

**Constitution Amended and Adopted 7/23/2018
Bylaws Amended and Adopted**

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA, INC.**

These Amended and Restated Constitution and Bylaws govern the affairs of the First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama, Inc., an Alabama religious non-profit corporation (the "Church"). These Constitution and Bylaws amend and restate, in its entirety, the previous Constitution and Bylaws of the Church, as amended.

*******CONSTITUTION*******

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith and to the end that this body is subject to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and governed in an orderly, democratic manner and process consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Denomination and churches, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the Church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith and order, we do declare and establish this our Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE I: Name and Principal Office

The name of this Corporation is the "FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA, INC." This corporation will be further referred to in the Bylaws as the "Church." The Church will maintain its principal office at 300 S. Section Street, Fairhope, Alabama 36532. The Pastoral Leadership Team shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another as needed on a temporary basis.

ARTICLE II: Church Facility Usage

First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Inc.'s property and facilities may be used only for purposes consistent with the Church's doctrinal beliefs as reflected in the Bible and the Church's Statement of Faith, including its Statement on Marriage and Sexuality.

Property and facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the Church's religious teachings as reflected in the Bible and the Church's Statement of Faith, including its Statement on Marriage and Sexuality. First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Inc.'s Pastoral Staff and / or Properties Committee shall be the final decision-making authority regarding whether any proposed facility/property use is in conformity to the Church's doctrinal beliefs.

ARTICLE III: Handling of Property

The First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama, Inc. has been incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Alabama governing religious bodies, and the handling and disposition of real property and assets shall be in accordance with such laws.

ARTICLE IV: Mission and Purpose

The Mission and Purpose of the Church is to be a Biblically-based community of believers dedicated to impacting our community and world with the good news of Jesus Christ. We are committed to carrying out the purposes of Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Service, and Evangelism as we seek to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18 – 20 and Acts 1:8) and live out the two Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40).

ARTICLE V: Cooperation and Affiliation

The Church will seek to carry out its Mission and Purpose by cooperating with other like-minded Christian churches, ministries and organizations so long as such cooperation does not violate the autonomy of the local Church and the doctrines adopted by the Church. The cooperation of the Church will include affiliations with the Baldwin Baptist Association, the Alabama Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE VI: Church Covenant

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of the Church; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly through tithes and offerings to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel to all nations and people groups; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of God.

We will seek to maintain family and individual devotions; to educate our children in matters of our faith; to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances; to walk with integrity in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our responsibilities, and exemplary in our lifestyle; and to avoid those things which fulfill the lust of the flesh and are contrary to our daily walk in the Spirit with Christ as written in Holy Scripture. Also, while the Bible does not expressly prohibit the consumption of beverage alcohol, for the sake of wisdom and our witness, we strongly encourage one another to abstain from its use and to abstain from the use of illegal drugs.

We further engage to watch over one another in Christian love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in our feeling and Christian courtesy in our speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the commands of our Savior to do so without delay.

We moreover commit that when we cease to attend this Church that we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE VII:

Statements on Sanctity of Human Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty

Because we believe that the sanctity of human life, the dignity of biblical marriage as the union of one man and one woman, and the freedom of conscience and religion are foundational principles of justice and the common good, and are clearly-taught principles in the Bible; and because these vital principles are being compromised in our society to the detriment of the common good, the congregation of First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama, Inc. is compelled by our Christian faith and convictions to speak and act in their defense.

Statement on Sanctity of Human Life

"So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; he created them male and female."
Genesis 1:27 (HCSB)

We believe that God created every human being in His image and that life, in all its stages and conditions is precious to God, we the Church will be united and untiring in our efforts to protect the lives of the unborn from abortion, as well as to bring assistance, comfort, and care to pregnant women in need and to those who have been victimized by abortion, even as we stand resolutely against the corrupt and degrading killing of their unborn children. Our message is, and ever shall be, that the just, humane and truly Christian answer to problem pregnancies is for all of us to love and care for mother and child alike.

We will insistently call on those who have been entrusted with temporal powers to fulfill the first responsibility of government: to protect the weak, the vulnerable, the disabled and the dependent against violent attack, and to do so with no favoritism, partiality, or discrimination. The Bible calls upon us to defend those who cannot defend themselves and to speak for those who cannot themselves speak. We will be ready to defend and speak for the unborn, the disabled, and the dependent.

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is like him.' So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his own ribs and closed the flesh at that place. Then the LORD God made the rib He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. And the man said: 'This one, at last, is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called woman for she was taken from man.' This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh." Genesis 2:18, 21-24 (HCSB)

We believe that God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man and a woman; therefore the Church will only recognize marriages between one biological man and one biological woman. Further, the Pastors and staff of the Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman.

This Statement on Marriage and Sexuality specifically gives the Church the right to restrict the use of Church facilities and property to uses consistent with its Statement of Faith and Statement on Marriage and Sexuality, as solely determined by the Church.

Statement on Religious Liberty

“Therefore, give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”

Matthew 22:21 (HCSB)

First Baptist Church of Fairhope, Alabama, Inc. “takes seriously the biblical admonition to respect and obey those in authority. We believe in law and in the rule of law. We recognize the duty to comply with laws whether we happen to like them or not, unless the laws are gravely unjust or require those subject to do something unjust or otherwise immoral. The biblical purpose of law is to preserve order and serve justice and the common good; yet laws that are unjust – and especially laws that purport to compel citizens to do what is unjust – undermine the common good, rather than serve it.”

Through the centuries, Christianity has taught that when the Laws of God and the laws of man conflict, *“We must obey God rather than men.”* (Acts 5:29) “Because we honor justice and the common good, we will not comply with any edict that purports to compel the Church to participate in, or support abortion; nor will we bend to any rule purporting to force the Church to bless immoral sexual partnerships, or perform same-sex or multiple marriages in the Church.” We will also not comply with any edict that purports to compel the Church and / or any Pastors of the Church to refrain from proclaiming the truth, as we know it in any medium, about morality and immorality and marriage and the family.”

*Quotations, other than Scriptures, are taken from the *Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience* released on November 20, 2009.

ARTICLE VIII: CHARACTER

1. Polity

The Church’s government is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual love and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist churches.

2. Doctrine

The Church receives the Scriptures and accepts its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of Southern Baptist churches as indicated in the Statement of Faith contained in Article IX.

3. The Constitution

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of members present provided the proposed amendment has been presented to the Church in a Business Meeting sixty (60) days prior to the vote and has been read at a regular Business Meeting a second time thirty (30) days prior to the vote.

ARTICLE IX: Statement of Faith

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God and as the only basis for our beliefs and practices. The Church accepts the *Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted June 14, 2000 by the Southern Baptist Convention as an affirmation of our basic Christian beliefs and as a general statement of our faith. The *Baptist Faith and Message* does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all we believe as interpreted through the life and words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We do believe, however, that the *Baptist Faith and Message* accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore is a model of belief and behavior for all members in the following areas:

- The Scriptures
- God
- God the Father
- God the Son
- God the Holy Spirit
- Man
- Salvation
- God's Purpose of Grace
- The Church
- Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- The Lord's Day
- The Kingdom
- Last Things
- Evangelism and Missions
- Education
- Stewardship
- Cooperation
- The Christian and the Social Order
- Peace and War
- Religious Liberty
- The Family

*The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message may be accessed online at the Church's website and hard copies are available in the Church office.

