

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **Bylaws of First Baptist Church Fort Erie**

**DRAFT**

**Approved for Presentation to the Church Membership  
December 12, 2024**

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## **ARTICLE I - IDENTITY**

### **1.0 Name**

The church shall be known as First Baptist Church Fort Erie. Whenever the word “church” appears in this document, it will always refer to the First Baptist Church Fort Erie.

### **1.1 Mission of the Church**

**“We are inspired to follow Jesus by loving God and loving all people.”**

(Matthew 22:36-40; 28:18-20; John 1:14)

We are committed to following Jesus' priorities as the head of the Church (Colossians 1:17-18). As such, like Jesus we have an outward focus of seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10). We will be faithful in loving one another, as Jesus commanded, by faithfully serving others with the Holy Spirit gifts we've received (Romans 12:4-8). We are also a church that prays to our loving God for all the nations (Isaiah 56:7). In our relationship with God, we believe that God can move mountains (Matthew 17:20). As our LORD Jesus taught and prayed, we want everyone to know we are Christians by our love (John 13:35; 17:23). We will promote unity in our diversity (Ephesians 4:3).

### **1.2 Affiliation**

The church shall be a member of the *Niagara-Hamilton Association of Baptist Churches* and of the *Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ)*. It shall send delegates to the meetings of the Association and the CBOQ Assemblies. We are affiliated with *Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM)* and *Baptist World Alliance (BWA)*.

### **1.3 Baptist Distinctives**

“Baptists share many basic biblical convictions with other Christians, including the belief in one God, the Trinity, the human and divine nature of Jesus Christ and the significance of his crucifixion and resurrection for salvation. Though they have many historic ‘confessions of faith,’ Baptists are not a ‘credal people.’ They prefer simply to affirm the authority of the Scriptures for all matters of faith and practice, and allow each Christian the right to interpret the Bible for himself or herself. However, the distinctive combination of beliefs held among Baptists can readily be identified and have come to be known as ‘Baptist Distinctives.’ In true Baptist fashion, these distinctives are expressed with different nuances.”<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

## **ARTICLE II – ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

It is the purpose of these Bylaws to provide a stable and effective organizational structure to aid this church in accomplishing its mission. The sections that follow specify a model that keeps the roles of Board, Lead Pastor (also referred to as the Pastor), Associate Pastor(s), Staff, and Membership distinct, effective and efficient for both church health and growth. These Bylaws shall be reviewed by the Board of Administration, at least every three (3) years, for any changes to the structure that may increase the effectiveness of the Membership, Board, Pastor(s) and Staff. The role of the Membership is to elect the

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<sup>1</sup> See Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec Website.

officers<sup>2</sup> and leadership and to serve as the ministers of the church. The role of the Board is to establish guiding principles for the Pastor's leadership.

- A. The role of the Pastor is to lead the church to accomplish its mission.
- B. The role of the Associate Pastor(s) is to fulfill a specific strategic goal of the Board of Administration.
- C. The role of the Staff is to manage the ministries of the church, as directed by the Pastor.

## 2.0 MEMBERSHIP

### 2.1 Requirements For

Upon request, any person professing Jesus as their LORD and Saviour (Romans 10:9), giving evidence of a change of heart (Hebrews 12:1), having followed Jesus in baptism (Matthew 3:13-17), and accepting the mission, vision, core values, and teachings of the church may be received into the church in one of the following ways:

- A. By Believers Baptism through First Baptist Church Fort Erie. If the Pastor and Deacons discern that a candidate is not able to comply with full immersion, grace may be extended (Ephesians 2:8-9; Luke 23:39-43).
- B. By a recent letter of transfer from another church having been baptized by immersion.
- C. By experience upon giving satisfactory evidence of previous baptism by immersion and Christian conduct and scriptural faith.

### 2.2 Membership Covenant

In line with the mission of the church, the church membership commits to the following Christian lifestyle:

- A. Commit to **GROW MORE** like Jesus within my church:
  - i) By learning to love Jesus more (Ephesians 3:17-19; Matthew 10:37-38).
  - ii) By learning to live more like Jesus (Philippians 3:10-11; Ephesians 5:1-2).
  - iii) By learning to lead more people to Jesus (Luke 19:10; Matthew 28:19-20).
- B. Serve in the **MISSION and VISION** of my church:
  - i) By discovering my gifts and talents (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:4-8).
  - ii) By being equipped to serve (Ephesians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
  - iii) By developing a servant's heart (Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:25-28).
- C. Promote and protect the **UNITY** of my church:
  - i) By acting in love toward other members (John 13:34; 1 John 4:19-23).
  - ii) By refusing to gossip (Proverbs 16:28; 20:19).
  - iii) By supporting the elected leadership (Hebrews 13:17; Romans 13:1-2).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The church administrative officers are Treasurer, Clerk, and Envelope Steward (Article III. 13).

<sup>3</sup> The Board of Administration is elected and held accountable by the church membership (2.3.1). The Pastoral leadership is held accountable by the Board of Administration (3.3).

**D. Support THE COMMUNITY of my church:**

- i)** By attending faithfully (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42).
- ii)** By practicing hospitality (Acts 2:46-47; Hebrews 13:2).
- iii)** By living at peace with others (Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18).
- iv)** By giving consistently, proportionately, generously and joyfully (2 Corinthians 9:7; Romans 12:8).

**E. Share in the OUTWARD FOCUS of my church:**

- i)** By sharing in word and deed, both locally and globally (Colossians 3:17; 1 John 3:16-18).
- ii)** By inviting the unchurched to attend (John 1:41-42; 1:45-46).
- iii)** By warmly welcoming all (Hebrews 13:2; Romans 15:7).

The primary role of the members shall be to serve as the ministers of the church, reaching out to unchurched people as of primary importance while also caring for the needs of one another within the church.

## **2.3 Membership Voting Privileges**

### **2.3.1 Active Membership**

An active member fulfills the requirements of membership and shows evidence of living the membership covenant. An active member is entitled to one (1) vote at a meeting of the members. The Clerk will maintain an up-to-date membership roll that will be reviewed annually by the Deacons.

A member is primarily called to serve others and be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 3:8). Members are also empowered to elect the officers and church leaders of the church at the duly called Annual General Meeting (AGM). At this same meeting, the financial budget must be approved by the membership. All proposed expenditures of \$1500 and above, outside the budget must be presented at a congregational meeting for approval. The Board, at its discretion, may choose to invite the church to vote on other leadership issues that may affect the church. In addition, the following decisions of the church shall require the approval of the members by eighty-five percent (85%) majority of those active members eighteen (18) years and older, present and voting:

- A.** Calling or dismissing the Lead Pastor or Associate Pastor(s).
- B.** Dismissal and release of a member.
- C.** Approving amendments to Bylaws.
- D.** Ratifying the annual budget for amounts \$1500 and above.
- E.** Purchasing or selling the primary church facilities.
- F.** Dissolving the church.

Members of all ages are able to actively participate and vote on all matters except for the six (6) decisions listed above.

### **2.3.2 Inactive Membership**

The Deacons Committee, in consultation with the Pastor(s), 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. Members who are homebound due to medical limitations or age are honoured exceptions. Other exceptions may include college/university, shut-ins, or any other unusual circumstances. The revised list shall be presented to the church Clerk for presentation at the Annual General Meeting. Inactive members shall not be entitled to vote at any duly called church business meeting.

### **2.4 Reception of New Members**

Each individual is responsible to take a step of faith and request to be a member. All applicants for membership whether by baptism through First Baptist Church Fort Erie, letter of transfer, experience or restoration shall meet with the Pastor together with one (1) or more Deacons to hear their testimony and for the Pastor/Deacon(s) to share the church's mission, vision, and core values.

After the initial meeting with the Pastor and Deacon(s), all candidates for membership must complete the *Membership Information Application* provided by the Pastor/Deacon(s). The names of those meeting the requirements shall be presented to the church by the Deacons Committee for acceptance by vote at the next Business Meeting.

### **2.5 Release of Membership**

All letters requesting release of membership by transfer or personal request shall be brought before the Deacons Committee for necessary action and taken to the church body as information at the next Business Meeting. The Deacons reserve the right to add absent members to an inactive list but cannot release an inactive member without the vote of the congregation at a duly called Business Meeting (see 2.3.1.B).

### **2.6 Discipline of Members**

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.

Reasons for discipline may include, but are not limited to:

- A.** When a church member's actions are not consistent with the church membership covenant (See 2.2; 2 Timothy 3:5).
- B.** When a member is intentionally or unintentionally causing division within the church by personal opinions or attitudes (Titus 3:10-11; Proverbs 18:2).
- C.** When a member promotes false teaching (Titus 1:9).
- D.** When a member is engaged in immoral behaviour (1 Corinthians 5:1-2; Ephesians 5:11).

### **2.6.1 Model of Discipline**

Our model of discipline will follow the guidelines given by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17.

**Phase One** (Matthew 18:15): One to One - "If a brother or sister sins, go and point out the fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over." This is the approach of correction that is most common between one church member and another. The vast majority of disciplinary/restorative actions within a healthy church family should be of this nature and no further intervention will be needed.

**Phase Two** (Matthew 18:16): Bring to Deacons - "But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." The Deacons are involved if the one-to-one is unsuccessful. Depending on the nature of the offense, the Deacons may refer the offended individual to counselling or other support services. As conflicts are confidential, the Deacons will hear both sides of the story and maintain confidence before next steps are considered.

**Phase Three** (Matthew 18:17a): 'Church' Involvement – "If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church." At this point in the process, the pastoral staff and the Deacons as a whole would be involved in helping to deal with the non-repentant or non-responsive church member(s). Due to matters of privacy, it would not be normal for the church membership to be involved in the formal discipline of a member, however, if the transgression was public in nature and widely known there may be situations where this norm would not be the case.

**Phase Four** (Matthew 18:17b). ". . . and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or tax collector." On rare occasions, a member may refuse to repent of his/her actions, despite the clear direction of the church leadership. 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 eighteen (18) years or older, present at a Business Meeting.

### **2.7 Restoration to Membership**

Restoration of a disciplined member is affected by confession of sins and evidence of repentance, Christian living, and humility to submit to the church's mission, vision, and core values. It is at the discretion of the Deacons as a whole if a public confession is needed before the whole church for restoration (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1; Matthew 3:8; 1 Timothy 5:20).

### **3.0 BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION**

The Board of Administration (the Board) shall be the official governance board of the church.

#### **3.1 Board Structure**

The Board of Administration shall consist of the Deacons as a whole, the Managers as a whole, the Christian Education Committee as a whole, the Church Treasurer, the Church Clerk, the Lead Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) as nonvoting ex-officio.

##### **3.1.1 Chair**

A Chair may be properly elected and is open to all members of the Board of Administration, except for the Pastor(s), Church Treasurer and the Church Clerk.

##### **3.1.2 Secretary**

The Church Clerk shall be secretary and be charged with taking and maintaining accurate minutes of the meetings of the Board and distributing those minutes within 14 days following the Board meetings.

#### **3.2 Governing Style**

The Board will approach its task with a style that emphasizes outward vision rather than an internal preoccupation, encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, strategic leadership more than administrative detail, clear distinction of Board and Staff roles, and pro-activity rather than reactivity.

#### **3.3 Board Job Description**

The job of the Board is to lead the church towards fulfilling its mission and vision and to help ensure that it occurs. To perform its job, the Board will endeavor to:

- A.** Determine the mission, values, strategies, and major goals/outcomes and hold the Lead Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) accountable for developing a strategic plan based on the Board's guiding principles.
- B.** Determine the parameters within which the Lead Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) are expected to achieve the goals/outcomes.
- C.** Monitor the fulfillment of set goals of the church relative to the achievement of the goals/outcomes within the executive parameters.
- D.** Maintain and constantly improve all on-going policies of the Board.
- E.** Fairly compensate the Lead Pastor and Associate Pastor(s), nurture, evaluate annually and, if necessary, recommend a motion to the church to terminate a Lead Pastor and/or Associate Pastor(s), who function as the Board's agents.
- F.** Ensure financial solvency and integrity through policies and procedures.
- G.** Require periodic financial, legal, and external audits to ensure compliance with the law and good practices.
- H.** Evaluate and constantly improve the Board's performance as the governing Board and set expectations for Board members' involvement on the Board and their respective committees.

- I. Appoint a member from the Deacons or Managers Committee to administer the Benevolent fund.

### **3.4 Board Meetings**

- A. The meetings of the Board of Administration shall begin with a time of prayer and worship followed by a short discussion of agenda affecting all Standing Committees (Deacons, Managers and Christian Education). 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.
- B. The Board of Administration shall meet at least four (4) times a year.
- C. The proposed/suggested calendar model for Board meeting's themes are:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter – Connecting with Christ.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter – Connecting with People.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter – Updating Policies.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter – Review the outcomes of goals set.
- D. Fifty-one percent (51%) of Board of Administration members must be present, including those who join by electronic means, to constitute a quorum for action by the Board.
- E. Minutes, updated procedures, and guiding principles are expected to be sent to Board of Administration members within 14 days following the Board meetings.

### **3.5 Board Members Code of Conduct**

The Board of Administration commits itself and its members to the following points of integrity:

- A. Acknowledging and believing that Jesus is the sole owner of the Church and that each individual and group is called to serve God's Church. Therefore, any personal or group interests are to be laid aside.
- B. Honouring the principles and decisions of the Board acting as a whole. They may not foster dissent or attempt to exercise individual authority over the Pastor(s), Staff or the congregation except as explicitly stated in the guiding principles.
- C. Respect the confidentiality of Board of Administration issues and will not discuss these issues outside of the Board, except where required by Article 2.6 and 2.6.1.

## **4.0 LEAD PASTOR**

### **4.1 Calling a Lead Pastor**

In the event of a vacancy in the position of Lead Pastor, the Board of Administration may invite the *Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec* (CBOQ) to guide the Board in the process of finding and calling a new Lead Pastor who has the ability to lead this church to the next level of effectiveness in the achievement of its mission.

- 4.1.1** The Board of Administration shall form a Pastoral Search Committee which will consist of seven (7) representatives of the church, of which at least two (2) shall be from the Deacons Committee, one (1) a member of the Managers Committee, one (1) a member of the Christian Education, and the Church Clerk, with a Deacon acting as chairperson.
- 4.1.2** The Pastoral Search Committee shall consider persons recommended for the filling of the vacancy, using diligence to post the position on the CBOQ platform, on the church website, and other venues as deemed best by the guiding principles of the Board of Administration.
- 4.1.3** The Pastoral Search Committee shall not present the name of the Lead Pastor to be called to the ministry of the church unless they are convinced that the candidate accepts the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God and that the candidate's preaching is evangelistic, calling sinners to repentance and encourages and builds up the church.
- 4.1.4** The Pastoral Search Committee may arrange, subject to the consent of the Board of Administration, for any such candidates to occupy the pulpit for the purposes of considering a call, for one or more Sundays.
- 4.1.5** The Pastoral Search Committee shall then, at any duly called Business Meeting, submit the nomination of one that it deems suitable to fill the vacancy in the Pastorate.
- 4.1.6** The vote to call a Lead Pastor must carry by at least eighty-five percent, (85%) of church members present.
- 4.1.7** The Board of Administration will be responsible for an interim plan to fill the Lead Pastor role until a new, permanent Lead Pastor is in place.

### **4.2 Role of the Lead Pastor**

- 4.2.1** The role of the Lead Pastor is to implement any policies approved by the Board of Administration and create any procedures, as needed and share with the Board of Administration.
- 4.2.2** The role of the Lead Pastor is to lead the church to accomplish its mission and vision (See 1.1). The Pastor shall lead the Congregation by teaching biblical truth, casting vision, and advancing the mission.
- 4.2.3** Only decisions of the Board of Administration acting as a whole and documented in the minutes of Board meetings are binding on the Lead Pastor.
- 4.2.4** The authority and accountability of the Lead Pastor is to the Board of Administration.

- 4.2.5** The Lead Pastor shall inform the Board of Administration of relevant trends, anticipated adverse media coverage, material external and internal changes, particularly changes in the assumptions upon which any Board policy has previously been established.
- 4.2.6** The Lead Pastor shall relate to the Board of Administration as a whole except when fulfilling reasonable individual requests for information or responding to officers or committees duly charged by the Board.
- 4.2.7** The Lead Pastor is an ex officio on any or all Church Group and Committee meetings in order to provide insight and input. Due to Charitable Organization Regulations as an employee, the Lead Pastor cannot be a voting member of any board or committee.
- 4.3** **Lead Pastor Dismissal**
- 4.3.1** The disciplinary measures for a Lead Pastor's unsatisfactory performance will be met with the following escalating process: recorded verbal warning(s) and written warning(s) are kept on file.
- 4.3.2** If circumstances are deemed necessary, there may be suspension, with pay, pending investigation by the Board of Administration.
- 4.3.3** For verbal and written warnings, the areas of deficiency will be clearly described and the expected standard of performance, along with measurement criteria and a deadline date to accomplish the improvement, will be fully explained to the Lead Pastor by the Board of Administration. Dates of verbal warnings and a copy of written warnings will be documented and kept in the Lead Pastor's file.
- 4.3.4** Dismissing a Lead Pastor shall first require a vote by the Board of Administration to propose the action, after seeking nonbinding consultation with the CBOQ.
- 4.3.5** The Dismissing of a Lead Pastor requires a Membership vote that must affirm the motion of dismissal by at least eighty-five percent, (85%) of church members present.
- 4.3.6** When a Lead Pastor is dismissed, the Board of Administration may provide a severance package in consultation with the CBOQ based on the outgoing Pastor's past service, reason for leaving, and cooperative spirit.<sup>4</sup>
- 4.3.7** In the case of resignation, retirement or death, a gift or remembrance comparable to severance may be given to the Lead Pastor or the Lead Pastor's family.
- 4.3.8** If the Lead Pastor is intending to transition, retire, or resign, the Pastor should give the Board of Administration at least one month's notice of intent to leave.

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<sup>4</sup> The subjective "may" is not a requirement. When an employee resigns, the individual must show that there was "just cause" for voluntarily leaving to be eligible for Employment Insurance (EI). By law, the church is required to issue a hard copy ROE within 5 days of the pastor's last day worked. By law, the church is also required to pay outstanding vacation pay upon termination of employment.

## **5.0 ASSOCIATE PASTOR(S)**

- 5.0.1** Associate Pastor(s) may be called to manage a strategic goal of the church and support the Lead Pastor in the mission of the church.
- 5.0.2** The Lead Pastor in conjunction with the Board of Administration will take the initiative of considering a calling of Associate Pastor(s).
- 5.0.3** Associate Pastor(s), whether they are part-time or full-time with regard to compensation, are at the discretion of the Board of Administration in consultation with the membership.
- 5.0.4** The Associate Pastor(s) answer to the Board of Administration for the effectiveness of their Board given goals and ministry mandates.

### **5.1 Calling Associate Pastor(s)**

In the event of a vacancy in the position of an Associate Pastor, the Board of Administration may invite the *Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec* (CBOQ) to guide the Board in the process of finding and calling a new Associate Pastor who can manage a strategic goal of this church and take the church to the next level of effectiveness in the achievement of its mission. Associate Pastor(s) are non-voting ex officio on the Board of Management. At the discretion of the Board of Administration, they may be asked to serve as ex officio on a standing committee that addresses their area of missional specialty.

- 5.1.1** The Board of Administration shall form a Pastoral Search Committee which will consist of seven (7) representatives of the church, of which at least two (2) shall be from the Deacons Committee, one (1) a member of the Managers Committee, one (1) a member of the Christian Education, and the Church Clerk, with a Deacon acting as chairperson.
- 5.1.2** The Pastoral Search Committee shall consider persons recommended for the filling of the vacancy, using diligence to post the position on the CBOQ platform, on the church website, and other venues as deemed best by the guiding principles of the Board of Administration.
- 5.1.3** The Pastoral Search Committee shall not present the name of the Associate Pastor to be called to the ministry of the church unless they are convinced that the candidate accepts the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God and can manage a strategic goal of the church and will support the Lead Pastor in the mission of the church.
- 5.1.4** The Pastoral Search Committee may arrange, subject to the consent of the Board of Administration and Lead Pastor, for any potential candidates to serve for one or more Sundays for the purpose of determining their call.
- 5.1.5** The Pastoral Search Committee shall then, at any duly called Business Meeting, submit the nomination of one that it deems suitable to fill the vacancy in the Associate Pastorate.
- 5.1.6** The vote to call an Associate Pastor must carry by at least eighty-five percent, (85%) of church members present.

**5.1.7** The Board of Administration will be responsible for an interim plan to fill a vacant Associate Pastor's role until a new, permanent Associate Pastor is in place.

## **5.2 Associate Pastor(s) Dismissal**

**5.2.1** The disciplinary measures for Associate Pastor(s) unsatisfactory performance will be met with the following escalating process: recorded verbal warning(s) and written warning(s) are kept on file.

**5.2.2** If there is an accusation of immoral, unethical, or illegal conduct, there may be suspension, with pay, pending investigation by the Board of Administration.

**5.2.3** For verbal and written warnings, the areas of deficiency will be clearly described and the expected standard of performance, along with measurement criteria and a deadline date to accomplish the improvement, will be fully explained to the Associate Pastor by the Board of Administration or the Board's ministry designate. Dates of verbal warnings and copy of written warnings will be documented and kept in the Associate Pastor's file.

**5.2.4** The Lead Pastor shall keep the Board of Administration informed in confidence of growing Associate Pastor challenges. The Board of Administration may recommend mediation if the Board discerns that conditions are unfair, undignified or unsafe.

**5.2.5** The Dismissing of an Associate Pastor requires a Membership vote that must affirm the motion of dismissal by at least eighty-five percent, (85%) of church members present.

**5.2.6** When an Associate Pastor is dismissed, the Board of Administration may provide a severance package based on the outgoing Pastor's past service, reason for leaving, and cooperative spirit.

**5.2.7** In the case of resignation, retirement or death, a gift of remembrance comparable to severance may be given to the Associate Pastor or the Associate Pastor's family.

**5.2.8** If the Associate Pastor is intending to transition, retire, or resign, the Associate Pastor should give the Lead Pastor and the Board of Administration at least one month's notice of intent to leave.

## **6.0 CHURCH MINISTRY STAFF**

**6.0.1** Church Ministry Staff may be called to manage a strategic ministry goal of the church (examples, Children and/or Youth Director, summer students, and etc.).

**6.0.2** The initiative of considering a calling of a Church Ministry Staff is through the Lead Pastor who will recommend to the Board of Administration a strategic staffing plan.

**6.0.3** Church Ministry Staff, whether they are part-time or full-time with regard to compensation are at the discretion of the Lead Pastor in consultation with the Board of Administration.

**6.0.4** The Lead Pastor answers to the Board of Administration for the effectiveness of the Church Ministry Staff and is responsible for setting their ministry goal outcomes.

## **6.1 Hiring Church Ministry Staff**

- 6.1.1** The Lead Pastor will present to the Board of Administration a strategic staffing plan and the Board will allot financial resources to support and empower the Lead Pastor in accomplishing the mission and vision of the church.
- 6.1.2** The Lead Pastor will not fill a paid position, from within or without, without having formed a hiring team, consisting of the Lead Pastor and three other ad hoc members from the Board of Administration.
- 6.1.3** The Lead Pastor will not fill a paid position, from within or without, without posting internally and externally the position for all interested to see for at least 2 weeks.
- 6.1.4** An interview is required of all potential candidates by the Lead Pastor and hiring team.
- 6.1.5** If in the event a candidate for a position is part of the immediate family of either the Lead Pastor or the Board of Administration, the related party on the hiring team will recuse themselves from the committee and another ad hoc member will be selected in their place for the hiring for that position. When there is an immediate family member in relation to the Lead Pastor, the Lead Pastor will rejoin the hiring process once the family candidate is no longer being considered. If the family member is being considered as a final candidate, the Lead Pastor will join the hiring process once the hiring team has made the family member the final candidate.
- 6.1.6** All Church Ministry Staff hires will happen at the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and by a majority vote of the Board of Administration.
- 6.1.7** The church does not vote on the calling of a Church Ministry Staff unless it involves an unplanned financial budget. If such a motion is brought before the church, the motion is on the proposed budget for the strategic plan and not for the individual Church Ministry Staff candidate.

## **6.2 Church Ministry Staff Dismissal**

- 6.2.1** The disciplinary measures for a Church Ministry Staff's unsatisfactory performance will be met with the following escalating process: recorded verbal warning(s), and written warning(s) are noted and kept on file. In the case of a university, college or a third party supplier of the staff member, written reports will be sent to the university, college or "employee supplier."
- 6.2.2** For verbal and written warnings, the areas of deficiency will be clearly described and the expected standard of performance, along with measurement criteria and a deadline date to accomplish the improvement, will be fully explained to the Church Ministry Staff by the Lead Pastor or the Lead Pastor's ministry designate. Dates of verbal warnings and copy of written warnings will be documented and kept in the Church Ministry Staff's file. Written warnings will be provided to the ministry staff member.
- 6.2.3** If there is an accusation of immoral, unethical, or illegal conduct, there may be suspension, with pay, pending investigation by the Board of Administration.

- 6.2.4** The Lead Pastor shall keep the Board of Administration informed of growing Church Ministry Staff challenges. The Board of Administration may recommend mediation if the Board discerns that conditions are unfair, undignified or unsafe.
- 6.2.5** The final dismissal of a Church Ministry Staff is by the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and an 85% vote of the Board of Administration.
- 6.2.6** If a Church Ministry Staff is intending to transition, retire, or resign, the Church Ministry Staff should give the Lead Pastor, if possible, at least a month's notice of intent to leave.

## **7.0 STANDING COMMITTEES**

The standing committees of Deacons, Managers, Christian Education, Trustees, and the Nominating Committee will help the Board of Administration to be effective and efficient. They speak "to the board" and not "for the board." Committees are not created to exercise authority over the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastor(s) or Church Ministry Staff. Committees are entrusted with oversight of a specific realm of ministry. If a new committee is required, it will be created by the Board of Administration. The Nominating Committee will recommend committee members for terms, subject to congregational approval at a duly called Business Meeting. The Lead Pastor is a non-voting ex officio member of all committees to provide insight and input. The Standing Committees are empowered to form ministry teams that will enhance their goals. Standing Committees may invite non-voting ex officio guests to meetings as needed.

### **7.1 Standing Committees Organization**

Each member of a Standing Committee begins with a three (3) year term unless otherwise noted. After serving three (3) years, an approved and interested candidate may be nominated for a second consecutive term. After two consecutive terms, a person shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one (1) year. *\*When there are not sufficient qualified candidates this clause may be waived by motion and vote of approval at the Annual Church Business Meeting.*

Each of the following respective committees will have their first Committee meeting within a month of the Annual General Meeting. At that first meeting the committee will:

- A.** Elect a Chair who will set agendas and facilitate committee discussions and decisions.
- B.** Elect a Secretary to keep a record of minutes and decisions. Minutes of committee meetings should be distributed within 14 days following the meeting.
- C.** Decide on the frequency of committee meetings.

### **7.2 Removal or Resignation of Standing Committee Members**

The term of a Standing Committee Member may be vacated by a letter of resignation that is dated and signed. A Standing Committee Member may be removed by discipline (Article 2.6), by transition as a church member, or by action of the Board of Administration due to a member's non-compliance in attendance. The remainder of a vacated term shall be filled by the Nominating Committee with approval of the Board of Administration. The person who fills the vacancy is eligible to serve a second consecutive

term of three (3) years, after which they shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one (1) year. *\*When there are not sufficient qualified candidates this clause may be waived by motion and vote of approval at the Annual Church Business Meeting.*

## **8.0 THE DEACONS COMMITTEE**

The Deacon's Committee in conjunction with designated Associate Pastor(s) shall assist and advise the Lead Pastor in giving leadership to the care and spiritual nourishment of the congregation.

### **8.1 Selecting of Deacons**

To be nominated as a Deacon, the Deacon must be a faithful active member 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.

The 4 "C"s of Deacon Selection:

**A. Character:** 1 Timothy 3:2-13 and Titus 1:6-9.

Qualifying Deacons are to be growing in their love of God and in love of all people, which is evidenced by a lifestyle that is above reproach. A Deacon is to be faithful in marriage, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. A Deacon must manage their family well and do so in a manner worthy of full respect.<sup>5</sup> A Deacon should love what is good, be self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. A Deacon must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that the Deacon can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose.

**B. Competency:** Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-14 and Romans 16:1-2.

Deacons are to keep watch over themselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. Deacons are shepherds of the Church of God, which Jesus bought with his own blood. Deacons care, not because they must, but because they are willing, as God wants. A Deacon is eager to serve, not lording it over people, but by being an example to the flock.

**C. Courageous:** Joshua 1:6-9 and Acts 6.

A Deacon must be strong and courageous to follow Jesus and support the ministry initiatives of the Lead Pastor that are intended to fulfill the Board of Administration's goals and strategic plans. As God spoke to Joshua, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

**D. Calling:** Acts 6:1-7 and Romans 11:29.

A Deacon should be known "to be full of the Spirit and wisdom." Spiritual giftings that are always valuable among deacons are discernment, wisdom, faith, mercy, intercession, and teaching. God's calling and gifts are irrevocable.

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<sup>5</sup> A Deacon may be single.

## **8.2 Deacon Committee Organization**

The Deacons Committee shall consist of at least four (4) Deacons. If the church grows or is in decline, it is reasonable to have one (1) Deacon for every twenty-five (25) active members.

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

## **8.3 Deacon Responsibilities**

The primary role of the Deacons is to oversee the people care ministries. That would include, but is not limited to:

- A. Committing to the ministry of prayer and intercession.
- B. Guiding, training and empowering the People Care Support Team(s).<sup>6</sup>
- C. Visiting and connecting with all church members at least once a year where possible.
- D. Helping the Pastor(s) with screening new potential volunteers.
- E. Screening potential candidates for baptism and/or church membership.
- F. Assisting in the serving of the LORD's supper during monthly church services and for the sick and shut-ins where possible.
- G. Helping resolve relational conflict where necessary as defined in Article 2.6, 2.6.1 and 2.7.
- H. Annually, reviewing and processing in November or December the church Active Membership List.
- I. Suggesting names for potential Deacons to the Nominating Committee.

**8.4** The Deacons as a whole are members of the Board of Administration.

**8.5** Deacons are to comply with the *First Baptist Church Protection Policy* for the vulnerable sectors they serve.

## **9.0 THE MANAGERS COMMITTEE**

The Managers Committee shall be charged with all the business management and property management of the church.

### **9.1 Selection of Managers**

A Manager is a spiritual leader, like a Deacon, with different spiritual gifts. As such, to be nominated as a Manager, the Manager must be a faithful active member in good standing for at least one (1) year, meet the Scriptural requirements and be concerned and willing to help with regard to the fiscal health and property management of the church.

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<sup>6</sup> The Deacons give leadership and oversight to all people care ministries, including but not limited to, sick and shut-in ministries, people care food teams, baptismal preparation teams, and Greeters, Ushers, Hospitality teams, and Music teams.

The 4 "C"s of Manager Selection:

**A. Character:** 1 Timothy 3:2-13 and Titus 1:6-9.

Qualifying Managers are to be growing in their love of God and in love of all people, which is evidenced by a lifestyle that is above reproach. A Manager is to be faithful in marriage, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach/mentor, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. A Manager must manage their family well and do so in a manner worthy of full respect. A Manager should love what is good, be self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. A Manager is not to pursue dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

**B. Competency:** Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-14 and Acts 5:1-11.

Managers are to keep watch over themselves and all the fiscal affairs of the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. Managers care, not because they must, but because they are willing, as God wants. A Manager is eager to serve, not lording it over people, but by being an example to the flock.

**C. Courageous:** Joshua 1:6-9 and Acts 6.

A Manager must be strong and courageous to follow Jesus and support the ministry initiatives of the Lead Pastor that are intended to fulfill the Board of Administration's goals and strategic plans. As God spoke to Joshua, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

**D. Calling:** Acts 6:1-7 and Romans 11:29

Managers should be known "to be full of the Spirit and wisdom." Spiritual giftings that are valuable among Managers are wisdom, discernment, administration, and service. God's calling and gifts are irrevocable.

## **9.2 Manager Committee Organization**

The Managers Committee shall consist of at least four (4) members. If the church grows or declines, it is reasonable to have one (1) Manager for every twenty-five (25) active members.

The Church Treasurer and the Chair of Trustees are voting ex officio members of the Managers Committee.

## **9.3 Manager Responsibilities**

The Managers oversee both the church business management and property management. That would include, but is not limited to:

- A.** Developing the annual church budget after the Board of Administration develops and affirms its mission and vision goals for the respective year. The Managers will consult with the Lead Pastor and the respective Standing Committees before they present the proposed budget to the Board of Administration for affirmation. The budget is presented to the church at the Annual General Meeting for final approval.

- B. Ensuring that the financial integrity of the organization is maintained at all times; that proper care is exercised in the receiving, processing, and disbursing of funds; and that financial and non-financial assets are appropriately protected.<sup>7</sup>
  - C. Approving an unbudgeted expenditure of less than \$1500.00 All unbudgeted requests that are \$1500.00 or greater are taken to the church membership for approval at a duly called Business Meeting.
  - D. Developing and recommending to the Board of Administration any financial plans and courses of action that will provide for mission accomplishment and organizational financial well-being.
  - E. Making policy recommendations to the Board of Administration with regard to the level and terms of indebtedness, cash management, investment policy, risk management, financial monitoring and reports, employee benefit plans, signatory authority for expenditures and other policies that the committee determines are advisable for effective financial management.
  - F. Maintaining fire safety standards and requirements.
  - G. Ensuring church rooms are safe and effective for ministry needs.
  - H. Overseeing the supplies and upkeep of First Aid kits and sanitary supplies.
  - I. Managing and filling the baptismal tank when required.
  - J. Maintaining church property and service equipment.<sup>8</sup>
  - K. Developing a procedure for use of outside or internal contractors in building or property developments.
  - L. Suggesting names of potential Managers to the Nominating Committee.
- 9.3.1** The Managers as a whole are on the Board of Administration.

## **10.0 THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The Christian Education Committee is charged with developing evangelism, spiritual growth and discipleship ministries to the whole church.

### **10.1 Selection of Christian Education Committee**

A Christian Education Member is a spiritual leader, like a Deacon or Manager, but with different spiritual gifts and oversight. As such, to be nominated to the Christian Education Committee, the person must be a faithful active member in good standing for at least one (1) year, meet the Scriptural requirements and be concerned and willing to help with regard to the evangelism and discipleship ministries of the church.

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<sup>7</sup> The Managers will give leadership and oversight to building teams of Tellers.

<sup>8</sup> The Managers will give leadership and oversight to any hired staff who are specifically tasked with maintaining the property, whether janitorial, lawn, or snow removal contractors. They will also facilitate any rental agreements with community groups.

The 4 "C"s of a Christian Education Member selection:

**A. Character:** 1 Timothy 3:2-13 and Titus 1:6-9

Qualifying Christian Education Members are to be growing in their love of God and in love of all people, which is evidenced by a lifestyle that is above reproach. A Christian Education Member is to be faithful in marriage,<sup>9</sup> temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. A Christian Education Member must manage their family well and do so in a manner worthy of full respect. A Christian Education Member should love what is good, be self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. A Christian Education Member is to keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

**B. Competency:** Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-14 and Acts 18:24-26

Christian Education Members are to keep watch over themselves and all the evangelistic and discipleship ministries of the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. Christian Education Members will equip and empower their respective ministries, not because they must, but because they are willing, as God wants. A Christian Education Member is eager to serve, not lording it over people, but by being an example to the flock.

**C. Courageous:** Joshua 1:6-9, 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

A Christian Education Member must be strong and courageous to follow Jesus and support the ministry initiatives of the Lead Pastor that are intended to fulfill the Board of Administration's goals and strategic plans. As God spoke to Joshua, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

**D. Calling:** Ephesians 4:1-6; Acts 6:1-7 and Romans 11:29

Christian Education Members should be known "to be full of the Spirit and wisdom." Spiritual giftings that are valuable are wisdom, discernment, evangelism, and teaching. God's calling and gifts are irrevocable.

## **10.2. Christian Education Organization**

The Christian Education Committee shall consist of four (4) active members. If the church grows or declines, it is reasonable to have one (1) Christian Education Member for every twenty-five (25) active members.

## **10.3 Christian Education Duties**

The Christian Education Committee oversees both evangelistic and discipleship ministries. Their responsibility includes, but is not limited to:

- A.** Working closely with the Lead Pastor, to build and direct comprehensive and unified programs of evangelism and discipleship for the whole church.

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<sup>9</sup> A Christian Education member may be single.

- B. Recruiting, training, and empowering effective ministry leaders, who will in turn, build their own teams.<sup>10</sup>
- C. Creating and maintaining ministry procedures that enhance the evangelism and discipleship ministries of the church.
- D. Working with the Pastor(s) and Deacon(s) to maintain and ensure compliance with the *First Baptist Church Protection Policy* for the vulnerable sectors.
- E. Suggesting names of potential Christian Education nominees to the Nominating Committee.

**10.4** The Christian Education Committee as a whole is on the Board of Administration.

## **11.0 TRUSTEE COMMITTEE**

Church Trustees are required since First Baptist Church Fort Erie is not incorporated. There is legal requirement in the Religious Organizations Land Act (ROLA) which legislates how religious organizations purchase, hold, mortgage and dispose of property, since the church itself is not a legal entity. The ROLA Act stipulates that there should be three (3) unrelated Trustees.

### **11.1 Selection of Trustees**

A Trustee must be a long-term active member, five or more years (5+), in good standing. As a Trustee may represent the church in legal matters, a Trustee must possess integrity, spiritual and stewardship maturity, as well as knowledge and skills in property, asset management, and legal matters.

The Trustees shall be three (3) unrelated active members who shall be selected by the Nominating Committee and approved by the church membership at a duly called Annual General Meeting. Trustees hold their office for three (3) years, before being considered for re-nomination. If approved, a Trustee may hold office for life.

### **11.2 Trustee Responsibilities**

The Trustees shall be responsible for all legal obligations for the church and will ensure requirements regarding mortgage, insurance and other financial matters are met. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- A. Holding the church property on behalf of the congregation in accordance with the Religious Organizations Land Act (ROLA).
- B. Ensuring that no part of the property is sold, mortgaged, or otherwise encumbered or disposed of other than by an approving vote of at least eighty-five percent (85%) of the active members of the church present and voting at a duly constituted Business Meeting called to consider the matter.
- C. Attending to the fulfilment of the legal obligations indicated in the terms of any Trust.

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<sup>10</sup> Long-standing evangelistic and discipleship ministry teams include, but are not limited to: Nursery, Team316 (Sunday School), Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, Adult Ministry, Senior's Ministry, Church on the Lawn, Growth Groups, and Missions (whether short-term or long-standing).

- D. Ensuring that the property is adequately covered by insurance at all times, that premiums are paid promptly and that insurance coverage is reviewed at least every five (5) years.
- E. Attending to the safekeeping of all legal documents such as deeds, mortgage records, and insurance policies. Trustees shall provide these at any time at the request of the Board of Administration.
- F. Ensuring that the assets and investments are handled in a proper manner and are not exposed to a high-risk environment.<sup>11</sup>
- G. Ensuring, through the treasurer, that the appropriate documents are processed each year to ensure continued registration as a charitable organization according to the requirements of Canada Revenue Agency.
- H. Ensuring that the church is being carried on exclusively for charitable purposes, that upon dissolution its assets will be transferred to another registered charity, that the church is operated without profit or gain to its membership.
- I. Ensuring through the Treasurer, that all withholding deductions (i.e. Canada Pension, Employment Insurance, Income Tax and Pension contributions) related to employees are paid in full at the end of each year.

## **12.0 NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee is responsible for discerning and acquiring the appropriate persons for the respective Standing Committees.

### **12.1 Nominating Committee Selection**

All Nominating Committee members and nominees must be active members. The Nominating Committee shall consist of two (2) members elected at the Annual General Meeting of the church for a term of one (1) year together with one (1) representative from each of the following: the Deacons, the Managers, and the Christian Education Committee.

### **12.2 Nominating Committee Responsibilities**

- A. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to prepare for submission to the Annual General Meeting, nominations for church officers, Standing Committees, and representatives and to post such a list at least two (2) weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall obtain the consent of each person nominated prior to posting the list.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall at regular or special Church Business Meetings make nominations to fill any nominated vacancy as outlined in Article 7.2.
- C. The Nominating Committee will include the following year's delegates to the Niagara Hamilton Association of Baptist Churches and the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec Assembly in their report.

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<sup>11</sup> High risk would be considered any behaviour that may foreseeably put the church into a position where we face an inability to pay debts, incur financial penalties, unreasonably high-interest rates, or where we make investments that may substantially impact the church's finances negatively or positively such as in high-risk investments.

### **ARTICLE III – ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS**

#### **13.0 CHURCH CLERK**

The Church Clerk shall be an active member who is elected for one (1) year and shall be eligible for re-election.

The Clerk's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- A.** Keeping the minutes of the Church Business Meetings and distributing the minutes to the Board of Administration for approval within 14 days following the meeting before distributing to the congregation for final approval.
- B.** Keeping a register of church membership with amendments as per Article 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 and carry on correspondence as needed.
- C.** Preparing a yearly statement showing the number of Baptisms, admissions to and deletions from the church membership.
- D.** Being a voting member of the Board of Administration.
- E.** Serving as the Secretary of the Board of Administration with minutes distributed within 14 days following the meeting.

#### **13.1 CHURCH TREASURER**

The Church Treasurer shall be an active member who is elected for one (1) year and shall be eligible for re-election. The Treasurer is accountable to the Manager's Committee for the fulfillment of duties and responsibilities.

The Church Treasurer's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- A.** Paying all accounts approved by the authority of the Budget or by the approval of the Managers Committee, or by Trustees, or the Board of Administration, where required.
- B.** Ensuring that the church maintains the appropriate financial books and records and that these are accurate and current.
- C.** Ensuring that the Managers monthly monitor the church's financial integrity and alerts it to any important discrepancies between planned and actual figures.
- D.** Ensuring that government tax filings and remittances are submitted on a timely basis.
- E.** Ensuring that payroll and other liabilities are settled in a timely manner.
- F.** Overseeing electronic banking and serving as a co-signer of cheques with at least one other signing officer, as needed.
- G.** Ensuring that excess funds and reserves are properly held and invested at the direction of the Managers.
- H.** Verifying that donations are handled appropriately, and designations are accounted for in accordance with the requirements of law.
- I.** Ensuring that the church finances are yearly audited or have independent review.
- J.** Being a voting member of the Board of Administration.

- K. Keeping the Board of Administration informed of important financial events, trends, and issues relevant to the church's governance goals.

### **13.2 CHURCH ENVELOPE STEWARD**

The Church Envelope Steward shall be an active member who is elected for one (1) year and shall be eligible for re-election.

The Church Envelope Steward is responsible to keep a confidential and true record of all contributions by envelope or by online means. The Church Envelope Steward shall prepare tax receipts for donors for the monies donated towards the budget and special offerings as approved by the church membership. The Church Envelope Steward shall work in conjunction with the Treasurer to ensure accuracy of records. The Church Envelope Steward shall provide envelopes or a donor number to new donors.

## **ARTICLE IV – ORDINANCES**

In obedience to our LORD's command and example, we practice *Believer's Baptism* and participate in *the Lord's Supper*. Authorized by Christ, these are the two Ordinances of the church. By "Ordinance" Baptists believe that *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper* are symbols and are not necessary for salvation. However, the understanding of ordinances as symbols, and not sacraments, does not diminish their significance in our worship.

### **14.0 BELIEVER'S BAPTISM**

A Believer is baptized to follow the example of Jesus (Matthew 3:14-17). Baptism symbolizes Christ's death and resurrection (Colossians 2:12) and our new life as a Christian (Romans 6:4). We are baptized by immersion because Jesus was baptized that way (Matthew 3:16) and every water baptism in the New Testament was by immersion. The Biblical Greek word *baptizo* means, "to immerse or dip under water." Baptism by immersion is required for church membership. If the Pastor and Deacons discern that a candidate is not able to comply with full immersion, grace may be extended (Ephesians 2:8-9, Luke 23:43).

#### **14.1 Believer's Baptism Procedure**

Every person who has believed in Christ Jesus should be baptized (Acts 2:41; 8:36-38; Mark 16:16). It is the responsibility of the individual to present themselves to the Pastor and/or a member of the Deacons Committee requesting baptism. The Pastor and at least one (1) Deacon will discuss salvation and the understanding of Baptism with the candidate. If the candidate appears to comprehend the significance, the candidate will be baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

### **15.0 THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The Lord's Supper is a repeated symbol of our remembrance of Jesus' broken body and shed blood for the forgiveness of sins and the new covenant with God through Jesus' blood (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:12-26). In this action, called the Lord's Supper, or Communion, Christ offers Himself to us and we present ourselves to Him in worship, adoration, and anticipation of when it will find fulfillment in the Kingdom of God (Luke 22:15-20).

### **15.1 The Lord's Supper Procedure**

- A. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are eligible to participate in the Lord's Supper. We practice open communion.
- B. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is observed monthly or at the discretion of the Pastor and Deacons.
- C. The symbol of Jesus' broken body and shed blood may be anything that is taken in faith and remembrance.
- D. The Pastor and Deacons may discern how communion will be practiced and served.

### **ARTICLE V – CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Two weeks' notice shall be given to the congregation for all duly called Church Business Meetings. Agendas and intentions of duly called meetings are to be noted.

A quorum at any Church Business Meeting shall be at least thirty percent (30%), of the active membership. All active members may make motions or vote on motions, but those under eighteen (18) years of age may not vote on:

- A. Calling or dismissing the Lead Pastor or Associate Pastor(s).
- B. Dismissal and release of a member.
- C. Approving amendments to Bylaws.
- D. Ratifying the annual budget for amounts \$1500.00 and above.
- E. Purchasing or selling the primary church facilities.
- F. Dissolving the church.

### **16.0 Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year shall be January 1 until December 31.

### **16.1 Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of the church shall be held prior to February 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.

### **16.2 Regular Church Business Meetings**

Regular Church Business Meetings shall be called twice a year, in May, and September or October.

### **16.3 Special Business Meeting**

A Special Business Meeting may be called by the Board of Administration or Standing Committees.

### **16.4 Business Meeting Procedures**

The Chair of the Board of Administration, or a designate as determined by the Board of Administration, shall act as the Moderator of Church Business meetings. The Moderator shall be neutral and objective on items of discussion and ensure that all voices are adequately heard.

The church will use Robert's Rules of Order as a guide for conducting church Business Meetings. Robert's Rules of Order provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language. Robert's Rules of Order provides for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the church. See Appendix B.

#### **ARTICLE VI – AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION/BY-LAWS**

One of the main catalysts for amendments to the governing documents comes through the church membership input to the Board of Administration concerning items in the documents.

The Bylaws may be amended in whole or in part if the following requirements are met:

- A.** Individual members who have proposed amendments to the governing documents are encouraged to share these with the Board of Administration by a written statement.
- B.** At a duly called Business Meeting, the Board of Administration may put forth the motion to amend the constitution/by-laws. After a motion on the matter is duly seconded it must be tabled for a period of four (4) weeks before a final vote is taken at a duly called Business Meeting.
- C.** The Congregation is given at least two (2) weeks' notice of the vote by announcement at regular services. Notice may also be given by electronic or postal mail.
- D.** The motion for amendment shall require eighty-five percent (85%) approval of those present.
- E.** The amendments shall supersede all previous constitutions/by-laws and motions which as now might be considered to be in contravention with this constitution/by-laws.

## **Appendix A – BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES**

### **1. Jesus is Lord**

Baptists believe that Jesus Christ, being eternally God, only begotten Son and the visible expression of the invisible God, effectively procured salvation for all creation through his death, burial and resurrection. He is the one assigned by God the Father to rule with authority over all of creation. Every area of the believer's life and the life of the church is to be subject to the Lord.

### **2. The Word of God is the Authoritative Rule of Faith and Practice**

Baptists believe that God communicates his will through the inspired Word of God. For Baptists, the Bible is the final authority in matters of faith and practice. It is to be interpreted responsibly under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit within the community of faith.

### **3. The Priesthood of All Believers**

The Bible affirms the value of each person as having been created in the image of God, and also declares each person morally responsible for his/her own nature and behaviour. Baptists believe that inherent in the worth of each person is also the right and competency of each individual personally to deal directly with God through Jesus Christ. This principle also suggests our responsibility to serve other believers in intercession and nurture: we are priests to each other. Baptists believe that no group or individual has any right to compel others—forcefully or politically—to believe or worship as they do. Rather, Baptists have historically been champions of religious liberty.

### **4. A Believers' Church**

Baptists believe that Jesus Christ chooses to form his church by bringing together believers for the purpose of worship, witness, fellowship and ministry (both spiritual and social). Baptists recognize the church universal as all who truly profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. They also profess their understanding of the church as being visibly expressed in local congregations. Each local church must thus be made up of believers who, upon their profession of faith and their baptism (almost always by immersion), are incorporated into the local church through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Baptists believe that Believers' Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances required by the New Testament and are to be administered by the local church.

### **5. Mission and Evangelism**

We have a story to tell that is mandated by our Lord in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. Our calling is to share God's message of love and salvation with each person. Each Christian has a duty to share their faith with others. Baptists continue to be very active in mission efforts, both in local and global contexts. We recognize that mission is not just evangelism, but also includes promoting justice, social welfare, healing, education and peace in the world. It is a holistic approach that expresses care for both the needs of the human soul and the social needs that affect all of life.

## **6. Church Autonomy and Association**

Government in a local church is controlled by the principles of the priesthood of all believers, the Lordship of Christ, the authority of the Scriptures and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Christ, present in the lives of congregational members, leads them corporately to discover and obey his mind and will. Such 'congregational government' calls for and expresses the equality and responsibility of believers under the Lordship of Christ. Baptist churches also recognize the need to temper the exercise of their autonomy in order to 'associate' by linking regionally, nationally and internationally for ministry, mission, support and fellowship.

## **7. Freedom and Equality**

Emerging from our convictions about the priesthood of all believers, we affirm that in Jesus Christ all people are equal. Each one is free to be in relationship with God and to express a faith that is not coerced. Faith cannot be predetermined by someone else, but is the right of and responsibility of each individual as they seek a relationship with God based on their own personal commitments. A further extension of the principle of the Lordship of Christ and the priesthood of believers is to be found in the Baptist conviction that there must exist a separation between the church and civil governments.

## APPENDIX B – ABBREVIATED ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER

### **Simplified Robert’s Rules**

Robert's Rules describe basic protocols for discussing and deciding issues when a large number of people are involved. It usually would not be necessary to use many aspects of it for a meeting of 3 to 12 people, but the “basics” are a useful way to manage any meeting. There is nothing special about Robert's Rules other than that there has to be some protocol that everyone follows, and this protocol has been tested over decades and proven sound. The rules anticipate every possible scenario, and can be quite convoluted for the ordinary course of business. Usually, using the protocol for ordinary motions is enough to get the job done. However, in larger groups it is useful to have a more complete protocol.

This appendix provides two summaries:

- The basics of addressing a motion.
- Some additional information on ancillary motions (subsidiary, privileged and incidental) which might be needed in larger settings.

It is recommended that, if you have a particularly large membership group, or if there are contentious issues being addressed, you become familiar with the more detailed Robert's Rules.

### **Basics of Addressing a Motion**

- A motion is a course of action recommended by the person putting the motion forward.
- **The Chair controls the flow of the meeting.** In order to put forward a motion, the mover must be recognized by the Chair. In an informal setting, this is generally done with a nod or a gesture. In a more formal members meeting, the mover must stand and wait to be recognized.
- **The group can only consider one motion at a time.** If there is a motion on the table, then a second motion will not be “heard”. There are exceptions to this rule; see *Basics of Ancillary Motions* below.
- **The mover states his/her motion**, usually in positive terms (e.g., you would move that the organization pursue such-and-such a course of action, rather than that the organization NOT pursue another.) The motion statement is structured to start with the words “I move that...”.
- **A second person, or seconder, declares, “I second the motion”** (meaning, “there are two here who think this is right”). In a friendly environment, the Chair may ask if there is a second to the motion, but is not obliged to do so.
- **If there is no seconder** to the motion, it will not be considered by the group; it is considered “lost”.
- If the motion is seconded, **the Chair declares to the group that “It has been moved and seconded that...”**. The motion must now remain unchanged while it is discussed and debated by the group.

- Formally, **the Chair will ask if the mover wishes to expand on his/her motion.** In a friendly or smaller meeting environment, the mover may be given an opportunity to explain their reasons or rationale to the group before putting the motion forward, but technically, they should not do so until this point. The mover will not be given another opportunity to speak unless the Chair calls upon him/her to answer a question or clarify a statement as a result of a contribution from the floor (the members).
- **The membership is then given an opportunity to express their views** or ask questions about the motion.
- **All comments, starting with the motion and the second and running right through the entire process, should be directed at the Chair.** In this way, the Chair operates as debate or discussion “traffic cop” by recognizing only one person at a time and making sure that everyone plays by the same rules.
- **There is a time limit**, usually set by the Chair at the beginning of the meeting, for how long someone can hold the floor to talk about the motion. This prevents filibustering and helps everyone treat everyone else's views with respect. Sometimes there is a limit put on the debate of the entire motion rather than on individual contributions to the discussion.
- If no one has any comments or questions on the motion, **it can go immediately to a vote.**
- Otherwise, when there has been a full discussion and no further comments or questions are forthcoming from the floor, the Chair will then ask for a vote. This is called “Calling the Question”. Depending on the circumstances, **votes can take place:**
  - **By Show Of Hands** — typical in a boardroom setting. This method can also be extended to a show of “votes” where proxies are used. Some organizations hand out one special card for every proxy vote, so a show of hands might include someone putting their hand up with, say, 10 proxy cards.
  - **By Voice** (shouting “Aye” for positive or “No” to indicate negative vote). Somewhat more typical in political settings than in corporate settings.
  - **By Roll Call**—The Secretary reads the name of each voter who then indicates individually her or his vote. This can be used in any setting but is time consuming.
  - **By Division**—The members, shareholders or directors literally stand up and go to one side or another of a room or dividing point to indicate their position on the motion.
  - **By Ballot**—where secrecy is important; not used often
- In addition to these methods, the Chair, if he/she judges there to be a consensus on the motion, can say, **“There being no objection, ... the motion is passed”**. The pause allows any individual to say that they object. If there are no objectors, then the motion is carried or passed. However, if there is even one objector, the motion must be put to a formal vote.

- **Once a motion is put to a vote, that is the end of that motion one way or the other.** It cannot be reconsidered by the group, whether it was passed or lost, unless there is a new motion to reconsider or rescind it.

### Basics of Ancillary Motion

The motion described above is a “main motion”, although the process is generally the same for all motions. Even though the group can only address one motion at a time, there are sometimes motions related to the motion on the floor that it would make sense to consider at the time they come up. Under Robert's Rules, some of these motions are debatable and others go directly to a vote.

### Subsidiary Motions

- The purpose of a subsidiary motion is to change how a main motion is handled and voted on. It must therefore be considered before the group can proceed to consider the main motion.
- Subsidiary motions include:
  - **Lay on the Table**—temporarily suspends further consideration of the main motion while a related motion is considered
  - **Take from the Table**—resumes consideration of the motion laid on the table
  - **Limit Debate**—limits the discussion of the motion to a specified period of time or for a specified period of time
  - **Extend Limits of Debate**—extends existing limits of debate for a specified period of time or to a specified period of time
  - **Postpone Definitely**—postpone the debate to a specific time or for a specific time
  - **Refer**—used when additional information is considered to be useful for a decision, the question is referred to a committee or some other individual or body to gather this information and sometimes to make a recommendation
  - **Amend**—to change the wording of the main motion; in a “friendly” amendment, the mover accepts a suggested amendment without the need to vote
  - **Postpone indefinitely**—essentially removes the motion from consideration indefinitely

### Incidental Motions

- Incidental motions deal with procedural issues relating to other motions and are therefore considered before both subsidiary and main motions. Incidental motions are generally undebatable and should be put to an immediate vote.
- Incidental motions include:
  - **Question of Order**—to point out an infraction of the rules
  - **Suspension of Rules**—where it would be advisable for the group to voluntarily suspend some aspect of its own rules

- o **Objection to Consideration of a Question**—applied only to a main motion, the nature of the objection must be stated
- o **Divide a Question**—split the question into its component parts to consider each independently
- o **Methods of Voting**—to change the method of voting

### Privileged Motions

- Privileged motions do not relate to the main motion or the related subsidiary or incidental motions, but rather relate to the general order of business of the group. As these are “meta” questions, they take precedence over both subsidiary and incidental motions. They are not debatable and should be put to an immediate vote.
- Privileged motions include:
  - o **Fix The Time At Which To Adjourn**—self-explanatory
  - o **Adjourn**—self-explanatory
  - o **Take a Recess**—self-explanatory
  - o **Raise a Point of Privilege**—used to remind members of the group of the need for courtesy or quiet or to make a request which will enable more effective participation, such as asking participants to use a microphone or requesting a translation
  - o **Call for Orders of the Day**—a motion reminding the group to adhere to the agenda