

# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF INTERLACHEN CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

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## Article I – NAME

This Church is and shall be known as First Baptist Church of Interlachen, Florida.

## Article II - AFFILIATIONS

This Church is and shall be affiliated with the St. Johns River Baptist Association, the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

## ARTICLE III - OUR PURPOSE, VISION, MISSION

1. Our Purpose: To glorify God by being a lighthouse for Jesus and a visible image of God.
  2. Our Mission: To be the hands and feet of the Son of God, living out the Word by the power of the Spirit of God, by leading others to Christ and providing opportunities for spiritual growth and evangelism.
- Our Vision:
- To see the Word of God lived out by the members of First Baptist Church of Interlachen.
  - To see Jesus Christ lifted up as Savior and Lord.
  - To see the Church, as the fellowship of believers, become a lighthouse and a beacon of hope for the lost, the weary and the hurting.
  - To see individuals disciplined and living for Jesus Christ.
  - To see leaders developed not because they have been elected but chosen by God.
  - To see the home restored as the central place of worship.
  - To see the Good News of Jesus Christ proclaimed in Interlachen and all the earth.

## Article IV– ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. We believe that the Bible, comprised of the Old Testament and New Testament, is the divinely inspired word of God, complete, inerrant and infallible, and that it is the supreme and final authority in matters of faith and practice.
2. We believe in one God, eternally in three persons: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is truly God and truly man.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God and that man sinned; thereby incurring not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and in the case of those who reach the age of moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word and deed.

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5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitution sacrifice and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, His ascension into heaven, and in His presence there for us as High Priest and advocate, and in His personal visible return to the earth according to His promise.
7. We believe in the universality of sin (“... all have sinned...”Romans 3:23), and that salvation by grace (“... not of works lest any man shall boast.” Ephesians 2:9), and that Sonship with God is attained only by regeneration through the Holy Spirit and faith in Jesus Christ.
8. We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, who came down upon the earth on the day of Pentecost to dwell within believers “to reprove the world of sin and righteousness and of Judgment...” (John 16:8) and to be the administrator in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
9. We believe in a heaven of eternal bliss for the saved and in a hell of conscious and eternal punishment for the unsaved.
10. We believe that each church is independent and autonomous and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; therefore, church and state must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from the dictation or patronage of the other.
11. We subscribe to the 2000 edition of the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention.

### ARTICLE V - 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 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 this Church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promise its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of its ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to teach our children the Christian truths; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances, to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements; exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling; backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of alcohol as a beverage or any product or entertainment media that would adversely affect our Christian walk; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further encourage watching over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in

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speech; to be slow to offend but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior; to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with another Southern Baptist Church or a Church of like faith and doctrine where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

### ARTICLE VI – ORDINANCES

- Section 1. Ordinances:** Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Section 2. Method of Baptism:** Baptism shall be by immersion.
- Section 3. Observance of the Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly with such exceptions as may be recommended by the Pastor

### Article VII – MEETINGS

- Section 1. Weekly Meetings:** The weekly meetings of the church shall be as follows:
- a. **Worship:** The worship services of the Church shall be morning and evening of each Sunday.
  - b. **Prayer and Bible Study:** The midweek prayer service shall be weekly on Wednesday. The service day and time may be changed for sufficient reason.
  - c. **Sunday School and Discipleship Training:** Shall be conducted on each Sunday.
- Section 2. Business Meeting**
- a. **Regular Business Meeting:** Shall be held as designated by the Church council.
  - b. **Special Called Business Meetings:** May be called by the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons, or by written request of ten (10) active members of the Church. The reason for the special called business meeting will be the only business allowed to be discussed or conducted at this meeting. Advance notice shall be given to the Church in at least two (2) worship services of the Church.
- Section 3. Guidelines for Business Meetings**
- a. **Quorum:** A quorum shall consist of thirty-five (35) active members of the Church
  - b. **Moderator:** The Pastor shall act as moderator. Should the Pastor be absent, the Pastor, shall have appointed a moderator. If the Church has no Pastor, the Chairman

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of Deacons shall act as moderator.

- c. **Agenda:** A written agenda for each business meeting shall be established and provided the Sunday prior to all business meetings. Any item not on the agenda may be brought for discussion only and must be tabled to be voted on at the next business meeting.

### Article VIII – MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1. General:** The Membership of this Church shall consist of persons who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, who have been baptized as believers by immersion and who are in sympathy with the preaching and practices of this Church as reflected in the Church Covenant and Constitution and By-Laws.
- Section 2. Admission of Members:** Membership in this Church shall be attained by one of the following three ways:
  - a. Upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ, followed by baptism by immersion.
  - b. By letter from another Baptist Church of like doctrine and order.
  - c. By Statement of Faith of prior conversion experience and by renewal of a vow of love and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The candidate must have been baptized by immersion. Persons may become members of this Church by presentation and acceptance by this Church of proper letters of dismissal from other churches of like faith and order.
- Section 3. Reception of Members:** Persons coming into the membership of this Church by letter, profession of faith, or statement, shall be greeted by the Church; then recommended to the Church to be received for membership by simple majority vote of eligible members at the next scheduled business meeting.
- Section 4. Duties of Members**
  - a. **To Themselves:** to acquire scriptural knowledge; to make consistent progress in spirituality; be consistent in moral conduct, and the control of every unholy temper.
  - b. **To Their Pastor:** To honor, esteem and love him, to pray for him fervently, to submit to him the spiritual exercises of his official authority, to attend constantly upon his administrations, to manifest a tender regard for his reputation.
  - c. **To other members of the Church:** To cultivate and cherish brotherly love for every member of the Church; to show them love by using all proper measures to promote their spiritual benefit, progress and prosperity.
  - d. **To those not connected to the Church:** To be exact in fulfilling obligations and

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promises, to lead them to Christ and to provide opportunities for spiritual growth.

- e. **To attend** habitually the services of the Church.
- f. **To contribute** financially toward the support of the Church in proportion to their ability.

**Section 5. Transfer of membership** – letters of transfer shall be communicated from this Church to another Baptist Church of like doctrine and order of the member's choice. A letter of dismissal will be given to anyone joining a Church of another denomination.

**Section 6. Membership classification:** Members of this Church shall be classified in the following manner:

- a. **Resident Members** – members residing within a reasonable travel distance of the physical location of church property. If resident member is absent from regular services of this Church for a period of nine (9) months and fails to contribute to the Church for the same period of time, the member will be placed on the inactive roll. A person on the inactive roll may become an active member again upon regular attendance and support of the Church for a period of three (3) months.
- b. **Non Resident Members** – members who have moved their residence from the local community and are not within a reasonable travel distance of the church property. According to our Church covenant, we pledge to unite with another Church as soon as possible after moving. Therefore, after a person has moved away from this area for a period of six (6) months, unless the member keeps in contact with this Church, he/she shall be moved from the active roll of the Church and shall be placed on the inactive roll. If a person is connected with the armed forces, in college or has any other justifiable reason, this rule shall not apply.
- e. **Inactive Members** – When a member has been absent from the regular services of the Church for over nine (9) months and has failed to maintain contact with the Church, the Church Clerk upon the recommendation of the Pastor shall place that member on the inactive roll of the Church. Those on the inactive roll of the Church shall not have voting privileges of a member or be able to serve in any leadership capacity within the Church.

**Section 7. Termination of Membership:** Membership in this Church may be terminated in one of the following manners:

- a. By letter of transfer.
- b. Upon written request of the member.
- c. By joining a Church of another denomination.
- d. By Death.

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- e. By unchristian conduct – membership may be withdrawn from any member who continually engages in unchristian conduct. Scriptural procedure shall be followed at all times during this action.

### Article IX – STAFF

#### Section 1: Selection of a Pastor

1. Upon the death, resignation or removal of a Pastor, the Church shall without delay, instruct the Nominating Committee to recommend a Pulpit Committee. This committee, shall consist of five members elected by the Church, to select and recommend a suitable man whom they shall present to the Church, to serve as Pastor.
2. The Pulpit Committee shall deal with only one candidate at a time.
3. The committee shall recommend the candidate to the Church. The ballot shall be a written secret ballot and the Deacons shall serve as tellers. In order to extend a call to be Pastor, the candidate must receive the support of at least ninety percent (90%) of active members present at a special called business meeting.
4. Should a candidate be considered by the committee and by the Church, but does not receive sufficient votes by the Church to sustain a call, this candidate shall be so notified before the committee shall proceed to consider another candidate.
5. The call of a Pastor shall be for an indefinite period of time.

#### Section 2: Duties of a Pastor

All matters concerning the relationship of the Pastor and the Church shall be set forth in the “Pastoral Covenant”.

#### Section 3: Termination of a Pastor

- a. The relationship of the Pastor and this Church may be terminated either by the Pastor or the Church by giving thirty (30) days notice in writing.
- b. A termination by the Church shall be supported by at least a seventy-five percent (75%) majority of the qualified members present and voting through written secret ballot, with the deacons serving as tellers, at any specially called business meeting which has been announced from the pulpit or in the bulletin at least two weeks prior to the called meeting.

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### **Section 4: Other Ministerial Staff**

1. These are the Associate Pastors of the Church.
2. Should a ministry staff position be vacated or should the Church feel the need to create a ministry staff position, an Ad Hoc committee shall be elected by the congregation during business meeting for the purpose of filling that ministry staff position. The Ad Hoc committee will be responsible for establishing the guidelines in the covenant relationship between that staff member and the church. The covenant will describe the duties, ministries, and financial support of that ministry staff member. The Ad Hoc committee will present the covenant to the church for approval prior to presenting it to the candidate for consideration. If the candidate and the church are in agreement, the Ad Hoc committee will present the candidate to the church for consideration by appropriate voting procedures.

### **Section 5: Support Staff**

- a. The Church may call additional staff as deemed necessary by the Church
- b. All other staff along with job titles, functions, duties supervision, qualifications, compensation, hours of work, and any other item of employment shall be outlined in the Personnel Manual.
- c. Likewise, all volunteer positions including teaching, leadership and committees shall be detailed in the Operations Manual.

## **Article X - DEACONS**

**Section 1:** There shall be a body of deacons, the number to be in proportion to the membership of the Church, qualified according to Scripture.

**Section 2:** Deacons shall be nominated by active members of the Church and ordained when qualifications have been met.

### **Section 3: Duties:**

1. Assist the Pastor in promoting and maintaining the spiritual welfare of the Church and in the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism.
2. Serve as a council to advise and work with the Pastor in matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the Church; to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort of soul-winning and spiritual growth.
3. In the event the pulpit has been vacated, the deacons are to see that a leader is provided

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for the prayer meeting and for Sunday services until a pastor has been called.

4. In the absence of the Pastor, the deacon chairman may be called to conduct business meetings.

### **Article XI – OFFICERS**

**(This article will be moved to future Operations Manual)**

#### **Section 1: Elections**

1. Nominations from the floor shall be referred to the Nominating Committee for review and will be presented back to the church for consideration and vote.
2. Nominations may be presented to the Nominating Committee by any member of the Church at any time or made by individuals from the floor. Nominations from the floor shall be referred to the Nominating Committee for review and will be presented back to the church for consideration and vote.

#### **Section 2: Authority**

1. Let it be crystal clear that no Pastor, Trustee, Deacon, head of department, committee chairman or other member of this Church is vested with any sort of special authority to act at any time for any purpose for this Church other than to cast a vote as a member unless and until so authorized by this Church.
2. No officer, member, committee, or department shall incur financial obligation for this Church in excess of five dollars (\$5.00) unless same is provided for in the budget.
3. The Stewardship Committee shall not incur any obligation for this Church in excess of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) unless such expenditures are definitely provided for in the budget or authorized by the Church.
4. Without the expressed consent of the Church, no member or committee of the Church is to solicit funds or donations in the name of the Church from anyone outside the Church body.

#### **Section 3: Officers' Duties and Responsibilities**

##### **1. The Church Clerk**

- a. shall maintain the records and the reports of the Church in the Church office;
- b. shall handle all correspondence connected with the office of the Clerk;
- c. shall keep correct and up-to-date records of the Church membership;
- d. shall present to the Church, at each regular business meeting, all communications addressed to him or her officially pertaining to the Church;



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- e. shall issue all Church letters, when directed by the Church, and receive and record all Church letters after acceptance by the Church.
- f. shall deliver to his or her successor all office records of every nature pertaining to the office of the Clerk, when directed by the Church.
- g. shall be responsible for the annual Church letter.

### **2. The Church Secretary/Financial Secretary**

- a. shall receive all monies from regular Church offering and/or other offerings after they have been counted and recorded by the Counting Committee;
- b. shall deposit all funds and securities, as directed by the Church, in the bank or banks or other depositories designated by the Church;
- c. shall pay all bills and obligations of the Church after they have been audited, approved, and ordered paid by the Church Stewardship Committee unless they have been included and approved by the Church in the Church budget and are routinely paid;
- d. shall function and perform his or her duties in cooperation with the Church Stewardship Committee, and the Church Treasurer;
- e. shall submit and exhibit to the Stewardship Committee, the Church Treasurer or the Church, at all reasonable times as requested, the Church books, records, and files, as requested by the same;
- f. shall render an accurate statement of the condition of the finances of the Church at each regular business meeting and at such times as may be required by the Stewardship Committee or Church Treasurer;
- g. shall render a condensed annual financial report of the Church's finances for the year at the close of the Church year, which report, when approved and accepted by the Church, shall be incorporated in the Church's annual report or letter to the Association;
- h. shall be responsible for other duties as laid out in the church Employee Handbook, and as outlined for the job description for Church Secretary; and
- i. shall endorse all checks and negotiable papers that come into his or her official charge.

### **3. The Trustees**

- a. shall consist of four members, at least one of which shall be a Deacon;
- b. shall be elected for a four-year term, one member to rotate off each year;
- c. shall elect a chairman and a chairman-elect to serve for one year, at the end of said year the chairman-elect becomes chairman and a new chairman-elect is elected;
- d. shall act as legal representatives as directed by the Church and sign all legal documents involving Church property;
- e. shall maintain an up-to-date inventory of all Church property, property deeds, mortgage loans, and insurance on all Church property;
- f. shall act as legal representatives of the Church in the event a suit is brought against the Church;

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g. shall have the authority to spend no more than six-thousand (\$6,000.00) on emergencies or repairs to the Church without first coming before the Church for approval, provided the money is available in the treasury. When the money has been used on repairs or maintenance, the Trustees will present before the Church at the next regular business meeting what the money has been or what is going to be used toward. When the money is spent, an itemized receipt will be given to the Church Financial Secretary for the items purchased.

#### 4. **The Deacons**

- a. shall be closely associated with the Pastor in having charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church.
- b. shall perform such duties and accept such responsibilities as are incumbent upon the office of a Deacon; and
- c. shall elect their own officers, the officers to consist of: chairman, chairman-elect and secretary. The secretary shall serve for a one-year term beginning in June. The chairman-elect shall be elected in the May Deacon's meeting to serve for a one-year term as chairman-elect and then one year as chairman.

#### 5. **The Church Nominating Committee**

- a. shall be elected. This committee shall be composed of a Deacon and two (2) lay members. When the Sunday School Director, Discipleship, WMU Director and the Baptist Men Director has been elected, they shall be added to this committee.
- b. This committee shall remain functional for filling all vacancies which occur until its a new committee shall have been elected at the April business meeting.
- c. The Deacon and lay members shall be elected to a three-year term, with one lay member rotating off each year.

#### 6. **The Stewardship Committee**

- a. shall consist of one Trustee, one Deacon, three lay members, the Church Treasurer, Financial Secretary (ex-officio), and one Ministry Staff member (ex-officio), who are not related and are not employees of the Church;
- b. shall audit, approve and authorize payment of all Church bills payable, not included in the Church budget and so authorized;
- c. shall be responsible for the auditing and approval of the Treasurer's reports to the Church and shall report their findings to the Church; and
- d. shall supervise the preparation of the annual Church budget and submit same to the Church for its approval and acceptance.
- e. The three lay members shall be elected for a three-year term, one to rotate off each year.

#### 7. **The Ushering Committee**

- a. shall consist of a chairman and co-chairman;
- b. shall select, train and direct their own assistants.

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8. **The By-Laws Committee**
  - a. shall consist of one Deacon and two lay members of the Church;
  - b. shall each be elected for a three-year term, one member to rotate off each year.
9. **The Buildings and Grounds Committee**
  - a. shall consist of a chairman and co-chairman and at least seven more members;
  - b. shall be the building maintenance committee of the Church;
  - c. shall have charge and control of the Church property as authorized by the Church;
  - d. shall supervise the beautification and maintenance of the grounds and all Church property.
10. **The Counting Committee**
  - a. shall consist of a chairperson and members as deemed necessary by the chairperson and elected by the Church;
  - b. shall be responsible for counting and making deposits of Sunday receipts.
11. **The Church Treasurer**
  - a. shall assume responsibility for overseeing all funds and securities of whatever value coming into the possession of the Church.
  - b. shall endorse all checks and negotiable papers that come into his or her official charge;
  - c. shall be elected for a one year term of office.

### Section Five – Church Council, Staff Members, and Personnel Committee

1. **The Church Council**
  - a. is made up of the Ministry Staff, Church Secretary, Stewardship Committee Chairman, Sunday School Director, Discipleship Training Director, WMU Director, Baptist Men's Director, Media Library Director, Church Clerk, Chairman of Trustees, Social Committee Chairman, Chairman of Deacons, and Children's Ministries Director.
  - b. meets quarterly to coordinate the Church's calendar, schedule of activities, special events, and use of facilities.
2. **Ministry Staff Members**
  - a. are the Pastor, and the Associate Pastors
  - b. should a ministry staff position be vacated or should the Church feel the need to create a ministry staff position, an Ad Hoc committee shall be elected by the congregation during business meeting for the purpose of filling that ministry staff position. The Ad Hoc committee will be responsible for establishing the guidelines in the covenant relationship between that staff member and the church. The covenant will describe the duties, ministries, and financial support of that ministry staff member. The Ad Hoc committee will present the covenant to the church for approval prior to presenting it to the candidate for consideration. If the candidate and the church are in agreement, the Ad Hoc committee will present the candidate to the

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church for consideration by appropriate voting procedures.

### **3. The Personnel Committee**

- a.** shall be five (5) in number composed of the Chairman of Deacons, Chairman of the Trustees and three (3) elected lay members excluding employees and Ministry Staff members of the Church;
- b.** shall recommend the hiring any employee of the Church;
- c.** shall draw up job descriptions for each employee and review the performance of each job;
- d.** shall research and recommend all employee benefits;
- e.** shall make the decision to dismiss any employee; however, said employee may bring any dismissal notice before the Church business meeting if the employee feels the action is unwarranted;
- f.** shall keep employee relations confidential unless it is the employee's choice to seek
- g.** committee members will step aside during any consideration of a family member;
- h.** lay members shall each be elected to a three-year term with one member rotating off each year.

## **ARTICLE XII – AUTHORITY**

- 1.** Let it be crystal clear that no Pastor, deacon, trustee, department head, committee chairman, or any other member of this Church is vested with any sort of special authority to act at any time for any purpose for this Church other than to cast a vote in a business meeting as an active church member, unless and until so authorized by this Church.
- 2.** The Stewardship Committee shall not incur any obligation for this Church in excess of twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars unless such expenditure(s) be definitely provided for in the budget or authorized by the Church.
- 3.** The trustees shall have authority to spend no more than six thousand dollars (\$6,000.00) on emergency repairs.  
to the Church property without first coming before the Church for approval provided that the money is in the treasury. The trustees shall at the next regular business meeting inform the Church of the expenditure and submit receipts for said expenditures(s).
- 4.** Without the express consent of the Church, no one is authorized to solicit funds or donations in the name of the Church from any source outside of the Church body.

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### ARTICLE XIII- AMENDMENTS

1. This Constitution and By-Laws may be altered or amended at any regular business meeting of this Church, provided that any suggested change or amendment shall have been introduced in written form at the previous business meeting and listed on the agenda.
2. All By-Laws changes shall be reviewed by the By-Laws Committee to eliminate any conflict in the By- Laws that may result from such a change. Any recommendations shall be reviewed and presented at the next regularly scheduled business meeting.
3. Any alteration, correction or change of these By-Laws will require a majority fifty-one percent (51%) affirmative vote of the active Church members present at said business meeting.
4. All by-laws, rules, regulations and resolutions adopted by the Church prior to the adoption of these By-Laws and in conflict therewith are hereby repealed.

