



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF OLNEY, TEXAS
ANNOTATED CHURCH COVENANT
DEVELOPED BY CHAD A. EDGINGTON AND C.J. FRAZIER

The Church Covenant was adopted June 12, 1898 and revised on October 22, 2017. The bold lettering is the actual language of the church covenant which was written during the middle of the 19th Century and was included in the Pendleton Church Manual. When First Baptist Church was organized, the missionary who organized the church used the documents found in the Pendleton Church Manual, including this covenant. The covenant has been slightly edited for biblical fidelity.

Our church covenant summarizes how members of this church have promised to live together. It holds out a biblical standard by which we agree live. It is a helpful expression the commitments we have made to Christ and to one another. As you read the covenant you will realize that the expectations we have of each other as church members are simply the expectations we should have of each other as Christians. A faithful church member is nothing more than a faithful follower of Jesus. As a church we should always strive to protect ourselves from individual and corporate sin. We should also encourage one another to live in light of the greater covenant which was initiated by love, sealed by sacrifice, and kept for eternity by our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The purpose of this covenant is to state the virtues we as members will strive to attain.

1. Purpose Statement:

-Clear statement that expresses the biblical standard by which we agree to live as members of this church

We have all been led by the Holy Spirit to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and on the profession of our faith, have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

2. Regenerate Church Membership & Baptism

-A distinctive aspect of our church is that all members are saved

-From Article 14 of our Statement of Faith: "We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of a church relation"

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.

3. Covenant Membership

-We believe that the scriptures clarify that the church and its members have a high degree of responsibility to one another.

-Membership is about more than attending church meetings. Members commit to joining a spiritual family who provides encouragement and support. They are called to a biblical degree of responsibility, service and

sacrifice. Our elders (pastors) and leaders pledge to assist our Covenant Members with care, counsel, prayer and teaching.

We engage, therefore, by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love;

4. Walking Together

-There are many “one-another” passages in the New Testament where Christians are instructed to treat one another in special ways. The context for obeying most of the “one another” passages is the local church.

- Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50)
- Don't grumble among one another (John 6:43)
- Be of the same mind with one another (Romans 12:16, 15:5)
- Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
- Wait for one another before beginning the Eucharist (1 Corinthians 11:33)
- Don't bite, devour, and consume one another (Galatians 5:15)
- Don't boastfully challenge or envy one another (Galatians 5:26).
- Gently, patiently tolerate one another (Ephesians 4:2)
- Be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- Bear with and forgive one another (Colossians 3:13)
- Seek good for one another, and don't repay evil for evil (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
- Don't complain against one another (James 4:11, 5:9)
- Confess sins to one another (James 5:16)
- Love one another (John 13:34, 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 4:7, 11; 2 John 5)
- Through love, serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Tolerate one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)
- Greet one another with a kiss of love (1 Peter 5:14)
- Be devoted to one another in love (Romans 12:10)
- Give preference to one another in honor (Romans 12:10)
- Regard one another as more important than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)
- Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Wash one another's feet (John 13:14)
- Don't be haughty: be of the same mind (Romans 12:16)
- Be subject to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
- Clothe yourselves in humility toward one another (1 Peter 5:5)
- Do not judge one another, and don't put a stumbling block in a brother's way (Romans 14:13)
- Greet one another with a kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12)
- Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Speak truth to one another (Ephesians 4:25)
- Don't lie to one another (Colossians 3:9)
- Comfort one another concerning the resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- Encourage and build up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)
- Pray for one another (James 5:16)
- Be hospitable to one another (1 Peter 4:9)

to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its spirituality and prosperity;

5. Church Growth

- It isn't about numbers, but to see God's people maturing
- Focus on teaching and learning, accountability, and mercy ministries
- Members should be seeking the welfare of the church in invisible and tangible ways

to sustain its worship, ordinances, disciplines, and doctrines;

6. Promote Spirituality

- Lifestyle of worship (ascribing proper value to God and everything else)
- Right understanding of Baptism and the Lord's Supper-each serves to proclaim the gospel and to affirm the believer's profession of faith.
- Spiritual disciplines in the church include: prayer, fasting, fellowship, stewardship, submission to authority, study, evangelism, contemplation, confession, forgiveness, gratitude, silence, celebration, self-examination
- The church is responsible for maintaining a faithful gospel witness. We must carefully guard our teachings.
- Our Statement of faith is a bare-bones summary of what we believe scripture teaches about God, Salvation, and the Church. Through faithful teaching and preaching we thoughtfully seek to know all that the Scripture reveals. In wisdom we do not seek to know any more or less than what is revealed. Doctrine is simply thinking in the right way about what the Bible says.

to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministries, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout the nations of the world. The church's material stewardship shall be through the receiving of tithes, offerings, and gifts based on New Testament teachings.

7. Promote Prosperity

- Our church is supported by the regular giving of the membership.
- Not equal giving, but equal sacrifice
- Concept of the Tithe, which pre-dates the Old Covenant. Not mandated, but a good guide.
- God loves a cheerful giver, each should set aside in his own heart what he should give
- Funds given support the church ministries, salaries, expenses, benevolence, and missions
- Co-operative nature of Baptists- autonomy of each local body, but desire to co-operate in mission and fellowship through voluntary affiliations. (Co-operative program)
- Affiliations: SBC, BGCT, Bi-Fork Baptist Association

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions;

8. Family and Personal Devotion

- Spiritual instruction and discipleship should be a primary focus in the home. Fathers and Mothers should shepherd their children through regular Bible reading and prayer in the home with their children and each other. Conversations in the home should center around our duty to God and each other. As church members, we must be able to trust that other members are treasuring Christ and teaching their children to do so. This unity of mind among us is essential to a healthy church. Each of the children in the congregation should see a healthy, robust, growing faith in the lives of their parents. Marriages should be a picture of the gospel lived out each day in our homes.
- Church leadership recognizes a duty to teach, preach, and disciple members, but members must be committed to personal spiritual growth

to educate our children in the way of the Lord Jesus Christ;

9. Our Culture of Discipling Children

-As a church we place significant emphasis on evangelizing and discipling children. We are generous in allocating resources (time and money) to our work with children and youth. All church members are expected to support these ministries whether they have children in the home or not. While the primary responsibility to disciple children lies with the parents, we desire to be a church that equips and supplements what is happening in the Christian home.

to seek the salvation of all people;

10. Evangelism

-First Baptist Olney is not a country club for the leading citizens of our community.

-We are a spiritual family that has been given a command by our Lord to reach out and make disciples of all nations. Obedience to this command starts locally, as we take the message to our community indiscriminately. Our doors are open to all kinds of people.

-Our people also are committed to mission work in other parts of the state, the nation, and internationally.

-Through Cooperative Program giving, we also support mission work in Texas, North America, and to all the nations.

to walk circumspectly¹ in the world; to be just in our dealings with others, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in deportment²; to avoid all tattling, backbiting³, and excessive anger;

11. Duties We Owe to One Another as we Relate to the Public/Culture

-As members of this church, we can expect that other members of the church will conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:27).

-Members should consider how their behavior towards others will affect the overall witness of the church.

to seek God's help in abstaining from the use of any drug, food, or drink in such a way that harms the body or jeopardizes our own or another's faith; to flee from sexual immorality in any form; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

12. Other Duties Toward Self, Fellow Believers, and Christ

-Total abstinence is not a requirement of church membership. However, the church has asked that those holding the Biblical offices of pastor (elder) and deacon to abstain from drinking to ensure exemplary service to the congregation, not because we believe the Bible teaches that drinking alcohol is sinful.

-Because of our freedom in Christ, we know that all things that are not sinful are permissible, but not all things are beneficial. For some in our congregation alcohol, food, and some medicines represent significant sins and/or stumbling blocks. The consciousness of others in the flock is not burdened in the same way. Therefore, as members under this covenant, we promise to be sensitive to one another in these areas and agree that we will strive to never cause others to sin or stumble. In Romans 14:22, Paul tells the Corinthians to keep these matters regarding the individual conscience between themselves and God. We will do likewise. In other words, members should not flaunt their freedom in front of others, but should bear with the weaknesses of their brothers and sisters.

-Drunkenness is always a sin, Drug abuse is also a sin. Any substance that you eat or drink apart from faith is a sin.

-The Pastor also advises people that the alcohol industry, the alcohol culture, and the alcohol content of many drinks are all quite different than they were in the first century. There is only a narrow band of permissible alcohol use for a Christian, and there is next to nothing to be gained by drinking alcohol as a

¹ If you are walking circumspectly, you are thinking carefully before you do or saying anything.

² Deportment has to do with how you behave and present yourself to others.

³ Backbiting is malicious talk about someone who is not present.

beverage. However, it is certain that millions of lives have been lost or ruined by drinking. It is a source of hurt for many others. Scripture has plenty of warnings against alcohol.

-The Christian Sexual Ethic is very simple and very clear. All sexual behavior outside of a one-man one-woman marriage is sinful. Our statement of faith clearly sets forth our church belief on this issue. The position of our church on this issue runs counter to that you will find in the prevailing culture. Yet, we must be on the same page on this issue. Our understanding of our Lord's teaching on sexuality does not give us a license to mistreat or to be hateful to anyone who does not agree.

-As members of this church we should be excited about seeing God's Kingdom advancing in our hearts, our homes, our community, and in the world.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech;

13. Accountability

-Church membership creates duties owed toward one another. One of those duties is to watch each other for consistency in obeying the commands of Jesus, this watchfulness is always done with love and a desire to see God Glorified and sin destroyed.

-We trust that members are praying for one another.

- It is important that we bear with one another in our weakness and burdens. This should be reflected in the way we feel toward each other and in how we speak to one another.

to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

14. Reconciliation and Discipline

-We will follow the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 18 to resolve conflict in the church.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

15. Commitment to Follow Christ

-If a member must move to another place, we must be able to trust that they will find a like-minded church and join it. Our commitment to Christ and His church should be so established that no matter where we find ourselves, we will be found faithful.