

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ADA MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT

We believe that to carry on the religious mission of the church, to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who associate with the church as members should abide by and agree to the following statements and conduct themselves in accordance with them.

A. Statement of Faith ()

We affirm the following truths:

Doctrine. This church stands firm on the Bible as the divinely inspired and inerrant Word of God in its entirety and receives the New Testament in particular as full authority for all church doctrine. As for Christian faith and conduct among its members, it adopts a formal Church Covenant and the Statement of Faith.

- a. **God and the Trinity** God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (the Trinity) is the one true and living God. He is perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. He is a God who is ever present demonstrating love, mercy, forgiveness, and all other perfections. All humanity owes to Him supreme faith and obedience. (John 5.26, John 15.26, Matthew 28.19, Exodus 3.14, John 8.58, Psalm 90.2, John 10.29)
- b. **Christ The Mediator** Jesus Christ is God the Son, the Eternal Word. He was born of a virgin, assumed human form while being yet divine, lived a sinless life in full obedience, and died an atoning substitutional death for the sins of the world. Salvation is found in no other. Jesus Christ was bodily raised from the dead, defeated death and the grave and triumphantly ascended into heaven. Thus, whether it be through our death or His personal, imminent, visible return, we believe we will be raised to dwell with Him eternally according to His promises. Believers will enjoy an eternal state of blessedness in Heaven while unbelievers will experience eternal separation from God in Hell. Christ is the only true Mediator between God and man, therefore, any person who desires to seek forgiveness for his sins or spiritual guidance in his life may do so by approaching God directly through Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 52.13-53.12, John 1.14, Mark 10.45, 2 Corinthians 5.21, 1 Peter 1.10-11, Acts 4.12, John 5.28-30, 1 Corinthians 15.42-43, Philippians 3.20-21, Matthew 25.32-46)
- c. **The Holy Spirit** The Holy Spirit presently convinces and convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He is the One Who regenerates, sanctifies, and comforts those who believe in Jesus Christ. Believers receive a new nature and enter into a new life of Christian growth as inspired by the indwelling Spirit (John 3.1-8, 14.26, 15.26-27, 16.5-16 Acts 1.1-8)
- d. **Creation** The universe is temporal, spoken into being by God as described in the Scriptures. The present earth shall be destroyed by fire in the end time, making way for a new heaven and a new earth. (John 1.1-3, Romans 1.20, Colossians 1.16, Genesis 1-2)
- e. **The Fall of Man, Sin and Punishment** Man was created in the image of God and that he was originally innocent, sinless, and pure. However, he became fallen in Adam and is now sinful by nature and by choice, and is in need of salvation. (Romans 3.10-19, 23, 5.12-21; Psalm 51.5, Ephesians 2.1-3, Colossians 1.21)
- f. **The Holy Scriptures** The Bible is God's authentic, written expression of the Eternal Word, written in the original by godly men who were divinely inspired, and that it was divinely

preserved so that it remains faithfully the supreme and only authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (2 Timothy 3.14-17, Luke 24.27, Romans 15.4, 2 Peter 1.19-21, 2 Peter 3.16, Acts 28.33, Matthew 22.29-32, John 5.39-40)

- g. **Salvation** The only Way of Salvation is by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, Who shed His blood for the remission of our sins. Through true repentance of sin and confession of faith in Christ, men and women may believe unto salvation. Only by this repentance and faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ the Lord can acceptance by God be attained. (Titus 3.3-7, Ephesians 2.1-10, Luke 19.8-10)

h. **The Believer**

We are chosen by God before creation (Romans 8.28-30, Ephesians 1.4-6) and furthermore, we are called and drawn by God's grace through the proclamation of the Gospel (John 6.44). As all have sinned before the Holy God, the penalty for our sin is death and separation but Jesus died to pay for the penalty of our sins was buried and rose from the dead giving us eternal life.

The individual, by the power of God through the Holy Spirit, dead in their transgressions is made alive in Christ (Ephesians 2.1-5). This regeneration or being born-again is God imparting new spiritual life (John 3.3-8). As the individual is regenerated by God, the response to the gospel is saving faith and repentance.

Saving faith is personal trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. Repentance is godly sorrow for sin, the renouncement and forsaking of sin followed by walking in obedience to the Lord. (Acts 2.37-38, 3.19) The believer will produce fruit in keeping with repentance and show forth a life being transformed and conformed to the likeness of Christ as set apart or sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (Luke 3.8, Luke 13.6-9, John 15.5-8, Galatians 5.22-25)

The believer is declared righteous in God's sight as sins are forgiven and Christ's righteousness is imputed or attributed (2 Corinthians 5.21; Romans 3.21-22, 5.19, 8.1 & 30) Therefore, the believer is justified in the sight of God and is adopted into the family of God as His child, receiving the blessings of spiritual relationship with the Father. (John 1.12-13, Galatians 3.26-29)

Only those who are truly regenerated/born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere until the end. (John 6.35-40, 10.27-29, 8.31-32)

- i. **The Church, The Body of Christ** The church universal is a living, spiritual body of which Christ is the Head and that all regenerated people are members. The local visible Church is an earthly and imperfect expression of this spiritual truth, existing in a company of believers, united in faith worship, observance of the ordinances of communion and baptism, work, fellowship and for spreading abroad the Gospel. (Colossians 1.18, Acts 2.42-47, Matthew 28.18-20, 1 Peter 2.9-10)
- j. **Believers Baptism** Christian baptism is the full immersion in water of a believer in Christ in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit to show forth a symbol of one's faith as crucified to sin and resurrected to a new life in Jesus Christ. We further believe that believer's baptism is a prerequisite to church membership in this body of Christ. (Matthew 28.19-20, Acts 2.37-41, 8.36-38, Romans 6.1-4, Colossians 2.9-12)
- k. **The Lord's Supper** The Lord's Supper is a communion of bread and the juice of the grape, symbolic of Christ's body and blood, partaken of by born again Christians at the Lord's invitation in commemoration of the death of their Lord until He comes again. Observance of

this ordinance is to be preceded by faithful self-examination. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Luke 22:14-23, 24:6,39, Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Hebrews 9:11-14, 24-28)

- i. **Religious Liberty** This local church is independent as well as self-governing and must be free from interference or coercion by any ecclesiastical or political group. We further believe that participation of local Baptist churches in state and national conventions is voluntary, and that each member's vote is of equal value. We believe in the separation of church and state, that the church must not dictate to the state, nor the state to the church, that the state should protect all religious groups, but favor none, and that all men should have the freedom to worship God according to their own conscience.
- m. **The Lord's Day** The first day of the week is the Lord's Day which is to be kept sacred to religious purposes by abstaining from all secular labor except works of necessity and mercy, by the devout observance of worship, and by preparation for that rest that remains for the people of God. (Matthew 12:1-13, Isaiah 58:13)
- n. **The Great Commission** The evangelization of all people is our task, beginning at the local community and unto all sections of the state, the nation, and the uttermost parts of the world. As we proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, we are to make disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey the commandments of our Lord (Matthew 28: 19 - 20).
- o. **Sanctity of Life** All human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139.)

B. Statement of Marriage, Singlehood, Gender and Sexuality ()

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female at conception. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that God created the family as the foundation for humanity to live in firm relationship to Him and that He Himself initiated the relationship between a man and a woman from the very beginning. God's design is that man and woman either be joined together in a perpetual monogamous relationship or live in a single state, both giving glory to God.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning with regard to human relationships: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of First Baptist Church of Ada as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to its members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by First Baptist Church of Ada in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Singlehood, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.) We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of First Baptist Church of Ada.

C. Statement on Church Discipline ()

In regard to the discipline of spiritually careless members and/or *attendees*, the church has an obligation to apply Biblical principles (such as Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Corinthians 2:5-11) carried out by the Deacon Board and pastor to *individuals* who are clearly and openly living outside the realm of Christian conduct. Such unbecoming conduct damages the witness of the Church and should be lovingly corrected if at all possible. In the event that an *individual* refuses all attempts at reconciliation, it may be necessary to ask that *individual* to leave the fellowship of the church.

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Tim 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the *Deacon Board and pastor* and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the *Deacon Board and Pastor*, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.

Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this church. An individual may be disciplined by the *Deacon Board and Pastor* short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry). *Deacon Board and Pastor*, as is required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

The members of this church further knowingly and voluntarily agree that a member cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership *while subject to an active discipline process*, and may only voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership if they are not the subject of a discipline proceeding at the time or only after a disciplinary process, of which they are the subject, has been

concluded as determined by the *Deacon Board and Pastor*. *The Deacon Board has the right to explain the circumstances to the congregation and able to share that the discipline process has been under way.*

D. Statement on Mediation ()

Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion. (1 Corinthians 6: 1-7.)

Mediation will be governed by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules), unless modified as stipulated by *all* parties.

(www.peacemaker.net/rules-of-procedure/) In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

E. Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct ()

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of First Baptist Church of Ada's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Deacon Board and Pastor(s) are the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

I have reviewed the statements above as indicated by my initials before each of them, and agree to be governed by all the provisions herein:

Name

Date