FOUNDATIONAL CHURCH DOCUMENT

CONSTITUTION

1st Free Will Baptist Church of Park Hills

The foundational governing document of the congregation.

REVISION	REV 2019-06
STATUS	SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUS VERSIONS

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DOCUMENT NAVIGATION

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Article I : Name

The name of this church shall be the First Free Will Baptist Church of Park Hills, Inc. (hereafter referred to as the 1st Free Will Baptist Church).

Article II : Foundation, Principles, Purpose & Mission

Section 1 : Foundation

The foundation of this church is the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, the Old & New Testaments (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Section 2 : Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of this church, in all its affairs, are:

(1) The Word of God, which this church does here affirm as the Holy Scriptures, the Old & New Testaments (See Article III, Item 4);

(2) The Constitution, The Bylaws, & the Policies & Best Practices of the 1st Free Will Baptist Church;

(3) The Treatise of Faith and Practices of the Free Will Baptists.

Section 3 : Purpose & Mission

Section 3.1 : Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be to:

(1) Worship God according to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures;

(2) To practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament;

(3) To sustain the ordinances (See Article III, Item 10) and doctrines of the Holy Scriptures (See Article III, Item 4);

(4) To propagate among all people, the gospel of salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 3.2 : Mission Statement

The mission statement of this church shall be:

> **"To glorify God by making disciples through gospel-centered worship and by doing the mission of love to all."**

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Article III : Statement Of Faith

The following shall be the Doctrinal Statements of the 1st Free Will Baptist Church. These statements outline what we teach.

(1) About God : We believe that God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Righteous Ruler of the universe. He has revealed Himself in nature, and in the Scriptures of the Holy Scriptures as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: yet as one God.

(2) About Jesus Christ : He is God's unique Son; the only one of a kind. The Holy Scriptures teaches that He is God revealed in flesh. In His Divine nature He is truly God and in His human nature truly man. He is the One once crucified for man's sin, the now risen and glorified Savior and Lord who mediates between God and man and who gives us access to the Father through His intercession. None can come to the Father unless they come through Him.

(3) About The Holy Spirit : All of the attributes of God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit by the Holy Scriptures. It is He who convicts and convinces men of their sin. He also convinces man of that which is right, and that a final day of judgment will come. He, it is, who comes to live in us at conversion, to open our understanding to the Scripture, and to lead us into the truth.

(4) About The Bible : God used holy men to write the Holy Scriptures. They are, in both the Old and New Testaments, the very words God intended us to have. They are, as given by God, without error and are our only rule of faith and practice. We profit from them by learning the truth about many things: they also speak to us about wrong doing; they even correct us and get us back on course as well as instructing us in right living.

(5) About Mankind : God created man in a state of innocence. Man, being tempted by Satan, yielded and willfully disobeyed God, becoming a sinner and incurring God's judgment upon sin. All of Adam's descendants inherit his fallen nature and thus have a natural inclination to sin. When one comes to an age of accountability, he is guilty of sinning before God and in need of salvation.

(6) About God's Relationship To His Creation : God exercises a wise and benevolent providence over all beings and things. He maintains the laws of nature and performs special acts as the highest welfare of mankind and His created order of things require.

(7) About Salvation : Man receives pardon and forgiveness for his sins when he admits to God that he is a sinner, when in godly sorrow he turns from them and trusts in the work of Christ as redemption for his sin. This acceptance of God's great salvation involves belief in Christ's death on the cross as man's substitute and the fact of God's raising Him from the dead as predicted. It is a salvation by grace alone and not of works.

(8) About Who Can Be Saved : It is God's will that all be saved, but since man has the power of choice, God saves only those who repent of their sin and believe in the work of Christ on the cross. Those who refuse in this life to repent and believe have no later chance to be saved and thus condemn themselves to eternal damnation by their unbelief.

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(9) About Perseverance : We believe that there are strong grounds to hope that the saved will persevere unto the end and be saved because of the power of divine grace pledged for their support. Since man, however, continues to have free choice, it is possible because of temptations and the weakness of human flesh for him to forfeit his faith and be lost.

(10) About The Gospel Ordinances : We believe the Bible teaches two ordinances for the church to practice: Baptism in water by immersion, and the Lord's Supper, to be perpetuated until His return.

(11) About The Resurrection : We believe the Scriptures teach the resurrection of the bodies of all men, each in its own order; they that have put their faith and trust in Christ will come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have not put their faith and trust in Christ to the resurrection of damnation.

(12) About Christ's Second Coming : The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ, who ascended on high and sits at the right hand of God, will come again, glorify His saints, and judge humanity.

(13) About Church Government : The 1st Free Will Baptist Church is autonomous (self-governing). We voluntarily affiliate ourselves with other like-minded churches, associations, and organizations, for the purpose of promoting the cause of Christ on the local, state, national, and world-wide level.

(14) About Missions : We believe that Jesus commanded the church to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

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(15) About Marriage : We believe, based on the teaching of the Scriptures in the Old and New Testaments, that marriage is an institution ordained by God from the foundation of the world and is intended as a lifelong union of one man and one woman. This understanding is supported by the account of creation in Genesis, chapters 1 and 2. Genesis 1:26-27 indicates that God created man in His own image, as male and female.

The passage implies that the unity of a man and woman in marriage is in some way reflective of the image of God in mankind.

Genesis 2:18 provides a more detailed account, relating that God created the first man, Adam, and decided that it was not good for him to be alone. God indicated that He would make "an help meet for him." Then God brought all of the animals to Adam, but none of them was such a suitable helper; so God created Eve, the first woman, from part of Adam himself. God did not create a second man to be Adam's helper, or an assortment of multiple women, but one woman. Together they were man and wife and had "no shame" or sin in their union (Genesis 2:18-25).

Jesus Christ reaffirmed the teaching of the Old Testament when He said, as recorded in Matthew 19:4-6: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

The Apostle Paul states in Ephesians 5:22-32 that marriage is not merely a human institution, but is a special, divine metaphor that illustrates the union of Christ and the Church. For this reason also, only a union between one man and one woman can be a Biblical marriage because no other union—whether of two men, two women, or any other arrangement—could illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church in accord with this Biblical teaching.

A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by this church only to the extent that it is consistent with the Biblical definition of marriage expressed in this statement.

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(16) About Human Sexuality : First Corinthians 6:9-11 condemns a variety of lifestyles including those associated with adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality. Indeed, the Bible condemns as sexual immorality all sexual intercourse outside marriage as defined above. It also encourages Christians to flee from sexual immorality because of its destructive effects and because the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:12-20).

Romans 1:18-32 makes clear that it is not only sinful to engage in homosexual unions, but also to approve of such sins in others or to encourage their practice. As a result, in order to maintain our consistent Christian witness, we cannot sanction, approve, or promote in any way adultery or any other form of sexual immorality—including, but not limited to, pornography, pedophilia, polygamy, bestiality, homosexuality, or homosexual unions. This is made clear in many passages in the Old and New Testaments.

Our church follows what the Bible reveals as the "sure foundation" of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles (Matthew 7:24-29; 1 Corinthians 14:37). If our church is to bear the name Christian authentically, we are called to teach and practice these teachings and are not at liberty to depart from them for a different authority. Though we strive to live peaceably with all people and to obey legitimate government authority, if the two come into conflict about matters as foundational as marriage, we must ultimately obey God rather than man (Acts 4:18-21).

Sexual activities outside of marriage, including but not limited to those named above, are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the church. Lewd conduct; transgender behavior; bi-sexual behavior; and the creation, distribution, or viewing of pornography are incompatible with God's purpose for human sexuality.

Article IV : Denomination & Affiliations

This church shall be a Free Will Baptist Church. This church shall be affiliated with the National Association of Free Will Baptists, the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptists, and the St. Francois District Association of Free Will Baptists.

This church reserves the right to dissolve and/or change its affiliation with any denomination, association, and/or organization at any time, for any reason. The dissolution/change must be approved by a 3/4's majority vote of active members.

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Article V : Membership

Members of this church shall consist of baptized (immersed) believers in Christ who:

(1) Take the Holy Scriptures as their only rule of faith and practice;

(2) Gives evidence of regeneration by living consistently with their profession of faith and with the views of faith, doctrine, and practices of this church;

(3) Have been received into membership according to the Bylaws of this church.

Should disagreement occur, members will hold this church and its leadership "harmless." There will be no appeal to any court. Membership in this church will not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the church but shall only entitle the member to vote on those matters submitted to the church membership by the General Board.

Article VI : Leadership & Organization

Section 1 : Offices

The offices of this church shall be Pastor(s), Deacons, Trustees, Treasurer, Clerk, and Financial Secretary. Officers of the church shall meet the qualifications and faithfully perform the duties according to the Bylaws of this church.

Section 2 : Boards

The officers of the 1st Free Will Baptist Church shall be vested in boards:

(1) The General Board shall consist of Pastor(s), Deacons, Trustees, and Treasurer.

(2) The Deacon Board shall consist of Pastor(s) and Deacons.

(3) The Trustee Board shall consist of Pastor(s), Trustees, and Treasurer.

Each board shall be organized and faithfully perform the duties within its purview as outlined by the Bylaws of this church.

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Article VII : Divisions, Dissolution, & Consolidation

Section 1 : Divisions

In the event of a division of this church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the church's active membership, provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise, it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division.

Section 2 : Dissolution

Should a condition arise when for any reason, the church's work cannot continue, the church property shall be donated to the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptists.

Section 3 : Consolidation

Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same beliefs be advisable:

(1) Consolidation may take place with a 3/4's majority vote of active members.

(2) The General Board shall be authorized to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this church is concerned.

Article VIII : Revisions, Additions, & Amendments

Revisions, Additions, or Amendments of this Constitution may be made by a 3/4's affirmative vote of present, active members, only after following due process, which follows:

(1) Must be submitted in writing to the General Board;

(2) Must be approved by the General Board;

(3) Written notice of change must be made available to membership for two (2) successive, regular Sunday morning gatherings prior to business meeting;

(4) Verbal notice of change must be made from the pulpit for two (2) successive, regular Sunday morning gatherings prior to business meeting.

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