

# **First Baptist Church Cadillac, Michigan**

***Constitution and By-Laws  
Adopted January 1, 2007***

***Amended:  
January 25, 2009  
January 30, 2011  
January 29, 2017***

## ***Committee's Preface***

The Constitution Revision Committee is a committee appointed annually by the Advisory Council of the First Baptist Church of Cadillac. Its “responsibilities include an annual review or as needed to keep the document current and published” (FBC Constitution, Revisions to 2000, Article X, Section 7). The current committee was formed in the spring of 2005 by the Advisory Council and began to meet and discuss the current edition of the FBC Constitution.

It should be noted that during a review of all church business meeting minutes (both quarterly and annual meetings) from 1989-2005, we found that there were several instances of actions being taken by the church that were never added into the text of the “current” constitution. We had made those corrections.

As we met it became clear that more than a review was required and that significant revision was in order. For years the members of this committee had heard about, and witnessed for ourselves, the lack of adherence to our present constitution. This reality has existed for a variety of reasons, none of which is particularly malicious or of bad intent. Some of the reasons are ignorance, lack of oversight, and quite frankly an outdated and outmoded structure that does not allow for our present ministry to flourish.

With this Proposed Revision it was our desire to preserve the biblical and historically Baptist congregational polity of our church. We realized, however, the scriptures also describe a leadership structure that we chose to adopt in this revision. This polity can best be described as an “Elder-led, Congregational-rule polity.”

This polity recognizes that God gifts and provides for His church Elders and Deacons (both vocational and lay) to “oversee” the ministry of the church. These leaders are accountable to the local congregation, which is ultimately responsible to God. The congregation is to value, respect, and obey the leadership God has provided. They must also evaluate and test against the scriptures the teaching and decisions of that leadership body.

One question which is sure to surface almost immediately is “what happened to the ‘old structure’ – the boards and committees? How can we function with only two boards (Council of Elders and Board of Deacons)?” As you review the structure you will see that the revised structure allows for committees as needed and also specifies responsibilities for the two formal “boards.” These responsibilities cover the bulk of the work which was being done under the “old structure” while adding organizational structure and direct lines of oversight and accountability. The old structure is familiar but it is not currently functioning as prescribed and is in great disrepair. These revisions allow for a more mission-driven ministry without outmoded structures which inhibit mission. It will allow us the freedom of gift-based ministry and spirit-based leadership into the future.

From our first draft to this present Proposed Revision we have sent all of our committee’s work to the entire pastoral staff as it was completed for their comments and evaluation. We did receive comments and recommendations from the pastors and considered them in our deliberations.

As a committee we have met almost weekly from August 2005 through the present, sometimes meeting twice a week, in order to complete this project. It has been an intense season of work but one which we feel was deeply satisfying. It is with an appropriate sense of pride and accomplishment that we present to you, our church family, this Proposed Revision. We have experienced the presence of God in our midst as we have deliberated, searched the scriptures, and come to consensus. We offer this Proposed Revision with the hope that its ratification will allow the congregation of the First Baptist Church of Cadillac to flourish and continue to be a “city on a hill” whose light cannot be hidden.

**SOLA DEO GLORIA!**

Constitution Revision Committee  
July 2006

# ***Table of Contents***

## **Constitution**

I. Name.....	4
II. Mission Statement.....	4
III. Leadership and Organization.....	4
IV. Affirmation of Faith.....	4
V. Our Church Covenant.....	6
VI. Membership.....	6
VII. Dissolution.....	6
VIII. Revisions, Additions, and Amendments.....	6

## **By-Laws**

I. Membership.....	7
II. Church Government.....	8
III. Church Employees.....	11
IV. Church Finances.....	11
V. Meetings.....	12
VI. Affiliation.....	13

Glossary.....	14
---------------	----

Voting Summary.....	15
---------------------	----

Organizational Chart.....	16
---------------------------	----

Amendments.....	17
-----------------	----

# ***Constitution***

## **Article I: Name**

This organization shall be known as the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF CADILLAC, and shall be duly incorporated in the State of Michigan under the name as a religious, non-profit corporation.

## **Article II: Mission Statement**

The First Baptist Church of Cadillac is an active community of believers in love with and committed to Jesus Christ. Therefore, our mission is: **To Help People Connect with Jesus.**

The mission will be accomplished by utilizing these six Core Values:

- To EXALT the one true and living God through worship;
- To EXPERIENCE intimacy with God through prayer;
- To EDUCATE the people of God for lifelong discipleship;
- To ENCOURAGE loving relationships through small groups;
- To EXERCISE our spiritual gifts through service;
- To EVANGELIZE our community and world.

## **Article III: Leadership and Organization**

- A. The congregation of the church is the final authority within this local church, in submission to the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers to govern the church. However, the vote of the membership of this church at a properly called meeting or worship service, as provided in the By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:
  1. Accept members into the church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the church roll;
  2. Elect officers of the church;
  3. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office;
  4. Approve annual budgets of the church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve certain transactions regarding real property;
  5. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;
  6. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church;
  7. Approve the call, job description, and initial salary of Vocational Pastors and Ministers.
- B. The offices of the church shall be Elder and Deacon. The purpose of the officers of the church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.
- C. The leadership of the church shall be vested in the Council of Elders who are responsible for governing the church, teaching the Word, and tending the flock of God in this church.
- D. Deacons shall assist the Council of Elders by performing services of advice, administration, and implementation.

## **Article IV: Affirmation of Faith**

### ***1. THE WORD OF GOD***

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31-32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32).

### ***2. THE TRINITY***

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that They are equal in every divine perfection; and that They execute distinct but harmonious offices; i.e., the work of creation, providence, and redemption (Genesis 1:1-26; John 1:1-3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:5-6).

### ***3. GOD THE FATHER***

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (Luke 10:21-22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; John 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1-2; I Timothy 2:5-6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6).

#### **4. JESUS CHRIST**

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary, atoning death; bodily resurrection; ascension into heaven; perpetual intercession for His people; and personal visible return to earth (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; John 20:28; Romans 9:5; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30-31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; Romans 6:9-10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16).

#### **5. THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide (John 14:16-17, 26; John 15:26-27; John 16:8-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; I Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26).

#### **6. REGENERATION**

We believe that all human beings were created by God in His own image; that they sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual, and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature, are sinners by choice, and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation, and receive eternal life (Genesis 1:26; Genesis 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 2:11; John 3:14; John 5:24; John 5:30; John 7:13; John 8:12; John 10:26; Romans 9:22; II Thessalonians 1:9; Revelations 19:3, 20; Revelations 20:10-15; Revelations 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; Romans 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1).

#### **7. THE CHURCH**

We believe in the universal church; a living, spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary work of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world and discipling those who believe in Him (Ephesians 2:19-22; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25).

#### **8. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT**

We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others, that their conduct should be blameless before the world, that they should be a faithful steward of their possessions, and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ (I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15, 23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:9-10).

#### **9. THE ORDINANCES**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

#### **10. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God and is accountable to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other (I Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9, 12).

#### **11. CHURCH COOPERATION**

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time (Acts 15:36; Acts 15:41; Acts 16:5; I Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:1-3; Revelations 1:4, 10-11).

#### **12. THE LAST THINGS**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked (Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; I

Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 15:51-58; II Thessalonians 1:7- 10; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15).

## **Article V: Our Church Covenant**

We believe that the New Testament church was a voluntary organization of baptized believers meeting together to maintain the worship of God, to observe the ordinances, and to promote the interests of the Kingdom of Christ.

We strive to follow the faith of the New Testament church.

We believe that Christ is the only Head of the Church, that the Word of God is its only authority, and that the Holy Spirit is its only guide unto all truth.

As an organized group of Christian people, we enter into this covenant with one another to:

1. Walk together in Christian love;
2. Strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, spiritual integrity, and godly living;
3. Promote its Christian character by sustaining its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine;
4. Contribute to the support of the total ministry of the church;
5. Serve, as our talents, gifts, and circumstances permit, the mission of the church.

We will also strive to cultivate, by prayer and meditation, a life of devotion and consecration to God and to our Savior, Jesus Christ; to order the lives of our homes so that they may be truly Christian, the dwelling places of God; and to conduct ourselves in our business and social lives in ways becoming to disciples of Jesus Christ.

We enter into this covenant in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

## **Article VI: Membership**

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; who give evidence of regeneration by living a life consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine, and practice of this Church; who have been baptized by immersion; and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church.

## **Article VII: Dissolution**

It is confidently expected that the ministry of First Baptist Church of Cadillac will continue until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, in order to fulfill all possible legal requirements, it is the expressed wish and desire of this corporation, if First Baptist Church of Cadillac should bring its work to a conclusion and dissolve its corporation, that none of its assets remaining after meeting all responsibilities and payment of all just obligations shall go to the benefit of any individual member of the corporation, Elder, Deacon, missionary, employee, or other private individual. Any such assets shall, in the event of its dissolution, be turned over by decision at a regularly called or special meeting of the members of this corporation to an organization or organizations which is or are in harmony with the objectives as stated in the Affirmation of Faith of First Baptist Church of Cadillac. Such an organization or organizations must also be recognized by the United States Treasury Department as entitled to income tax exemption.

## **Article VIII: Revisions, Additions and Amendments**

Revisions, additions, or amendments of this Constitution and its By-Laws may be made only in the following manner:

1. At a properly called business meeting;
2. By two-thirds majority of those members present, provided at least ten percent (10%) of the voting membership of the church is present at such meeting;
3. After presentation by written motion at a quarterly or special meeting held at least three months before the aforementioned meeting;
4. If notice of the proposed change or addition has been given, in writing and from the pulpit, on at least two Sundays in the interim period between said meetings.

# ***By-Laws***

## **Article I: Membership**

### ***Section 1: General Statement***

We invite any person who has trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and is submitted to Him as Lord to identify with this church. We hold that membership in a local church involves definite responsibilities. It is expected for members to:

1. Commit to conduct themselves in daily living so as to bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ according to the pattern of spiritual life demonstrated and taught by Christ Jesus in the New Testament (Ephesians 4:1-3, 5:8-17; I Peter 1:15-16; Matthew 22:36-40).
2. Respond to God with cheerful service in the various ministries of the church, as He leads and gives ability (Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:23-24; Romans 8:4-9).
3. Give high priority to participation in church functions, especially those held for worship, preaching and teaching of the Word, fellowship, and prayer (Acts 2:41-47; Hebrews 10:25).
4. Diligently and faithfully give of their financial means to support the efforts of this church to proclaim the gospel at home and abroad (Exodus 25:2; Malachi 3:7-12; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:6-7; Genesis 28:22).

### ***Section 2: Procedure for Admission into Membership***

All actions regarding membership, either of admission, dismissal, or readmission, shall be by vote of the church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders. For admission into the church, this vote shall take place at any regularly called business meeting or at any regularly scheduled worship service. All other actions regarding membership shall take place at any regularly called business meeting. Upon receiving or dismissing members, the church may recognize this change in membership status at any regularly scheduled worship service.

An individual seeking membership in First Baptist Church of Cadillac shall:

1. Demonstrate their profession of faith in Jesus Christ through believer's baptism by immersion (unless precluded by disability);
2. Study the Church's Affirmation of Faith and Constitution;
3. Attend the approved membership instruction class or its equivalent;
4. Sign a statement indicating agreement with the Affirmation of Faith and a willingness to abide by the Constitution;
5. Appear before the Council of Elders to give personal testimony to a saving faith in the Person of Jesus Christ, and to declare the intention of walking in obedience to His command;
6. Request membership in First Baptist Church of Cadillac.

### ***Section 3: Discipline of Members***

The discipline of members shall be a responsibility of the Council of Elders, under such rules and procedures as the Elders may from time to time establish on the basis of Scripture. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of prayer, mingling Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 5:1-5).

### ***Section 4: Dismissal of Members***

- A. Letter of Transfer  
Any member in good standing who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to another church may receive it upon their request and upon the vote of the church. The name of the church to which membership is requested shall be stated in the request, and the letter shall be sent to the pastor or clerk of that church.
- B. Letter of Withdrawal  
Any member in good standing who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to another church may receive it upon their request and upon the vote of the church. This letter is available to be used when the withdrawing member has not yet selected a new church home.
- C. Request  
Upon their request, a member may withdraw from membership.
- D. Exclusion  
Should a member, by reason of immoral or other conduct contrary to God's word, become an offense to the mission of Christ, the Council of Elders shall respond by making every effort to bring that member to

reconciliation in a loving and conciliatory manner. Opportunity shall be given to the member to present a defense. If reconciliation and restoration cannot be achieved, upon recommendation of the Council of Elders and a majority vote of the congregation, at any regular quarterly business meeting, that person's membership shall be terminated (I Corinthians 5:9-11; Matthew 18:15-20).

## **Article II: Church Government**

### **Section 1: General Statement**

The leadership of First Baptist Church of Cadillac is modeled after principles found in Titus 1, I Timothy 3, and Acts 6. The Elders are responsible for the overall direction and spiritual development of the Church. The Deacons support the Elders by being responsible for the physical needs of the congregation.

We believe that our local church should be independent and autonomous, as well as solely responsible to God for its actions (Rev 1-3). Accordingly, we are not under the authority of any denomination or other hierarchical form of government. God gave the ultimate authority in the church to Jesus Christ. He is the head and it is our privilege and responsibility to follow His leadership (Ephesians 1:22-23). We believe that God has divinely given leadership gifts to certain individuals in the church with the express intent that they should lead (Ephesians 4:11-12).

### **Section 2: Leadership Structure**

#### A. Officers

The Officers of the church shall be Elders, belonging to the Council of Elders, and Deacons, belonging to the Board of Deacons. Officers shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the church. All officers of the church shall be members of the church in good standing. The Council of Elders and the Board of Deacons are the two bodies created by these By-Laws.

#### B. Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary

The church, upon nomination by the Council of Elders, shall elect at the Fall Business Meeting members to the positions of Church Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. The Treasurer shall be bonded by the church for a suitable amount. The functions of Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall not be performed by one member. The Elders shall provide a written description of duties to the Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary.

#### C. Committees and Appointees

The Council of Elders has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Council of Elders has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it creates. The Council of Elders also has the authority to appoint Elders, Deacons, or other members of the church to serve as members of such committees and to act as agents in such positions. The Deacons may nominate candidates for any committee or position, with appointment by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate to the Deacons the authority to appoint Deacons or other members of the church to serve as members of such committees and as agents of the Council of Elders in such positions. Every committee shall have a chairperson, responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who shall be appointed by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate the responsibility for selecting the chairperson to the Deacons or to the committee. The Council of Elders shall maintain oversight of all appointed committees and appointees.

### **Section 3: Vocational Pastors and Ministers**

#### A. Definition

1. Vocational Pastors are the ordained Elders of the church who, in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the Church of Christ.
2. Vocational Ministers are the non-ordained ministers of the church who, in response to God's call, serve the Church of Christ as their primary vocation.
3. Both Vocational Pastors and Ministers are supported financially by the church in return for their vocational labors.

#### B. Duties

In addition to the duties of their office as described in the following sections, Vocational Pastors and Ministers shall perform the duties determined by the Council of Elders and approved by the congregation. The duties shall be in writing at the time of the call to service, and substantial changes shall be approved by the church. The church's call of a Vocational Pastor is a call to the Eldership of the church. Therefore, Vocational Pastors shall be members of the Council of Elders and have all the Biblical qualifications of an Elder. Vocational Ministers are not necessarily called to the Eldership, but as assisting partners in the ministry. Therefore vocational ministers may be appointed to the Board of Deacons at the discretion of

the Council of Elders. Vocational Ministers may, when appropriate, be called by the church to the Council of Elders from the Board of Deacons.

C. Vocational Call by the Church

The members shall call Vocational Pastors and Ministers by:

1. Ballot upon recommendation of the Council of Elders;
2. At least three-fourths majority of those members voting at the meeting with at least twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the church present.

Written publication and oral notice of any such meeting, stating its objective, shall be given from the pulpit two weeks preceding the meeting.

D. Termination of Vocational Call by the Church

1. By Resignation

The question of terminating the vocational call of a Vocational Pastor or Minister shall be considered at any time by the church upon the presentation of the Pastor's or Minister's resignation.

2. By Grievance

Where a grievance exists against a Pastor or Minister, either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in the Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedure prescribed in Matthew 18 and I Timothy 5:19-20. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the Pastor or Minister may be terminated at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of at least three-fourths majority of those members voting at the meeting with at least twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Written publication and oral notice of any such meeting, stating its objective, shall be given from the pulpit two weeks preceding the meeting.

E. Licensing and Ordination

In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the church shall follow, as far as possible, the procedure recommended by the American Baptist Churches. The Council of Elders will have the power to recommend discipline, even to the revoking of ordination credentials, any minister ordained by the church. Discipline will be enforced if the ordained minister is guilty of doctrinal or moral defection.

#### ***Section 4: Lay Officers***

A. Definition

Lay officers are the non-Vocational Elders and Deacons of the church who have maintained membership in good standing for at least one year.

B. Duties

Lay Elders and Deacons shall have the duties of their offices as described in Section 5 for the Council of Elders and Section 6 for the Board of Deacons below.

C. Calling and Term

The Council of Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for lay Elder and Deacon. The Council shall provide for individual members of the church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Council as candidates for office and for the Council's further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. The Council of Elders shall publish a list of potential candidates for the Elder and Deacon positions for public input ninety days prior to the Fall Business Meeting, whereby the Council of Elders and the Board of Deacons will be approved. In those cases where the Council of Elders concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion. The Council of Elders shall present a ballot of candidates for calling as Elders or Deacons to the congregation at the Fall Business Meeting. The Council of Elders may also nominate candidates for election to office at the Spring Meeting or any special meeting, provided that the written ballot of nominees is available for review in the church office at least two weeks prior of the meeting and is announced publicly to the church in the Sunday morning worship at least two weeks prior of the meeting. Person or persons receiving the highest number of votes will be called to fill the open position or positions. Lay Elders and Deacons shall be called by the church for a normal term of three years. Lay Elders and Deacons shall serve no more than three

consecutive terms. Following three consecutive terms the Elder or Deacon will not serve actively in office for a period of one year. Following this period they are again eligible for nomination as Elder or Deacon. For purposes of this provision, a term during which an Elder or Deacon serves not more than one year shall not be considered a term in office.

D. Removal

1. Resignation

Officers may resign their office at any time if they are no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

2. Grievance

Where a grievance exists against an officer of the church, either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in the Constitution or to alleged conduct on his/her part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedure prescribed in Matthew 18 and I Timothy 5:19-20. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be removed from office at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of at least three-fourths majority of those members voting at the meeting with at least twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Written publications and oral notice of any such meeting, stating its objective, shall be given from the pulpit two weeks preceding the meeting.

**Section 5: Council of Elders**

A. Composition

The Council of Elders shall be composed of men, both Lay Elders and Vocational Elders. The number of Elders within the Council shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church. The number of Lay Elders shall be greater than the number of Vocational Elders.

B. Qualifications

Elders and nominees for Elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible (Relevant texts include I Timothy 2:11-15, 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:1-4). Elders are also required to be in agreement with the First Baptist Church of Cadillac Affirmation of Faith (Article IV of the Constitution).

C. Responsibilities

The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word of God. The Elders are responsible for governing, teaching the Word, and tending the flock of God in this church. The responsibilities of the Elders shall include:

1. Examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant;
2. Overseeing the process of church discipline;
3. Examining prospective candidates for office;
4. Scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings;
5. Providing for reporting and recording of official church business;
6. Overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed church agents and committees;
7. Conducting worship services;
8. Administering the ordinances of the Gospel (refer to Article IV, Section 9 of the Constitution);
9. Equipping the membership of the church for the work of the ministry;
10. Teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally;
11. Correcting errors in and the overseeing, coordinating and promoting of the ministries of the church;
12. Mobilizing the church for world mission;
13. Producing for congregational approval internal policies and position papers regarding key issues as they arise;
14. Providing for an annual internal peer evaluation process of and by the entire Council of Elders.

D. Organization

The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines best to achieve the mission of the church. The Elders must meet at least once per month. Meetings of the Council of Elders may be held at any location. The Council meetings may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings is defined as at least one half of the Lay Elders plus at least one half of the Vocational Elders, except for matters in

which only Lay Elders are entitled to vote; in this case a majority of the Lay Elders shall constitute a quorum. The Council of Elders shall annually select a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

### **Section 6: The Board of Deacons**

#### **A. Composition**

The Board of Deacons shall be comprised of men and women, both Lay Deacons and Vocational Ministers. The Board of Deacons shall be composed of at least seven members, with the number of Deacons at any time determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men or women in the church. There shall be at least twice as many Lay Deacons as Vocational Ministers.

#### **B. Qualifications**

Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible (Relevant texts include at least I Timothy 3:8-12).

#### **C. Responsibilities**

The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities shall include:

1. Administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress;
2. Organizing the greeting and welcoming ministries of the church;
3. Assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel (refer to Article IV, Section 9 of the Constitution);
4. Assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church;
5. Caring for and maintaining the church properties;
6. Administering the business affairs of the church that pertain to its material assets.

#### **D. Organization**

The Board of Deacons shall organize itself however it determines best to achieve the mission of the church. The Council of Elders or the Board of Deacons may designate any specific deacon or group of deacons to specialize in some particular function. Meetings of the Board of Deacons or subcommittees thereof shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the Board of Deacons.

## **Article III: Church Employees**

There may be operational needs of the church that require more time than a volunteer can reasonably give. In these cases, it may be necessary to hire an individual to complete the work. The need for additional paid staff shall be presented by persons in leadership positions to the Council of Elders for their approval. The presentation should include a proposed job or ministry description and rationale for the need. The Council of Elders must approve the need for additional staff, and they shall be responsible for determining the duties, job description, and hiring of such personnel. The budgetary monies and any reallocation of funds for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting.

Interviewing and hiring of additional staff shall be completed by the Council of Elders or a team appointed by them. The hiring process should follow the procedures established by the Council of Elders. The staff of the church must agree with the doctrinal positions of the church as outlined in Article IV of the Constitution, be a growing Christian, have a desire to serve God, and be willing to submit to the leadership structure.

Either party may terminate the employment relationship at any time. Employment of staff may be terminated immediately with cause at any time with written notice. Because the staff needs and the budget of the church may change, employment of staff may also be terminated without cause at any time with written notice.

## **Article IV: Church Finances**

### **Section 1: Contributions**

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum.

Special offerings may be sought by the church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them. No method of acquiring funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the scriptural ideals of the church.

## ***Section 2: Budget***

The financial planning of the church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets of the various programs. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders, or, if authorized by the Council, the Board of Deacons or any other committee. Matters involving Vocational Elders' and Ministers' and church employees' compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay Deacons or other lay members of the church.

## ***Section 3: Role of Treasurer and Financial Secretary***

The Treasurer shall be responsible for and have responsibility for the custody of all receipts and disbursements for First Baptist Church of Cadillac. The Treasurer shall present a financial statement to the Council of Elders each month and a quarterly and annual report to the congregation. The Financial Secretary shall keep the records for all tithes, offerings, and pledges and perform a mailing of annual year-end individual giving statements. Other duties of these positions will be described in more detail by the Council of Elders in their job descriptions.

## ***Section 4: Authority to Bind the Church***

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with the Church Constitution, these By-Laws, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate and church property.

## ***Section 5: Designated Funds***

From time to time, the Council of Elders and the Board of Deacons may call for special funds for designated projects. These funds will normally be used only for the purpose for which they were designated. If, in special circumstances, it is necessary to temporarily use these funds for other matters, their use must be approved by the Council of Elders and/or the Board of Deacons. In the case of emergencies, the Board of Deacons may approve the use of designated funds with subsequent ratification of the Council of Elders. The monies so used must be replaced as soon as possible.

The Council of Elders may, for a variety of reasons, elect to change the purpose of a designated project. The Council of Elders is responsible for contacting individuals who contributed to the designated project, whenever possible, to ascertain if they are willing to contribute to the revised designation. If the donor does not wish to participate in the revised designation, then the gift will be returned.

## ***Section 6: Properties***

The title to all property of this church, both real and personal, will be and will remain vested in the church membership. The church will have the power to acquire and hold property, both real and personal, for the general purpose of the church. The acquiring or building of new structures and major renovation projects shall require 20% cash on hand before moving forward. All property so acquired will be in the name of the First Baptist Church of Cadillac.

Any sale, mortgage, or transfer of real or personal property valued in excess of 10% of the annual budget must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the quorum present at a called business meeting. Written publication and oral notice of any such meeting, stating its objective, shall be given from the pulpit two weeks preceding the meeting. All properties belonging to the Church will be available to attendees and members for purposes consistent with the ministry of the Church. The Council of Elders and the Board of Deacons will regulate these properties and their uses.

## ***Section 7: Policy Statements***

From time to time, clarification of issues raised in the congregation may be required. To handle such issues, the Church, through its Officers, shall be responsible to maintain a policy and procedures manual to give guidance that will spell out the details of the Church Constitution and its By-Laws (i.e. personnel, purchasing, etc.).

## ***Section 8: Fiscal Year***

The fiscal year of the church shall be the calendar year.

# **Article V: Meetings**

## ***Section 1: Worship***

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month or at such other times as the Council of Elders may determine. Other religious services may be designated as the advancement of the work of the Church may require (i.e., prayer meetings, etc.).

## **Section 2: Business**

### **A. Regularly Scheduled Meetings**

The Spring Business Meeting shall be held in April for the purpose of receiving annual reports and the transaction of such other business as is proper. The Fall Business Meeting shall be held in November for the purpose of reviewing and approving the annual budget, electing officers, and the transaction of such other business as proper.

### **B. Special Meetings**

The Council of Elders or any ten members in good standing may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular objective of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on specially important matters not otherwise provided for.

### **C. Quorum**

A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of the members present at a properly called business meeting, unless otherwise noted.

### **D. Qualifications of Voters**

Church members 18 years of age or older shall be eligible to vote.

### **E. Rules Governing Business Meetings**

Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the business meetings of the Church. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

### **F. Absentee Votes**

Absentee ballots shall not be accepted.

## **Article VI: Affiliation**

Recognizing the obligations of its global mission and the privileges of maintaining cooperation with a denominational body, the First Baptist Church of Cadillac shall therefore be affiliated with the American Baptist Churches of Michigan and the American Baptist Churches of the United States of America and other organizations as it may desire.

# *Glossary*

**Autonomous:** Self-governing; not governed by other ecclesiastical structures.

**Baptistic:** Any teachings or practices that have historically or theologically been distinctive of Baptist groups.

**Congregational-rule:** A form of church governance which recognizes final authority in church issues lies within the Congregation.

**Covenant:** An agreement to do or not to do something specified.

**Discipline:** Process of correction with the desire of guiding fellow believers to repent and bring their behavior back into line with biblical living and teaching.

**Dissolution:** When an organization dissolves or ceases to be.

**Ecclesiastical:** Pertaining to the Church or its organizational structures.

**Elder-led:** A form of church governance whereby the Elders provide oversight and leadership while giving final authority on specific matters to the Congregation.

**Final judgment:** The teaching that there will be a final accounting of our relationship with God. This judgment will be based upon our being reconciled to God through the finished work of Christ.

**Gift-based:** A philosophy of ministry which seeks to place people into ministry positions based upon their spiritual gifts and not just willingness to serve.

**Hierarchical:** A form of governance which utilizes an organized body of ecclesiastical officials in successive ranks or orders.

**Immersion:** To place completely under water.

**Indwells:** This refers to the teaching that God's Spirit actually resides, in some way, within an individual believer.

**Infallibly:** To act without error or free from mistakes.

**Ordination:** The formal process of the Church's recognition of the calling and fitness of an individual to serve as a Pastor.

**Polity:** A particular form or system of governance.

**Regeneration:** Pertaining to the idea of being "born again." The word means "re-born" and refers to the process of our salvation.

**Restoration:** Following a process of discipline, it is the return of someone to a former condition (i.e. membership, leadership, etc.).

**Spirit-led:** To base mission and vision on the understanding that an individual or group is being guided by the ministry of God's Spirit.

**Substitutionary:** The teaching that Christ's death is sufficient to pay for our sin. He is our substitute in enduring God's wrath.

**Vocational Ministers:** The non-ordained ministers of the church who, in response to God's call, serve the church of Christ as their primary vocation.

**Vocational Pastors:** The ordained Elders of the church, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church of Christ.

# ***Voting Summary***

## Calling of Vocational Pastors and Ministers

- Written publication and oral notice from the pulpit two weeks prior
- 20% of voting membership present
- Affirmative of 3/4 majority of members present

## Calling of Lay Officers

- Written publication ninety days prior to vote
- Person or persons receiving the highest number of votes will be called to fill the open position or positions

## Termination of Vocational Officers and Lay Officers

- Written publication and oral notice from the pulpit two weeks prior
- 20% of voting membership present
- Closed ballot
- Affirmative of 3/4 majority of members present

## Sale, Mortgage, or Transfer of Property

- Written and oral notice from the pulpit two weeks prior
- Affirmative of 2/3 majority of members present

## Revisions, Additions, or Amendments to the Constitution and/or By-Laws

- Written motion at a properly called business meeting three months prior to vote
- Written and oral notice from the pulpit two Sundays following aforementioned business meeting
- 10% of voting membership present
- Affirmative of 2/3 majority of members present

# Organizational Chart

