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Acknowledgement Page

1. Employee Handbook Acknowledgement and Receipt

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, RIPLEY, MS.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

October 2025

SECTION 1: Introduction and Employment Foundations

1. WELCOME

Welcome to First Baptist Church. This Handbook was developed to provide you with information regarding the Church's policies, practices, and procedures.

The policies and procedures described in this Handbook are for purposes of information only and may be amended or modified by the Church at any time, with or without prior notice. **This Handbook shall not constitute a contract of employment or a contract to provide any benefit to any employee.** All employment with the Church is on an *at-will basis*, meaning either you or the Church may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause or notice.

2. THE ROLE OF CHURCH STAFF

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.” Ephesians 4:11-14.

This phrase: “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry” summarizes the role of the paid staff at First Baptist Church.

Our primary job is not to accomplish ministry for the congregation, but to serve, encourage, model, and equip the members of First Baptist Church to accomplish the work of the ministry that they have been called to. The Personnel Committee is responsible for the administration and implementation of the Employee Handbook.

3. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT

It is the Church's policy to extend equal opportunity to all qualified employees and applicants for employment, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, disability, and any other protected status under the law unless it conflicts with the religious stance of the Church. When necessary and in compliance with State and Federal law, the Church shall provide reasonable accommodation to applicants and employees with disabilities.

Existing and functioning as a religious and faith-based church, and under applicable Federal and State law, the Church reserves the right to employ persons who have a religious background and

philosophy of ministry consistent with that of the Church and who, in the opinion of Church leadership, have a work history and lifestyle that is consistent with the vision and scriptural principles of the Church. All employment decisions will be made in compliance with applicable labor laws.

4. EMPLOYEE'S FOUNDATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS & KEY QUALIFICATIONS

There are *core characteristics* that are vital to any person being successful in employment at First Baptist Church. Each of these is vital for any member of our staff. These characteristics will be consistently demonstrated and evaluated in the way that we accomplish our calling as ministers.

Foundational Characteristics:

- Is **Meek** – submits their strength and gifts to God. (Matt 5:5).
- Has a **Shepherd** mindset – acts as an owner, not merely a hireling. (John 10:3-13)
- Encourages **Lay Ministry** – lives out the idea that every member is a minister. (I Peter 2:5-9).
- Dedicated to **hospitality** – makes others feel welcome like they belong here. (I Peter 4:9).
- Creates **discipleship** – follows Jesus to help others follow Jesus. (II Cor. 11:1, 2 Tim 2:2).
- **Unifies** – a team mindset that seeks out the interests of others. (Eph 4:3-13).
- **Leads** from weakness & honesty – avoids a false impression of perfection. (Mark 10:42-45).

There are also *key qualifications*, which also apply to every staff position, unless otherwise determined in advance.

Key Qualifications: with a/and...

- Christian attitude and trustworthy character.
- Understanding of, passion for, and commitment to the mission and vision of the Church in general and First Baptist Church in specific.
- Strong team spirit, respect and support for the other members of the Ministerial Staff.
- Proper level of confidentiality in all matters of the church, employees, and/or church members.
- Personal encounter and a daily walk with Christ.
- Agreement with the basic statement of belief for First Baptist Church.
- Fulfillment of the requirements for and maintenance of membership in First Baptist Church.
- Spiritual maturity and a positive work attitude.
- An attitude of professionalism, patience, respect, compassion and grace when working with staff and congregation.
- Adherence to the Church Statement of Faith and the Baptist Faith and Message adopted in 1963 by the Southern Baptist Convention as amended in 1998.
- Duty to follow Biblical, Christian principles in their jobs for the Church and to refrain from any conduct that is contrary to those principles and Church statements of faith.
- Definition, as to job responsibilities relating to weddings, marriage, or counseling of couples, of “wedding” and “marriage”, and “marry” being that of only to the union of one adult man with one adult woman.

- No participation and no allowance of use of facilities of the Church in any gathering or event or ceremony or pronouncement involving the recognition of same sex marriage, in that such recognition violates Biblical Christian principles.

5. HIRING PROCESS

All hiring must be done according to the Church's hiring process and according to all applicable local, state, and federal laws. The process is:

1. Approval of position to be filled by the Pastor and Deacons (job description and budget accountability).
2. Completion of the Church's Employment Application
3. Interviewed by the Personnel Committee, or Search Committee
4. Criminal Background Check and Credit Check if employee handles money
5. Reference Checks (2 at minimum)
6. Present to the Deacons for approval
7. Present to the church body for vote (A 75% majority vote of those present & voting is required to call a Minister)
8. Signing of Employee Handbook
9. Signing of Statement of Faith
10. Written Job Offer

Primary Function

The Personnel Committee will work with the Pastor to review staffing needs, fill open positions, maintain efficiency among all church employees, and foster harmonious staff relationships. This committee will also implement all church-established personnel policies with guidance from the Pastor. Additionally, the committee will develop proposed changes to personnel policies as needed and plan the personnel budget. The Personnel Committee will keep accurate, detailed minutes of each meeting.

Hiring of Personnel (Other than Pastor and Minister of Music)

It shall be the responsibility of the Personnel Committee to interview prospective personnel other than the Pastor or Minister of Music as recommended by the Pastor and other authorized persons. Those approved for employment shall be presented to the Deacons for their review and approval. The Personnel Committee shall counsel with involved staff and/or committees concerning new positions which need to be created. Any new position must be approved by the Pastor and the deacons. To be consistent in employment practice for non-vocational staff, this committee shall use a written application form and means whereby references can be checked.

Counseling, Warning, Suspension and/or Termination

In consultation with the Pastor and Staff member directly affected by each personnel position, this committee shall have the authority to employ and discharge all personnel except the Pastor, subject to approval of the Deacons. This is to be done in the framework of the approved budget.

In cases of termination, the Personnel Committee and Finance Committee, in consultation with the Deacons and Pastor, will review each situation individually to determine if severance pay is appropriate. Severance pay will not exceed three months' salary and will end immediately if the individual secures new employment before the conclusion of the severance period.

If approved for employment, the first day of the job for Full Time and Part-Time Staff is to be coordinated with the church secretary to ensure collection of all required forms (e.g., W-4, I-9, etc.) any additional information and to complete an orientation process, which will be coordinated with their Direct Supervisor.

SECTION 2: Employee Conduct & Expectations

1. DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Church to comply with all state and federal laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, sex, age, national origin, disability and other protected classes subject to the Church's right to exercise its freedom of religion. The Church prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace in any form including harassment by contractors, members visitors or vendors. Complaints will be kept confidential and should be reported immediately to the Pastor and the Chairman of the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee and the Pastor shall immediately address any complaints of sexual harassment, illegal discrimination or other employee complaints.

The Church will carefully investigate each complaint and provide the complaining employee and the accused of the results. As with all personnel matters, the Church will maintain the confidentiality of the investigation except to the extent necessary to complete the investigation and to protect the Church's interest.

Any individual who violates this policy will be subject to discipline including possible termination regardless of the outcome of any investigation.

2. DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE POLICIES

The Church is committed to maintaining a professional and respectful work environment that reflects Christ's teachings. The use of tobacco, vaping, drugs, and alcohol in the workplace or during church-related activities can impair judgment, harm health, and undermine our witness.

The Church has established that the following are violations of Church policy:

- The Church campus is a smoke-free environment. Smoking of any kind is prohibited within all church buildings and enclosed areas.
- Use of smokeless tobacco or vaping products is also prohibited within church property.
- The illegal use, possession, or distribution of drugs is strictly forbidden on church premises and during church activities.
- Prescription medications may only be used as prescribed, and must not impair the ability to perform their duties safely and effectively.
- Alcohol consumption or being under the influence during working hours, during Church functions or on Church property is not permitted under any circumstances by any Church staff.
- Excessive or inappropriate alcohol use that affects work performance, safety, or the Church's reputation is grounds for disciplinary action.
- Ordained Ministers are expected to honor their Biblical responsibilities and principles including the qualifications for their office.

Everyone shares in the responsibility for maintaining a safe work environment and co-workers should encourage anyone who may have problems with drugs, alcohol or other addictions to seek help. The goal of this policy is to balance the Church's respect for individuals with the need to maintain a safe, productive and drug-free environment. Violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

3. SEARCH AND INSPECTIONS

The Church reserves the right at any time, without notice, to search or inspect any employee's property that is on the Church premises. Refusal to cooperate or submit to a search may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

4. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The Church is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. All employees should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a member of the Church, or a member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods, will not be tolerated. All threats of (or actual) violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to your immediate supervisor or any other management level employee. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by Church members, vendors, solicitors, or other members of the public. When reporting a threat of violence, you should be as specific and detailed as possible.

All suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported, as soon as possible, to a supervisor. You are not required to place yourself in peril.

Anyone determined to be responsible for threats of (or actual) violence or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHURCH INFORMATION

During the course of the employees' employment with the Church, they may have access on a regular basis to information of a highly sensitive and confidential nature. Employees of the Church serve in a position of trust, and they have an obligation to the Church and to those persons to whom the Church ministers to see that the confidentiality of this information is maintained and protected. Unauthorized use or disclosure, even if inadvertent, compromises both the employee and the Church and seriously erodes the confidence of others without which the Church simply could not effectively minister.

Information regarding the Church or its members, or other persons to whom the Church may minister, of which the employee becomes aware as a result of the employment relationship, could be considered confidential information. The employee may not disclose, duplicate, or use this information except as required in the performance of duties with the church. Failure to reasonably protect people's confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

The employee's obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information acquired during employment continues even after the church no longer employs the individual. The employee may not disclose, after separation of their employment, any information which he was not permitted to disclose during employment. Moreover, the employee may not utilize the confidential information he acquired while employed at the Church even after departure from the church.

6. CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH'S INTERESTS

The interests of the Church, particularly confidential information, represent proprietary assets that each employee has a continuing obligation to protect.

Information designated as confidential is to be discussed with no one outside the Church, and only discussed within on a "need-to-know" basis. This responsibility is not intended to impede normal ministry communications and relationships, but is intended to alert employees to their obligation to use discretion to safeguard the Church's interests.

Employees authorized to have access to confidential information may be required to sign special nondisclosure agreements and must treat the information as proprietary Church property for which they are personally responsible. Employees are prohibited from attempting to obtain confidential information for which they have not received access authorization. Employees violating this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, and may be subject to legal action.

SECTION 3: BENEFITS FOR FULL TIME STAFF (Part time staff receive some of these benefits in case-by-case situations.)

1. ANNUAL COMPENSATION AND COST OF LIVING EVALUATION

The Deacon Officers will conduct an annual review of the Pastor. All other employees and staff will be reviewed annually by the Personnel Committee and Pastor. This evaluation process is to provide constructive feedback, recognize accomplishments, identify areas for growth, and update job descriptions. The purpose of these evaluations is not only to review past performance but also to encourage continued growth, strengthen the effectiveness of our ministry, and ensure that each employee is supported in fulfilling their role within the church. Raises may be merit and/or cost-of-living, and the conversations created in the evaluations may, of course, influence merit raises. These evaluations are to take place during the first 2 weeks of October. Job descriptions will be kept separate in a Job Description booklet in the church office.

Evaluation Structure

Each eligible minister (including the pastor) will be evaluated annually using the following two categories:

Ministry Performance – 50% of Total Evaluation

This includes nine areas of ministerial responsibility:

1. Spiritual Leadership: Faithfulness to Scripture, Personal Spiritual Health, and Doctrinal Soundness
2. Preaching and Teaching: Biblical Accuracy, Clarity, Relevance, Application, and Discipleship.
3. Pastoral/Ministerial Care: Responsiveness (being accessible to members and the community in times of need), Visitation, and Compassionate Counseling.
4. Leadership and Administration: Vision Casting (Pastor), Planning and Organization (managing time and church resources effectively), and Team Leadership (working well with volunteers, deacons, and ministry staff.)
5. Conflict Resolution: Handling Disagreements in Accordance With Scripture, Grace and Fairness.
6. Evangelism and Outreach: Personal Witness, Actively Sharing the Gospel, Community Outreach, and Support of Missions.
7. Stewardship and Integrity: Financial Responsibility, Managing their budget in a way to maximize the benefit to the Kingdom, Responsible use of time and resources, Moral Integrity, Living above reproach in all areas of life.
8. Enthusiasm for the Ministry.
9. Positional Duties and Responsibilities: Fulfilling job duties and responsibilities.

Ministry Goals – 50% of Total Evaluation

At the beginning of each year (ideally in January), the pastor and/or minister will meet with the Personnel Committee to establish clear, measurable goals for the year. These goals may include areas such as:

- Leading new ministry efforts
- Improving member engagement
- Completing leadership development training
- Expanding outreach programs
- Meeting pastoral care benchmarks
- Improving areas of concern, particularly items identified in the annual evaluation

Ministers will be placed into one of four categories based on the combined evaluation of ministry performance and goal achievement.

1. Exceptional: Performance and goals significantly exceed expectations.
2. Strong: Performance and goals meet and occasionally exceed expectations.
3. Satisfactory: Performance and goals meet basic expectations.
4. Needs Improvement: Performance and/or goals do not meet expectations.

Evaluation Structure: (Non Ministerial Staff)

- Job Knowledge & Skills – Demonstrating competence in assigned duties, maintaining accuracy, and striving for improvement.
- Work Quality & Reliability – Completing tasks efficiently, meeting expectations, and consistently maintaining dependable attendance.
- Teamwork & Communication – Cooperating with other staff members, church leadership, and volunteers in a spirit of unity and respect.

- Initiative & Stewardship – Showing responsibility in the use of church resources, being proactive in problem-solving, and demonstrating a servant-hearted attitude.
- Commitment to Mission – Supporting the mission and vision of the church through one’s work and conduct.

2. HOLIDAYS

The Church observes several holidays each year. Eligible full-time employees will be given a day off with pay for each holiday listed below:

- New Year’s Eve
- New Year’s Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (2 days)
- Christmas (2 days)

Full time Staff typically do not work these days as Church offices will be closed. Any employee who works on any scheduled holiday may take an alternative day off (*i.e.*, a flex day) with the approval of the employee’s supervisor and that it does not present undue hardship on the Church’s scheduled workload. These flex days may be used in conjunction with corresponding vacation days.

3. PERSONAL LEAVE

The purpose of Personal/Sick leave is to provide full time employees with seven (7) sick days and 3 personal days each calendar year, for full-time staff. These sick leave days are not cumulative.

Despite these guidelines, excessive absences may be a cause for termination.

4. TEMPORARY DISABILITY LEAVE

The Pastor may grant leave of absence not to exceed 14 days for temporary disability required by the employee. The Personnel Committee shall consider requests for extensions on a case-by-case basis.

A full-time employee shall be considered for a leave of absence for temporary disability at any time the employee's condition interferes with the performance of regular duties.

First Baptist Church shall not terminate the employment of the employee during an approved leave of absence for temporary disability.

The employee shall submit to the Pastor a request for leave of absence for temporary disability. The request must be accompanied by a physician’s statement confirming the employee’s inability to work, the date upon which the employee’s inability to work began, the date upon which the employee has requested the leave to begin and the probable date of the employee’s return.

The Personnel Committee may place an employee on leave of absence for temporary disability if, in their judgment and in consultation with a physician who has performed a thorough medical examination of the employee, the employee's condition interferes with the performance of regular duties. The employee shall have the right to present evidence to the Pastor of fitness to continue in the performance of regular duties.

The employee shall notify the Pastor of a desire to return to active duty at least three (3) days, or a reasonable period of time, before the expected date of return. The notice must include a physical fitness exam showing the employee's ability to return to regular duties.

5. MILITARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

It is First Baptist Church's policy and desire to comply with all provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

The Church is committed to protecting the job rights of employees qualified for absence on applicable military or service leave. In accordance with federal and state law, it is the Church's policy that no employee or prospective employee will be subjected to any form of unlawful discrimination on the basis of that person's membership in or obligation to perform service for any of the Uniformed Services of the United States as defined by USERRA. Specifically, the Church will not unlawfully deny employment, reemployment, promotion or other benefit of employment on the basis of that membership.

Employees taking part in a variety of military duties are eligible for benefits under this policy. Such military duties include leaves of absence taken by members of the uniformed services, including Reservists and National Guard members, for training, periods of active military service and funeral honors duty, as well as time spent being examined to determine fitness to perform such service.

The Church reserves all rights afforded under the USERRA.

6. REVIVALS

FBC of Ripley understands that Ministerial Staff may be recruited to serve at revivals or similar events outside of our organization that may conflict with the execution of normal duties, including Sunday Worship services. FBC is supportive when our staff is acknowledged for their dedication to glorifying the Lord through ministry. While we support these opportunities, we recognize that the primary ministry of our staff is to be exercised within the context of our local church. Therefore, we allow our Ministerial Staff two Sundays per calendar year, along with two Wednesdays if needed, to participate in these events.

7. VACATION

The following policy governs vacation time for all full-time staff members of First Baptist Church:

Vacation Eligibility and Accrual

- Years 1-10 of Full-Time Ministry Service: Employees are eligible for two weeks (10 working days) of paid vacation annually.
- Beyond 10 Years of Full-Time Ministry: An additional half day of vacation will be earned for each full year of full-time ministry service beyond 10 years, up to a maximum of 20 additional half-days (10 full working days). This results in a cap of four weeks (20 working days) of vacation annually.
- First Year of Employment: Employees may begin using earned vacation after completing six months of full-time service.

*Note: Years of full-time ministry service are cumulative and include ministry service at previous church or institutions.

Scheduling and Approval

- Pastor: The pastor must schedule vacation time through the Chairman of Deacons.
- Ministers: Any minister requesting to be absent for two or more consecutive Sunday morning services must receive approval from the Deacons.
- All Other Staff: All other employees are to schedule vacation through the Pastor or Personnel Committee. Ministerial staff should ensure their vacations do not overlap, to maintain ministry coverage.
- Seniority Preference: After the Pastor, vacation date preferences will be granted based on longest continuous service at First Baptist Church.

Vacation Accrual Schedule

- Vacation time is earned monthly, beginning January 1 of each calendar year. The number of vacation days accrued each month is based on the employee's total years of full-time ministry service, using a standardized monthly accrual factor.
- The monthly accrual factor is calculated by dividing the total number of vacation days the employee is eligible for in the year by 12 (months).

Examples:

- a) 1 to 10 years of service: Eligible for 10 vacation days per year, which equals 0.83 vacation days earned per month (10/12).
- b) 20 years of service: Eligible for 15 vacation days per year, which equals 1.25 vacation days earned per month (15/12).
- c) 24 years of service: Eligible for 17 vacation days per year, which equals 1.42 vacation days earned per month (17/12).

Advance Use of Vacation

Stable and reliable employees may be allowed to take unaccrued vacation days in advance, with approval from the Pastor or Personnel Committee.

8. CALENDAR AND USAGE GUIDELINES

The vacation year aligns with the church calendar year (January 1- December 31).
Vacation days do not roll over or accumulate for use in future years.

9. TERMINATION, RESIGNATION, OR RETIREMENT

In the event of termination, resignation, or retirement, unused earned vacation may be paid out at the discretion of the Deacons.

10. INSURANCE

The Ministers and Staff of FBC Ripley (only permanent full-time employees are eligible) have the option to enroll in the Church's group health insurance plan for themselves and their families. The Church will pay one half of the premium for the employee only. The remaining cost for employee or family coverage is the responsibility of the employee. The cost of the plan including plan benefits and deductibles is determined annually when the policy renews. Employees may only enroll, withdraw or make changes to the policy during the annual enrollment period except as otherwise allowed by law. The employee's share of the health insurance premium will be paid through a payroll deduction.

11. WORK HOURS

Regular church office hours are from 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Employees are expected to fulfill their responsibilities when special, seasonal or ministerial needs arise. The FBC of Ripley understands that the nature of ministry often includes special events or situations that fall outside of normal office hours. To help accommodate these unpredictable demands, flexible work hours may be approved by the Pastor. In addition to unscheduled events, Sunday is considered a scheduled day of work for Ministerial Staff. Therefore, the Ministerial Staff are permitted to take one day off during the week as a scheduled day off. This day can vary, but staff must keep one important principle in mind: The FBC of Ripley exists to serve the community for the glory of God. To support this mission, it's important that Ministerial Staff be available during regular office hours for unexpected needs or ministry opportunities. For this reason, Ministerial Staff must coordinate their days off with the Pastor to ensure that at least one member of the Ministerial Staff is present on-site Monday through Friday.

12. SECOND JOB (Outside employment)

The FBC of Ripley recognizes that staff members may, at times, wish to engage in employment outside their church responsibilities. While outside employment is not strictly prohibited, it is essential that such employment is consistent with the mission and values of the church and does not interfere with the staff member's ability to fulfill their responsibilities at FBC Ripley. Such scenarios should be rare if the employee is fully engaged with his/her church responsibility.

1. Approval Required

Employees must submit a written request to the Pastor, Deacon Body and the Personnel Committee prior to accepting any outside employment. The request should include the nature of the work, the expected hours, and the name of the employer (if applicable). Approval must be granted before the employee begins the second job.

2. Criteria for Approval

Outside employment may be approved provided it:

- Does not interfere with the employee's performance or availability for their church duties.
- Does not create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict.

- Does not reflect negatively on the reputation or witness of the church.
- Is consistent with biblical values and the employee's role within the ministry.

3. Ongoing Evaluation

All approved outside employment will be subject to review every six months by the Pastor and Personnel Committee. This review will consider whether:

- The employee's performance and availability remain unaffected.
- The nature of outside employment has changed in any way.
- Any concerns have been raised regarding reputation, witness, or conflict of interest.

4. Revocation of Approval

If at any time it is determined that the outside employment is negatively impacting the employee's performance, availability, or the image of the church, the approval may be revoked.

5. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the employee to keep the Pastor, Deacon Body and Personnel Committee informed of any significant changes to their outside employment.

13. NEPOTISM AND SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS

Purpose:

This policy is established to ensure fairness, integrity, and transparency in employment practices and to prevent actual or perceived conflicts of interest within the church staff structure.

Policy Statement:

First Baptist Church of Ripley values equal opportunity in employment and seeks to avoid favoritism, conflicts of interest, and the appearance of impropriety in all personnel decisions. While the church recognizes the close relationships that often exist within a church family, certain boundaries must be maintained in the interest of accountability and effective ministry.

Definition of Family Member:

For the purpose of this policy, "family member" includes:

- Spouse
- Child
- Parent
- Sibling
- Grandparent or grandchild
- In-law (mother, father, son, daughter, brother, or sister-in-law)
- Any person residing in the same household or in a close personal relationship that could influence impartiality

Disclosure Requirements:

All applicants and employees are required to disclose any family relationships with current employees at the time of application, or immediately upon the development of such a relationship during employment.

Failure to disclose may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Review and Oversight

The Personnel Committee will periodically review supervisory relationships involving family members to ensure continued compliance and organizational health. Adjustments may be made if circumstances or concerns warrant.

Exceptions

In rare and exceptional cases, where hiring or supervision of a family member is in the best interest of the church, exceptions may be granted with approval of the Pastor, Personnel Committee and Deacons. Such exceptions must be documented and subject to regular review.

14. TEACHING/TRAINING DAYS

In some cases, it can greatly magnify the ministry of the church for staff to take days to get training or to offer training, teaching, etc. in a variety of settings. Ministers may attend up to two conferences per year, provided sufficient funds are available in the budget and the request has been approved by both the Pastor and the Deacon Officers.

15. EMPLOYEE EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS

Church expense reports must be submitted to the Office Manager at the end of each month in which the expense was incurred to reconcile credit card charges or to receive reimbursement. Reimbursement forms are available in the church office. Documentation for all expenses is required, with no exceptions. Any item that is not accompanied by a receipt or if the expense is not an approved or budgeted item, it will not be approved.

All employees are expected to uphold a high level of integrity at all times in the usage of Church expense reports. Employees who submit false information, as determined by the Business Office or Deacon Body will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including the termination of employment.

All reimbursements are subject to the Church's Accountable Reimbursement Policy.

16. BUSINESS TRAVEL AND CONFERENCES

Ministers and Staff members are encouraged to grow their ministry through information learned at conferences and seminars. The Church will reimburse employees for reasonable business travel expenses including the costs of conferences and seminars. All business travel including travel to conferences and seminars must be approved, in advance, by the Pastor and the cost must be within the travel and conference budget. When approved, the actual costs of travel, meals and lodging which are directly related to the business objective will be paid or reimbursed by the Church provided receipts and documentation are in order. Employees may be accompanied by a family member on business travel, when the presence of a companion will not interfere with the business objectives. Any portion of the travel before, during, beyond or after what is approved will be the responsibility of the employee. This means an employee is permitted to travel early or overstay but such practice will be considered vacation and subject to vacation policy. No Business Travel or Conference shall interfere with Sunday Services.

17. VEHICLE REIMBURSEMENT

Employees who use their own automobiles for travel on authorized Church business will be reimbursed for mileage at the rate established under the current Internal Revenue Service guidelines. Reimbursement for mileage should be submitted using the Mileage Reimbursement Form, which is available in the Church office. The form should be filed with the Business Office as soon as reasonably possible after travel, but in no event longer than one week after the travel occurred.

Employees must carry, at their own expense, at least the minimum insurance coverage for property damage and public liability.

18. CHRISTMAS BONUS

Each staff member may be given a monetary Christmas Bonus. The amount will be determined by the Personnel Committee, except for the Pastor's, which will be set by the Deacon Officers. To ensure fairness and stewardship bonuses are not to exceed 2% of the employee's annual salary.

19. PASTOR AND MINISTER APPRECIATION GIFT POLICY

To show gratitude and honor for the spiritual leadership and service provided by our Pastor and Ministers, First Baptist Church will recognize Ministers during Pastor and Minister Appreciation Month each October. Recognition may include a financial gift. The Minister's gift will be determined by the Deacon Officers. To ensure fairness and stewardship, no gift will exceed 2% of the employee's annual salary.

20. PAID MATERNITY LEAVE

Maternity leave (Paid Maternity Leave) is a paid leave associated with the birth of a child. Paid Maternity Leave is not taken from any other paid time off. You qualify for Paid Maternity Leave after one-year of employment with First Baptist Church, although your Supervisor may waive this requirement. Full-Time Staff Members receive 6 weeks of paid leave. Part-Time Staff Members receive 4 weeks of paid leave. Temporary Staff and Staff working less than 20 hours per week are not eligible for Paid Maternity Leave under this policy.

Health insurance benefits will continue to be provided during the Paid Maternity Leave under this policy at the same rate as in effect before the leave was taken regardless of length of service, provided you have at least one full year of service.

You must provide to your Supervisor 30 days' notice of the requested leave (or as much notice as practicable if the leave is not foreseeable). You are encouraged to take Paid Maternity Leave consecutively. However, with the approval of your Supervisor, all or part of Paid Maternity Leave may be taken with reduced hours or non-consecutively within 6 months of the birth of a child.

21. Part Time employees

- Vacation: none
- Insurance: none
- Annuity: none
- Holiday Pay: none
- Days Off (weekly): none
- Sabbatical Leave: none
- Teaching/Training Days – Supervisors may determine that it is the best interest for part-time employees to engage in training.
- Part-Time Pay – Part-time employees do not receive pay when they are not at work.

SECTION 4: FURTHER PROCEDURES

1. SALARY DEDUCTIONS

After all leave has been exhausted, the employee shall forfeit the full daily rate of pay for each day of absence thereafter.

Unauthorized absences shall be defined as an absence from an assigned duty not provided for by First Baptist Church. There shall be deducted from the employee's salary for each unauthorized absence an amount based on the employee's daily rate of pay.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Church has guidelines to avoid real or potential conflicts of interest with the interests of the Church or its members. It is an employee's duty to follow the guidelines about conflicts of interest. If this is not clear, or if the employee has questions about conflicts of interest, he is to contact the Supervisor.

An actual or potential conflict of interest is when you are in a position to influence a decision or have business dealings on behalf of the Church that may result in personal gain for you or your relatives or immediate family.

We do not automatically assume that there is a conflict of interest if you have a relationship with another individual or company. However, if you have any influence on transactions involving purchases or contracts, you must tell the Supervisor as soon as possible. By telling us that there is a possibility of an actual or potential conflict of interest, we can set up safeguards to protect everyone involved.

The possibility for personal gain is not limited to situations where you or your relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which the Church does business. Personal gains can also result from situations where you or your relative received a kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of a transaction or business dealing involving the Church.

Employees are permitted to purchase items necessary for their duties subject to the Church's purchasing policies and budget. Employees are responsible for maintaining expenditures within their own department's budget. For expenditures exceeding \$1,500, employees must obtain and submit at least three competitive quotes from reputable vendors to ensure fair pricing and fiscal responsibility. The Pastor may waive this requirement when purchases are from vendors with an established relationship, where alternate vendors are not available or in emergency circumstances. For all purchases, documentation must be filed with the Church office for record-keeping purposes.

3. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

No person or work team shall be authorized to incur substantial non-budgeted indebtedness on behalf of the Church without the prior approval of the Finance Committee and Deacon Body.

Additionally, no Staff member, Board member, Team member, or Church member is authorized to conduct fund-raising campaigns or efforts for Church related programs without prior approval of the Pastor.

4. SAFETY GUIDELINES

The Church values the health and safety of all employees, and works diligently in maintaining a safe and productive working environment by establishing and consistently enforcing safety guidelines within the workplace.

It is the responsibility of any employee to avoid situations in which they feel unsafe or at risk of injury. If any employee is asked or instructed to do something that they feel could put them at risk, they are required to communicate with their supervisor their concerns.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify the appropriate supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance.

5. MEDIA & PUBLIC INQUIRIES

How we engage with the media locally and beyond is very important. It is vital that this is done in an intentional way that preserves the message of First Baptist Church and the gospel.

All media inquiries and other inquiries of a general nature should be referred to the Pastor. Inquiries seeking information concerning current or former employees should be referred to the Personnel Committee.

Employees are encouraged to be intentional and consider the impact of anything posted on social media especially about the Church and congregation. If there is any question as to the appropriateness of any post, please communicate with the Pastor.

6. BOUNDARY INTERACTION

Church staff members should recognize the importance of maintaining appropriate personal boundaries when counseling. Staff are encouraged to create a safe and respectful environment by establishing clear limits on personal interactions, limiting isolated meetings when possible, and refraining from personal disclosures that are not necessary to the counseling or witnessing process. It is essential to prioritize the spiritual and emotional well-being of the congregation while preserving professional integrity, confidentiality, and trust. Staff should limit isolated interactions especially with children or members of the opposite sex and should utilize safeguards to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

Guidelines:

- One-on-one counseling with minors should be conducted in a visible and accessible location, such as an office with a window or glass door, or in a larger room where others are present nearby.
- Whenever possible, meetings should be scheduled with parental knowledge and consent.
- Private conversations with children or youth should be conducted in ways that maintain accountability, while also allowing for appropriate ministerial care.
- All staff and volunteers are expected to respect personal boundaries and follow these guidelines to ensure the safety and well-being of every child.

These boundaries are intended to safeguard our children and youth, while also supporting meaningful ministry opportunities.

7. SEMINARY SCHOLARSHIPS AND TRAINING

The church offers further education scholarships for appropriate staff seeking education that is deemed to serve the ministry of the church. Encouraging our staff, via conferences, mentoring relationships, experience and further education, to develop their skills to increase their role in the Kingdom is a vital ministry of the Church. Each situation will be evaluated by the Staff Member's Supervisor and/or the Deacon Body.

8. COMPUTERS/EMAIL/INTERNET SYSTEMS

The Church provides computers, email accounts, internet access, and other digital devices to support ministry and administrative functions. This policy establishes guidelines to ensure that technology resources are used responsibly, ethically, and in a way that honors the mission of the church.

1. Church Access to Computers, Email, and Internet Use

- All church-owned or church-funded computers, email accounts, and internet services are the property of the church.

- Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using church systems, accounts, or devices.
- The church reserves the right to monitor, access, and review any files, communications, or internet activity on church-owned systems or while using church-provided accounts.
- Personal devices used for church business (e.g., accessing church email) may also be subject to review if necessary to protect church records or sensitive information.

2. Prohibited Use: Pornography and Inappropriate Content

- Accessing, viewing, downloading, or distributing pornography or sexually explicit material is strictly prohibited.
- Employees are also prohibited from engaging in online activity that is offensive, harassing, illegal, or contrary to the values and teachings of the church.
- Violation of this standard may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

3. Ownership of Church Devices and Subscriptions

- Any computers, tablets, phones, or other devices purchased by the church remain the property of the church.
- Upon resignation or termination, all church-owned devices must be returned immediately.
- Any subscriptions, software, or digital services paid for by the church remain the property of the church and may not be transferred to an individual.

4. Handling of Sensitive Information

- Employees are entrusted with sensitive information regarding members, staff, and church operations.
- Any files, communications, or digital records containing sensitive or confidential information remain the property of the church.
- Upon resignation or termination, all such material must be turned over to the church and may not be copied, shared, or retained by the employee.
- Employees are expected to exercise discretion and safeguard sensitive information at all times.

5. Agreement

- By using church computers, email, or internet resources, employees acknowledge and agree to abide by this policy. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

9. DRESS CODE

Dress is casual yet appropriate for a professional employee in a Christian organization. Dress should be comfortable, clean, neat, appropriate, and modest. No employee will be allowed to wear jewelry in a body piercing with the exception of women with pierced ears (earrings).

10. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Disciplinary actions can include confrontation, official warnings (verbal or written), demotion, unpaid time off, and/or termination and others. There is no guarantee of the order of these potential disciplinary actions.

11. INCLEMENT WEATHER

During inclement weather the decision to close or open our offices is determined by the decision made by the Pastor and Chairman of Deacons. If we close our offices due to inclement weather all employees scheduled to work that day will be paid their normal salary. We do not expect any employee to drive to work in conditions that make them feel unsafe. If our offices are open but an employee is uncomfortable driving to work due to inclement weather they need to notify the Pastor within one hour of their normal reporting time about their intention to stay home. Vacation pay or paid personal time for this time off may be utilized if available. If the employee's vacation time and paid personal time has been expended the day will be taken off without pay.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT

This is to acknowledge that I have received my personal copy of First Baptist Church's Employee Handbook. In consideration of my employment with the Church, I hereby agree to read, observe and abide by the conditions of employment, policies and rules contained in this Handbook.

I understand that the policies and procedures described in this Handbook are for purposes of information only and may be amended or modified by the Church at any time, with or without prior notice. **This Handbook shall not constitute a contract of employment or a contract to provide any benefit to me.**

I further understand that my employment is entered into voluntarily and at all times shall remain "at-will" and that I am free to resign at any time. Similarly, the Church is free to terminate my employment for any reason at any time, with or without cause.

Employee Name: _____

(Print Name)

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____