



CHURCH CONSTITUTION

600 S 4th Ave, Paden City WV | (304) 337 9320

| office@valleychurchwv.com | www.valleychurchwv.com

Valley Church
Paden City, West Virginia
Constitution

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Preamble

This preamble provides an overview of Valley Church's leadership structure. It is not technically part of the constitution but introduces our congregation-affirmed, pastor-led, elder-guided, member-served framework. This model delegates overall leadership of the church to the Senior Pastor who is accountable to the Elder Board. The Elder Board is accountable to the church. The elders are responsible for overseeing such things as the spiritual life of the church: its commitment to Christ, unity, doctrine, as well as general church policy, budget, and legal responsibilities. The Elder Board relies on the membership to carry out the day to day ministries of the church, thus enabling the elders to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. Together with the Senior Pastor, the Elder Board forms a plurality of leaders sharing as overseers of the church.

- Congregation - Affirmed: The Senior Pastor and Elders are affirmed in their gifting and calling and appointed to their position by way of a church vote. They are accountable to serve the congregation according to biblical standards and in keeping with the principles of this constitution.
- Pastor - Led: In this model, the Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader of the church and is responsible to see that the staff and congregation promote the church's mission and vision. All staff, paid and volunteer, are accountable to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor is accountable to the Elder Board.
- Elder - Guided: The Elder Board oversees the entire church and its ministries. The Elder Board delegates ministry leadership to the Senior Pastor and his staff and relies upon Serve Teams and committees for other important functions.
- Member - Served: Church members are encouraged to join a Serve Team which function to assist the Elders in achieving the mission of the Church.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this church shall be *The First Baptist Church of Paden City DBA Valley Church*.

ARTICLE II

MISSION

We exist to multiply disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the valley and the world.

ARTICLE III

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant one with another, as one body in Christ. To God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pledge our love, faith and obedience and covenant to live as Christians in our community and in our world, to be exemplary in our conduct, just in our dealings and faithful in our engagements; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We also covenant to live as Christians in our homes, to engage in personal and family devotions, to teach our children by instruction and example that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord; and to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

We further covenant to live with one another in Christ like love; to pray for one another; to help each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy of speech; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, gossip, and excessive anger; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation; to forgive one another as Christ, has forgiven us; and to minister to one another in compassion, sacrifice and concern as we share each other's joys and sorrows.

We moreover covenant to love as disciples of Jesus Christ and to grow in His grace and knowledge, as we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together; nor neglect to study the Holy Scriptures; nor fail to pray faithfully. We also covenant to contribute cheerfully and regularly with our time, tithes and talents to support the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, 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 IV

STATEMENT OF FAITH

At Valley Church, we have three distinct but complementary statements summarizing our beliefs to varying degrees of comprehensiveness:

- **Statement of Basic Beliefs**

This statement represents the most simple and foundational beliefs of Christian orthodoxy from a biblical and historical perspective. It captures the basic contours of Christian theology.

- **Statement of Biblical Doctrine**

This statement represents a full summary of the various convictions articulated in the other statements. Together, these statements communicate what we believe as a church and will therefore be foundational for our teaching, preaching, praying, instructing, disciplining and counseling.

- **Matters Pertaining to Biblical Ethics**

This statement captures our convictions on areas that are debated even among “Bible-believing” churches. As the line between right and wrong is blurred in society it is important that as a church we stand on the sure foundation of the Word of God as our authority in every area of life as we are called to “teach, reprove, correct and train in righteousness”

Statement of Basic Beliefs

The gospel is the hope of the world. As we read the Scriptures, we see the overarching themes of God’s providence, power and provision to reconcile mankind and the created world to Himself through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In light of this, we aim to be explicitly gospel-centered in all that we preach, teach and practice.

We believe:

- The Scriptures are true, inspired by God, authoritative and sufficient. (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- There is only one true God, Creator of heaven and earth, who eternally exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6; Isaiah 46:9-10; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 28:17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
- All things exist for the glory of God. (Psalm 148; Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 61:3; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Ephesians 1:3-14).

- All mankind, Christ excluded, is sinful by both birth and action. (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8, 12-21; 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- The penalty for sin is physical and spiritual separation from God at death. (Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 3:19; Romans 5:12; 6:23; James 1:14-15).
- Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin and is both fully God and fully man. (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).
- Jesus Christ died as the sacrificial substitute to pay the penalty for sin. (John 1:29; 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).
- Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and will one day return. (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).
- There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Only those who turn from sin and to Jesus in faith and repentance will be raised to eternal reward. Those who do not turn from sin and to Jesus will be raised to eternal punishment. (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
- Only through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ and repentance from sin can one be reconciled to God and experience true hope, life and joy for all eternity with Him. (John 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Statement of Biblical Doctrine

The Scriptures

We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is an essential and infallible record of God revealing Himself to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God and are, thus, free of error. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession or theology, must be tested by the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture.

The Triune God

There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty and perfect in holiness, truth and love. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father. Yet each is truly Deity. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

God the Father

God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By His word and for His glory, He freely and supernaturally created the world in six literal days out of nothing. Through the same word, He daily sustains all creation. He rules over all and, together with the Son and the Spirit, is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love Him and, in His unfathomable grace, gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. God made all things for the praise of His glory and intends for man to live in fellowship with Him.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the eternal Word made Flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully man. Through Him, all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him, all things hold together by the word of His power. He is perfect in nature, teaching and obedience and is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed His blood and died a vicarious death on the cross. By His death in our place, He revealed divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Redeeming us from sin, He rose bodily from the grave on the third day, victorious over death and the powers of darkness and performing many convincing proofs of His resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, He intercedes for His people and rules as Lord over all. His return is imminent. He is the Head of His body, the Church, and should be adored, loved, served and obeyed by all.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of new life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel, He persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit, a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who, in turn, came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored and worshiped as God, the Third Person of the Trinity.

Man

God made man—male and female—in His own image, as the crown of creation so that man might glorify Him through enjoying fellowship with Him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God. Being estranged from his Maker yet responsible to Him, man became subject to

divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will and affections. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ alone.

The Gospel

The gospel is the good news of God's grace invading the darkness of this world. It is the grand narrative of creation, fall, redemption and consummation ordained by God and orchestrated through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel. His resurrection is the power of the gospel. His ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men can be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have in glorifying God because of what He has accomplished.

Man's Response to the Gospel

The proper response to the gospel is faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, a faith that must be accompanied by repentance from sin. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service and works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Christ, he cannot become His disciple. This response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for His own pleasure and glory. This gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations.

Man's Inheritance Through the Gospel

Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Anyone repenting of sin by the miracle of regeneration and looking to Christ and His substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is declared righteous by God as a free gift. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. He is justified and fully accepted by God. Through Christ's atonement for sin, an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes His child. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit.

Sanctification

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification, seeking to produce His fruit in us. Our minds are renewed, and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though indwelling sin remains a reality, the Spirit leads us to grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping His commandments and endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith, knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word and deed. The

spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve His people until the certain end.

Empowered by the Spirit

The Holy Spirit empowers believers for Christian witness and service. The promise of the Father is freely available to all who believe in Jesus Christ, enabling them to exercise the gifts He sovereignly bestows for ministry and mission. The Holy Spirit desires to continually fill each believer with power to bear witness to the gospel and imparts His gifts for the edification of the body and the work of ministry in the world. The healthy exercising of diverse gifts within a unified body is essential to the mission of the Church in the world today.

The Church

God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that newly redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will on earth. This service involves a commitment to see the gospel preached and Churches planted in the entire world. The ultimate mission of the Church is to bring glory to God by making disciples. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local Church in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper and prayer.

All members of the Church are to be a vital and committed part of a local Church. In this context, they are called to live out the implications of the gospel as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the Church, including prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the equipping of Christ's body so that it might mature and grow. In the context of the local Church, God's people receive pastoral care and oversight and the opportunity to steward their gifts for His glory and the good of the others.

Ordinances of the Church

Water baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple. In obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that a former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin.

As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we come to the table with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body.

The Consummation

The consummation of all things includes the future, physical, visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the consummation, Satan, with his hosts and all those outside Christ, is finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in glorious bodies, will live and reign with Him forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then the eager expectation of creation will be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new.

Matters Pertaining to Biblical Ethics

Marriage & Sexuality

Marriage is an institution ordained by God from the foundation of the world, and intended as a lifelong union of one man and one woman. This idea is supported by the account of creation where God created man in His own image, both male and female. The passage implies that a unity of one man and one woman is in some way necessary to fully represent the image of God in mankind. (Genesis 2:15-25)

Jesus Christ reaffirmed God's foundational truth regarding one man, one woman marriage until death saying "Haven't you read, he replied, that at the beginning the creator made them male and female and said for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."¹ (Matthew 19:4-6)

The Apostle Paul states that marriage is not merely a human institution, but is a special divine metaphor that is supposed to illustrate the union of Christ and the Church. For this reason also, only a union between a man and a woman can be a proper marriage because a union between two men, two women, or one man and multiple women or any collection of people could not properly illustrate the relationship between Christ and His Church. (Ephesians 5:22-32)

¹ New International Version

The Bible condemns all forms of sexual immorality and encourages Christians to flee from it because of its destructive effects on the body and the soul. As a result, in order to maintain our consistent Christian witness, we cannot sanction, approve, or promote in any way adultery, divorce, remarriage after divorce, fornication (a sexual relationship between an unmarried man and woman; i.e. "living together"), pornography, pedophilia, polygamy, incest, bestiality, homosexuality, transgender behavior or any sexual deviation from one man, one woman marriage until death. (I Corinthians 3:16; 6:12-20, Romans 1:18-32)

The sure foundation of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles is what the Church is called to teach and practice and is not at liberty to depart from them for a different authority if it is to authentically bear the name "Christian." Though we strive to live peaceably with all people and to obey legitimate government authority, in instances involving matters as foundational as marriage we must ultimately obey God rather than man if the two come into conflict (Acts 4:18-22, Matthew 7:24-29, I Corinthians 14:37)

Church Practices Derived from This Policy

Because of these above described religious beliefs and our belief in the need for a practice of fidelity to these beliefs, it is our policy that the facilities of this church may not be used for any ceremony that is inconsistent with our beliefs. It is also the policy of the church that no pastor or member of the church staff officiate at any ceremony designed to solemnize, promote, create, or approve of such a union. Nor may any member of the church enter such a union without being subject to church discipline.

Sexual Sin

Recognizing that sexual sin is a common struggle, we will love all people in Jesus' name, pointing them towards Christ's power to forgive and heal. We will seek God to discern ways that we can directly and indirectly minister and share God's love with those who struggle with this particular sin.

Weddings:

Any wedding ceremony performed on the church premises shall be officiated by a member of the Pastoral Staff, an ordained or duly licensed Elder of the church or a Pastor who agrees with our Statement of Faith and is approved by the Elders. Applicants shall participate in premarital counseling from the Pastor or counselors employed by this church or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the Pastor and Elders of the church have the appropriate training, experience, and spiritual understanding to provide such counseling. The Pastor and Elders may decline to provide church facilities for, and/or decline to officiate at a ceremony when in their judgment, there are significant concerns that one or both applicants may not be qualified to enter the sacred bond of marriage for theological, doctrinal, moral or legal reasons.

Family Relationships

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society and that a marriage which reflects biblical priorities and principles is the foundation of the Church and a healthy family. Children are a gift from God, and are both a blessing and a reward to their parents who are called to train them daily and diligently in God's truth. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them to God through a consistent lifestyle example, appropriate teaching, and discipline. (Deuteronomy 6:7-9; Psalm 127:3-5; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4)

We believe that men and women are equal in position before God. God has given each sex distinct and separate spiritual roles in the home and the Church. The husband is to love and serve his wife as Christ loves the Church, to recognize that she is his essential helper and companion, and to live with her in a nurturing and understanding way. The wife is to submit to the headship of her husband as the Church submits to the headship of Christ, to be her husband's loving friend, and to respect him as a matter of spiritual service. A husband's responsibility includes giving priority to spiritually leading his family and providing for his family's material needs. A wife's responsibility includes giving priority to home management and the nurture of her children. (Genesis 1:27; 2:15, 18; 3:19; 5:2; Proverbs 31:10-31; Ephesians 5:22-33; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

God commands that those who remain single are to commit themselves to a life of sexual abstinence and single-minded devotion to Christ. The Apostle Paul, who himself was single, taught that such a lifestyle was not only good but has the advantage of enabling the believer to serve the Lord without distraction. (1 Corinthians 7:8, 32-34)

Abortion and Euthanasia

We believe that human life is a sacred gift from God and must be respected from the moment of conception (fertilization) until natural death. We believe that the intentional, willful termination of a pregnancy ("abortion") at any time after conception constitutes the taking of life. Accordingly, abortions, including for reasons of birth defects, gender selection, birth control, population control, or even in the tragic instances of rape or incest, and acts of encouraging, facilitating, or paying for abortions, are inconsistent with Scripture and the glory of God. (Psalm 139:13-16)

While we oppose active intervention with the intent to produce death ("euthanasia"), whether for the relief of suffering, economic considerations, or convenience of the person, family, or society, we do not oppose the withdrawal or failure to institute artificial means of life support in patients who are clearly and irreversibly deteriorating, in whom death appears imminent.

Article V

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Qualifications & Admission into Membership

Persons confessing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives, being baptized by immersion and agreeing to the Constitution, shall be recommended to membership upon approval of the Elders.

In cases where the candidate has been a member of another church, the Elders shall receive recommendation from that church that the candidate was in good standing. In cases where a recommendation is received, it does not automatically admit one into membership.

Section 2 – Responsibilities of Members

The responsibility for ministry belongs to the entire membership. Members prayerfully carry out the mission and vision of the church by using their spiritual gifts, contributing financially through tithes and offerings to the work of the church and participating in its business and ministries. Each member of the church is expected to attend its meetings, to work for its up-building, and guard its good name in the community. The members approve broad decisions for the church and entrust leadership to the Senior Pastor, working with the Elders, Staff and Serve Teams. Members honor and pray for the Staff and leaders of the church, and serve with them in carrying out the mission and covenant of the church, while endeavoring to preserve its unity.

Members vote on the following matters:

- a. Admittance to church membership
- b. Election of the Elders
- c. Adoption of an annual budget
- d. The call of a Senior Pastor
- e. Election of a Senior Pastor Search Committee
- f. The encumbrance of debt of real property
- g. Amendments to the Constitution
- h. Other business the Pastor or Elders desire to bring to the church.

Members shall strive to keep their covenant obligations. They will endeavor to preserve the unity of the church; and if at any time they find themselves unchangingly opposed to the doctrines and procedures of this church (as described by the Church Constitution), they will not seek to disrupt its fellowship, but will quietly withdraw from its membership.

Section 3 -Discipline of Members

Church discipline is a necessary mark of a healthy church and shall be applied in cases of sexual misconduct, gossip, divisiveness, dishonesty, and various other expressions of sin. In accordance with the biblical pattern generally outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, a person who evidences such sin will be confronted in an initial one-on-one meeting, followed by escalating engagement by the Elders

Where the steps of discipline are exhausted in cases of unrepentant and/or habitual sin, the Elders will consider removing a person from membership with the hope of eventual reconciliation and restoration. This removal may or may not include a prohibition to attend church services and events, depending on the circumstances. In addition, it will include public disclosure of removal from membership and the circumstances leading to this decision to the corporate membership of the church. Those so disciplined will in turn be restored to fellowship where the Elders have determined that appropriate repentance has occurred.

1. Inactive and Negligent Members

The Elders shall assist inactive and negligent members in their walk with God and seek to recover such members to active church membership. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the Elders shall inform the negligent member regarding his/her continued negligence and may act to remove him/her from church membership.

2. Offended and Quarreling Members:

Offences among members are inevitable, and it is important that attempts are made to settle them according to the pattern outlined in scripture. Members are to seek reconciliation in a spirit of love when offences occur whether noticed by the offender or the offended person. However, if the parties involved are unsuccessful in following this pattern, or if upon following it, reconciliation has not been reached, it is incumbent upon the Pastor and Elders to preserve the peace of the church. (Matthew 18:15-16, Matthew 5:23-24)

3. Rebellious and Divisive Members

Conduct such as gossip or backbiting, falsehood, slander, disorder, conspiracy, are unscriptural and detrimental to the life of the church. Persons who rebel against the spiritual leadership of the church, who endeavor to influence others against leadership, who promote divisions, shall be subject to church discipline. The Elders shall act with love and grace, but are required to proceed immediately to admonish any member engaged in, secretly or otherwise, obstructing the work or disturbing the peace of the church. If the attitude and actions persist after disciplinary measures have failed, the

Elders may act to remove him/her from membership. (Titus 3:10, II Thessalonians 3:6, II Timothy 4:2)

4. Accused Members

If a member is accused by another member in good standing of a violation of the Statement of Faith, Constitution or of doctrinal, immoral, or unchristian conduct, such charges must be submitted in writing to the Elders by the accuser.

When such charges have been presented, the Elders shall investigate the following:

- a. Whether the pattern of Matthew 18:15-16 is applicable and has been followed.
- b. Whether the accusations appear to be valid.
- c. Whether the accusations are supported with the preponderance of evidence.

The accused shall be asked to meet with the Elders at a time that is reasonable to receive a full and fair hearing. The accused shall have at least two (2) weeks written notice of such hearing and be informed of the nature of the charges with a copy of the accusations given to them personally. If the accused does not appear in answer to the summons, the Elders may begin disciplinary measures as the case may warrant. If there is evidence of repentance and restitution the Elders may acquit the accused, but if these efforts fail, the Elders may act to remove him/her from church membership.

5. Accused Elder or Pastor

In cases where the accused is related by birth or by marriage to an Elder, that Elder shall, for purpose of concluding the evaluation of the charges, remove himself from the hearings in which these charges are dealt with.

If a Pastor or Elder is accused by two or three members of a violation of the Statement of Faith, Constitution or of doctrinal, immoral, or unchristian conduct, such charges must be submitted in writing to the Elders by the accusers. If upon evaluation the charges appear to be valid the Elder or Pastor must be temporarily removed from his position while the charges are dealt with. In the case of an Elder, if necessary the remainder of the Elders may appoint someone who meets the qualifications for the office of Elder to temporarily fill the vacancy. In the case of a Pastor, the Elders may appoint a temporary Pulpit Supply. Such information, as needed with reasons, will be presented to the church for their awareness, understanding, and cooperation.

Membership may be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death of the member
2. Inactivity and negligence
3. Request for the transfer of membership*
*Any member in good standing may be removed by transfer of membership to the fellowship of another Bible-believing church of like faith.
4. Discipline – A member may be removed from membership as a result of any of the disciplinary action described in this Article. Exclusion from membership shall be by unanimous action of the Elders. Exclusion from membership shall stand as the final action of discipline until the person returns and makes things right according to Scripture.

Article VI

THE BOARD OF ELDERS

Section 1 – Qualifications

The Board of Elders (Elders) will be male church members who fulfill the following Biblical qualifications for the office as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-5.

- a. They aspire to the office.
- b. They are above reproach.
- c. They are the husband of one wife.
- d. They are self-controlled
- e. They are sensible, prudent, and reasonable.
- f. They are respectable & honorable
- g. They are hospitable
- h. They are skilled in teaching
- i. They are not addicted to alcohol
- j. They are not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome
- k. They are not lovers of money
- l. They are leaders of well-ordered homes.
- m. They are mature believers
- n. They have good reputations even with the outside world.

Section 2 – Selection

All Elders are nominated by the Senior Pastor and elected by the membership for three-year terms. The Pastor may nominate an individual for a shorter term to fill a vacancy or to balance the number of terms expiring each year. An Elder's term begins on the date he is elected by the congregation and ends after three years at the appropriate Annual Meeting. Elders may serve a maximum of six consecutive years on the Elder Board, after which they must be out of office for at least one full year before receiving another nomination.

Names of candidates nominated by the Pastor for the position of Elder must be posted no less than four (4) weeks prior to the election. The ballot will identify nominees, including incumbents, and clearly indicate the term of office for Elder. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of members present and qualified to vote shall be necessary to elect an Elder. The vote shall be by written ballot.

At a subsequent service of the church, newly elected Elders will be commissioned for their responsibilities. Those Elders already in office will lay hands on the new leaders and, by means of prayer, commission them to their tasks.

Section 4 – Structure

The Elders will consist of a minimum of three (3) members, unless there are not three qualified persons able or willing to serve, in which case the number of Elders will reflect those qualified to serve. The three members will include the Senior Pastor, Elder Chair and Secretary. The Secretary of the Elders will also serve as Church Clerk.

Section 3 – Responsibilities

The purpose of the Elders is to shepherd the church and ensure that the church members fulfill its Mission and Covenant.

Primary Responsibilities:

1. Praying: The Elders will pray for the church and its members and will also offer a ministry of prayer for members who are sick. (James 5:14)
2. Shepherding: As shepherds, Elders will seek to joyfully care for the flock by practicing hospitality, engage in the teaching and discipline of the membership and assuming pastoral duties in the absence of a Senior Pastor. (1 Peter 5:1-4; Heb.13:17).
3. Guiding: Elders are charged with overseeing the spiritual life of the church, including its unity and peace, essential biblical doctrine, ministry direction, Senior Pastor's leadership, and the church's financial condition.

Occasional Responsibilities:

1. Arbitrating Disputes: The Elders will serve as arbitrators in disputes as necessary, including disputes with the Senior Pastor, and address unwarranted criticism.
2. Membership: The Elders are responsible for implementing the process by which individuals become church members, including interviewing and recommending candidates for membership.
3. Disciplining: The Elders are responsible for seeing that discipline occurs in keeping with Matthew 18:15-17.
4. Ordaining/Licensing: The Elders are responsible for approving the licensing and ordination of individuals to the gospel ministry.
5. Overseeing the Annual Budget and Financial Matters: The Elders are responsible for establishing and overseeing the process of formulating the Annual Budget.

6. Communication: The Elders will work with the Serve Team Directors to receive suggestions, encourage them in their ministries and commission them for special projects.
7. Selection: The Elders will give orientation to Serve Teams and Committees regarding the selection of Serve Team Directors and Committee Chairs and members.
8. Financial Matters: The Elders shall review the church's financial records and report results to the Stewardship Committee at least annually. The Elders will also have the right to authorize expenditures not included in the budget of the church in cumulative amounts not exceeding five percent (5%) of the church's approved annual budget.
9. Legal Functions: The Elders will perform all the statutory functions of the Board of Trustees of a religious association incorporated under West Virginia law. The chairman of the Elders will serve as President of the church for legal purposes.
10. Evaluation: The Elders, as part of their responsibility in providing guidance to the Senior Pastor in the spiritual oversight and administration (conduct) of the church, shall annually appraise his ministry by performing a written performance evaluation which also serves as a document of recommendation for salary adjustments to the Stewardship Committee.

Section 4 – Termination

1. Resignations of Elders, shall be submitted in writing to the Elders.
2. Should the relation between the congregation and an Elder, become detrimental to the welfare of the church, and efforts at restoration are unsuccessful, the remaining Elders shall make an actionable recommendation to the membership. The service of this Elder shall conclude immediately following a vote for dismissal by an affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of the members.

Article VII

THE CHURCH STAFF

Section 1 – Makeup

The term Church Staff, as used in this Constitution, includes both employees and volunteers appointed to roles designated by the Elders as staff roles. The Church Staff shall consist of the Senior Pastor, and Support Staff.

1. The Senior Pastor oversees the Church Staff, which consists of qualified men and women who help carry out the church's vision, purposes and annual ministry objectives.
2. Support Staff members assist the Senior Pastor in fulfilling specific responsibilities that support the ministries of the church.

Section 2 – Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall meet all the qualifications for Elders as stated in VI Section 1 and serve as a voting member of the Board of Elders.

1. General Responsibilities: The Senior Pastor will:
 - a. Lead the church in the accomplishment of its mission and vision
 - b. Devote himself to prayer and the ministry of the word
 - c. Train and develop Church Staff, Elders and Serve Team Directors.
 - d. Oversee the church members in partnership with the Elders
 - e. Serve as the primary preacher in the church
 - f. Represent Church Staff on the Board of Elders
2. Church Staff Leadership: The Senior Pastor will:
 - a. Oversee all Church Staff and, with input from the Elders, determine the Staff's organizational structure with lines of leadership and responsibility.
 - b. Provide counsel, encouragement, and discipline for the Church Staff, so as to assist in the accomplishment of the objectives established for each Church Staff member.
 - c. Conduct regular Church Staff meetings.
 - e. Communicate annual feedback to the Church Staff
 - f. Hire or terminate any Church Staff member with the approval of the Elders.

Section 3 – Other Church Staff

1. Qualifications and Calling

- a. All Church Staff shall be individuals who demonstrate both the appropriate spiritual maturity and competence to serve in their area of responsibility.

b. A Church Staff position may be created, modified, or abolished by the Elders. When a Church Staff position is created, or becomes vacant, the Senior Pastor will recommend a replacement that will be approved by the Elders. It is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor to ensure the position is filled in a timely manner.

2. Responsibilities and Authority

The Elders shall approve a written job description for each Church Staff position, specifying responsibilities and supervision.

Article VIII

SERVE TEAM DIRECTORS & SERVE TEAMS

Section 1 – Qualifications and Makeup

Serve Team Directors will be Church members who fulfill the qualifications for the office of Deacon stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Section 2 -Selection & Structure

Serve Team Directors will be selected as needed by the Elders to serve the Church by leading specific areas of practical ministries within the church. These roles whether paid or volunteer will be considered Church Staff roles.

Serve Team Directors will choose for themselves other ministry leaders who will lead teams under them to accomplish their purpose and goals. Individuals leading a team must be members of the Church but those serving on a team may include Church members and active nonmembers whose beliefs and practices are consistent with those of the Church. If at any time the Elders deem a Serve Team Director or team member as better suited for a different area of ministry or as unfit to serve in their current capacity, they may act to move or remove that individual from their position.

Section 3 – Responsibilities

The purpose of Serve Teams is to assist the Elders in achieving the mission and vision of the Church. Specific responsibilities for Serve Team Directors and volunteers are expounded upon in their respective Serve Team Handbooks.

ARTICLE IX COMMITTEES

Section 1 – Qualifications and Makeup.

Committee members shall be church members selected by the Elders and reaffirmed in that position by the Elders every three years.

Section 2 -Committees That Report to the Elders

1. Stewardship Committee: The Stewardship Committee will consist of a minimum of four (4) members. The Stewardship Committee will be responsible for the following:

- a. Disbursing all money contributed to the local church budget and keeping accurate records of how money is spent.
- b. Reviewing monthly financial transactions to ensure the funds of the church are being handled in accordance with the wishes of the congregation as expressed by the annual church budget.
- c. Maintaining accurate records of all funds received, and gift designations.
- d. Supplying correct tax documents to donors and employees annually.
- e. Assist the Elders as requested in creating an annual church budget for the congregation's approval at the annual business meeting.
- f. Rendering quarterly financial reports to the church membership and presenting an annual financial report to the church.
- g. Reviewing the salary packages of all Church Staff annually, and recommending changes in compensation for the following year.
- h. Assisting the Senior Pastor in the hiring process for other Church Staff, including the details of their job description and salary package.

2. Search Committee: Whenever the position of Senior Pastor becomes vacant, a Senior Pastor Search Committee shall be formed. The Search Committee of seven (7) shall be comprised of three (3) members of the Elder Board and four (4) members of the church selected by the Elders.

- a. All seven of the selected members must be approved by the Congregation at a called members meeting. The Search Committee shall meet and select its own Chair, Vice Chair and secretary to handle all communications with the prospective candidates and the congregation.
- b. Before recommending a prospective candidate to the church the committee must agree unanimously that the candidate fulfills all the qualifications for Elders as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. They must check references, perform a background check and attain a signed statement from the candidate endorsing the Statement of Faith and Constitution.
- c. The Search Committee shall recommend one candidate at a time to the Elders for approval, and then to the church. Search Committee members and Elders must unanimously agree on a candidate before recommending the candidate to the church.
- d. The voting on the candidate by the church shall take place at a meeting of the Congregation for that purpose, in which case at least two-week's prior notice shall be given.
- e. The Search Committee shall recommend the starting salary package of the newly called Pastor to the Stewardship Committee upon the approval of the church.

Section 3 – Termination

1. Resignations of committee members shall be submitted in writing to the Elders and be effective on the date specified in the resignation.
2. Should the relation between a committee member and the congregation become detrimental to the welfare of the church, and efforts at restoration are unsuccessful, the Elders shall have authority to consider this matter and to remove the person from office. The service of this committee member shall conclude immediately following dismissal by the Elders.

ARTICLE X MEETINGS

Section 1 -Meetings for Worship and Teaching

1. The church shall meet for worship and teaching on Sundays and at other times as the Elders may decide.

Section 2 -Members Meetings

1. Members meetings may be called by the Elders or by the members of the church through a petition signed by at least twenty (20%) of the members.
2. The time, place, and purpose of Members Meetings will be announced to the church in a suitable manner and as far in advance as possible.
3. Agenda items requiring a vote of the membership shall normally be communicated two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. In emergency situations, communication will occur as far in advance as possible.
4. Agenda items must be communicated clearly enough to allow members to understand the nature of the issues being decided.
5. All motions must be submitted to the Elders prior to Member's Meetings and printed in the published agenda before being voted on.

Section 3 -Annual Meeting

1. The Annual Meeting of the church will be held during the third full week of January, with the date to be determined by the Elder Board.
2. The minimum agenda for this meeting will include the election of Elders, the vote for adoption of the annual budget, a review of the church's previous year through the presentation of reports by the Senior Pastor and the Elders, and other business as is proper to come before said meeting.

Section 4 -Voting Procedures

One-third (1/3) of the current membership who are members in good standing and qualified voters shall constitute a quorum. If after the notice of a Members Meeting, a quorum is not obtained, the Moderator may call a second meeting designating a lesser number of the

membership. Unless otherwise specified, a vote of seventy five percent (75%) of the quorum shall be required to pass any motion.

All matters pertaining to the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of property shall be voted on only by members who are in good standing and at least 18 years of age. On all other matters, members who are in good standing and at least 15 years of age are entitled to vote.

The election of the Senior Pastor and other Elders shall be by secret ballot.

Section 5 – Church Moderator

The Church Moderator is a church member elected annually by the Elders to carry out the Agenda set by the Elders for all Members Meetings according to Roberts Rules of Order. The Moderator fulfills a neutral role when presiding at regular and special called Members Meetings to facilitate productive church business in an orderly and efficient manner.

ARTICLE XI

CHURCH BUDGET

1. The method of financing the work of this church shall be through tithes and offerings.
2. The Elders shall oversee the process of preparing a proposed Budget each year. Such proposed Budget shall be posted for the members two (2) weeks prior to the Annual Meeting to be voted on.
3. Items on the Budget may be paid by the Treasurer without further church vote.

ARTICLE XII

MISSIONARY SUPPORT

1. Missions support shall be designated in the budget year.
2. Designated gifts may be given to the Treasurer for any Missionary or Mission work approved by this church. If the Elders should consider support of a designated person or agency to be inconsistent with the testimony and/or the position of the church, such designated gift will be returned to the donor.

ARTICLE XIII

CHURCH YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall begin the first day of January and close on the last day of December.

ARTICLE XIV

AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

1. Auxiliary Organizations of the church shall have the right to adopt such rules and regulations as they may deem best and most favorable to their success, provided that none shall conflict with this Constitution, or interfere with regular or special meetings of the church.
2. All Auxiliary Organizations shall be accountable to the Elders.
3. When any Auxiliary Organization disbands, all money and property held by them shall become the property of the church.
4. All Executive Officers of Auxiliary Organizations must be members of the church.
5. Speakers at Auxiliary Organizations Meetings must either be members of this church or have the prior approval of the Elders.

ARTICLE XV

REPRESENTATION IN ASSOCIATIONS

Whenever it is necessary to appoint Messengers to represent this church in any association, the church shall so appoint. The Messengers shall then faithfully represent the desires of the church as instructed.

ARTICLE XVI

AFFILIATIONS

The church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in the fulfillment of its purposes, the church may voluntarily affiliate with other churches and conventions by a unanimous vote of the Elders.

ARTICLE XVII

DIVISION AND DISSOLUTION

1. Division: In the event of a division of the church, the property of this church shall belong to the group representing the largest portion of the church membership, which is loyal to the Constitution.

2. Dissolution: Should conditions arise when, for any reason, the church work cannot continue, seventy-five percent (75%) of members present and voting may decide to dissolve and transfer assets, subject to debt repayment, to another ministry which is supportive of the church's Statement of Faith.

ARTICLE XVIII

RULES OF ORDER

The rules contained in Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the business proceedings of this church in all cases where they are not inconsistent with this Constitution.

AMENDMENTS XIX

This Constitution may be amended at any duly called Members Meeting of the church by three fourths (75%) vote from members present and voting.

This Constitution was adopted on June 25, 2017 by the Members of The First Baptist Church of Paden City
Amended on June 27, 2022 by the Members of The First Baptist Church of Paden City by voting to affirm DBA
"Valley Church".