

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **OF**

### **BONAIRE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.**

#### **PREAMBLE**

This Church does purpose to be, as far as possible, a representation of the entire Body of Christ in its purpose and character. As such, this Church will strive to be the pillar and support of the truth. Furthermore, this Church does purpose to be a picture of God's sovereign reign over all things.

#### **ARTICLE I: Name**

This Body of believers in Christ shall be known as Bonaire First Baptist Church, Inc.

#### **ARTICLE Purpose**

The highest purpose of Bonaire First Baptist Church is to worship God as He is revealed in the Bible. We believe that all facets of our mission should ultimately redound to worship for the glory of God. Accordingly, we do desire to be controlled by the Holy Spirit in order to experience and proclaim faithfully the Gospel of God.

#### **ARTICLE III; Articles of Faith**

(Note: These articles are excerpted and adapted from the New Hampshire Confession and subsequent Baptist Faith and Message Statements. Ultimately, their aim is to be faithful to Scripture.)

##### **1. The Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore, is and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

##### **2. The True God**

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, Whose name is YAHWEH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth: inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that, in the unity of the Godhead, there are three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct, but harmonious, offices in the great work of redemption.

### **3. The Fall of Man**

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression, fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners not by constraint but by choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and, therefore, under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

### **4. The Way of Salvation**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Who, according to the will of the Father, became Man, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven; and uniting in His wonderful Person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

### **5. Justification**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in Christ; by means of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us by God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

### **6. The Freeness of Salvation**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own determined depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

### **7. Regeneration**

We believe the Scriptures teach that, in order to be saved, men must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life.

### **8. Repentance and Faith**

We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties and also inseparable graces wrought in the soul by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby, being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy, at the same time, heartily receiving the Lord Jesus as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

## **9. God's Purpose of Grace**

We believe the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness; that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility; that it encourages the use of means; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly accept Christ; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

## **10. Sanctification**

We believe the Scriptures teach that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we have been and are made partakers of His holiness; that while it's certainty is secured in the person and completed work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit it is also progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means - especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer; and in the practice of Godly exercise of all duties.

## **11. Perseverance of the Saints**

We believe the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will not utterly fall away and perish, but will endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

## **12. The Law and Gospel**

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that the Law of God is holy, just, and good; that the Law as revealed from God condemns man because he violates God's holiness in his natural proclivities to sin; that there is no salvation nor sanctification from the Law, only the knowledge of sin and judgment; that Jesus Christ came and fulfilled the Law of God and took the curse of God's Law upon Himself as a Substitute for His People; that New Covenant believers are enabled by the Holy Spirit to live by the Royal Law of Christ which is epitomized in John 13:34.

## **13. A Gospel Church**

We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible Church of Christ is a company of baptized believers associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word.

## **14. Christian Baptism**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in his death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation, and to the Lord's Supper.

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

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Lord's Supper is a provision of bread and wine, representing Christ's body and blood, partaken of by the members of the Church, assembled for that purpose, in commemoration of the death of their Lord, showing their faith and participation in the merits of His

sacrifice, their dependence upon Him for spiritual life and nourishment, and their hope of life eternal through His resurrection from the dead; its observance to be preceded by faithful self-examination.

### **16. The Lord's Day**

The New Covenant teaches that the commands and ordinances of the Old Covenant were shadows and types of what would come under the New Covenant (Colossians 2:16-17). Christ is the Sabbath of all believers. We do believe it is important for the church to come together on the first day of the week to celebrate the day of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ as well as other appointed times throughout the week. This assembling of believers is for the purpose of corporate instruction, corporate praise and worship, and corporate edification and exhortation.

### **17. Civil Government**

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of kings of the Earth.

### **18. Righteous and Wicked**

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as are regenerate, being justified through the Spirit of God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are, in His sight, wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men, both in and after death.

### **19. The World to Come**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from Heaven and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless sorrow, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in Heaven or Hell on principles of righteousness.

## **ARTICLE IV: Church Government and Affiliations**

Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government of the Church. This body of believers is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body; but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist Churches. While maintaining its autonomy, Bonaire First Baptist Church, Inc., will cooperate with and support the Rehoboth Baptist Association, the Georgia Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

## **ARTICLE V: Adoption and Amendments**

**Section 1.** This Constitution shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the church conference in which it is submitted for adoption.

**Section 2.** This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at any regular or called church conference; provided, however, that detailed written notice of such amendment is provided to the membership one month in advance of the church conference in which the amendment is to be considered.