

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF MERIDIAN FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Meridian, Idaho

PREAMBLE

Relying upon the faith we have in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and identifying with the teachings and the distinctives of fundamental Baptists namely:

1. The eternal deity of Jesus Christ [Sec. II B];
2. The Bible, God's inerrant standard of faith and practice [Sec. I];
3. Regenerated membership [Sec. III A & B; IV B & C];
4. Believer's baptism by immersion [Sec. III C-1];
5. Positional, progressive and perfect sanctification [Sec. VI B-3];
6. Soul liberty [Sec. IV D];
7. Eternal security of the believer [Sec. II C; Sec. VI A];
8. Ordination of the church and civil government [Sec. III D];
9. Autonomy of the local church [Sec. III B].

We thus join together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and establish for our government, plan of worship and service, the following Declaration of Faith, Constitution, and by-laws.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

We, as New Testament believers, enthusiastically accept the historical Baptist belief that a scriptural local church is to be composed only of people who believe and have been baptized as a testimony of their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ deserves the very best from each of the members of this church. We believe that any habit, practice, association, or affection, which hinders spiritual growth and an ever-deepening knowledge of the Lord Jesus, should be laid aside. We desire our testimony to be used in directing lost souls to Christ.

When you become a member of this church you enter into a fellowship which exists foremost to glorify our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore, we commit to honor Christ with our lives through obedience to His written Word: thus allowing all areas of ministry to conform to His Word, and believers to be transformed into His likeness.

SECTION I - THE SCRIPTURES (Bibliology)

A. Inspiration

The Bible in its original manuscripts, is plenary (completely) and verbally (the very words) inspired by God, and is the infallible (errorless) and authoritative Word of God given to man. (Psalm 19:7-11; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:19-21)

B. Interpretation

Since the Bible was written by many authors over a long period of time, the most accurate and comprehensive method of interpretation is the literal-historical-grammatical method. In order to be

consistent with scriptural intent and meaning this is the method this Church shall use to interpret the Scriptures. (I Corinthians 4:5; Proverbs 30:5, 6)

SECTION II - THE TRINITY (Theology)

There is one true God who is spirit and as such is infinite, intelligent, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, immutable, perfect, holy, and righteous. God exists eternally in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three Persons are equal in deity, essence, power, sovereignty, and majesty, yet perform distinct, but harmonious functions. (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5; Matthew 28:19, 20; John 10:30)

A. God the Father

God the Father is a distinct person of the Trinity, yet shares in the same essence with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He is sovereign over all creation and His purpose for all creation is to display His glory, person, and name. Therefore He does what He pleases, when and how He pleases. (I Samuel 2:2; Psalms 29:2; Isaiah 14:24-27; 29:15,16; 43:6,7; 46:8-10; 55:8,9; Romans 9; Daniel 4:34,35; Revelation 4:11)

B. God the Son, Jesus Christ

God the Son has eternally existed as a distinct person of the Trinity, yet shares in the same essence with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is the creator, sustainer of all creation, the LORD (Jehovah of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies). In the redemptive plan, even though He was still God, He took upon Himself the form of man by being supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. In this way He became, and is today, the perfect substitutionary sacrifice for man and the only payment for the penalty of sin. After His death on the cross He rose bodily from the grave, ascended into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father making intercession for us. Both then (incarnation) and now He is completely God and completely man, and will physically return to rule and reign on the earth in keeping with His promises. We believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus is LORD, Yahweh (Jehovah), without sin and without the possibility of sinning. Jesus is the Savior, Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah (the One who will establish the Theocratic Kingdom on earth at the time of His second advent). When the word "Christ" (Messiah) is used in the New Testament it is a reference to His work, position and title as the "Anointed One", the God/Man Ruler and the King who has all power and authority in heaven and on earth. Jesus is His given name. (Luke 1:26-35; John 1:14; Acts 2:22-36; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 1:15-22; Hebrews 1:1-4; 7:25; Revelation 4:11; Matthew 28:14; Luke 2:21; John 20:31; Philippians 2:6; Hebrews 4:15; I John 3:5)

C. God the Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the Trinity, yet shares in the same essence with God the Father and God the Son. He was active in the creation of this world along with God the Father and God the Son. In the Old Testament He came upon men selectively to empower them for service. In the New Testament, following the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost to institute the church and to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. He came to indwell all believers making them spiritually alive, setting them apart for purity, and sealing them as God's eternally secure possessions. Today the Holy Spirit is our helper as He comforts and leads us through life. He teaches us the truths of God's Word, controlling and strengthening us to live Christ-like lives. At the moment we put our faith in Christ the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the Church, which is the Body of Christ, and gives spiritual gifts to be used in service for our Lord and the Church. The gifts of the Spirit are identified in I Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12,

and Ephesians 4. Certain gifts have ceased or have come to an end (e.g. I Corinthians 13). (Genesis 1:2, 26; John 3:5-8; 14:16-18; 16:7-14; Acts 2:16-18; 5:3, 4; I Corinthians 6:11; 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 1:3-14; II Peter 1:20-21)

SECTION III - THE CHURCH (Ecclesiology)

A. The Universal Church

There is one true church, a living organism called in Scripture the body and bride of Christ. The Church was a mystery in the time before Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, yet now has been revealed in the New Testament. It came into existence on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given. At this time the disciples became a part of the body of Christ. All who have been "born from above" by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are members of His body, of which He is the head. (Matthew 16:18; John 3:3-8, 36; Acts 2:1-13; I Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:25-30)

B. The Local Church

The local Church is comprised of those belonging to the universal church who are baptized and associated together by faith. In keeping with the admonition of Scripture, they voluntarily fellowship together in order to observe the ordinances, preach Jesus Christ, worship, exercise their spiritual gifts, and teach the Word of God to equip the saints for ministry. The local church has the absolute right of self-government with dependence upon none, other than Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 10:24, 25; Acts 13:1-3; II Corinthians 8:1-5, 19, 23; I Timothy 3:1-5)

C. The Ordinances of the Local Church

Jesus Christ instituted the observances of baptism and communion (the Lord's Supper) as the two ordinances of the church. These ordinances are to be observed by born-again believers who are old enough to understand their meaning and are walking with the Lord.

1. Baptism

Scriptural baptism is by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is to be observed only once after conversion as an outward sign of the inward work of grace by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36, 37; 10:47; 16:33)

2. Communion

The Lord's Supper is to be observed regularly until He comes. It is a remembrance of all that Christ did for us in His substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection. Observance of the Lord's Supper is for believers only, and has no spiritual merit for the unsaved. (Matthew 26:26-30; I Corinthians 11:23-34)

D. The Church and Civil Government

God established both the church and the civil government and He gave each its own distinct sphere of operation. The government's purposes are outlined in Romans 13:1-7 and the church's purposes in Ephesians 4. Neither should control the other, nor should there be an alliance between the two. (I Timothy 2:1-3; I Peter 2:13-17)

SECTION IV - MAN (Anthropology)

A. The Purpose of Man

The primary purpose of man is to worship God and to bring glory to Him forever. (Isaiah 45:5-9,21; Ephesians 1:3-6,11, 12; 3:10,20, 21; I Peter 4:10, 11)

B. The Condition of Man

Man was created by God in a state of innocence, but as a result of the temptation of Satan, Adam voluntarily sinned and fell from his innocent state. Because of this act of disobedience, all people are sinners by nature and choice, and are totally depraved. Therefore man, unless redeemed, is condemned eternally to a literal Hell. (Genesis 3:1-7; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:9-19,23; 8:5-8; II Thessalonians 1:7-9)

C. The Redemption of Man

The only hope for man in his lost condition is the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. This sacrifice of His body and blood satisfied God's demand for the payment required for the penalty of man's sin. Christ's life, death, and resurrection were not merely an example for us to follow. He acted as our only substitute and received the penalty for sin that we deserved. (Leviticus 17:11; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:22; I Peter 2:24; 3:18)

D. The Soul Liberty of Man

Soul liberty is the implementation of the truth that we must obey God rather than men. Every man must give an answer to God individually and therefore no other man, and no church, can act as his conscience. He has the responsibility to interpret the Scripture for himself and to answer to God for the way in which he does so. He has, as a believer, the Holy Spirit to guide and enable him, apart from any other ministry of man or of the church. Every believer will stand individually responsible for the proper interpretation and application of everything the Bible teaches. (Acts 3:29; Romans 14:5-12; II Corinthians 4:2; Titus 1:9; I John 2:27)

E. The Final Judgment

1. Of the Believer

Every saved individual will someday stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. This judgment is not of their worthiness of salvation but of their works in order that every believer may receive rewards from the Lord. (I Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:5)

2. Of the Unbeliever

Unsaved individuals will someday stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne of Judgment where they will recognize Jesus Christ as Lord, be judged according to their works, and sentenced to eternal judgment. (Luke 16:19-31; John 3:18; Romans 14:10-12; Revelation 20:11-15)

SECTION V - THE SPIRIT WORLD (Angelology)

A. The Creation of Spirit Beings (commonly called angels)

Prior to the creation of the world and universe God created a host of spirit beings to serve Him and bring Him glory. They were created with rank and authority, which is seen in their names: anointed cherub, cherubs, seraphs, archangel, and angels. The Scriptures further describe the ranks or organization of angels as powers, rulers, thrones, dominions, and authorities. (Genesis 3:24; Job 38:1-7; Isaiah 6:1-4; Ezekiel 28:14; Colossians 1:15-17)

B. The Present State of Spirit Beings

1. Elect Spirit Beings

a. Their State

The spirit beings that did not leave their original state of creation are unfallen or elect spirit beings and will forever remain in that state. (I Timothy 5:21)

b. Their Ministry

These spirit beings today minister in two general areas: (1) they worship God and carry out His bidding; (2) they are ministering spirits to those who are heirs of salvation. (Isaiah 6:1-3; Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 4:6-11)

2. Fallen Spirit Beings

a. Satan

God created all things perfect and without sin. But when Satan, the anointed cherub and God's highest created being, determined to be like God, sin entered into the creation. Satan is a real being and is extremely powerful, but he does not have God-like attributes. He is evil and cunning, intending to destroy God's plan and usurp God's sovereign rule. He seeks to achieve his purposes and control through deceitful temptations and trying circumstances. He is the accuser of the brethren. (Job 1 & 2; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-17; John 8:44; II Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 12:9, 10)

b. Demons

In seeking to overthrow God's authority Satan convinced one third of the angels to follow him, resulting in their fall. Because of this willful act of sin their eternal punishment and destiny is sealed with no opportunity for repentance. Until these fallen angels are sent to their eternal punishment they are demonic messengers under Satan's control opposing God's plan and purpose. (Ephesians 6:10-12; Revelation 12:1-6)

c. Their Activities

Both believers and unbelievers are influenced by these demonic forces, but unbelievers are powerless to resist their schemes and dominance. They may also be demon possessed. Believers have the strength to resist Satan's temptations if they use the power and armor given to them by Jesus Christ. Demons seek to entice believers to act independently of God,

however they cannot be demon possessed because they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 4:1-11; Acts 5:3; II Corinthians 2:10, 11; 6:14-16; 11:13-15; Ephesians 2:1, 2; James 1:12-15; I John 5:19)

SECTION VI - SALVATION (Soteriology)

A. Its Provision and Assurance

God authored and Christ purchased our eternal salvation. God has chosen those who will believe in Christ and exercise their personal faith in Him, though we are still obligated to obey and yield to His sovereignty. This salvation is all of grace through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who paid the full redemptive price for our sins. He satisfied God's righteous demands by suffering the death and penalty for man's sin on the cross of Calvary. Salvation is made effective to man only as he believes, exercising personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Those who have placed their faith in Christ are saved forever and nothing can separate them from God's love. Since believers are eternally His, God will not allow the believer to be separated from Himself. (John 3:16; 20:31; Acts 16:30, 31; Romans 10:9, 10; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 5:9; 10:10,14-18; I Peter 1:2-5)

B. Its Content

1. New Birth

Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden brought the penalty of death to him and all his descendants. At that moment of his sin both Adam and Eve died spiritually and began to die physically. In order for God to deal with mankind's spiritual death He sent His Son to die for all sin and to be raised from death in order to give victory over the penalty of sin. At the moment of salvation or new birth the Spirit of God gives to a person who is spiritually dead, spiritual life. Believers are made partakers of the divine nature. This spiritual life enables them to understand spiritual truth and to communicate with God. Not only are believers made alive spiritually, but also indwelt with the Holy Spirit, who is the believer's source of power. (Genesis 1:17; John 3:3-8; Romans 3:23, 5:12-21; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:24; II Peter 1:4)

2. Justification by Faith

Individuals are acquitted from the guilt of sin when they are saved by faith. At the moment of salvation God declares them to be righteous in the person of Jesus Christ. It is not possible for anyone to earn justification before God. (Romans 5:1-11)

3. Sanctification - Sanctification has three aspects:

a. Positional Sanctification

At the moment of salvation believers in Christ are sanctified. They are declared to be righteous and holy in Christ, and are set apart for a holy purpose.

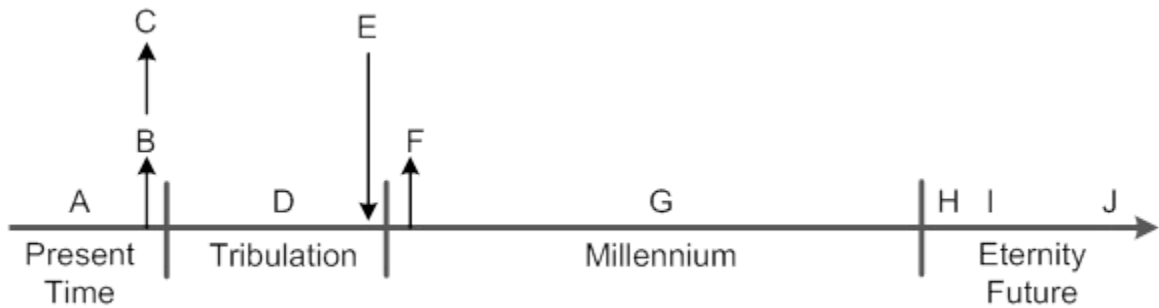
b. Progressive Sanctification

Believers are in an ongoing process of being set apart from sin to the purpose of God in their lives. This is daily sharing and participating in God's holiness as the Holy Spirit is active in their lives. (I John 3:1-4)

c. Perfect Sanctification

In the future, when believers are in His presence, they will be like Christ. Not that they will become gods, but they will be glorified and holy in reality as Christ is holy. (John 3:1-3; Romans 6; I Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 3:12-14; I Thessalonians 3:12, 13; II Peter 1:2-11; I John 3:1-4)

SECTION VII - FUTURE EVENTS IN PROPHETIC SCRIPTURE (Eschatology)



A. The Church Age

The Church began on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given and will continue on earth until the Rapture of the Church. (Acts 2; I Corinthians 15:51-52; I Thessalonians 4:13-17)

B. The Rapture

The next great prophetic event spoken of by Paul awaiting the Church is the bodily coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air when true believers from the day of Pentecost until His coming will be caught up to meet the Lord and be taken into heaven in glorified bodies. The word “Rapture” comes from the Latin translation of the word “caught” in I Thessalonians 4:17 which means to seize or snatch. (I Thessalonians 4:13-17; II Thessalonians 2:1; I John 3:2)

C. The Judgment Seat of Christ

This is a judgment for believers in order to receive reward. It is not a judgment of our being qualified for heaven but a judgment of our life as we give account of what we have done for the Lord. (I Corinthians 4:5; II Corinthians 5:10)

D. The Tribulation

This is the seven-year period, also known as Daniel’s Seventieth Week, in which God will once again focus on the people of Israel and will pour out His wrath on all nations of the earth. The tribulation is divided into two equal parts, the first half being “the beginning of sorrows” and the second half being “the great tribulation”. The church will be taken to be with the Lord prior to the beginning of this seven-year period. (Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24; Daniel 9)

E. The Second Coming of Christ

This is the personal, bodily return of Christ with His Church to the earth to establish His earthly kingdom just prior to the end of the Tribulation Period. As Christ sets foot on the earth He will bring the great campaign of Armageddon to an end. At that time He will conquer the nations and establish His millennial kingdom. (Zechariah 14:1-5; Jude 14-15; Revelation 19:11-21)

F. The Resurrection of Old Testament Saints

Following the Tribulation Old Testament believers will be resurrected in order to receive their inheritance in Christ's millennial kingdom. (Daniel 12:1-3, 9-13)

G. The Millennium

This is the fulfillment of God's promise to David that he would have a descendent who would sit on his throne forever. Jesus Christ will literally begin to fulfill this prophecy as He rules and reigns on the earth for one thousand years. (II Samuel 7:8-16; Isaiah 11:1-16; Revelation 20:1-6)

H. The Great White Throne of Judgment

This is the judgment of unbelievers of all ages. All will be resurrected to stand before the Lord to be cast alive into the Lake of Fire because their names are not written in the Book of Life. (Revelation 20:7-10)

I. The New Heavens and the New Earth

Following the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ and the judgment of unbelievers, God will restore the heavens and the earth to their original perfection. The new heavens and earth will be the eternal home of the saints. (II Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1-22:5)

J. Eternity

Believers will exist eternally in the presence of the Lord. For the unbeliever it will be eternal existence separated from God to bear the punishment of their sin without relief. (I Corinthians 15:3-57; II Thessalonians 1:8, 9; Revelation 21-22)

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be "Meridian First Baptist Church" of Meridian, Idaho.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be to:

1. Provide a spiritual fellowship among New Testament believers in our community by maintaining an independent Baptist church;
2. Provide a place of worship and prayer with faithful recognition of the New Testament doctrines and ordinances;

3. Provide a center of discipleship training for the whole family in Bible knowledge and Bible doctrines;
4. Provide teaching and give example of faithful stewardship in time, talent, and money;
5. Provide training and motivation for continuous witnessing under the direction of the Holy Spirit;
6. Proclaim the good news concerning Christ at home and abroad as commanded by our Lord;
7. Promote scriptural missions at home and abroad.

ARTICLE III – ASSOCIATIONS

An independent New Testament Baptist church cannot join anything outside itself, but only affiliate therewith on the grounds of fellowship. This church declares itself to be in fellowship with the following groups so long as these groups remain true to their original statements of faith, aim and practice.

1. The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC)
2. The Baptist Network Northwest (BNN)
3. The Southern Idaho Regular Baptist Fellowship (SIRBF)
4. Idaho Regular Baptist Camp, Inc. (Camp Pinewood)

The church may associate or withdraw association from an organization at its own discretion by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the church. No church association or financial support is to be given to a work or workers whose doctrinal position is not consistent with the Declaration of Faith of this constitution.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

Section A. Qualifications of Membership

The membership of this church shall be restricted to those who profess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and evidence the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23); to those who have been immersed, acknowledged substantial agreement with the Declaration of Faith and practices of this church; and have been received into the fellowship by regular action of the church.

Section B. Manner of Receiving Members

1. Candidates may qualify to become members of the church in one of two ways:
 - a. Baptism by immersion.
 - b. Statement of Christian experience (having been previously scripturally immersed).
2. It is desirable that all applicants for membership come forward in a church service, and subsequently shall be interviewed by the board of deacons as to their qualifications for membership.
3. After recommendation by the deacon board applicants may be voted upon at any Sunday service or business meeting of the church, and shall be accepted upon approval of all those present and voting.
4. If one or more members, because of the knowledge of some existing circumstance, deem it necessary to object to an applicant, a written objection shall be brought in person to the board of deacons. The case will be examined by the board of deacons. Should the objection be found

valid, the applicant for membership will not be received and announcement of such shall be made at the next business meeting.

Section C. Termination of Membership

1. By Inactivity.

The membership rolls of this church shall be reviewed at least annually for the purpose of keeping such rolls current. The names of members demonstrating lack of interest and/or attendance at services of the church for a continuous period of six months will be submitted to the pastor and deacon board for disposition. Those names agreed upon by the pastor and deacon board will be recommended to the church for removal from the regular church membership roll and placed on the roll of inactive church members. Before any members may be placed on the inactive list or dropped from the roll they must be contacted personally by representatives of the deacon board if they live in the area or by personal letter if they have moved from the area and their address is known. Inactive members will not be permitted the privilege of voting at any meeting. Restoration to active membership shall be reviewed by the pastor and board of deacons upon written request of the inactive member and granted upon unanimous vote of the church (See Section B – Manner of Receiving Members, #3 & 4). Names that are placed on the roll of inactive church members will be given an additional six months, after which time if necessary they will be presented to the church membership for removal from the rolls. Members that are removed from the membership roll will be notified in writing by the church clerk.

2. By conduct.

When the church has voted to withdraw its fellowship from any member who has been duly proved unworthy of membership, that membership shall cease immediately (See Article IV, Section D – Conduct of Members).

3. By death.

4. By written request of the member.

5. By joining another church.

A member who has joined another church will be automatically removed from the membership roll.

Section D. Conduct of Members

We believe that all saved individuals should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon God; and that separation from religious apostasy, all worldly sinful pleasures, practices and association is commanded by God (Romans 12:1, 2; 16:17, 18; II Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:1-17; II Timothy 3:1-5; James 1:27; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11).

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Section A. Elected Offices

The principle offices of this church are pastor and deacon. The church shall elect and/or the pastor(s) and deacons shall appoint other officers as herein specified. All officers and committee members, whether

elected or appointed, shall be members of this church and lead a separated life (See Article IV, Section D – Conduct of Members). All elected officers, except pastor shall be elected from the membership of the church by ballot and unless otherwise provided, upon a majority vote. Unless otherwise specified, the term of service shall be for a period of one year, and the terms of all elected officers and appointees shall expire at the annual meeting.

Section B. Pastor

1. Qualifications

- a. The pastor shall meet the New Testament standards as given in I Timothy 3:1-7.
- b. The pastor shall be in accord with this Constitution (including the Preamble and Declaration of Faith).

2. Duties

- a. The pastor, as an under-shepherd of Christ's local church shall: preach the Word of God, administer the ordinances, shepherd the church and lead it in the fulfillment of its equipping task (Ephesians 4:12), and publicly extend the right hand of fellowship to new members on behalf of the church.
- b. The pastor shall have direct supervisory oversight and responsibility for all paid staff members, with continuing accountability to the board of deacons for their conduct and ministry.
- c. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, boards, and auxiliary organizations of the church.

3. Calling

- a. The pulpit committee shall be the board of deacons.
- b. Preliminary investigation shall begin as soon as possible after the resignation, removal, or death of a pastor. A minister of the gospel who is of good report, sound in doctrine, biblical in separation and Baptist by conviction, shall be invited to meet with the deacons, supply the pulpit for a Sunday or longer, and state whether or not he is willing to be considered for the pastorate. Only recommendations from the pulpit committee shall be considered. Candidates must be unanimously recommended by the pulpit committee before being presented to the church for a vote within three weeks after time of candidacy. A special church business meeting shall be called by the deacons to consider a call for the prospective pastor. A notice of this meeting and its purpose must be read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays previous. An eighty percent (80%) vote of the members present and voting is required to call a pastor. To avoid confusion, only one perspective pastoral candidate shall be considered at one time.
- c. Moving expenses of the incoming pastor shall be paid by the church unless otherwise agreed upon.

4. Compensation

- a. The pastor's salary shall be reviewed annually by the board of deacons.
- b. The pastor shall have an annual vacation, the time and extent to be agreed upon by the pastor and the board of deacons.

5. Dismissal

- a. The office of pastor shall be a continuous office, and shall be terminated only by the acceptance of his resignation, or by contrary majority vote at a duly called business meeting to consider pastoral relations. Such a meeting may be called by a majority of the board of deacons, or by a majority of qualified voting members at any regular business meeting. A written notice of a pastoral relations meeting must be read from the pulpit of the church at regular services for two weeks prior to this meeting.
- b. Whenever a business meeting is being called by the board of deacons to consider pastoral relations, the pastor may be suspended immediately from all duties by a majority vote of the board of deacons.

6. Associate/Assistant Pastor(s)

- a. Associate and/or assistant pastoral staff positions may be added or deleted upon recommendation of the board of deacons, and with the approval of an eighty percent (80%) majority vote of the congregation at any regular or special business meeting called for that purpose. The associate/assistant pastoral position must be approved in the above manner prior to calling an individual to the newly-created position.
- b. Additional pastoral staff shall be subject to the pastoral qualifications, calling, compensation and dismissal provisions outlined in Article V, Section B of this constitution. As to the duties, a general description shall be included in the call.
- c. All associate and/or assistant pastoral staff shall be accountable to the senior pastor as to job function and coordination of ministry.

Section C. Deacons

1. Qualifications

- a. The deacons shall meet the New Testament standards as given in I Timothy 3:8-13.
- b. He shall be a member of this church in good standing for a period of six months before accepting office on the deacon board (See Article IV, Section D – Conduct of Members).
- c. No person shall hold a deacon's office in this church who is not in accord with this constitution, who demonstrates a divisive attitude or fails to promote the spiritual welfare of the church (I Corinthians 3:3).
- d. No person who has been divorced and remarried while the former wife is still living shall be elected to the deacon board (I Corinthians 7:10,11; Titus 1:6).

- e. It is required that an individual be at least 21 years of age in order to be eligible for the deacon board.

2. Duties

- a. Since the temporal affairs of the church are legitimately embraced in the duties of the deaconate according to the Scriptures, and since the deacons are elected in such a way as to comply with the statutes of the State of Idaho, the board of deacons shall, in transactions involving the state and other temporal agencies, constitute officially, and be known as the directors of the Meridian First Baptist Church, Meridian, Idaho. To the extent consistent with the provisions of this Constitution, the deacons, shall, in exercising their office as directors, have all legal power and authority normally residing in directors of a corporation including, without limitation, the power and authority when such actions are duly approved to perform the following acts on behalf of the church:
 - b. The deacons shall perform the following special duties:
 - i. Execute documents and instruments;
 - ii. Enter into agreements and incur obligations and liabilities. Documents and instruments shall be executed by at least two members of the board of deacons: (1) one member shall be either the chairman of the board of deacons or, in his absence, the vice-chairman; and, (2) the second member may be any other member of the board of deacons. Certification of any document or instrument, as required, shall be provided by the secretary of the board of deacons;
 - iii. Distribute the elements at the Lord's Supper;
 - iv. Administer a benevolent fund (for the benefit of the church);
 - v. Assist the pastor in visitation;
 - vi. Serve as an advisory board to work with the pastor in superintending all the affairs of the church;
 - vii. Assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual life of the church;
 - viii. Constitute the pulpit committee;
 - ix. Arrange for pulpit supply in the absence of the pastor;
 - x. Constitute the church officer nomination committee;
 - xi. The chairman of the board shall preside over business meetings;
 - xii. At least one deacon shall be assigned to each major standing committee as designated by the board;
 - xiii. Special speakers will be selected by the pastor and board of deacons.

- c. They shall have charge of the property of the church but shall not sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber the real estate or other property of the church without consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the church present at a special meeting called for that purpose by church notice given at least two weeks previously.
- d. They shall be responsible for the designation of a bank for general banking and depository for securities and other valuables of the church. They may also assign to church officers, boards or standing committees, certain responsibilities to be performed at the direction of the deacon board.
- e. They shall have the custody of the Seal on which is inscribed the words: Meridian First Baptist Church, Meridian, Idaho.
- f. They shall supervise the handling of trust, endowment and scholarship funds.
- g. They shall acquaint themselves with the laws of the State of Idaho and the ordinances of the city that pertain to churches and see that such laws are faithfully obeyed in all matters affecting this church.
- h. They shall plan for the raising, collecting, and safeguarding of the funds, both current and benevolent, needed by the church, and shall encourage each member of the church to enter into its financial support.
- i. They shall make expenditures from funds allotted in the budget and/or special funds designated by the church. Any item that is not in the budget that calls for an expenditure of more than two thousand (2,000) dollars must first be approved by a vote of the church.
- j. They may, in writing, delegate authority to pay ordinary items of office expense from petty cash, and to the treasurer to pay any item set up in the budget for which funds are available for any individual, board, standing committee, auxiliary organization, or other designated purpose.
- k. They shall have power to employ one or more caretakers, recommend their salaries, and determine their duties.
- l. Two-thirds (2/3) of the members shall constitute a quorum. Recommendations of the deacon board to the church on matters of policy shall require an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) majority of the entire deacon board.
- m. They shall make reports at the regular and annual meetings of the church as needed.
- n. They may present written recommendation of items of finance to the church.

3. Term and Number

- a. The church shall determine the number of deacons it needs to minister for the church.
- b. The deacon's term of office shall be for three (3) years unless otherwise specified, with terms arranged so that the deacons will not all go off the deacon board at one time.

- c. A deacon may serve, if elected, for two consecutive terms, after which he must sit out for one (1) year before being eligible for re-election to the board.

Section D. Other Church Offices

1. Christian Education Director –(Appointed by the pastor(s) and deacons)

The Christian Education Director shall be general executive of the Sunday school and, together with the pastor, youth pastor and deacons, shall make plans for organizing and directing of its activities. This function may be shared by more than one person. They shall select any assistant personnel, department heads, teachers, and workers. All selections shall be made for one year. Selections and removals will be with the approval of the deacon board. The Christian Education Director in consultation with the pastor, youth pastor, and deacons shall appoint personnel, approve curriculum, administer budgeted funds and oversee all Christian education ministries of the church, including: teen ministries, Awana, Bible studies, children's ministries, Vacation Bible School and others as may be designated.

2. Clerk – (Elected by the church)

It shall be the duty of the Clerk to keep an accurate record of all business meetings of the church and a complete alphabetical and chronological record of the date and manner of admission and dismissal of members of both the active and inactive rolls. The Clerk shall conduct the official correspondence of the church regarding business meetings and membership as directed by the church.

3. Treasurer – (Elected by the church)

The Treasurer along, with the Financial Secretary, shall receive and keep, in designated depositories, all moneys of the church. Payments from funds in the custody of the Treasurer shall be made only by check, signed by the Treasurer, or the Financial Secretary, or the chairman of the deacon board. Authorization for payment from any non-budgeted fund, except the benevolent fund, shall be by vote of the church or by order of the board of deacons, as permitted. The Treasurer shall keep accounts of all such funds and shall submit an annual report and any additional reports which may be requested by the church or board of deacons.

4. Financial Secretary – (Elected by the church)

The Financial Secretary, along with the Treasurer, shall count all moneys received and shall deposit them in the bank in the name of the church. They shall keep a record of all income and shall give reports of the income of the church at all regular business meetings. Members of the deacon board may substitute for either or both the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer in their absence.

5. Music Director – (Appointed by the pastor(s) and deacons)

The Music Director shall provide oversight for all music of the church. The Music Director shall arrange for special music, arrange to have a pianist for church services, be responsible for the choir and choir director, and shall be responsible for insuring that a song leader is available for all services. All church music will be arranged/coordinated with the pastor.

6. Ushers – (Appointed by the pastor(s) and deacons)

It shall be the duty of the ushers to welcome visitors, assist with seating, receive the offering and assure the comfort of the congregation through control of the heating, ventilation, and lighting of the building. They shall meet as soon as possible after their appointment to select their chairman, and discuss proper procedures with the previous usher chairman. They shall be sufficiently organized so that at least two ushers will be at every service in sufficient time before the service starts to greet everyone as they arrive. They shall keep a record of the attendance at all services and report same. They shall provide the security of the church building during and after services.

7. Additional Offices

Additional offices for specific church needs may be allowed for upon recommendation of the board of deacons, and with approval of a majority vote of the congregation at any regular or special business meeting called for that purpose.

Section E. Vacancies

All office, board and committee positions shall become vacant by resignation of the occupant, removal from active church membership roll, disqualification from membership of this church, or death. Removal from office because of failure by the individual to perform adequately the obligations or duties assigned shall be by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of all ballots cast at a meeting initiated for that purpose. This meeting may be called by either the pastor or the board of deacons. Vacancies shall be filled for any unexpired term at the discretion of the deacon board.

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

Section A. For Worship

Meetings shall be held regularly for public worship on Sunday. Meetings shall also be held regularly for prayer, praise, and/or Bible study during the week. The Church may, by official action, arrange the date, place and time of any meeting. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall ordinarily be observed monthly at which time the benevolent offering may be received. Special meetings for the purpose of promoting evangelism, Bible study, missionary work, etc., may be held upon the recommendations of the board of deacons.

Section B. For Business

The annual election of officers and the annual business meeting shall take place prior to the end of January. Newly elected officers shall take office on the following Sunday. The deacons shall constitute the nominations committee. They shall provide a nomination form to the Church. The membership shall list names of persons they would like to see in office. The membership shall then turn this form into the deacons three (3) weeks prior to the annual election. The deacons shall then have the responsibility to determine both fitness and willingness of the nominee. Fitness of nominees must be based upon biblical qualifications and principles and not personal opinions (See Article IV, Section D – Conduct of Members). Members must be at least 18 years of age to be eligible to vote. Special meetings for the transaction of business may be called by the pastor or the board of deacons, provided notice has been given to the church.

Section C. Policy and Procedure

1. The deacons shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining operational policy and procedures that will be a companion document to this constitution. Operational policies and procedures shall not be in conflict with any element of the constitution and shall be approved by majority vote of the deacon board.
2. In keeping with the spirit of I Corinthians 14:40, Roberts Rules of Order are hereby adopted as a general guide for our business meetings.
3. All elections shall be by secret ballot.
4. Absentee ballots for elections of church officers including pastors may be accepted from qualified members provided:
 - a. The ballot is placed inside a sealed envelope with the date cast and the member's signature on the outside of the envelope.
 - b. Ballots are turned into the church office prior to the election and are given to the business meeting moderator prior to voting. The moderator shall read aloud the name of those casting absentee ballots to determine if the voter is 18 or older and an active member of Meridian First Baptist Church, and thereby a qualified voter. Once the voters are qualified the moderator shall remove the ballots from the envelopes and turn them over to the designated counters.
 - c. If more than one ballot is required the absentee ballot shall be counted only with the first ballots cast.

Section D. Quorum

To transact business a quorum of twenty percent (20%) of the active resident members of voting age is required.

ARTICLE VII – FINANCIAL YEAR

The financial year of this church shall close with the last day of March unless otherwise specified by the board, and full financial reports shall be made at the annual meeting. The method of raising money shall be by faith through free will offerings.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

Section A. Approval

This constitution may be repealed or amended at the annual or any other meeting of the church called for that purpose. This action requires a two week prior notice, and also requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present. Any proposed amendment must be in writing, and be submitted to the church for notification two weeks prior to the meeting at which it is to be considered.

Section B. By-Laws

1. No by-laws shall be adopted which shall be in conflict with or void any provision of the constitution. If there is a conflict between the constitution and by-laws the constitution will prevail.
2. By-laws shall take precedent over any items or statements of policy or procedure.

This Constitution shall supersede all previous legal documents and these shall now constitute the legal documents of Meridian First Baptist Church, Meridian, Idaho, adopted on April 18, 2010.