

PREAMBLE

Placing our complete trust by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation; believing the Holy Bible to be the inspired (both plenary and verbal), infallible and authoritative Word of God; accepting the historic, distinctive Baptist principles; we band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers and hereby adopt this Constitution and Bylaws as our method of labor for the Lord. (*Hebrews 10:22-25*)

ARTICLE I - Name

The name of this organization is Farmington Avenue Baptist Church. It is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Connecticut.

ARTICLE II - Purpose

Farmington Avenue Baptist Church exists to bring glory to God as we DELIVER the gospel of Jesus Christ, DISCIPLE believers, and DEVELOP servant leaders.

(*1 Corinthians 10:31; Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 2:2*)

ARTICLE III - Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; we do now in the presence of God, and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, to strive for advancement of Farmington Avenue Baptist Church in grace, knowledge, and holiness; to promote its spirituality and well-being; to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (*Ephesians 4:3*); to sustain its worship, ordinances, and doctrines; and to contribute cheerfully and liberally, as God moves in our hearts, to the financial support of the ministries of the church. (*2 Corinthians 8-9*)

We further engage, as the Holy Spirit directs us, to walk together in brotherly love; to exercise Christian care and watchfulness over one another; to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation; to consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, and to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together. (*Hebrews 10:22-25*)

ARTICLE IV - Declaration of Faith

SECTION I Doctrine of the Scriptures

We believe in the verbal (every word) and plenary (complete) inspiration of the Scriptures in the original manuscripts; that the Old and New Testaments are equally inspired and without error or contradiction; that they are accurate and reliable in science, history, and every other matter they discuss; that we have the complete and only revelation by God to man in the sixty-six books of the Bible as it now stands; and that anyone who adds to or takes away from this completed revelation is cursed of God. (*II Samuel 23:2; Psalm 19:7-11, 119:89, 105; Matthew 5:18; John 10:35, 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21*)

SECTION II Doctrine of God

We believe in the true and living God, eternally existing as one in His essence yet, three in His persons. (*Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 8:6*).

A. God the Father

We believe that God the Father is Father in His relationship within the Trinity and in His relationship with those who receive Jesus Christ as Savior; that He orders all things after the counsel of His own will and in so doing, concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer; that He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent; and that He is the object of our worship and praise. (*Psalm 65:1-2; 139; Matthew 6:25-34; John 14:6; I Timothy 2:5*).

B. God the Son

The Lord Jesus is coequal and coeternal with the Father; we believe that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary; that He is God manifest in the flesh, very God and very man; that He was sent by the Father for the purpose of being the perfect sinless sacrifice for the sins of mankind; that He died in our stead, was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures gaining victory over death for us; that He is the object of our faith; that He is the only way to the Father; that He is imminently coming for the saints; that He will reign as King of Kings on earth for one thousand years; and that He will judge evil works of darkness at the end of time. (*Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1, 4; John 3:13-17, 14:6; Acts 16:31; I Corinthians 15:1-4, 55-57; Colossians 1:16-17; I Timothy 2:5; I Thessalonians 4:14; Hebrews 4:14-16; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15*).

C. God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person equal with the Father and Son of the same nature; that He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment; that He bears witness to the truth; that He is the agent of the new birth; that He baptizes all true believers into the body of Christ indwelling and sanctifying all of them, sealing and thus securing them unto the day of redemption; that He endues, guides, teaches and helps believers; and that it is the privilege and duty of the saved to be filled with the Spirit the evidences being love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance; that in relation to the evil world He restrains the evil One until God's purpose is fulfilled. (*Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18; John 3:5-7, 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-15; Galatians 5:22-23*).

SECTION III Doctrine of Creation

We believe the Genesis account of creation as being neither allegory nor myth, but a literal historical account of the direct immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man (spirit, soul, and body) was created by a direct work of God. (*Genesis 1-2:25; John 1:3, 10; Colossians 1:16*).

SECTION IV Doctrine of Man

We believe that man was created by God in His image, sinless and innocent, but that by disobedience to his Creator he incurred both physical and spiritual death; that all men through choice and an inherited evil nature are totally depraved, and if not saved after the age of accountability will endure eternal punishment in the lake of fire. (*Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7-3:24; II Samuel 12:23; Psalm 51:5; Matthew 18:10-14; Roman 5:12, 6:23; I Corinthians 15:45; Galatians 5:17; Revelation 20:14-15*).

SECTION V Doctrine of Sin

We believe that sin is the transgression of the Law of God; we believe in the universality of sin; that it separates man from God; that there is no remission of sin apart from the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and man's repentance. (*Luke 24:46-47; Romans 3:10-26, 6:23, 7:23-24; I John 3:4*)

SECTION VI Doctrine of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is only of grace, a free gift of God in the person of Jesus Christ; that salvation is received individually by a repentance from sin and a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by the shedding of His blood in death made a full and vicarious

atonement for our sins. He is in every way an all-sufficient Savior. (*John 1:12; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 9:24-25, 10:19, 12:24; I Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5*).

A. Regeneration

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that in the new birth, the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that its proper evidence appears in holy fruits of repentance and newness of life. (*John 3:33; II Peter 1:4; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 6:23; II Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 2:13; I John 3:8-9*)

B. Justification

We believe that justification is the judicial act of God whereby He makes man to be righteous by his faith in Christ Jesus; that justification includes the pardon of sin and the imputation of God's righteousness; that it is bestowed, not by any work which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood sacrifice. (*II Corinthians 5:18-21; Romans 5:1, 8-9; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 8:11*)

C. Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is an act and a process whereby God sets apart all believers unto holiness. He then conforms them to the image of Christ, completing the process of sanctification at the return of Christ for His saints. (*Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:3-4; I John 3:2*)

D. Security

We believe in the eternal security of the elect. Those whom God saved are kept by His power. At the same time, we must be diligent to make our calling and election sure. Scriptures gives no assurance to those who profess salvation yet whose lives are characterized by continued sin. (*John 6:37, 39; 10:27-30; Romans 8:38-39; II Peter 1:10; I John 3:7-10*)

E. Glorification

We believe that when Christ comes for the Church, all believers will be changed in the "twinkling of an eye" and will become like Christ at His appearing; that our mortal bodies will become immortal; that our corruptible bodies will become incorruptible. (*I Corinthians 15:51-54; I John 3:2*)

SECTION VII Doctrine of the Church

We believe that the church exists in two aspects:

A. An Organism

We believe that the church as an organism is the body and the bride of Christ, His fullness, composed of all the redeemed. We believe that Christ gave Himself for the church; that He is its only true head. (*I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:20-23, 3:3-11; Colossians 1:18*)

B. An Organization

We believe that the establishment and continuation of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament. We believe that the church as an organization is an assembly of baptized believers, voluntarily associated by covenant in the faith for fellowship, worship, and service; that its mission is the spread of the Gospel to all men, and to earnestly contend for the faith. We believe that its officers are pastors and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that its only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; and that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and methods of its cooperation. On all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline and benevolence, the will of the local church is final. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 14:27; I Corinthians 3:9-17; 16:19; II Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:2; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11; Revelation 2:3*)

SECTION VIII Church Ordinances

We believe that there are two Christian ordinances and that they are symbolical, not sacramental: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

A. Baptism

We believe that baptism is an act of obedience whereby a believer gives testimony to what has taken place in the heart of that believer, but that there is no saving power in baptism. We practice baptism by the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, setting forth in picture the essential facts in redemption – the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ - and showing the believer as being dead to sin and resurrected to walk in newness of life. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:37-41; Romans 6:4*)

B. Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the Lord's death to be observed until He comes; that the elements, the bread and the fruit of the vine, are only symbols of His broken body and shed blood; and that our observance of it is a pictorial testimony of the believer's fellowship with the crucified Savior and should be preceded by solemn heart-searching and self-judgment. (*Matthew 26:26-30; I Corinthians 10:16-21, 11:17-34*).

SECTION IX Satan

We believe in the personality of Satan, that old serpent, the devil; that he is the author of sin, and the cause of man's temptation and consequent fall. We believe that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; that his final doom along with his hosts shall be eternal punishment in the lake of fire. (*Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:1-11, 25:41; Revelation 12:9-10, 20:1-2, 7-10*)

SECTION X Doctrine of Spirit Beings

We believe that angels and demons are spirit beings. Angels were created as heavenly hosts, but some through choice are now the hosts of Satan and dishonor and will share in his ultimate doom. The angels of heaven, ministering spirits, are sinless and pure, and are forever seeking to praise God in their ministries for Him and His people. Their ministries, ranks, and orders differ, and their strength, appearance, travel, etc., are not bound by natural human laws. They are immortal and do not marry. Their abode is in heaven. (*Matthew 18:10, 22:30; Mark 5:2, 8:38; Colossians 1:16; I Thessalonians 4:16; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6, 9*)

SECTION XI Doctrine of Last Things

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead--of believers, unto an eternal life of blessedness; of unbelievers, unto eternal punishment. (*Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; II Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:5-6, 11-15*)

We believe that the return of Jesus Christ is imminent. After the first phase of His coming, in which the Church is taken up to heaven, the great tribulation on earth will be followed by the coming of Christ and the establishment of His millennial reign. Then, the kingdom will be delivered over to the Father for all eternity. (*Matthew 24:21; 25:1-13; I Corinthians 15:24-28; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; II Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 19:11-20:6*)

SECTION XII Doctrine of Separation

We believe that we are mandated by God in the Scriptures to separate ourselves unto Christ and as much as possible from any participation in or endorsement of sin; from ecclesiastical

organizations and religious personalities that deny the faith or compromise its message; from brethren that walk disorderly or who unrepentantly continue in sin or engage in the compromise aforementioned. Believers are not to enter marriage, partnerships, or other bonds with unbelievers to which create an unequal yoke. We, therefore, urge every member to abstain from every questionable thing, keeping himself from even the appearance of evil in religion, dress, conversation, amusement, business, habit, etc., according to the teachings of God's Word. *(Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 2:8-10; II Thessalonians 3:11-12; II Timothy 3:1-5; I John 2:15-16; II John 9-11)*

SECTION XIII Civil Government

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home; 2) the church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God *(Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13-14)*

SECTION XIV Human Sexuality

- A. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, transgenderism, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography, among other deviations, are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. *(Genesis 2:24; Genesis 19:5, 13; Genesis 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).*
- B. We believe that the only biblical marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. *(Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23).*
- C. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the loving leader of the home and men are to be the loving leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. *(Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)*

SECTION XV Divorce and Remarriage

We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the

offices of pastor or deacon (*Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6*)

SECTION XVI Abortion

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (*Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44*).