

CONSTITUTION

FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH

FORT ERIE

ONTARIO

Draft May 15, 2008

Approved and Adopted June 13, 1989

Revised and Approved and Adopted September 20, 1995

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ARTICLE I

Name:

The Church shall be known as the **First Baptist Church**.

Purpose:

The purpose of **First Baptist Church**, 165 Bertie Street, Fort Erie, Ontario, L2A 1Y9 is the Worship of God; edification of believers through study of the Word of God, Fellowship, prayer, discipleship development, Christian Education; and the salvation of souls through the proclamation of the gospel, locally and world wide.

Affiliation:

The Church shall be a member of the **Niagara-Hamilton Association of Baptist Churches** and of the **Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec**. It shall send delegates to the meetings of the Association and the Convention and it shall support the for-said bodies in accordance with the **Holy Scriptures**.

ARTICLE II

Statement of Faith:

WE BELIEVE.....

1. The Bible, (the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, in the original autographs), is the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God and is the final authoritative guide to faith and abundant life.

(II Tim. 3:16,17; Matt. 5:18; Is. 55:11; II Peter 1:20,21; I Cor. 2:13; I Cor. 10:11; John 10:35)

2. There is one true God who exists eternally in three personalities -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is an infinite Person, worthy of praise and worship, the creator and sustainer of all things, and the source of all truth.

(Matt. 28:19; John 10:30; Acts 5:3,4; II Cor. 13:14; Heb 11:3; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 104:24-33; Rom 11:33-36; Gen 1:1; John 1:1,2; Deut. 6:4; I Cor. 8:4; Rev. 5:12; Rev. 4:8,11)

3. In the full deity and perfect humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, His impeccability, His representative and substitutionary sacrifice, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the Father's right hand, His present high priestly ministry, and His personal return in power and glory.

(Matt. 1:16-20,23; Luke 1:34,35-39; Heb. 4:15; II Cor. 5:21; I Cor. 15; Acts 1:9-11; I Peter 2:5-9; I John 2:1; Matt. 11:25-27; John 1:14; Phil. 2:8; Rom. 8:34; I Thess. 4:13-17)

4. The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, convicts men of sin, imparts spiritual life at the moment of salvation, indwells, seals until the day of redemption and empowers all believers to live a godly life.

(John 16:8-11; Titus 3:5; I Cor. 6:19; 2:6-15; Rom. 8:9; I Cor 12:13; II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 5:18; 1:13,14; Gal. 5:22,23)

5. By the special act of creation, man was created in the image of God with the ability to reason and communicate as a person. As a result of his historic fall in the Garden of Eden, all men are born with a sin nature, are spiritually dead and are in need of salvation.

(Gen. 1:26,27; Gen. 3; Eph. 2:1; Rom. 1:18; 3:23,30; 5:12; 7:21-25)

6. Salvation is a gift of God and cannot be earned by human merit. It occurs when a man acknowledges his guilt before God, repents of his sin, and personally places his faith and trust in the Person of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross.

(Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8,9; John 3:16; Titus 3:5-8; Rom. 3:23; Acts 2:37,38; Rom. 10:9,10)

7. That Jesus Christ will return imminently, personally, visibly, and bodily. He will receive His own, establish His Kingdom and rule in righteousness and peace.

(Rev. 19:11-16; Zech. 14:4-11; I Thes. 1:9,10 John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; Matt. 24:36-42)

8. In the resurrection of the saved and of the lost; of the saved to the resurrection of eternal life, and of the lost, to the resurrection of judgement, eternal separation from God with confinement to the place of torment.

(I Thess. 4:13-18; John 5:28-30; Titus 2:13; Acts 24:15; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20; Rev. 22:20)

9. Every believer is commanded to walk by the Spirit so as not to bring reproach upon their Lord and Saviour, to witness by life and word to the truths of the Holy Scripture, and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all the world.

(Rom. 12:1,2; Gal. 5:16-26; II Cor. 6:14)

10. The church is a spiritual organism made up of all redeemed persons, irrespective of their affiliation with Christian organizations.

(I Cor. 12:12,13; Col. 1:18; Eph. 2:15,16)

ARTICLE III

Membership:

Requirements for:

Any person professing personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change of heart, and accepting the teachings of the Church may be received into the church in one of the following ways:

- (i) By Believers Baptism
- (ii) By letter of transfer of recent date from another church having been baptized by immersion.
- (iii) By Experience upon giving satisfactory evidence of previous baptism by immersion and Christian conduct and scriptural Faith.

IIIb

Reception of:

All applicants for membership whether by baptism, letter of transfer, experience or restoration shall be examined by the Pastor together with a (the) Deacon(s). The name of those meeting the requirements shall be presented to the church by the Deacons Committee for acceptance at the next business meeting. Applicants for membership who have recently been baptized in our church may be exempted from second examining conversations and their names submitted as above.

IIIc

Release of:

All letters requesting release by transfer or personal request shall be brought before the Deacons committee for necessary action and thence to the church body as information at the next regular congregational meeting.

IIIc

Discipline of:

Should the conduct of a member call for discipline on the part of the church, the Deacons Committee shall be responsible for such discipline and shall endeavour to discharge their duty with understanding and love, and in the Spirit of Christ. Should exclusion seem the only solution, it shall be by vote of the Church, which shall require the support of eighty-five percent (85%) of the members present at a regular business meeting.

IIIc

Discipline of cont'd

Restoration of a disciplined member is effected by confession of sins and evidence of repentance and Christian living.

(Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1)

ARTICLE IV

Ordinances

- (a) **Baptism:** The ordinance of Believer's Baptism by Immersion shall be observed when the approved candidate presents himself for the ordinance. Persons desiring baptism may make application by approaching the Pastor and/or a member of the Deacons Committee. Special classes of instruction and examining conversations with the candidate(s)

will be held to see whether the Pastor and Deacons are satisfied with the experience of conversion to the Christian Life.

(b) *The Lord's Supper*: All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are eligible to participate in the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE V

The Pastor:

The Pastor is encouraged to attend any or all Church Group and Committee meetings to provide insight and input but due to Charitable Organization Regulations as an employee cannot be a voting member of any board or committee.

ARTICLE VIa

The Deacons Committee:

Organization:

The Deacons Committee shall, be not less than one Deacon to twenty-five members, one or more per ratio to be elected for a term of three years.

A member of the Deacons Committee after serving two consecutive terms shall not be eligible for re-election for one year. *

Qualifications:

To be elected a Deacon, he must be a faithful attendant in good standing for at least one year, meet the scriptural requirements and be concerned and willing to help with regard to the spiritual nourishment and welfare of the Church.

(1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tim. 5:16-22; Acts 6:4; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)

Duties:

The Deacons Committee shall assist and advise the Pastor in the Spiritual activities of the Church, provide leadership in evangelism, and report to the Board of Administration matters of concern. These activities may include such things as; interviewing candidates for baptism, interviewing applicants for membership, assisting at the Lord's Supper, visiting, ministering and discipling among the Church Family, and Deacon representation to the nominating committee and the pastor selection committee.

NOTE:

**When there are not sufficient qualified candidates this clause may be waived by motion and vote of approval at the Annual Church Business Meeting.*

Collectively as a committee the Deacons will participate in church discipline, advise all committees in spiritual matters, select pastor selection committees, call special meetings of the church, suggest future Deacons to the nominating committee, approve appointments by the Christian Education Council, Sunday School Superintendent, Adult Youth Counsellors, make arrangements for Anniversary supper and related church services, etc.

The Deacons Committee, in consultation with the Pastor, shall review, in November or December of each year, the current membership list provided by the clerk of the church and may elect to remove the names of members who have not attended or participated in church activities over the previous twelve, (12), month period and place such names on an inactive list. The revised list shall be presented to the church clerk for presentation at the annual business meeting.

Life Deacon:

Any Deacon, after years of distinguished service may be asked by the members of the church to serve as Life Deacon. Such Deacons shall be in excess of the regular number of Deacons.

Vib**The Managers Committee:****Organization**

The Managers Committee shall, be not less than one Manager to twenty-five members, one or more per ratio to be elected for a term of three years.

Member of the Managers Committee after serving two consecutive terms shall not be eligible for re-election for one year. *

The Church Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Managers Committee.

The Chairman of the Trustees, (or in his absence or at his request any other member of the Trustees), is an ex-officio member of the Managers Committee.

NOTE:

**When there are not sufficient qualified candidates this clause may be waived by motion and vote of approval at the Annual Church Business Meeting.*

Qualifications

To be elected a Manager, he must be a faithful attendant in good standing for at least one year, meet the scriptural requirements and be concerned and willing to help with the spiritual welfare of the Church.

(1 Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:3,4)

Duties:

The Managers Committee shall be charged with all the business management and routine expenses of the Church. All proposed expenditures in excess of five hundred dollars, (\$500), outside the budget must be presented at a congregational meeting for approval. The Managers Committee will report to the Board of Administration matters of concern.

Vic**The Board of Administration:**

The Board of Administration shall be the official board of the Church. It shall consist of the Deacons, the Managers, the Church Treasurer, the Church Clerk, and a representative from Christian Education.

A Chairman may be properly elected and is open to all members of the Board with the exception of the Church Treasurer and the Church Clerk.

The Church Clerk shall be secretary and be charged with taking and maintaining accurate minutes of the meetings of the Board.

The Board of Administration shall appoint a member from the Deacons or Managers Committee to administer the Benevolent fund. The fund records shall be audited at the end of each year. The Benevolent fund auditors shall be appointed by the Board of Administration.

The Board of Administration is charged with coordinating and facilitating all matters of the Church including spiritual, financial, and interpersonal. The meetings of the Board shall begin with a time of prayer and worship followed by a short discussion of agenda affecting both committees, (Deacons and Managers), after which the Board may properly break into committees for in depth discussion and decision. Committee decisions with financial impact will be brought to the Board of Administration for approval.

ARTICLE VII**Church Clerk:**

The Church Clerk shall be elected for one year and shall be eligible for re-election. The Clerk shall keep the records of the Church and shall carry on correspondence, make accurate minutes of all business meetings where the Clerk is required to be present, keep a register of all members and prepare a statement showing the number of Baptisms, admissions to and deletions from the Church membership during the year and current active membership of the Church to be presented to the Deacons Committee in the month of November. This statement as revised by the Deacons Committee shall be presented at the Annual Church Business Meeting.

VIIa**Christian Education Council:**

The Christian Education Council shall consist of three members, one to be elected each year for a term of three years. After serving two consecutive terms, a member shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one year. * All active church groups operating under the direction of the Christian Education Council shall provide representation when requested by that body or request assistance of Christian Education Council as required.

NOTE:

**When there are not sufficient qualified candidates this clause may be waived by motion and vote of approval at the Annual Church Business Meeting.*

The council, in close consultation with the Deacons Committee, shall build and direct comprehensive and unified programs of Christian Education for the whole church; sustain efficient leadership; effective teaching; and co-ordination of efforts; shall appoint the Sunday School Superintendent and coordinators for Children, Youth and Adult Ministries. The Council shall present to the Managers Committee an annual budget at the November meeting.

VIIb**Pastoral Search Committee:**

Upon the occurrence of a vacancy in the pastorate of the Church, the Deacons Committee shall select seven representatives of the Church, of which **at least two** shall be from the Deacons Committee, **one** a member of the Managers Committee and the Church Clerk, with a Deacon acting as chairman. This committee shall consider persons recommended for the filling of the vacancy, seeking information and advice through responsible Denomination Officials, or other.

The Pastor Selection Committee shall not present the name of a minister to be called to the ministry of our Church unless they are convinced that he accepts the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God and that his preaching is evangelistic, calling sinners to repentance.

The Pastor Selection Committee may arrange, subject to the consent of the Deacons Committee, for any such candidates to occupy the pulpit for the purposes of considering a call, for one or more Sundays.

The Committee shall then, at any properly called Church Business Meeting, submit the nomination of one that it deems suitable to fill the vacancy in the Pastorate.

The vote must carry by at least eighty-five percent, (85%) of church members present.

VIIc**Trustees:**

The Trustees shall be three in number and shall be elected in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Church and in conformity with the laws of the province.

The Trustees shall hold the Title Deed to the Property. They shall see that no part of the property is sold or disposed of, other than by the direction of the Church. They shall see that the property is adequately covered by insurance at all times and that the premiums are paid when due. They shall be responsible for the filing and safekeeping of all legal documents such as deeds, mortgage records, insurance policies, etc. They shall be prepared to provide these at any time at the request of the official church board

VIIId**Church Treasurer:**

The Church Treasurer shall be elected to hold office for one year and shall be eligible for re-election. It shall be his duty to take charge of all funds connected with the receipts and disbursements of the Church. He shall present at the monthly meetings of the Managers Committee financial statements and shall present to Annual Meeting and Regular Business Meetings of the Church a written Financial Statement showing all receipts and expenditures for the preceding term, and a written and audited financial statement for the Annual Business Meeting. The Treasurer shall be authorized to sign cheques at the direction of the Managers Committee. The Treasurer must at all times keep an

accurate account book. The Treasurer is responsible for filing all required Government Forms within the allotted times..

VIIe

Sunday School Superintendent / and Coordinators for Children, Youth and Adult Ministries:

The Sunday School Superintendent shall be appointed by the Christian Education Council subject to the approval of the Deacons committee. The Person shall act in the closest co-operation with the Pastor. The Person will lead the opening session of the Sunday School, (or delegate this to a qualified person), and preside at Teachers' meetings. The Person shall encourage and assist teachers in their efforts to win the children to Christ and encourage their spiritual growth. A combined outreach for increased attendance should come under his/her supervision.

The Sunday School Superintendent will ensure that accurate records of attendance and offerings are kept.

VIIIf

Church Envelope Steward:

The Church Envelope Steward shall be elected annually by the Church and shall be eligible for re-election. The Person shall be responsible for issuing the weekly offering envelopes before the first Sunday in the year, and shall keep a record of the persons to whom the envelopes have been issued. The Person shall keep a true record of contributions by envelope and shall give each contributor a "statement of contributions" when necessary.

VIIIfg

Nominating Committee:

The Nominating Committee shall consist of **two** members elected at the Annual Business Meeting of the Church for a term of one year together with **one** representative from each of the following: the Deacons Committee, the Mangers Committee, the Sunday School, and the Christian Education Council. (Whose Term of office commences October 1 of the current year and finishes September 30 of the year following.)

It shall be the duty of this Committee to prepare for submission to the Annual Business Meeting, nominations for Church offices, committees, and representatives and to post such a list at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. The Committee shall obtain the consent of each person nominated prior to posting the list.

The Committee shall consult the Deacons Committee as to suggested names for Deacons.

All nominating committee members and nominees must be members of this church unless otherwise noted.

The first name listed for each group shall be responsible for calling the first meeting within one month after the Annual Meeting to appoint an executive.

Additional nominations may be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Nominating Committee by any two members of the church with the consent of the nominee and must be posted at least one week in advance of the annual meeting. Where the number of persons nominated exceeds the number to be elected the Committee shall prepare a ballot for use at the Annual Meeting.

The Committee shall at regular or special church meetings make nominations to fill any nominated vacancy.

The Nominating Committee will include the following year's, delegates to the Niagara Hamilton Association of Baptist Churches and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec in their report.

VIIIh

Appendix A

Appendix A defines committees and convenors where membership of First Baptist Church Fort Erie is not a prerequisite to hold office.

Committees and convenors may be created with the appropriate job description and placed in Appendix A, or deleted from Appendix A, by a majority vote at any properly called business meeting without the waiting period required for amendment of the constitution.

Amendments to all other articles of the constitution follow the amending formula of Article IX.

ARTICLE VIII

Church Business Meetings:

The Fiscal year of the Church shall close on the thirty-first, (31st), day of December.

The “**Annual Business Meeting**” shall be held, if possible, the fourth, (4th), Wednesday of January of each year.

Regular Church Business Meetings shall be called twice a year, in May, and September. Special Business Meetings of the Church shall be called, by the Pastor, or by the Clerk at the request of the Deacons Committee or at the request of the Managers Committee.

Notices of the Annual or Regular Business Meetings of the Church shall be given by oral announcements two Sundays immediately preceding the meetings. Notices of Special Business Meetings shall be announced during the Sunday Service immediately prior to the meeting. The agenda of business must be announced at the time of the oral announcements.

The Chairman of the Deacons committee shall preside at all Church Business Meetings, or in his absence or at his request the chairman of the Managers Committee. A chairman may properly be elected from the floor.

Only Church members eighteen, (18), years or over shall be eligible to vote or to make motions. A **quorum** at any Church Business Meeting shall be at least thirty percent, (30%), of the members of eighteen, (18), years and older, whose names appear on the Current Active Church Membership Roll.

Approved Parliamentary Procedures and Rules as outlined in the Canadian Baptist Minister’s Handbook shall be observed at all Church Business Meetings.

ARTICLE IX

Amendments to Constitution:

Notice of an Amendment to the Constitution of the Church is required to be brought before a Regular Business Meeting of the church by a member of the church as one of the items for discussion. After a motion on the matter is duly seconded it must be tabled for a period of three, (3), months before a final vote is taken at a Regular Business Meeting. The Clerk shall give notice in writing to the members, on the current active membership roll, of the church two weeks before the meeting upon which this amendment will be voted. To become effective such amendment shall require a **yes** vote of at least eighty-five percent, (85%), of those present.

ARTICLE X

This constitution shall be deemed to supersede all previous constitutions and motions which as now might be considered to be in contravention with this constitution.

“**Ex-Officio**” **Member** is one who maintains his position by virtue of office and without special authority. An **ex-officio member** of a committee has the same voting and other rights as any other committee member providing The Person is a member of the parent organization.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A 1

Ushers Convenor:

The Ushers Convenor shall be elected by the Church for a period of one year and shall be responsible for the appointment and counselling of Ushers. A roster for the Ushers shall be given each usher and a copy shall be placed on the bulletin board.

Appendix A 2

Music Committee:

The Music Committee shall be elected by the Church and shall consist of three members, one to be elected each year for a period of three years. They shall be responsible for the appointment of organists, pianists, and choir

director for the regular Sunday Services. The Music Committee, in consultation with the Pastor, shall be given oversight of the Ministry of Music of the church.

Appendix A 3

Tellers:

The Tellers shall be appointed by the Managers Committee. Under the direction of the Managers Committee they shall count the church offerings and deposit the monies in the bank.

Appendix 4 A

Auditors:

Two auditors shall be elected annually by the Church. It shall be the duty of the Auditors to examine the accounting records of the Church and append their certificate thereto. A report shall be made to the Managers Committee of accounting deficiencies. All papers, books and documents necessary to supply the required information shall be at their command.

Appendix A 5

Missions Committee:

The Missions Committee shall be elected by the Church and shall consist of three members, one to be elected each year for a period of three years. They shall work in close consultation with the Board of Administration and shall be charged with enhancing and facilitating missions awareness and outreach for First Baptist Church. An annual proposed budget shall be presented to the Managers Committee at the November meeting.

Appendix A 6

Social Convenors:

The Social Convenors shall be elected by the Church and shall consist of two members for a period of three years. The Social Convenors shall select the Social Committee which shall coordinate and facilitate church sponsored events as directed by the Board of Administration. They shall be responsible for the oversight of the kitchen and kitchen supplies.

Appendix A 7

Nursery Convenor:

The Nursery Convenor shall be elected by the Church for a period of one year and shall coordinate the nursery program for the church services and shall oversee the needs of nursery workers and the purchase of nursery supplies. The Nursery Convenor shall secure the services of other people as the need directs.

Appendix A 8

Library Convenor:

The Library Convenor shall be elected by the Church for a period of one year and shall assist and enhance the ministry of First Baptist Church by keeping all records of the library, purchasing books and supplies and encouraging the congregation in the use of the library.

Appendix A 9

Sick and Shut-In Convenor:

The Sick and Shut-In Convenor shall be elected by the Church for a period of one year and shall work along with the Pastor or Deacons Committee to ensure that those of the congregation who are sick and shut-in experience the care of the church family.

Appendix A 10

Communion Committee:

The Communion Committee shall be elected by the Church for a period of one year and shall prepare the Lord's Table at the request of the Pastor and the Deacons Committee. The Communion Committee is responsible for clean-up of the communion ware.

Appendix A 11

Baptismal Committee:

The Baptismal Committee shall be elected by the Church for a period of one year and shall prepare for the baptismal services as requested by the Board of Administration. The committee shall assist and encourage the baptismal candidates as they are baptized. They shall clean up the baptismal area and shall launder the baptismal robes.