

# CONSTITUTION

## PREAMBLE

We, as a body of Believers in Jesus Christ, declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern this church in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other Southern Baptist churches.

### I. NAME

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Jennings, 1001 Cary Avenue, Jennings, Louisiana 70546.

### II. OBJECTIVES

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man as found in the Holy Scriptures.

To minister unselfishly to people in the church, community, and the world in Jesus' name.

To be Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

### III. STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

This church recognizes the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message as containing the basics of our beliefs. Listed are some of our basic beliefs.

#### **The Scripture**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. All Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ.

#### **God**

There is one and only one living and true God. God is Holy, God is all powerful and all knowing. God reveals Himself in the Trinity as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**God the Father:**

God reigns over His universe, His creation, and the flow of human history by His grace, power, knowledge, love, and wisdom.

**God the Son**

Christ is the Son of God. Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus became a human, yet without sin. Jesus died on the cross providing redemption for man's sins. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body. He ascended into heaven where He sits at the right hand of God. He will return to Earth in power and glory to judge the world.

**God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God who inspired holy men to write the Scripture in understanding truth, exalting Christ, and convicting men of sin. The Holy Spirit indwells and is active in believers.

**Man**

Man was created in the image of God. God created both male and female with freedom of choice. Mankind sinned against God and brought sin upon the human race. Only through God's redemptive plan through Christ's death on the cross can mankind be brought back into fellowship with God and fulfill the purpose of God. Every person of every race possesses dignity and is worthy of respect because of the sacredness of being created in the image of God.

**Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of man to those who freely accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

**God's Grace**

God's grace is displayed by God's Sovereign goodness, wisdom, holiness and unchangeable nature where He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies those He redeems.

**The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers who associate by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel and who observe the two ordinances of Christ. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through a democratic process. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. According to the Scriptures the offices of pastor and deacons are limited to men.

**Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

*Biblical baptism* is the immersion of a believer in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified,

buried, and risen Savior. Being a church ordinance, baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

*The Lord's Supper* is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

## **FAMILY**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. Biblical marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church. Through marriage God provides the man and the woman the framework for intimate companionship, the channel for sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family by example and in biblical teachings. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values. Parents are to lead their children, through consistent lifestyle and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

## **WEDDINGS**

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a covenant commitment for a lifetime. Therefore, we will in good conscience only perform weddings (or allow weddings in the church) consistent with the biblical view of marriage and after counseling sessions with a minister of the church, who determines that the marriage is consistent with the biblical view of marriage.

All staff members who are authorized to perform marriages will not officiate or co-officiate at any marriage outside of the previously stated definition of marriage. Anyone doing so will be subject to disciplinary review and loss of license.

The facilities of this church will not be used for weddings or receptions where the marriage union is contradictory to the provisions of the biblical view of marriage.

The Constitution shall be reviewed for possible revision every five years. This shall be by an Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Committee on Committees.

This Constitution supersedes any previous Constitution which may be in existence and was voted on and adopted by the church on \_\_\_\_\_.

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP**

#### Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Southern Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

#### Section 2. Candidacy

##### A. Who is Eligible?

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church at the invitation portion of a worship time. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and for biblical baptism according to the policies of this church.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church of like faith as ours.
3. By a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church of like faith when no letter is obtainable.
4. By evidence of a genuine salvation experience and believer's baptism in a non-Baptist church.

To be scriptural, baptism requires:

1. A proper subject, that is, an individual who personally has professed salvation by grace through faith in Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
2. A proper form, that is, full immersion in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)
3. A proper meaning, that is, in obedience to the command of Christ and intended by those administering it as an outward symbolic expression of the subject's inward faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and not intended by those administering it as a sacrament or a means to salvation, or a requirement for salvation, but fulfilling one of the two ordinances Jesus left with us; the other being the Lord's Supper. (Romans 6:4)

To determine if their baptism is scriptural:

1. The pastor and a deacon of his choice will meet with the candidate for membership from a non-Baptist church for the purpose of filling out a questionnaire to be used in obtaining the facts concerning the candidate's beliefs about baptism.
2. The results will be reported back to the entire active deacon body.
3. The deacon body will prayerfully come to a decision that does not deviate from our basic beliefs and honors Christ.

B. How are Candidates Accepted into the Membership?

1. The Pastor, staff member, or moderator shall present the candidate to the fellowship/membership at the invitation.
  - a. By baptism
  - b. By letter of recommendation from a Southern Baptist Church of like faith
  - c. By statement
2. And upon completion of the new members class and signing of the Statement of Beliefs agreement as mandated in the church Policies and Procedures Manual.
3. A candidate will be considered a member of First Baptist Church of Jennings after a joint recommendation of the pastor and deacons at the next regular scheduled business meeting following completion of New Members class, signing Statement of Beliefs agreement, and an official vote.
4. The pastor may withhold the presentation of any candidate for membership if he deems additional consultation with the person is needed. After such counseling, and in agreement with the deacons and church council, the pastor will make whatever recommendation is necessary to the church.

C. Responsibilities and Privileges of Church Members

The privileges of church membership are extended to those who desire to be responsible members of First Baptist Church. Responsibility and privilege go hand in hand.

Responsibilities:

1. Attend faithfully the worship, educational, and fellowship opportunities of the church. (Hebrews 10:25, Acts 2:42)
2. Contribute cheerfully and regularly tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:10, Matthew 23:23, 2 Corinthians 9:7)
3. Utilize devotedly God-given abilities and talents in carrying out the purposes of the church.
4. Witness openly by word and deed to others of the salvation of the Lord and seek to disciple them into Christian maturity. (Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, Luke 14:23)
5. Develop personal disciplines of spiritual growth in order to mature as a disciple of Christ. (John 14:15, Acts 17:11, 2 Timothy)

Privileges extended to members are:

1. Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business meetings, provided the member is present.
2. Every member of the church who has been an active member of this church or of a sister Southern Baptist church for at least one year is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for elective office in the church.
3. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

D. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death of a member
2. Dismissal to another Baptist Church
  - a. A letter of recommendation and dismissal will be sent by the church clerk to the requesting church after approval of the church in regular business meeting.
  - b. A letter of recommendation and dismissal will include information to the requesting church concerning the member's level of participation at First Baptist Church. This will be provided by the church clerk and will include objective evidence of participation only. (i.e. offices held, committee assignments, Sunday School attendance, etc.)
3. Exclusion by action of the church for disciplinary reasons, or
4. Erasure upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

E. Discipline

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist a troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and spiritual guidance. The attitude of

members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than being punitive in nature.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regularly scheduled business meeting is required; the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regularly scheduled business meeting of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

## **ARTICLE II - MINISTERIAL STAFF\***

### **A. Pastor**

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament Church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks: to worship, to witness, to educate, and to minister.

The pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he works with the church staff, church council, and deacons to:

1. Lead the church in the achievement of its purpose
2. Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers
3. Care for the church's members and other persons in the community

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. A Pastor Search Committee shall be chosen by church vote upon a recommended slate of nominees provided by the Committee on Committees. The recommendations of the Search Committee will constitute a nomination. The Search Committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one person at a time. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which one week's notice has been given to the church.

Election shall be by ballot with an affirmative vote of 90% of those present and voting being necessary for a call.

The Search Committee will request the Personnel and the Finance Committee to recommend a salary package for the church's approval for the pastor. A job description will be determined by the Personnel Committee and approved by the church.

\*See the Policies and Procedures Manual for the full job description for the pastor.



The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. He shall preside at meetings of this church and shall serve as moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized in these bylaws. In the event that the pastor is unavailable, another staff minister or deacon shall preside.

The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by notifying the Personnel Committee; subsequently, he will give a two week notice to the church. The church will compensate the pastor with not less than 1/12 of his total annual compensation which shall be rendered in not more than six weeks.

The church body may declare the office of the pastor vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called upon the recommendation of a majority of the Personnel Committee and Church Council or by written petition signed by not less than one-half of the resident church members.

The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and that person shall be someone other than the pastor. The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present is necessary to declare the office vacant.

In instances of a pastor's being excluded from office because of gross misconduct, the church will cease any financial responsibilities at the time of dismissal. Gross misconduct is described as conviction of a felony; conduct unbecoming a pastor such as sexual immorality; embezzlement; misappropriation of funds; substance abuse; or unscriptural teaching or preaching.

#### B. Interim and Supply Pastor

When the pastorate is vacated, the Search Committee shall be responsible for securing preaching supply, as well as interviewing and recommending interim pastor candidates. Prior to election of a Search Committee, the deacon chairman and remaining staff shall be responsible for securing pulpit supply.

Candidates for interim pastor will be experienced Southern Baptist ministers who have demonstrated dedication to local church ministry. The Search Committee will bring to the consideration of the church only one person at a time. The Personnel Committee will recommend a salary package to the Finance Committee for church approval for the interim. The election shall take place at regular business meeting or a meeting called for that purpose, of which one week's notice has been given to the church. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of 90% of those present and voting being necessary for a call. The interim pastor thus elected will not be considered a candidate for pastor.

The main job of interim pastor will be to preach in Sunday worship and lead in Wednesday night adult prayer meeting. He will also be available for counseling, visiting,

or conducting weddings and funerals as needed. He will assist the church staff members in planning for the ongoing ministry of the church.

Upon securing a new pastor, the interim pastor will end his duties the week prior to the new pastor's arrival.

#### C. Additional Staff Ministers

Additional staff ministers shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such ministers. A joint recommendation to the church from the Church Council and the Personnel Committee will initiate the search for a new staff member. A Search Committee will be established in the same manner as the Pastor Search Committee. Likewise, the nomination and election will be handled in the same way.

Resignations by staff ministers will be given with two weeks' notice. Should need arise to vacate a staff position, the procedure will be identical to that mentioned above for the pastor.

#### D. Interim Staff Ministers

The procedure for acquiring interim staff ministers will be the same as that for the interim pastor. A job description will be developed by the Personnel Committee for the additional staff and the interim staff and approved by the church.

\*See the Policies and Procedures Manual for full job descriptions for the Ministerial Staff.

### **ARTICLE III - VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP**

The ministerial staff is secured to aid church members in carrying out the church's mission. The bulk of the work must be done by volunteer leaders within the membership. The purpose of this section is to explain who is eligible for leadership positions, how they are elected, and what their responsibilities are.

#### A. Deacons

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministries tasks of:

1. Leading the church in achievement of its purpose
2. Proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers
3. Caring for the church members and other persons in the community

The church's policy for nominating deacons is as follows:

1. A nominating ballot is to be turned in for each man being nominated. A person may nominate as many men as he wishes. Only those nominated will be considered as potential candidates for election as deacon.

2. Ballots are to be placed in any one of the ballot boxes at a time specified by the deacons. Ballots may be picked up at the front and rear foyers of the auditorium. A list of the standards for deacons will be included with each ballot.
3. A screening committee of the deacon body will review the nominees to determine which men meet the qualifications listed below under the heading Standards for Deacons. The screening committee will also contact each man who qualifies to determine which ones are willing to serve. Nominees who meet the qualifications set forth by our church and are willing to serve will be voted on at a date specified by the deacons.

#### Deacon Election:

1. For the deacon election, ballots will be prepared listing the men who qualify and are willing to serve. A vote of 75% of ballots cast is necessary for election.
2. When voting, ballots will be declared invalid if names are written in and voted for other than those specified on the approved ballot

#### Deacon Emeritus:

During the month of August, a letter will be sent to each active and inactive ordained deacon of the church who is 65 years of age or older explaining their option to serve as Deacon Emeritus.

#### STANDARDS FOR DEACONS:

Nomination of deacons is a very important matter for the church. Each member should prayerfully consider any person that is nominated. These qualifications are found in I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-8.

1. Deacons should be men of good report both in the church and community. They are to be truthful and consistent, honest in speech, men of character, whose word becomes a bond. (I Timothy 3:8) "Must be grave, not double-tongued."
2. Deacons should be men who are filled with the Spirit of God and whose lives and actions are motivated by Him. (Acts 6:3) "...Look ye out among you...men...full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom."
3. Deacons should be men who are sober, abstinent from both the sale and use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs. (I Timothy 3:8) "Not given to much wine."
4. Deacons should be men who are possessed with a degree of wisdom that will enable them to be sound thinkers, act wisely and discreetly on church affairs (Acts 6:3) "...full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom."
5. Deacons should be men who are tithers. God's word teaches us that the tithe (ten percent) is the Lord's. (Malachi 3:10) "Bring ye all the tithes in the

storehouse...” I Timothy 3:8 “...likewise must the deacons not be greedy of filthy lucre.”

6. Deacons should be men who have first proven worthy of the office. This shall require that a deacon be faithful in his attendance at the regular worship service, Sunday School, Discipleship Training, and midweek services, and not absent himself from these functions unless providentially hindered. (I Timothy 3:10) “And let those also be first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.”
7. Wives of deacons are obligated to meet spiritual qualifications also. They are to be consecrated Christians. They are to guard their tongues well. They should be women of good temperament, and their personal habits should be that which reflects godliness. (I Tim. 3:11) “Even so must wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.”
8. To be eligible, a man must be a member of First Baptist Church for one (1) year prior to election time.
9. Marital status must comply with the Biblical standards for a deacon. (I Tim. 3:12) “Let the deacons be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.”

Deacons serve for a period of three years as active deacons. They rotate off after this time and remain inactive for one year after which they become eligible for nomination once again.

If a deacon’s conduct becomes an embarrassment to the deacon body and the church, the deacons may recommend to the church, after unsuccessful attempts to reconcile the problem, that such person be removed from the deacon body. The vote on such removal will be carried out at the next business meeting. A majority of those voting is required for this action. If such action is taken, the person’s ordination will then become invalid. Should the person thus removed repent and seek restoration, he may become eligible for deacon candidacy again after a wait of one year.

When a deacon requests to be released from active participation, his request shall be accepted without a vote. If he should ever desire to be active again, the deacon body must approve by 100% a recommendation to the church that such a person be made active again. That recommendation must be approved by the church with 90% of those present and voting.

There shall be no obligation to bring one, who has been a deacon in another church, into the deacon body of First Baptist Jennings as an active deacon. However, such a one may be considered a candidate for deacon after a period of one year, and his previous ordination by another church of like faith shall suffice.

## B. Trustees

The church shall elect six trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. The Financial Secretary and the ministerial staff shall serve as *ex-officio* members of the committee. Members are nominated by the Committee on Committees and rotate off the Trustees in the same manner as other committee members. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property and accept donations of property. When the signatures of trustees are required, a minimum of two trustees shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents relating to approved church matters.

## C. Moderator

The pastor serves as moderator at business meetings for the church unless he is absent or the church is without a pastor. A church staff minister may serve as temporary moderator. If no staff is available to moderate, the chairman of deacons may do so.

## D. Clerk

The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer. The Committee on Committees shall recommend a person to fill this office. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary as indicated by these bylaws. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the local Association.

The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary who will assist the elected clerk. All church records are church property and shall be kept in a secure place on the church premises. These records are important to the history of the church and shall not be destroyed without the authorization of the Church Council.

## E. Financial Secretary

This is a part-time paid position in our church. The Financial Secretary, with the approval of and at the direction of the Finance Committee, receives and preserves gifts of money, stocks, or bonds given to the church. The Financial Secretary pays out on receipt of approved vouchers all money owed by the church. Gifts to the church other than money, stocks, or bonds are accepted by the Finance Committee upon approval by the church. The Financial Secretary is responsible for keeping detailed records of all such monies received and expended. A second signature by a member of the Finance Committee shall be required for all disbursements. A monthly financial statement of the preceding month shall be presented to the Finance Committee prior to each business meeting. The chairman of the Finance Committee or a designee shall present this report to the church for approval. Financial Records shall be made available for formal audit

following a majority vote of the church OR at the request of the Finance Committee. The Financial Secretary is covered by the blanket bond that covers all paid staff and church volunteers.

#### F. Church Council

The Church Council shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations.

The primary functions of the Church Council shall be to recommend to the church suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate achievements in terms of church activities and goals. The Church Council shall also nominate persons to serve on the Committee on Committees. The Church Council shall be comprised of the current Deacon Chairman (Chair of the Council), Women on Mission (WMU) Director, Discipleship Training Director, Finance Chair, Personnel Chair, Mission Chair and Committee on Committees Chair. All matters agreed upon by the Church Council which call for action not already approved, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

#### G. Committees

The Committees of this church shall be Benevolence and Bereavement, Church Council, Committee on Committees, Counting Committee, Early Childhood Ministries Committee, Events Committee, Finance Committee, Hostess Committee, Missions Committee, Offering Bearers, Personnel Committee, Properties Committee, Screening Committee, and Trustees. Committees may be added/deleted by an amendment procedure during a regular business meeting on recommendation of the Committee on Committees and elected by the church during a regular business meeting. Committee members shall serve on a three-year rotation, except those who are on permanent committees. (Full job descriptions are contained in the Policies and Procedures Manual.)

Committee Guidelines apply to all committees and are found in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

1. Benevolence & Bereavement Committee prayerfully seeks to meet the needs of the church family and community during times of duress.
2. Church Council provides leadership for matters related to First Baptist Church Jennings (FBCJ) programs, ministries, and growth.
3. Committee on Committees prayerfully enlists and trains committee members, committee chairs, teachers, church officers, and other volunteer workers to function within the church.

4. Counting Committee prayerfully counts and maintains confidential records on monies collected by First Baptist Church, Jennings (FBCJ).
5. Early Childhood Ministries Committee develops a Christian environment within church programs where children can flourish and grow in God's love.
6. Events Committee promotes Christian fellowship and outreach in the community.
7. Finance Committee prayerfully plans, presents, maintains and promotes church annual budget and financial affairs in a fiscally responsible manner.
8. Hostess Committee ensures the church facilities and property are used in a Godly manner.
9. Missions Committee creates a Godly hunger in the church for the support of missions locally and around the globe.
10. Offering Bearers are to be faithful and dependable in this very important service to our Lord.
11. Personnel Committee provides Biblical guidance and counsel for matters related to church management and administration.
12. Properties Committee conscientiously and prayerfully oversees the properties of the church.
13. Screening Committee creates a safe Christian environment for the members and children of First Baptist Church Jennings (FBCJ).
14. Trustees hold in trust all of the properties of the church in a manner pleasing to God.

#### **ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS**

##### **A. Worship**

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, each Sunday evening, and each Wednesday evening at times established by the church, for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor or his representative shall direct the services for all of the church members and for all others who choose to attend.

## B. Education

These educational opportunities will be provided: Sunday School and Discipleship Training, Choirs, Missions Education and VBS. Other educational opportunities may be established upon the need and interest of the church through recommendation of the Church Council. Details of these organizations are delineated in the Organizations Section of the Policies and Procedures Manual.

## C. Fellowship

Fellowship is part of everything we do as a church, but special opportunities should be designed for the enhancement of this fellowship. Such opportunities as banquets, class meetings, recreation, youth activities, etc. shall be cleared and placed on the church calendar in order to avoid conflicts of time, persons and property. See Policies and Procedures Manual for specific details.

## D. Business

The church shall hold regular business meetings on the third Wednesday of each month unless the date change has been voted upon by the church in an earlier business meeting.

The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature or significance. A one-week written notice must be given for specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, the time, and the place, and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting using standard forms of communication used by the church: newsletters, bulletins, letters, social media, etc.

The quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called. In order to pass a motion, a simple majority of the quorum is required unless the church has previously voted to require a higher percentage or as otherwise established by these bylaws. Secret ballots may be used upon passage of a motion by a simple majority of the membership present.

*Robert's Rules of Order (RONR) 11<sup>th</sup> Edition* is the guidebook for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

## E. Special Services

Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objective shall be placed on the church calendar.

## **ARTICLE V - CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS**

The church shall maintain a program of Bible teaching; church leader training; mission education, action, and support; and music education, training, and performance. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control, with all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all



program activities subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

#### A. Sunday School

The Sunday School shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching program. Its tasks shall be to teach biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, perform the functions of the church within its constituency, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

The Sunday School shall be organized to:

1. Make a commitment to growth.
2. Identify and enroll prospects.
3. Start new classes and departments.
4. Train workers.
5. Provide space and equipment.
6. Conduct regular and ongoing workers' meetings when deemed necessary.
7. Conduct regular and ongoing visitation.
8. Teach the Bible to win the lost and develop the saved.

Classes and departments shall be organized by school grade or ages of the individuals. The Sunday School organization will be regularly evaluated by the church staff and Sunday School leadership to determine the proper structure of classes and departments. Sunday School leadership will be recommended by the Committee on Committees to the church for its approval. The Sunday School will observe annual promotion to coincide with the start of school.

#### B. Discipleship Training

The Discipleship Training organization shall serve as the training unit of the church. Its tasks shall be to train church members to perform the functions of the church; train church leaders; orient new church members; teach Christian theology, ethics, history, church polity and organization; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination. Discipleship Training shall be organized to provide for the needs of church members. Leadership shall be recommended by the Committee on Committees for church approval.

#### C. Women on Mission

Women on Mission (WMU) shall be the mission education, mission action, and mission support organization of the church. Its tasks shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action; support world missions through praying and giving; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination with regard to missions.

Women on Mission (WMU) shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires. The director shall be recommended by the Committee on Committees for church approval.

#### D. Church Music

The Music organization, under the direction of the church-elected Minister of Music, shall be the music education, training, and performance organization of the church. Its tasks shall be to teach music; train persons in music performance; provide music in the church and community as directed by the church. The music program shall encompass all age groups from children through senior adults.

#### E. VBS

Vacation Bible School is organized to provide concentrated Bible study, learning activities, and missions. Every effort is made to address the learning needs of all ages. Vacation Bible School is also an outreach ministry, seeking to reach across the whole community, including follow-up. Each year at least one Vacation Bible School week-long event shall be planned. Classes shall be organized by age and/or school grade. The director and assistant director are recommended by the Committee on Committees to the church for its approval.

The director is responsible for planning, enlisting, budgeting and evaluating with direct input from the church ministerial staff.

### **ARTICLE VI - PAID SUPPORT PERSONNEL**

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The church personnel committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be at the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the church.

Job descriptions for all personnel are included in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

### **ARTICLE VII - CHURCH FINANCES**

The Finance Committee (with input from all ministerial staff and the various committees of the church) shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed for all local and other expenses. This budget shall be an annual budget for each calendar year and presented for church approval.

It is understood that membership in the church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Gifts other than money, stocks, or bonds will be accepted by the Finance Committee upon approval by the church. Envelopes shall be provided to members for their contributions. Also, electronic contributions will be made available to church members. Yearly statements of contributions shall be provided to those who contribute. Quarterly statements will be

provided if asked. All contributions shall be posted and accounted for. Those who handle the money are covered by the church's blanket bond. Strict confidentiality shall be maintained.

The church fiscal year is January 1 through December 31.

## **ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH ORDINANCES**

### **A. Baptism**

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion.
2. The pastor, ordained staff, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and the observance of baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship event of the church.
4. A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff of deacons. If negative interest is ascertained on the part of the candidate, his/her name shall be deleted from the list of those awaiting baptism and full membership in the church.

### **B. The Lord's Supper**

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly at a date and time established by the staff and deacons. The pastor, ordained staff, deacons, and selected men of the church, shall administer the Lord's Supper; the deacons are responsible for the physical preparation.

First Baptist Church of Jennings practices Open Communion (Open Communion is the invitation to all believers in attendance who have been scripturally baptized, as described in article 1, section 2A of the Bylaws, to participate in the Lord's Supper.)

## **ARTICLE IX - ORDINATION AND LICENSE TO GOSPEL MINISTRY**

Individuals who have publicly professed at a worship service of this church that they believe God is calling them to gospel ministry shall be considered under supervision by this church. After observation and examination to see evidence that the person has indeed been called to the gospel ministry, as an indication of the church's support and confidence, this person may be considered for ordination. Ordination of such an individual may occur later when they have entered into or begin to enter a vocational

ministry in some aspect of Southern Baptist work. Also, a deacon ordination will take place after the church has elected a man to serve who has not been ordained. The ordination shall take place after the church has had sufficient opportunity for judging the person's call and gifts. The pastor, staff, and deacons shall recommend to the church that the ordination service be scheduled.

Prior to the ordination service, an Ordination Council consisting of all interested and ordained Southern Baptist ministers and deacons shall be convened prior to ordination. The purpose of this council will be to examine the candidate in regard to his Christian experience, call to the ministry, and views of Bible doctrine. The council will bring a final recommendation to the church as to whether or not the ordination should proceed.

The service itself shall consist of appropriate music, the candidate's testimony of conversion, call to the ministry, and beliefs about the mission of the church. A deacon shall give a charge to the candidate and the pastor shall give a charge to the church.

Licensing requirements of the State of Louisiana shall be met.

#### **ARTICLE X - OPERATIONS MANUAL**

An Ad Hoc Committee shall develop a church Policies and Procedures Manual to include church policies, procedures, and organizational charts, depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use there by any member of the church. The church secretary shall maintain the manual. The Church Council shall review the manual at least annually with authority to recommend changes for the church to consider. Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual.

Additions, revisions, or deletions of church policies require:

1. Recommendation of the church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the policy relates
2. Approval by the Church Council, and
3. Approval of the church by simple majority of those members voting

Procedures may be added, revised, or deleted by:

1. Recommendation of the church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the procedures relate
2. Approval by the Church Council
3. Approval of the church by simple majority of those members voting

#### **ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS**

Changes or additions in the Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided that:

1. The Church Council has reviewed the proposed change or addition.

2. The proposed change or addition has been presented in writing at a previous business meeting, and
3. Paper copies or website publication of the proposed change or addition have been made available for every church member. Changes and additions shall be approved by two-thirds vote of members present and voting at the next regularly scheduled business meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XII - REVIEW**

The Bylaws shall be reviewed for possible revision every five years. This shall be by an Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Committee on Committees.

These Bylaws supersede any previous Bylaws which may be in existence and was voted on and adopted by the church on \_\_\_\_\_.