

## Excerpt from the constitution of First Baptist Church of Four Oaks, North Carolina

### Our 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 God's person, and responding in obedience to God's leadership;
- ❖ to experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers;
- ❖ to help people experience a growing knowledge of themselves and God;
- ❖ to be a church which ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and the world in Jesus' name;
- ❖ to be a church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

### Articles of Faith

We affirm the Bible contains the inspired Word of God and with the Spirit's guidance, forms the basis of our beliefs. We steadfastly maintain the divine privilege, given to every believer, to hear and receive God's Word under the direction of God's Spirit. We hold fast to the autonomy of the local church body and the priesthood of every believer. This church adopts as its statement of faith the 'Baptist Faith and Message' adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention of 1963. This statement, though respected, should not be regarded as complete, final, infallible, or binding on the conscience of the individual. We have no creed but Christ.

### Policy

The government of this church shall be congregational in nature and shall be vested in the membership. All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action. This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but it recognizes and sustains obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation among Southern Baptist churches. This church shall cooperate with the Johnston Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship where practical. We agree to participate in denominational assemblies by Convention Messenger system.

### Covenant

This covenant is an effort to express the mutual thoughts and individual purposes of the members of this church. It is an effort to express the hopes, desires, ambitions, and intentions of those who have come together in this church to serve the Lord in the fulfillment of the objectives stated above.

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

We engage, therefore by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinance, doctrines, and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; to be faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and abuse of intoxicating drinks; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; to cultivate a community where justice and mercy are enjoyed by all persons, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in Christ-like love; to remember one another in prayer; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage 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.