

# CONSTITUTION OF OAK GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH, ASHDOWN, ARKANSAS

*Revised by the membership on February 10, 2021 and June 9, 2021*

## ARTICLE I

The name of this congregation shall be the Oak Grove Baptist Church, Ashdown, Arkansas.

## ARTICLE II

### ARTICLES OF FAITH—WHAT WE TEACH:

*From the time of the Apostles to today, Christians have laid out doctrine (beliefs) in brief, definitive statements. As those who know God, we believe it necessary to set forth in a concise fashion the cornerstone truths that our church teaches as guided by Scripture. Our Doctrinal Statement summarizes essential Christian beliefs, shows unity in Christ, and affirms our belief in the Christian truths which have been held by the church throughout the ages and particularly since the Protestant reformation, including believer's baptism, and congregational polity (government).*

Certain theological distinctives which distinguish Oak Grove Baptist Church from other churches who would affirm the basic doctrines and which shape the teaching of the church are noted. We do not expect all members to embrace all aspects of these distinctives, but members should expect that nothing contrary to these distinctives will be taught.

#### **1. The Holy Scriptures**

We teach that the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God, written by human authors who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to choose the exact words that would convey God's intentions,<sup>1</sup> contained no error in the original documents,<sup>2</sup> and is the only sufficient, certain, and authoritative standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. We teach that it is authored by God, its subject is truth and therefore contains no errors, and salvation is its ultimate end.<sup>3</sup> We teach that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us. Therefore, it is, and will always remain, the true center of Christian union, and the final authority in testing all claims about what is true and right.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> John 10:35; 14:26; 16:12-15; Acts 1:16; 3:21; 1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:16

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 23:19; Proverbs 30:5-6; Psalm 12:6; 119:89; Matthew 24:35; John 17:17; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18

<sup>3</sup> John 5:38-39; 8:31-32; 20:31; Romans 1:16-17; 2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 1:10-12

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 8:20; Psalm 119:59-60; Matthew 5:18; 22:29,31,32; Acts 17:11; 20:32; 28:23; Romans 2:12; Ephesians 2:20; Philippians 3:16; 1:9-11; 2 Timothy 3:17; Hebrews 4:12; 1 John 4:1,6

#### **2. God**

We teach that there is one, and only one living and true God,<sup>5</sup> an infinite all-knowing Spirit,<sup>6</sup> the Maker and supreme Ruler of heaven and earth<sup>7</sup> who is inexpressibly glorious in His holiness,<sup>8</sup> and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love.<sup>9</sup> We teach that in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternally existent persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,<sup>10</sup> which are equal in every divine attribute yet they execute distinct but complementary functions in the great work of creation, providence, and redemption.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 48:12; Jeremiah 10:10; Matthew 16:16; 1 Corinthians 8:4,6; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 3:12; Revelation 7:2

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 3:14; John 4:24

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 1:1-31; Psalm 83:18, 147:5; 148:13; Isaiah 48:13; Daniel 4:25,34-35; Romans 1:20; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 3:4

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 15:11; Psalm 103:19; 138:5; Isaiah 6:3; Romans 11:36; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Revelation 4:6-8

<sup>9</sup> Jeremiah 2:12-13; Matthew 10:37; Mark 12:30; Revelation 4:11; 5:12-14

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 1:26; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3; 15:26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:5-6

<sup>11</sup> John 5:17; 10:30; 14:11,23; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 8:6; Ephesians 2:18; Philippians 2:5-6

### 3. Distinctive || God's Creation of the Universe and Man

We teach that God created from nothing all that now exists in six days, and it was all very good.<sup>12</sup> We teach that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit acted together in the work of creation,<sup>13</sup> that out of all living things only man was created in God's image and without sin, and that God granted him dominion over all lesser forms of life and over the earth itself.<sup>14</sup> We teach that God, being eternally joyfully self-sufficient and not being moved by any incompleteness, need, or deficiency within Himself,<sup>15</sup> was pleased in creation to display His glory for the everlasting joy of the redeemed, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.<sup>16</sup> We teach that God directly created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side, and that Adam and Eve were the historical parents of all humanity,<sup>17</sup> and therefore there is only one race—the human race—though there are many distinct people groups.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 1:1-2:3; Exodus 20:11; 31:17; Psalm 24:1-2; 33:6, 9; Jeremiah 10:12-13; Acts 17:24; Romans 4:17; Hebrews 11:3

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 1:1-2, 26-28; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 1:26-28,31; 9:6; Psalm 8:3-8; Colossians 3:10; James 3:9

<sup>15</sup> Exodus 3:13-14; Job 22:2-3; Psalm 50:9-15; Acts 17:25

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 35:10; 43:7; Romans 1:20; Revelation 5:9; 7:9-10

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 2:7; 2:21-22; 3:20; Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22,45

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 3:20; 10:1-32; 11:1-9; Deuteronomy 32:8; Malachi 2:10; Luke 3:23-38; Acts 17:24-28; 1 Timothy 2:13; Revelation 5:9

### 4. Providence

We teach that from all eternity God decrees, or permits, everything that occurs.<sup>19</sup> We teach that He is absolutely sovereign over all creatures and events and perpetually upholds all things;<sup>20</sup> therefore, nothing is contingent (dependent on the action of humans) or uncertain to Him.<sup>21</sup> Yet God did this in such a way that He is neither the author nor approver of sin, nor does He violate the will or limit the moral accountability of mankind.<sup>22</sup> In God's infinite wisdom and power, all things work together for the good of those who love Him,<sup>23</sup> and for the glory of His name.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Numbers 23:19; Psalm 115:3; 135:6; Isaiah 45:6-7; 46:9-11; Acts 15:18; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 1:3; 6:17

<sup>20</sup> 1 Chronicles 29:11-12; Job 38:4-41; Proverbs 16:4,9; 21:1; Daniel 4:25; Matthew 10:29-31; John 19:11; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; Romans 9:15-21

<sup>21</sup> Job 1:21; Proverbs 16:33; Isaiah 14:27; Ezekiel 11:5

<sup>22</sup> Genesis 3:6; Psalm 50:21; Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; 2:16; 1 Peter 1:17

<sup>23</sup> Genesis 50:20; Deuteronomy 8:15-16; Romans 8:28; Hebrews 12:5-11

<sup>24</sup> Exodus 9:16; Isaiah 60:21; Ezekiel 28:20-24; Romans 9:22-24; 11:33-36

### 5. The Fall of Man and Its Effect on Humanity

We teach that Adam, as the representative of all mankind, was created morally upright and perfect,<sup>25</sup> but was led astray from God's word and wisdom by the subtlety of Satan's deceit thereby voluntarily and deliberately falling from his original righteousness and communion with God<sup>26</sup> and as a consequence every person is now a sinner by nature,<sup>27</sup> by choice, and by divine declaration,<sup>28</sup> which results in a state of radical depravity, meaning that every dimension of his being is distorted by sin.<sup>29</sup> Apart from the grace of God, fallen man is ruled by sin, hostile to God, sees the message of the cross as foolishness,<sup>30</sup> and neither desires nor is able to love God, keep His laws, understand the gospel, repent of sin, or trust in Christ<sup>31</sup> and therefore is justly condemned to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.<sup>32</sup> During this life, this corruption of nature remains in those who are regenerated<sup>33</sup> and calls for vigilance in the lifelong fight of faith.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Genesis 1:26-27, 31; 2:16-17; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Acts 17:26-29; Romans 2:14-15

<sup>26</sup> Genesis 3:6-24; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14

<sup>27</sup> Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4; John 3:6; Romans 3:23; 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22,45,49

<sup>28</sup> Genesis 6:12; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:9-18; 8:7; James 1:13-15

<sup>29</sup> Genesis 6:5; Deuteronomy 29:4; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:18; 1:28-32; 6:16,20; Titus 1:15-16; Revelation 22:11

<sup>30</sup> Romans 5:10,12; 8:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 1:13, 21; 2 Timothy 2:26; Titus 3:3; James 4:4; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21

<sup>31</sup> Jeremiah 13:23; Mark 4:10-12; John 6:44, 65; 8:43-47; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 4:17-19

<sup>32</sup> Ezekiel 18:19-20; Matthew 20:15; Romans 1:20; 2:1-16; 3:19; Galatians 3:10; 3:22

<sup>33</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 7:18,23; Galatians 5:16-18; Hebrew 3:12-13; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 1:8

<sup>34</sup> 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 4:7-8

## 6. Christ and the Way of Salvation

We teach that salvation is by grace alone and that the only way of salvation is in the name of Jesus Christ who was sent into the world by the Father to save sinners.<sup>35</sup> We teach that Christ was born of a virgin,<sup>36</sup> lived a sinless life,<sup>37</sup> and died a sacrificial death on the cross where He absorbed our punishment and appeased the wrath of God against us<sup>38</sup> through the one time act of shedding His blood to atone for our sins.<sup>39</sup> We teach that on the third day he rose victoriously from the dead and is now enthroned in heaven where he continually pleads with the Father on our behalf,<sup>40</sup> uniting the compassions of his human nature with his divine attributes<sup>41</sup> so that he is qualified in every way to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> John 3:16,17; 17:2; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:19-22; 5:8; 10:13-15; Galatians 4:4-5

<sup>36</sup> Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:14

<sup>37</sup> Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 4:1-11; Romans 5:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:14,17; 4:15, 7:26-28

<sup>38</sup> Isaiah 53:10; Romans 4:25; 5:9; 8:1,3; Ephesians 2:3-6; Galatians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9

<sup>39</sup> Matthew 20:28; John 10:15; 19:30; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:23-25; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Ephesians 5:25; Hebrews 9:11-14

<sup>40</sup> Matthew 28:5-7; Acts 1:3, 9-11; 2:33; 5:31; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8; Colossians 3:1-4; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:8,13; 8:1

<sup>41</sup> John 5:21, 26; Acts 2:29-36; 17:31; Romans 1:4; Ephesians 1:20-22; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 2:9

<sup>42</sup> Romans 8:34; Hebrews 2:18; 4:14-16; 7:25-26

## 7. The Freeness of Salvation

We teach that the blessings of salvation are freely offered to all by the gospel,<sup>43</sup> that it is the immediate duty of all to accept the gospel with a glad, obedient faith and Godly sorrow,<sup>44</sup> and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth other than his own inherent depravity (sinfulness) by which he refuses to listen and suppresses the truth in unrighteousness thereby rejecting the gospel<sup>45</sup> which makes him wholly responsible for his just condemnation.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Isaiah 55:1; Romans 10:9,13; Revelation 22:17

<sup>44</sup> Mark 1:15; Romans 1:15-17; 16:26; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

<sup>45</sup> Proverbs 1:24; Matthew 23:37; John 5:39-40; Acts 13:46; Romans 1:18-32; 9:32

<sup>46</sup> Matthew 11:20-22; John 3:18,19; 2 Thessalonians 1:8

## 8. Grace in Regeneration

We teach that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again.<sup>47</sup> This results in the mind being spiritually and savingly enlightened to understand the Word of God which is accomplished in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit<sup>48</sup> and the divine truth of the Word of God.<sup>49</sup> This is done in a way that brings about voluntary obedience and faith<sup>50</sup> which is evidenced by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:26; John 3:3,6-7; Romans 2:28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 14:3; 21:27

<sup>48</sup> Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 55:8-9; John 1:13; 3:8; Romans 5:5; 11:33-34

<sup>49</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:30; James 1:16-18; 1 Peter 1:22-25

<sup>50</sup> Ephesians 3:14-21; Philippians 2:13; 1 John 4:7; 5:1

<sup>51</sup> Matthew 3:8-10; 7:20; Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 4:20-24; 5:9; Colossians 3:9-11; 1 John 5:4,18

## 9. Faith and Repentance

We teach that faith and repentance are required by Scripture and inseparably linked graces that are granted to us as a gift by the regenerating Spirit of God<sup>52</sup> that deeply convince us of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ.<sup>53</sup> We then turn to God with true repentance, confession of sin, and pleas for mercy<sup>54</sup> while whole heartedly receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all sufficient Savior.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Mark 1:15; Acts 11:18; Ephesians 2:8; 1 John 5:1

<sup>53</sup> John 16:8; Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31

<sup>54</sup> Psalm 51; Luke 15:18-21; 18:13; 2 Corinthians 7:10-11; James 4:7-10

<sup>55</sup> Psalm 2:6; Matthew 13:44; Acts 3:22-23; Romans 10:9-11; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 1:8; 4:14; 7:25

## 10. Justification

We teach that Christ freely justifies (declares free from guilt or blame) those that believe in him<sup>56</sup> which includes the pardon of sin<sup>57</sup> and the promise of eternal life without any consideration of works which we have done. Rather it is solely through faith in the shed blood of Christ<sup>58</sup> by which His perfect righteousness is freely imputed (credited) to us so that God sees us as having the righteousness of Christ.<sup>59</sup> This brings us into a peaceful and favorable state (right standing) with God, and secures all the benefits of salvation for us.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> John 1:16; Romans 4:23-25; 5:1-2; 8:1,30; Galatians 2:16; 3:24; Ephesians 3:8

<sup>57</sup> Isaiah 53:11-12; Zechariah 13:1; Matthew 9:6; Acts 10:43; 13:39; Romans 4:6-8; 5:9

<sup>58</sup> Romans 3:23-24,28; 4:4-5; 5:17-21; 6:23; Philippians 3:7-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 John 2:25

<sup>59</sup> Romans 3:24-26; 4:23-25; 5:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:12

<sup>60</sup> Matthew 6:33; Romans 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; 1 Timothy 4:8

## 11. God's Purpose of Grace

We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies.<sup>61</sup> This in no way contradicts or negates the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> John 6:37-40; 10:14-16; 15:16; Acts 13:48; Romans 8:28-30; 9:10-18; 11:5-6; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:8-9; 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 1 John 4:19

<sup>62</sup> Ezekiel 18:23,32; 33:11; Matthew 25:31-46; John 3:18-19,36; 5:40; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 1:18-21; 2:4-5; 9:19-23; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17

## 12. Sanctification

We teach that sanctification is the process by which the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God and becomes more and more like Christ.<sup>63</sup> We teach that it is a progressive work that is begun in regeneration,<sup>64</sup> continued through self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer by the power of God's Word and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,<sup>65</sup> but never complete in this life.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Romans 8:5; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 1:4; Philippians 2:12-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 5:23; 1 Peter 1:2

<sup>64</sup> Proverbs 4:18; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 1:9-11; 3:12-16; Hebrews 6:1; 2 Peter 1:5-8

<sup>65</sup> Matt. 26:41; Luke 9:23; 11:35; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Ephesians 4:11-12,30; 6:18; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:29

<sup>66</sup> Romans 13:11

## 13. Perseverance of the Saints

We teach that those who are true believers can neither totally nor finally fall from a state of grace.<sup>67</sup> This persevering attachment to Christ is what distinguishes them from temporary believers.<sup>68</sup> Though true believers may fall through neglect and temptation, into sin, such that they incur God's displeasure and grieve the Holy Spirit, their graces and comforts become impaired, they hurt and scandalize others and bring temporary judgments on themselves, and disgrace the church,<sup>69</sup> nevertheless they will renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Mark 13:13; John 8:31; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:9; 5:18

<sup>68</sup> Job 17:9; Matthew 13:20-21; John 6:66-69; 13:18; 1 John 2:19

<sup>69</sup> 2 Samuel 12:14; Isaiah 64:5,9; Psalms 32:3-4; 51:10,12; Matthew 26:70,72,74; Ephesians 4:30

<sup>70</sup> Luke 22:32,61-62; Philippians 1:6; 2:13; Hebrews 1:14; 13:5; Jude 24-25; 1 John 4:4

## 14. The Harmony of the Law and the Gospel

We teach that the law of God is the holy, just, good, eternal and perfect rule of righteousness and moral government<sup>71</sup> and that the inability of fallen men to fulfill its precepts described in the Scriptures arises entirely from their love of sin.<sup>72</sup> The one great end of the gospel, and the means of grace connected with the church, is to deliver fallen men from bondage to sin, and to restore them to willing and cheerful obedience to what the will of God as revealed in the law requires.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Matthew 5:17; Luke 16:17; Romans 3:31; 7:12

<sup>72</sup> Jeremiah 13:23; Romans 3:20; 4:15; 8:7-8

<sup>73</sup> Psalm 119; Romans 7:7,14-22; 8:2-4; 10:4; Galatians 3:21; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 8:10; Jude 20,21

## 15. Distinctive || Christ's Church and its Officers

We teach that there is one universal Church, composed of all those, in every time and place, who are chosen in Christ and united to Him through faith by the Spirit in one Body, with Christ Himself as the all-supplying, all-sustaining, all-supreme, and all-authoritative Head.<sup>74</sup> We teach that it is God's will that the universal Church find expression in local churches which consist of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, associated with one another for fellowship,<sup>75</sup> hearing the Word of God proclaimed,<sup>76</sup> practicing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper,<sup>77</sup> governed by His commandments as revealed in His Word,<sup>78</sup> the building of each other's faith through the manifold ministries of love,<sup>79</sup> and holding each other accountable in the obedience of faith through Biblical discipline.<sup>80</sup> Its only scriptural officers are pastors (men called to teach and govern as shepherds, overseers, and elders of the body — three terms that are used interchangeably in the New Testament for the same office) and deacons (those called to serve the church) whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.<sup>81</sup> Women are not to fulfill the role of pastor in the local church, but are encouraged to use their gifts in appropriate roles that edify the body of Christ and spread the gospel.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; 3:6; 4:15-16; 5:23; Colossians 1:18

<sup>75</sup> Acts 2:41-42, 47; 8:1; 11:21-23; 1 Corinthians 1:1-8; 4:17; 14:23; 16:19; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 3 John 9

<sup>76</sup> Ephesians 4:11-12; 2 Timothy 4:1-2

<sup>77</sup> Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:2, 23-26

<sup>78</sup> Matthew 28:20; John 14:15,21; 15:12; Acts 5:11; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13; Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 John 4:21; 2 John 6

<sup>79</sup> Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 5:6; 12:1-31; 14:12,26; 2 Corinthians 2:17; Ephesians 4:1-16

<sup>80</sup> Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; James 5:19-20

<sup>81</sup> Acts 6:4; 14:23; 15:22; 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-12; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17 Titus 1:5-9

<sup>82</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12-13

## 16. Evangelism

We teach that the ministry of evangelism (sharing and proclaiming the message of salvation only possible by grace through faith in Jesus Christ) and discipleship (helping followers of Christ grow up into maturity in Christ) is a responsibility of all followers of Jesus Christ.<sup>83</sup> It is a priority in evangelism to unite new believers with local churches.<sup>84</sup> The ultimate aim of world missions is that God would create, by His Word, worshippers who glorify His name through glad-hearted faith and obedience.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:9-15; 1 Peter 3:15

<sup>84</sup> Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-35; Hebrews 10:19-25

<sup>85</sup> John 4:23; Romans 1:5; 15:8-11

## 17. Distinctive || Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We teach that only two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We teach that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water,<sup>86</sup> into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit<sup>87</sup> to give a solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer's faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior which results in death to sin and resurrection to a new life.<sup>88</sup> We teach that it is required prior to being admitted to church membership.<sup>89</sup> We do not believe in baptismal regeneration, nor do we hold that baptism is necessary for salvation. We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of the death of Christ until he comes<sup>90</sup> and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Matthew 3:5-6; John 3:22-23; Acts 2:38-42; 8:12, 36-39; 16:32-34; 18:8

<sup>87</sup> Matthew 28:19; Acts 10:47-48

<sup>88</sup> Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:26-28; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:18-21

<sup>89</sup> Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42; 10:48; Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27;

<sup>90</sup> Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:17-32

<sup>91</sup> 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; 10:3-32; 11:28-29

## **18. The Lord's Day**

We teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath. It is kept holy to the Lord when people have first prepared their hearts appropriately and arranged their everyday affairs in advance so that they may observe a holy rest and fill their day with public and private acts of worship and the duties of necessity and mercy.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Genesis 2:3; Exodus 20:8; Leviticus 19:30; Psalm 26:8; 118:15,24; Isaiah 56:2-8; 58:13-14; Mark 2:27; Luke 10:42; John 20:19; Acts 2:42-47; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 4:3-11; 10:24-25; Rev. 1:10

## **19. Separation and Unity**

We teach that because of the holiness of God in all His attributes and our responsibility to guard the purity of the Gospel believers are commanded to pursue holiness,<sup>93</sup> and separate from false teachers and clearly disobedient brethren.<sup>94</sup> However, they must also value the eager pursuit of unity with faithful brethren in the body of Christ.<sup>95</sup> We teach the importance of discipleship,<sup>96</sup> mutual accountability of all believers to each other,<sup>97</sup> as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> Leviticus 20:7; Romans 12:2; Hebrews 12:14; James 1:27; 1 Peter 1:14-16

<sup>94</sup> Romans 16:17-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Galatians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14-15

<sup>95</sup> John 17:20-23; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:1-6

<sup>96</sup> Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2

<sup>97</sup> Matthew 18:5-14; Galatians 6:1-2

<sup>98</sup> Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16

## **20. Distinctive || Family**

We teach that God established the institution of marriage in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, whom He created male and female as unique biological persons made to complete each other, and that the pattern of the monogamous union of one genetic male and one genetic female in marriage until death parts them is to be followed.<sup>99</sup> We teach that God's plan for human sexuality is to be expressed only within the context of marriage.<sup>100</sup> Christians are to marry only other Christians or remain single as God enables them.<sup>101</sup> Children are to be seen as gifts from God and are to be raised for God's glory and service. An authority structure exists within the family. The Lord is the Head of the home, the husband is the head of the wife and is to love her as Christ loves the Church, and children are to be obedient to their parents.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> Genesis 1:27; 2:21-24; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 7:39

<sup>100</sup> Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 7:2-3; Hebrews 13:4

<sup>101</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:8-9,25-28; 2 Corinthians 6:14

<sup>102</sup> Psalm 127:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21

## **21. Distinctive || Sanctity of Life**

We teach that human life is sacred from conception to its natural end, and that we must have concern for the physical and spiritual needs of those around us.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Psalm 139:13; Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 22:37-39; Romans 12:20-21; Galatians 6:10

## **22. Civil Government**

We teach that God has ordained civil authorities to be under Him and over the people, for His own glory and the public good.<sup>104</sup> Christians should make requests and prayers for those in authority and submit in the Lord to all things they lawfully require,<sup>105</sup> except when they oppose the will of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>106</sup> who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Deuteronomy 16:18; Exodus 18:23; 2 Samuel 23:3; Romans 13:1-7

<sup>105</sup> Matthew 22:21; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14

<sup>106</sup> Daniel 3:15-18; 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20; 5:29; Matthew 14:4, 9-13

<sup>107</sup> Psalm 2:1-12; 72:11; Matthew 23:10; Revelation 19:16

### **23. The Righteous and the Wicked**

We teach that there is a radical and essential difference between those made righteous in Christ and those who remain wicked and disobedient.<sup>108</sup> We teach that only those who through faith are justified (given right standing with God) in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem,<sup>109</sup> while all who remain unrepentant and do not believe are wicked in his sight, and under the curse and wrath of God.<sup>110</sup> We teach that a persons state, righteous or wicked, and therefore their eternal destination, with God or separated from him eternally in Hell, is fixed at death and will remain fixed for all eternity.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Genesis 18:23; Psalm 10:4; Proverbs 10:24; 11:31; 12:26; Ecclesiastes 3:17; Isaiah 5:20; 55:6-7; Malachi 3:18; Matthew 7:13-14; 13:1-50; 25:1-46; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 6:16

<sup>109</sup> Luke 9:23-26; Romans 1:17; 6:18,22; 7:6; 1 Corinthians 11:32; 1 Peter 4:17-18; 1 John 2:29; 3:7

<sup>110</sup> Isaiah 57:21; Matthew 13:30,41-42,49-50; 25:41; John 3:36; Galatians 3:10; 1 John 5:19

<sup>111</sup> Proverbs 14:32; Luke 12:4-5; 16:25; John 8:21-24; 2 Timothy 2:19; Revelation 22:11

### **24. Last Things**

We teach the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>112</sup> the bodily resurrection of the dead,<sup>113</sup> the establishment of His kingdom,<sup>114</sup> the final separation of Satan with his hosts and all the wicked, who are outside of Christ, from the benevolent presence of God to everlasting conscious misery which will eternally demonstrate His justice, and the everlasting joy of the righteous serving God and giving Him unending praise and glory which will eternally demonstrate His mercy.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Matthew 24:30-31; 28:20; Mark 13:24-27; 14:61-62; Luke 24:39-43; Acts 1:9-11; 3:21; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 2:28; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16

<sup>113</sup> Job 19:25-26; Isaiah 26:19; John 6:40; Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58

<sup>114</sup> Luke 22:28-30; 1 Corinthians 15:22-24; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 20:4-6

<sup>115</sup> Psalm 16:11; Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 3:12; 13:37-43,49-50; 19:29; 25:23,31-46; Mark 9:43-48; John 4:36; 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Romans 2:2-16; 3:5-6; 6:23; 9:22-23; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 6:9-10; 2 Corinthians 4:18; 5:10-11; Philippians 3:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Hebrews 1:10-12; 6:1-2; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:3-13; 1 John 4:17; Jude 4,7; Revelation 14:11; 20:11-15; 22:11

### **25. The Glory of God**

We teach that Christians must live for God's glory alone<sup>116</sup> through their awareness and enjoyment of His Person,<sup>117</sup> submission to His authority<sup>118</sup> and reliance upon His goodness.<sup>119</sup> In truth, all things that have or will transpire, serve to glorify God as their highest purpose.<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Peter 4:11

<sup>117</sup> Psalm 23:4; 46:1; 139:7-10; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 16:17; Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5-6

<sup>118</sup> 1 Samuel 15:22-23; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Micah 6:8; John 15:14-17; Hebrews 12:28-29

<sup>119</sup> Psalm 18:1-3; Isaiah 41:10; Habakkuk 3:17-19; Matthew 6:25-32; Luke 11:11-13; Philippians 4:6-7

<sup>120</sup> Psalm 46:10; 86:9; Malachi 1:11; Romans 11:36; Ephesians 1:3-14; 3:20-21

*Formulated with reference to [The Baptist Faith and Message 2000](#), the [New Hampshire Confession of Faith \(1853\)](#), and the [1689 Baptist Confession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century modernized by Stan Reeves](#)*

## **ARTICLE III**

### **CHURCH COVENANT:**

#### **What It Means to Be a Christian and a Member of Oak Grove Baptist Church (OGBC)**

Being a Christian is more than identifying yourself with a particular religion or affirming a certain value system. Being a Christian means you have embraced what the Bible says about God, mankind, and salvation. As members of OGBC we covenant (mutually commit) with one another to affirm, believe, and live in accordance with the following core truths which affirm OGBC's belief in the Christian truths which have been held by the church throughout the ages and particularly since the Protestant reformation.

**God Is Sovereign Creator:** The Bible says we were created by the one true God (Yahweh) to love, serve, and enjoy endless fellowship with Him. The New Testament reveals it was Jesus Himself who created everything. Therefore, He also owns and rules everything.<sup>121</sup> That means He has authority over our lives and we owe Him absolute allegiance, obedience, and worship.

---

<sup>121</sup> John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Psalm 103:19

**God Is Holy:** God is absolutely and perfectly holy; therefore He cannot commit or approve of evil.<sup>122</sup> God requires holiness of us as well. First Peter 1:16 says, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

---

<sup>122</sup> Isaiah 6:3; James 1:13

**Mankind Is Sinful:** According to Scripture, everyone is guilty of sin: “There is no man who does not sin,” 1 Kings 8:46. That doesn’t mean we’re incapable of performing acts of human kindness. But we’re utterly incapable of understanding, loving, or pleasing God on our own.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Romans 3:10-12

**Sin Demands a Penalty:** God’s holiness and justice demand that all sin be punished by death.<sup>124</sup> That’s why simply changing our patterns of behavior can’t solve our sin problem or eliminate its consequences.

---

<sup>124</sup> Ezekiel 18:4

**Jesus Is Lord and Savior:** Romans 10:9 says, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Even though God’s justice demands death for sin, His love has provided a Savior who paid the penalty and died for His church. Christ’s death satisfied the demands of God’s justice and Christ’s perfect life satisfied the demands of God’s holiness, thereby enabling Him to forgive and save those who place their faith in Him.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26

**The Character of Saving Faith:** True faith is always accompanied by repentance from sin. Repentance is agreeing with God that you are sinful, confessing your sins to Him, and making a conscious choice to turn from sin and pursue Christ and obedience to Him.<sup>126</sup> It isn’t enough to believe certain facts about Christ. Even Satan and his demons believe in the true God,<sup>127</sup> but they don’t love and obey Him. True saving faith always responds in obedience.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> Luke 13:3,5; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 11:28-30; John 17:3; 1 John 2:3

<sup>127</sup> James 2:19

<sup>128</sup> Ephesians 2:10

Having agreed with these truths we, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, covenant (mutually commit to) the following with one another:

**Salvation and Baptism:** That by grace through faith we have received Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and, supreme Treasure of our lives, and upon public profession of our faith we were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Doctrinal Unity and Fellowship:** We will welcome, and test biblically, instruction from the Scriptures by the pastor(s) and other teachers of the church which accords with *Article II, Articles of Faith—What We Teach* (AOF), seeking to grow toward biblical unity in the truth. We will not be divisive to or teach anything contrary to Scripture or the AOF, and will submit to church leadership and be diligent to preserve unity and peace.

**Stewardship:** We will consistently contribute, as a good steward of God’s blessings, such time, talent, and resources, in the measure that God prospers us, so that the ministry of local and worldwide spread of the gospel may continue.

**Responsibilities:** We will maintain family and personal devotions, educate our children in the Christian faith, and seek the salvation of our family and friends. We will diligently exercise self-control such that our lifestyle exhibits both true Christian love and personal holiness. We will seek God’s help in abstaining from all substances, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another’s faith.

**Fellowship Loyalty:** We will faithfully assemble with this body of believers for weekly services, striving to maintain unity, and doing all we can to stimulate love and good deeds in others as we seek to exercise our spiritual gifts in faithful service. We will commit to praying for the ministry here in this church, our brothers and sisters in Christ, the pastors(s) and deacons, and for the lost who need the Savior. That when we leave this church for righteous reasons, we will, if possible, unite with a like-minded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.

**Accountability:** We will be accountable to our brothers and sisters in Christ to adhere to this covenant and to likewise hold them accountable for the same, using all diligence to address concerns biblically and discretely. We will confess our sin to God and to fellow believers, repent and seek help to put our sin to death.

**Church Discipline:** We will follow the biblical procedures of church discipline where sin is evident in another, with the hope of bringing about repentance and restoration, and submit ourselves to discipline if the need should ever arise.

**Scriptural Authority:** We will submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues.

This covenant will be read and affirmed upon admission of a new member(s).

We will use this covenant to evaluate our commitment to the body of OGBC on an ongoing basis and affirm our continuing conviction and purpose to adhere to it. We will notify the pastor(s) if at any time we can no longer commit to this covenant, or have concerns regarding OGBC.

## ARTICLE IV

### MEMBERSHIP:

#### Section 1. Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must profess saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, give evidence of regeneration, and have been baptized in obedience to Christ’s command following his or her regeneration (See ARTICLE II, Section 17, above, for details on valid believer’s baptism by immersion). Each member must wholeheartedly believe in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible, agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in ARTICLE II, Articles of Faith—What We Teach, above, and to keep the commitments expressed in ARTICLE III, Church Covenant, above.

#### Section 2. Requests for Membership

Membership may be requested in the following ways:

- A. **Baptism:** Requests for membership by baptism may be received at any time.
- B. **Statement:** Requests for membership may be received upon statement affirming his or her faith, baptism in accordance with ARTICLE II, SECTION 17, above, and church membership.
- C. **Letter:** Requests for membership from persons coming from a Baptist Church of like Faith and Order may be received upon presentation or receipt of a letter affirming that they are a member in good standing.
- D. **Restoration:** Any person who has been dismissed due to church discipline (ARTICLE IV, Section 6, D, below) may be restored to membership upon request, demonstration of repentance and/or reparation, and approval by the church.

#### Section 3. Pastoral Review of Prospective Members

The pastor(s) shall be responsible for determining each person’s qualification for membership by reviewing relevant evidence and/or interviewing the prospective member. A brief testimony which demonstrates an understanding of the gospel may be requested, when deemed appropriate. Any questions or disagreement with the Church Covenant or Constitution must be indicated when requesting membership. If any discrepancies are identified and not resolved during the interview and the prospective member still wishes to be presented to the church for membership, the pastor(s) will make the results of their review known when they are presented to the congregation so that they can make an informed vote regarding the prospective members acceptance or denial.

#### Section 4. Presentation for Membership

The pastor(s) will announce the prospective members desire to join our congregation during a regular meeting of the church on Sunday morning. Prospective members will be denied membership or received into fellowship in accordance with the following requirements:

- A. Denial of Membership. If, upon review of the facts relating to a prospective member, the church determines that the prospective member does not confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the prospective member practices a lifestyle that exemplifies a blatant disregard for Scripture and is unwilling to repent and amend their lifestyle to be in keeping with Scripture, or that the prospective member holds beliefs incompatible with the Church Covenant or Constitution, membership shall be denied.
- B. Reception of Members. Prospective members may be received into the congregation if, upon review of the facts relating to a prospective member it is determined that the requirements of ARTICLE IV, SECTION 1, above have been met. Once they have been presented to the congregation action shall be taken at the next scheduled business meeting. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present will be required for acceptance into membership. Once received into fellowship prospective members will relinquish membership in other churches.

#### Section 5. Responsibilities of Membership

The responsibilities of membership are summarized in ARTICLE III, Church Covenant. Each member is expected to abide by these and participate in and contribute to the ministry of the church. Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend business meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such matters as may be submitted to a vote. Only those who are members of this congregation shall serve in the ministries of the church, although non-members may serve on an as needed basis with the approval of the pastor(s). Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and/or professional consultation.

#### Section 6. Church Discipline

The purpose of church discipline is to affect a return to a biblical standard of conduct and doctrine in a member who errs (Galatians 6:1) in order to maintain purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:4-6), and to deter sin (1 Timothy 5:19-20). Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and in doing so opposes the welfare of the church and/or renders their profession of faith doubtful, shall be dealt with, according to Matthew 18:15-18, as follows:

- A. It is the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of an erring member's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct the erring member in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration in a manner that exhibits love for God and neighbor—promoting holiness to the Lord and unity. It is essential that this be done in a spirit of obedience to Christ.
- B. If the erring member does not heed this warning, the warning member shall again go to the erring member accompanied by one or two other members (preferably a pastor) as witnesses to warn and correct, seeking repentance and restoration.
- C. If the erring member still refuses to heed the warning, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the pastor(s), who, upon careful and prayerful investigation, shall tell it to the church encouraging the congregation to pray for repentance and restoration of the erring member.
- D. If the erring member refuses to heed the warnings of the pastor(s) and the church, he or she shall be dismissed from the church pursuant to the Scriptures and treated as an unbeliever (Matthew 18:17, 1 Timothy 1:20). The congregation shall be encouraged to pray for the repentance and restoration of the erring member.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the pastor(s) in the exercise of their discretion may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline (ARTICLE IV, Section 6, C above) or to the fourth stage of church discipline (ARTICLE IV, Section 6, D above) when one or more of the following have occurred:

1. Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, i.e., openly and to the offense of the whole Church (1 Corinthians 5:1-5).
2. Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine not in keeping with Scripture and ARTICLE II, Articles of Faith—What We Teach, above, and chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the pastor(s) (Romans 16:17).
3. Where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11).

It is to be clearly understood that the discipline process will continue to conclusion whether the erring member leaves the church or otherwise seeks to withdraw from membership.

### Section 7. Membership status

Active members are those who regularly attend the stated meetings of the church, regularly contribute to the church through their time, talents, and financial support, and maintain vital contact with the pastor(s) during periods when they may be away. Only active members shall retain the right of voting in church business meetings and qualify for a letter of transfer of membership.

If vital contact is not maintained members will be carried on an inactive role for a period of no more than one year. During this time, every effort shall be made by the pastor(s) to re-establish the member's fellowship with the church. If the delinquent member shows no interest ARTICLE IV, Section 8, D below will be followed to exclude such members from the church roll.

A historical list of former members will be maintained for reference purposes only as the idea of a permanent inactive roll defies what it truly means to be a church member.

### Section 8. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in one of the following ways:

- A. By physical death.
- B. By transfer: When requested, the church may grant to a departing member who is on the "active members" roll and in good standing a letter of dismissal to the fellowship of another church of like faith. The church may refuse to grant a letter of transfer to any church which is in their judgment disloyal to the gospel (Jude 3). No such letter may be given to a member who is at the time under the corrective discipline of our church body.
- C. By self-professed apostasy. If a member professes to no longer believe in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible they will be excluded upon vote of the congregation.
- D. By exclusion: If a member regularly absents himself from the stated meetings of the church without a valid reason, or if due to relocation he or she ceases to maintain a vital contact with the church, he or she shall be excluded from the church roll. A list of members that have not maintained vital contact with the church will be presented at the first business meeting of the physical year and classified as an "inactive member." If there has still been no contact by the first business meeting of the next physical year a vote will be taken to exclude said members from the church roll. If an excluded member applies again for membership, the procedures set forth in ARTICLE IV, Section 2 above will again be followed.
- E. By Erasure: If a member joins a church of a different faith his or her name shall be removed from the church roll.
- F. By dismissal as a final step of church discipline: The procedures set forth in ARTICLE IV, Section 6, D above shall only be applied in strict accordance with the Scriptures and upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason collectively agreed upon by the church body.

Notice of any changes to the church roll will be presented at the next business meeting after such action is taken.

## ARTICLE V

### CHURCH POLICY:

Section 1. This church shall be and remain a democratic body governed only by its members.

Section 2. All organizations and officers of the church shall be authorized by and under its control.

Section 3. So far as may be consistent with the principles and teachers of the Word of God, this church shall cooperate with and have representation in the denominational causes sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and the Little River Baptist Association.

## ARTICLE VI

### AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and these By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any given meeting of the church called for that purpose; provided, that such proposed amendment shall be embraced within the call; that such call be in writing and placed before the church at a business meeting at least one month before the date set for final action; and that it shall be announced from the pulpit at the morning service on the Lord's Day next preceding the date set for such final action.

## ARTICLE VII

### BY-LAWS:

In order to make effective this Constitution, we hereby enact the following By-Laws:

### MEETINGS:

#### FOR WORSHIP AND WORK:

##### Section 1.

(1) For public worship, preaching, instruction and evangelism, regular meetings shall be held each Lord's Day morning and evening, and each Wednesday evening. Any exception from these regular meetings, other than in the case of an emergency, shall be by a majority vote of the congregation. In the case of an emergency, the Pastor and Deacons shall determine if worship services shall be cancelled.

(1) there shall be a Sunday School, conducted each Lord's Day morning; a Church Training Program each Lord's Day evening; and other organizations which may be deemed advisable by the church for the purpose of teaching the Word of God and training in Christian life and service, such as a Women's Missionary Union and its Auxiliaries; a Brotherhood and its related organizations.

(2) The church shall conduct evangelistic meetings from time to time as shall be determined by the church.

#### FOR TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS:

##### Section 2:

- (1) Regular Business Meeting: The Wednesday night following the first Sunday in each month shall be the stated time for the transaction of the business of the church, except as provided in Article VI of the Constitution.
- (2) Special emergency business meetings may be requested by the Pastor or the Chairman of the Deacons, who shall give notice of the time, place, and purpose of such a meeting at any regular worship service next preceding such meeting. An emergency meeting may be declared by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present.
- (3) In all questions of procedure, the church shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, except in cases of direct conflict with this Constitution, in which event this Constitution shall have precedent.

#### FOR OBSERVANCE OF ORDINANCES:

##### Section 1.

- (1) The church shall observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper a minimum of twice each quarter.
- (2) The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be held during Sunday Morning Worship Service every other time and during the Evening Worship Service every other time.

### OFFICERS:

Section 1. (1) **QUALIFICATIONS:** Each officer of the church and of its several organizations shall be a member of good repute, regular in attendance and a supporter of the church program,

- (2) Member shall be limited to holding one (1) major office at any one time

Section 2. PASTOR, MUSIC AND/OR Youth DIRECTOR: These shall be selected and called by the church whenever a vacancy shall occur, to serve indefinitely at the will of the church.

- (1) The Pastor shall be the under shepherd of the church as taught by the New Testament. Pastor shall be the Church Moderator, shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the church.
- (2) The Pastor shall give direction to the rest of the church staff and be responsible for supervision of all other personnel employed by the church.
- (3) Pastor will be expected to give at least two weeks notice of resignation.
- (4) A pastor may be dismissed upon the recommendation of the Deacon body and a majority vote of members present in accordance with Article III, Transaction of Business, Section 2, Paragraph 2.
- (5) The Music and/or Youth Director shall report to the Pastor.
  - a. They shall be responsible for the church music program and all youth activities of the church.
  - b. They shall be responsible for church property whenever conducting any activities after regular office hours.

Section 3. PERMANENT OR PART TIME: Upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee and Deacons, the church shall call other such staff members as deemed necessary by such recommendation and subsequent vote of the church.

Section 4. DEACONS:

- (1) QUALIFICATION:
  - a. A Deacon shall be a male member of the church who has attained the age of 21; shall faithfully support the activities of the church, shall possess the scriptural qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3, and I Timothy 3:8-12.
  - b. He shall have been ordained by the church, or if by another church of like faith and order, upon the recommendation of the Deacon body and vote of the church, may be received as an active deacon after six (6) months.

- (2) CLASSIFICATION: The Deacons of this church shall be classified as (a) Active and (b) Honorary.

- a. The Active Deacon shall be elected by the Church as hereinafter provided.

At such time the need for additional deacons is determined, the deacon body shall recommend for church approval, the setting aside of a qualified man for six months. Voting shall take place during a regular business meeting.

The Active Deacons shall elect a Chairman annually.

The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Deacons and shall act as Moderator at all business meetings of the church in the absence of the Pastor.

The Deacon body shall work with the Pastor in filling the pulpit in the absence of the Pastor.

- b. Honorary Deacons shall consist of all recognized ordained Deacons who are not serving as active Deacons as above provided.

- (3) LETTER OF DISMISSAL: Each letter of dismissal shall so state if the member has been ordained to the office of deacon by this church, or if he was received by letter of dismissal from a Baptist Church of like faith and order so stating.

Section 5. TREASURER: The Treasurer shall be elected annually by the church at the regular annual election of officers of the church.

The Treasurer shall provide for the keeping of a correct record of all financial transactions and shall make a monthly report to the church detailing all receipts and disbursements. The treasurer is authorized to disburse funds as set forth in the budget and as authorized by the church to disburse other funds.

The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.

Section 6. CHURCH CLERK: The clerk shall keep a careful and correct record of all official acts of the church, and perform all duties pertaining to the office, make monthly reports to the church, give detailed information pertaining to the membership roll. The clerk shall be elected by the church. In the absence of the clerk at any meeting, the Moderator shall appoint a temporary clerk.

### **COMMITTEES:**

Section 1. QUALIFICATIONS: Each member of any committee of the church shall be a member of good repute, regular in attendance, and a supporter of the Church Programs.

Section 2. The committees of this church shall be classified as (1) Standing Committees and (2) Special Committees.

All committees, unless otherwise specified, shall be considered standing committees.

Members of standing committees shall be elected by the church for terms of (1) year, and their terms shall begin on the first day of the church year (September 1), following their election, unless otherwise specified. All committees shall elect a chairman and recording secretary and shall report activities to the church at least once a quarter.

Committees elected by the church for services in matters of a temporary nature shall be known as special committees.

All special committees shall be discharged when the service for which they were elected has been completed, or at the will of the church.

1. TRUSTEES: The Trustees of this church shall consist of the Active Deacons, who shall constitute the legal agent of the church.

The Trustees shall hold in trust the property of the church and shall execute all deeds, debentures, mortgages, liens, transfers, leases, and all other legal documents for and on behalf of the church, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or encumber any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action. The trustees shall provide for insurance coverage on the property of the church.

2. BAPTISMAL COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of two (2) men and (2) women. It shall be the duty of this committee to make all necessary arrangements for the ordinance of baptism and to assist the Pastor and the candidates in its performance.

This committee shall fill baptismal pool and heat water, also, see that there are ample supplies such as: baptismal robes, towels, plastic bags for wet clothes, etc.

3. LORD'S SUPPER: This committee shall consist of the Deacon's and the Pastor's wives. It shall be the duty of this committee to make all preparations for the observance of the Lord's Supper as authorized by the church.

Duties of this committee are:

1. Prepare for the Lord's Supper as authorized by the church.
  2. Responsible for supplies – juice and unleavened bread.
  3. Care for the linens.
  4. Care for the Lord's Supper Service.
  5. Clean up.
4. FINANCE COMMITTEE: The Finance Committee shall consist of three (3) members and the Treasurer, one of whom shall be an active deacon of the church. This committee shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary.
  5. PROPERTY AND GROUNDS: This committee shall consist of five (5) members and shall have supervision over the maintenance of all the church property and grounds, schedule work days, and advise the church when work or repairs are needed. The committee will be responsible for all contracts for needed cleaning and repairs for the church and grounds.
  6. YOUTH COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of number of members as needed. They will work with the Youth Director in carrying out the recreational activities of the church for all youth. See that activities are properly chaperoned and offer guidance and leadership. Act as a voice between the youth and the church. Student representation on this committee shall include two youth.
  7. MUSIC COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of the Music Director, who will serve as chairman, Organist, Pianist, Adult Choir President, and the Director of each of the choirs. This committee shall meet quarterly to evaluate and make plans for the entire music program of the church. The Music Committee will work with the Music Director in filling that position in the absence of the Music Director.
  8. NURSERY COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of three (3) members. They will see that the nursery is maintained for all church functions that require it. Help acquire nursery personnel, volunteer and paid. Be in charge of all paid personnel. Work with the finance committee and building committee to see that there is adequate financing, and sufficient room and supplies (such as furniture) for the nursery. Coordinate all work with Nursery Director.
  9. HOSTESS COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of number of members as needed. The Church hostess will serve as the chairman. They will see that the kitchen is kept in an orderly manner. Work with other committees on all church-wide functions. Keep kitchen supplied with all necessary items. Work with the benevolence committee to see that the pantry is well balanced for emergency needs. Set policies for use of the kitchen.
  10. BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of one (1) deacon and two (2) church members. This committee will set guidelines as how help is to be given to people.
  11. FLOWER COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of three (3) women. It shall be their duty to see that there are fresh (when possible) flowers each Sunday. Take flowers left from Sunday services and weddings to the sick or nursing home. The flower committee chairman will order flowers in the event of a church member's death or the death of a church member's immediate family member.
  12. MISSIONS COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of three (3) members. It shall promote and supervise all missionary activities of the church.
  13. CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of three (3) members. They will bring before the church any change in an amendment or a new amendment to the constitution as deemed necessary.
  14. NOMINATING COMMITTEE: This committee shall consist of the Church Council. The Church Council will make recommendations for the following officers:

- i. Sunday School Director
- ii. Church Training Director
- iii. Sunday School Department Directors
- iv. All Church Officers
- v. All Committees

These nominees will be recommended to the church by the Church Council at the regular business meeting of July each year. The floor shall be open for further nominations.

The Nominating Committee for Sunday School teachers and Discipleship Training teachers will consist of the Sunday School Director, the Discipleship Training Director, and all department directors. These nominees will be recommended by the church for church approval in the regular monthly business meeting of August each year. The floor shall be opened for further nominations.

It shall be the duty of this committee to nominate and recommend to the church for election, and at such times as vacancies occur, members to serve as officers and teachers of the Sunday School and Church Training.

All auxiliaries within the church will elect their own officers.

15. **CHURCH COUNCIL:** The Church Council shall consist of the Pastor, Minister of Music and/or Youth, Sunday School Director, Church Training Director, Chairman of Deacons, Church Clerk, Church Hostess, Treasurer, Brotherhood Director, and WMU Director.

The Pastor with this group shall have general supervision of the teaching and training program of the church.

The Council shall promote and supervise all evangelistic activities of the church; and shall advise with the Pastor in the selection of the evangelist or the evangelistic team in accordance with Article VII, By-laws, II Meetings, Section 1, Paragraph 3 and advise the church body.

16. **LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE:** This committee is a special committee composed of not less than three (3) members and not more than eight (8) members to serve at the will of the church.

To supervise construction of all buildings or major alterations of the building as authorized by the church.

To study the needs of the church and make recommendations to the church on these needs.

17. **USHER COMMITTEE:** This committee shall consist of eight (8) members and four (4) alternates. They shall have charge of seating the people at all services and to greet visitors, direct them to the nursery, distribute bulletins and count worship attendance. Collect offerings at each service.

18. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:** This committee shall consist of three (3) or five (5) members and shall act as a voice between all staff personnel and the church.

## **CHURCH POLICY AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

**VACATIONS:** The Pastor, Music and/or Youth Director and Secretary shall be entitled to two (2) weeks paid vacation annually. For less than one year service but more than six (6) months service, one (1) week of paid vacation will be given.

**REVIVALS:** The Pastor and Music and/or Youth Director shall be entitled to two (2) weeks off for the purpose of conducting revivals at other churches. Pastor and Music and/or Youth Director will pay supply.

OFFICE HOURS: Regular church office hours will be from 9:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, or as determined by the Personnel Committee.

ABSENCES: Staff members will file with the Deacons when they will be absent from the church office. The Pastor, Music and/or Youth Director shall not be out of church for more than two (2) consecutive weeks for reasons of vacations, conventions, or revivals. Both shall not be away at the same time unless approved by the Deacons.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: Personnel Committee shall (1) oversee paid personnel of the church, (2) set hours of staff, (3) work with staff members in event of any conflicts, (4) determine duties of staff members. Any other items concerning staff.

## **AMENDMENTS**

Amendment I.

### **Standard Operating Procedures as adopted by Oak Grove Baptist Church** **August 2, 1987**

1. All Activities in fellowship hall must be coordinated through the pastor and placed on the church calendar.
2. Use of the building:
  - a. The church building will be available for church members for weddings or funerals or other activities such as voting, showers, family reunions, etc, if there is no conflict with the church calendar. The church building will be available for non church members upon approval.
  - b. The user is responsible for returning the building and grounds to original condition. If the original condition is not attained, they will be charged a fee.
  - c. The following rules will be observed:
    - i. All furniture returned to proper places.
    - ii. All trash and debris removed and swept.
    - iii. Kitchen and restrooms cleaned and in order.
    - iv. No alcoholic beverages allowed.
    - v. No smoking allowed inside buildings.
3. It will be a policy of Oak Grove Baptist Church that the organ will be locked at all times except when in use by qualified personnel.
4. The Sanctuary and Education building will be made secure by the deacon of the week after each service. This will include turning off all lights, air conditioners, etc.
5. Nursery. The paid nursery personnel shall be governed by the Personnel Committee Rules.
6. Custodians. The Church Custodians shall be governed by the Personnel Committee Rules.

### **BUS USE**

1. Church activities only
2. Users must remove trash and sweep if necessary
3. Driver must be church member in good standing
4. Driver must be on list approved by deacons and recorded with insurance company.

Amendment II.

### **Statement of Belief on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality as Adopted by Oak Grove Baptist Church** **June 7, 2017**

Section A.

1. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male and female. We believe God decides this gender identity in His wisdom for our good and His glory and this gender is revealed biologically while

still in the womb and maintained for all our natural life. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

2. We believe "marriage" is a Biblical institution established by God and has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, in a covenantally committed relationship for a lifetime as described in the scriptures. (Gen 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

3. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and the use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10)

---

#### Section B.

1. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of The Oak Grove Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Oak Grove membership and the community in which we live, it is imperative that all persons employed by this body in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22)

2. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11)

3. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with the Scriptures nor the doctrines of this church.

---

#### Section C.

1. The churches facilities were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of believers. The church desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

2. But facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the church's constitution and bylaws. Nor may church facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church's faith or moral teachings. The pastor, or his official designee, is the final decision-maker concerning use of church facilities.

3a. This restricted use policy is necessary for two important reasons. First, the church may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict the church's beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice. (2Cor 6:14; 1 Thess 5:22)

3b. Second, it is very important that the church present a consistent message to the community, and that the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allowing facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the church's faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the church strives to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, the church agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities.

4. Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, or engage in practices that contradict the church's faith use any church facility. Nor may church facilities be used in any way that contradicts the church's faith. This policy applies to all church facilities, properties, and belongings, because the church sees all its property and belongings as holy and set apart to worship God and be used for His glory. (Col 3:17).

