 1:15,16, 2:15, 3:1,2,9-11.

SECTION C: Officers

Paragraph 1—Qualifications

1. All officers must be members of the church. There is no limit to the number of offices that any one member can hold. Church board offices must be held by male members who are at least 21 years old, and who are solidly mature spiritually (Acts 6; I Timothy 3).
2. All elected officers must have a good testimony before the community (I Timothy 3); be in agreement with the principles, practices, and doctrines of this church; meet biblical standards for Christian living; and meet any other standards or requirements set by the church for such office. Moral conduct must be above reproach and free of carnal indulgences.

Paragraph 2—Officer Records, Dismissal, and Replacement

1. Records—All officer records are to be considered church property. They are to be maintained in good order and given to succeeding officers.
2. Dismissal—Any officer unable or unwilling to fulfill the qualifications of his office should resign. If a problem develops, the church board, after careful consideration, has the authority to remove a person from office. (The church board consists of the pastor and deacons.)
3. Replacement—If an officer, for some reason, is unable to finish his term, a replacement, the church board will decide on one of two options:
 - a. Leave the office vacant until the next Annual Meeting.
 - b. Have a special election announcing the nominated candidates two weeks prior to voting.

Paragraph 3—Pastor

1. Call and Termination
 - a. The calling of a pastor will be upon the recommendation of the pulpit committee and three-fourths affirmative majority vote of the quorum (51%) by secret ballot. The business meeting for the purpose of calling a pastor should be announced from the pulpit two weeks before the vote is held.
 - b. An extended call should be stated in a letter and accompanied by a clear statement of his responsibilities and obligations to the church, and the church's responsibilities and obligations to him.
 - c. To avoid confusion, only one pastoral candidate will be considered at a time. The pastor will be elected for an indeterminate term.
 - d. Unless otherwise agreed to, the pastoral relationship may be terminated upon sixty days written notice from either the pastor or the church or by mutual consent. Dismissal of a pastor will be by vote of the church at a special meeting called for that purpose. Announcement of the meeting must be made from the pulpit one week before it is held. A three-fourths affirmative majority vote of the quorum will be required for dismissal. If it is not deemed wise by the church for the pastor to continue his duties, he may be released immediately with two month's pay, except in a case of immorality when he would be dismissed immediately without pay.
2. Responsibilities
 - a. The pastor is to be considered the chief administrator of the church and have spiritual oversight with a servant's attitude toward this church which practices congregational government. He is to preach the Gospel, feed the flock, and equip the membership for the work of the ministry; he is to have in his charge the stated services of public worship; he will administer the ordinances; and he is to perform the usual duties of a Baptist minister.
 - b. The pastor will moderate all business meetings of the church and church board, unless there is unanimous agreement to appoint another member as moderator. In his absence the church may appoint any member in good standing to act as moderator. If the pastor is being considered for dismissal the chairman of the deacons will act as moderator.

- c. The pastor will be a member of all committees of the church with the right of choice to attend all meetings. He is to have access to all books of record except personal giving records. He will be allowed to spend up to \$100.00 per month without the consent of the deacons. He will secure speakers and programs for the church in consideration with the deacons.
3. Compensation, Vacation, and Absence
- a. Compensation shall be reviewed by the deacons annually and submitted at the Annual Church Business Meeting as a part of the budget recommendation. Included will be provisions for vacation, benefits, housing, and opportunities for ministry outside the local church.
 - b. Absence from services beyond normal vacation time will be by mutual consent of pastor and deacons. The pastor will be expected to attend conferences and fellowships at the church's expense as dictated by the annual budget. In the event of an ongoing illness of the pastor or his wife, a mourning period for the death of the pastor's wife, or extenuating circumstances deemed suitable per the deacon's agreement, there would be the need for a sabbatical (extended absence) up to six months. By mutual consent between the pastor and the deacons the sabbatical is not to exceed a period of six months. During the sabbatical the pastor's compensation will be reduced by 50%. The pastor and the deacons will employ either an interim pastor or suitable pulpit fill by an individual who meets the pastoral qualifications stipulated in the Bible as well as in the constitution. At the pastor's return an entrance interview process will be implemented and metrics established to gauge progress, if needed.

Paragraph 4—Other Pastoral Staff

- 1. Call and Termination: Same as guidelines under Article VI, Section C, Paragraph 3 for the pastor, except that the pastor and deacons will function as the pulpit committee for these positions.
- 2. Responsibilities: To be stated in detail at the time a call is extended.

Paragraph 5—Deacons

- 1. Election
 - a. The number of deacons must not be less than three, if available. If fewer than three deacons are in office, the pastor and deacon(s) will seek counsel and assistance from other elected officials in the church. The optimum number of deacons will be eight up to a membership size of 200. After the threshold of 200 one deacon should be added for each 100 additional members or major fraction thereof. The number of deacons will never exceed the number of "spirit-filled" men available who meet the qualifications listed in Acts 6, I Timothy 3, and Titus 1.
 - b. The church voting membership will elect deacons from a ballot submitted by the Nominating Committee at the Annual Meeting. Deacons will be elected to serve three-year terms arranged to end alternately.
- 2. Responsibilities
 - a. The deacons will assist the pastor in the oversight of all spiritual aspects of the church. They will meet regularly with the pastor to discuss church business. The deacons will help as much as possible in the area of church maintenance so the pastor can spend more time in spiritual study and ministry.
 - b. The deacons will endeavor to maintain an active role in the visitation and soulwinning ministry of this church in obedience to the Word of God, and in support of the pastor's ministry.
 - c. The deacons will, with the pastor, interview all candidates for church membership, assist in disciplinary measures against all delinquent and disorderly members, and make recommendations to the church regarding church business and procedure.
 - d. The deacons will assist the pastor in administration of church ordinances. They will arrange pulpit supply and provide leadership in the absence of a pastor. They will also perform other duties delegated to them by the church.
- 4. Meetings

- a. The deacons shall convene on a regular basis to transact an agenda which reflects the overall responsibilities entrusted to them. This regular meeting will be established by the pastor and deacons. Additional meetings may be called by the pastor.
- b. A secretary from within the board will keep a faithful record of the major aspects of each meeting.
- c. A deacon chairman and vice-chairman will be elected yearly in the February meeting. The chairman should have served on the board for at least one year. This chairman will moderate all business meetings in the absence of a pastor. The vice-chairman would only function in the absence of the chairman.

Paragraph 6–Trustees

1. The deacons will serve as trustees of this church representing this corporation as its agent. The pastor, deacon chairmen and church treasurer will serve as corporate officers, and should be exclusive. If there are not qualified individuals for the office of deacon (Section C, paragraph 5–Deacons 1, subsection a, page 11 ... will seek counsel and assistance from other elected officials in the church) the need to have one or more trustees may arise. A trustee will be selected by the mutual consent of the pastor and deacon(s) and voted on by the congregation for a term limit of one year. The position is to be one as needed until sufficient qualified candidates for the office of a deacon are available. A trustee will aid in counsel and advise the pastor and/or deacons.
2. The authorization of any expense over \$500 not included in the approved budget will require church action.

Paragraph 7–Other Positions

The Church may establish such other positions as it deems necessary to perform its ministry and administrative functions. The method of election, the length of term, and the responsibilities and requirements for each such position will be determined by the church.

Paragraph 8–Financial Records

1. The church will keep a permanent record of all financial transactions.
2. The person responsible for such records will submit to the church written quarterly and annual financial reports.
3. The church books will be audited on a regular basis.

SECTION D: Committees

Paragraph 1–Establishment and Regulations

1. Committees may be established and appointed by the the church when deemed necessary. Job descriptions will outline their duties and guidelines. Subcommittees may be appointed by committees to assist them in their duties. These appointments will be subject to the approval of the church. The subcommittee is to function under the supervision of the appointing committee.
2. The church will appoint members to each committee or delegate to the Pastor and Deacons the responsibility for filling such committees. Committee members will be members of the church who are willing to faithfully fulfill the duties of that committee. Committees will have the authority to effectuate the established policies of the church but will not establish new policies. They are, however, to be encouraged to make recommendations to the pastor and deacons. Further, members of the congregation are to be encouraged to propose meaningful suggestions to the pastor, deacons, and committee members.

Paragraph 2–Candidate and Pulpit Committee

1. The church will establish the Candidate and Pulpit Committee when a pastoral vacancy occurs. This committee is to function in accordance with ARTICLE VI, SECTION C, Paragraph 3.
2. It is the duty of this committee to seek out, examine thoroughly, and recommend to the church suitable candidates for the office of pastor.

Paragraph 3–Nominating Committee

1. The deacons will constitute the Nominating Committee.

2. All nominees must meet the qualifications stated in ARTICLE VI, SECTION C, Paragraphs 1 and 7. The nominating committee will meet annually in October.
3. Nominees must be publicized to the church by the first Sunday in December of each calendar year.
4. Additional nominations from the church body must be submitted to the church board for approval by the fourth Sunday in December. Nominations may not be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

SECTION E: Missions

This church shall give zealous efforts to promoting evangelistic missions, duplicating our convictions worldwide through prayer, financial support, missionary conferences, speakers, and other emphasis, encouraging all to be willing to go as well as send.

Paragraph 1–Support Policies

It shall be the policy of this church to primarily support missionaries and mission agencies engaged principally in evangelization and the establishment of New Testament Baptist churches. The agencies shall be known to be in agreement with our doctrine and practices.

Paragraph 2–Supported Missionaries

1. As funds are available, the church will support missionaries. All regular support must be approved by the church at a regularly scheduled meeting. Procedures for making support decisions will be established by the church.
2. All supported missionaries will be reviewed regularly and considered for support increases or decreases or dropped from support. Mission support may be dropped by church vote but should not be done until a missionary is on furlough, except in extreme cases involving doctrinal problems, church neglect, or if financial funds are not available.

secret societies, nor groups who cooperate with or are members of any apostate organization will be permitted use of church facilities.

2. All gatherings off the church property held in the name of the church shall be subject to the approval of the pastor and deacons.

Paragraph 2–Meetings of Public Worship

1. Public worship services shall be held regularly on Sunday. Any special program or speaker must be approved by the pastor and deacons.
2. Other services for Bible study and prayer will also be held on a regular basis.

Paragraph 3–Ordinances

1. Those professing faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, evidencing true conversion, and sufficiently instructed to testify of true understanding of the ordinance, upon authorization by the church, shall be immersed in water in accordance with the Scriptural teaching. Immersion shall be a prerequisite to, and not apart from, church membership (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38,41; Acts 8:26–39).
2. Communion shall be served to the assembled church on a regular basis, normally on the first Lord’s Day, at the discretion of the pastor and deacons. None who are His will be barred, except in certain cases when a member of the church is under discipline (I Cor. 5:11,12). The pastor will explain the meaning of this ordinance (I Cor. 11). In addition, the Church Covenant is to be read periodically at the discretion of the pastor.

Paragraph 4–Business Meetings

1. The Annual Meeting of the church will be held on the 4th or 5th Sunday of January with the specific date and time set at the discretion of the pastor and deacons with public notice to be given for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The agenda will include the election of officers, Annual Church Budget, annual reports of the treasurer, and other areas of ministry as requested, as well as any other proper business.
 - a. A sample election ballot will be posted by the first Sunday in January.

- b. Only members in good standing 18 years of age or older will be allowed to vote. Elections will be decided by majority vote.
 - c. Absentee ballots may be obtained one week prior to the election by members in good standing.
2. Quarterly Business Meetings will be held in April, July, and October with the specific date and time set at the discretion of the pastor and deacons with public notice to be given for two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The agenda will include the Treasurer's quarterly report and any other proper business.
 3. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time, providing public notice be given of the same on the Sunday preceding; except that notice on two Sundays immediately preceding shall be required for a meeting to call or terminate the pastor, elect or terminate deacons, hire or terminate church staff, consider church affiliation, or other corporate business dealing with the properties or financial position of the church.
 4. Receiving or terminating members and the selection of messengers may be transacted when necessary at any stated meeting of the church without previous notice.
 5. Fifty-one percent of the members in good standing will constitute a quorum in calling or dismissing a pastor, and in amending or revising this constitution. Twenty-five percent of the members in good standing will constitute a quorum concerning all other church decisions. A majority vote constitutes a quorum in all board and committee meetings.
 6. Secret Ballots In Business Meetings: Additional secret ballots may be used in church business meetings at the discretion of the church board when considering sensitive issues.
 7. The ordinary rules of deliberative assemblies will be observed in the transaction of business as set forth in *Roberts Rules Of Order Revised*, by Henry H. Roberts, but are not to take precedent over any Rules of Order established by the church.

SECTION G: Financial Regulations

Paragraph 1—Fiscal Year

The fiscal year will begin January 1 and end December 31.

Paragraph 2—Monetary Principles

1. There is a Scriptural plan by which the work of the Lord is to be funded (Acts 20:35; Matthew 6:19-21). Conformity to this plan is part of believer obedience as he gives to Christ, having first given his own self to the Lord (II Corinthians 8:5; Hebrews 7:8). This plan calls for regular, universal (all members), corporate, proportionate, and spiritual giving (I Corinthians 16:2).
2. All members of the church are expected to voluntarily contribute regular financial support to the church and to the advancement of the projects it sponsors through a corporately designated budget. In determining the Lord's portion, we believe and affirm with the Scriptures that gifts should be faithfully and cheerfully given (II Corinthians 9:6,7), and that sacrificial giving is encouraged, for all we have belongs to Christ (I Chronicles 29:14,16; Malachi 3:10; Acts 4:32-35).
3. No monies are to be raised for the support of the church and its various activities by any but the Biblical plan of Christian giving.
4. The designated officers are entrusted with the responsibilities of caring for the church treasury in accordance with the guidelines set forth in ARTICLE VI, SECTION C, Paragraphs 8 and 9. The church will function with a single treasury with all funds being disbursed by check from that treasury. Designation will be through the Annual Church Budget by corporate act of the church at the Annual Meeting and other subsequent corporate acts.
5. Undesignated gifts to the church treasury of regular systematic giving is encouraged as the Scriptural plan. Designated giving sacrificially beyond the tithe to corporately agreed projects is also encouraged. Special designated gifts to missions, organizations, and individuals other than those supported by the church will be handled at the discretion of the pastor and deacons.
6. A statement of contributions will be given each January to each donor by the the designated officer.

SECTION H: Licensing and Ordination

Paragraph 1—Licensing

Any active male church member who, in the judgment of the church, gives evidence by his living and aptness to preach and teach that he is called of God to the work of the ministry will be eligible for a license to preach. He will have preached in the hearing of the church, and having been examined by the pastor and deacons may, upon their recommendation, be licensed to preach the Gospel by the church, provided two-thirds of the qualified members present and voting at any business meeting shall agree thereof. Licensed preachers are subject to annual review. Any license may be revoked by church board recommendation and church action.

Paragraph 2—Ordination

Any active male church member who has given satisfactory evidence to the pastor and deacons of his conversion and definite call into fulltime ministry is eligible for ordination. This candidate must be carefully examined by the church board and must be in full agreement of the statement of belief and purposes of this church. Thorough Bible college and/or seminary training is preferable before ordination. If, after recommendation of the pastor and deacons, the church decides by two-thirds majority of the qualified members present and voting at any business meeting that this man possesses the Scriptural qualifications for ordination to the Gospel ministry, it shall call a council of ministers and other Christian leaders to examine the qualifications of the candidate and, upon the recommendation of that called council, the church will act to grant or withhold ordination recognition. Ordination will be withdrawn when a man ordained by the church has walked disorderly in violation of the Scriptural qualifications for the office of pastor as stated in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, or has departed from the basic Biblical doctrines expounded in this constitution.

SECTION I: Amendments and Revisions

This constitution may be amended, altered, or revised at any Annual Meeting by a two-thirds majority of the quorum, provided such proposed changes have been submitted in writing not later than the October meeting preceding. Notice of amendment, altering, or revision must be given from the pulpit for two consecutive Sundays preceding such a meeting. The church may adopt from time to time such additions in amplification hereof, as may be necessary or desirable, and shall provide therein for amendment of the same.

SECTION J: Constitutional Interpretation

When questions arise with regard to the interpretation of this constitution, the decision of the pastor and deacons will be considered as the final authority.

In all matters of Baptist polity not covered in these Rules of Order, *The New Directory for Baptist Churches* (unrevised) by Edward T. Hiscox will be the guide.

SECTION K: Incorporation and Dissolution

Paragraph 1—Incorporation

1. The purposes shall be to operate exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes, and particularly to teach the Holy Bible and thus encourage all individuals to trust in Jesus Christ through a program of evangelism, Christian education, worship, social activity, and missionary outreach; to engage in any and all lawful activities incidental to the foregoing purposes and any lawful activities authorized by chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes.
2. This church will not call, employ, grant membership, elected office, or leadership responsibility to anyone who is a practicing homosexual or who is sympathetic to the homosexual lifestyle (Romans 1).

Paragraph 2—Dissolution

1. This church shall have the right to own, buy, or sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through properly elected officers, when authorized by vote of the church.
2. No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any individuals from the assets, holdings, or other transactions in which this corporation may become involved.

3. In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated by corporate vote prior to dissolution to such other nonprofit religious corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Belief adopted by this church, and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service code of 1954 (section 501 C-3).