

2023-2024

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# Employee Handbook

*First*

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423/743-9156  
Main at Love  
Downtown Erwin  
[erwinfirst.org](http://erwinfirst.org)



## **Church Employee Handbook**

### ***Welcome***

Welcome to the ministry team at the First Baptist Church. You have been given a unique and special opportunity to serve God and minister to others in God's name. Your work here will make you a part of a team that seeks to meet the spiritual needs of a diverse community of believers both within our walls and without.

### ***Your Employment with First***

Your employment with First Baptist is "at will" and not by contract either express or implied. This means that both the First Baptist Church and you are free to end the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, and for any reason. No employee or representative of First Baptist, other than the Committee on Personnel, has the authority to create a contract of employment with you. Any such contract must be in writing signed by both parties.

### ***About This Handbook***

This Employee Handbook is intended to acquaint you with First Baptist and to provide you with information about the employment policies and practices of First Baptist in effect at the time of publication. All previously issued handbooks and any inconsistent policy statements or memoranda are superseded. This Handbook is not an employment contract and should not be construed as one.

The First Baptist Church reserves the right to revise, modify, delete, or add to policies, procedures, work rules, or benefits stated in this handbook or in any other document, except for the policy of at-will employment. Any written changes to this Handbook will be distributed to all employees so that employees will be aware of the new policies or procedures. No oral statements or representations can in any way alter the provisions of this Handbook. Nothing in this Employee Handbook or in any other personnel document, including benefit plan descriptions, creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment for any employee.

### ***Equal Employment Opportunity***

Employment decisions at First Baptist are based on merit, qualifications, and abilities without regard to race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age (as protected by the Age Discrimination in Employment Act), physical/mental disabilities (as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act), veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law. This commitment to equal treatment applies to all aspects of employment, including, but not limited to: selection, training, assignment, promotion, compensation, benefits, transfer, performance evaluation, administration of personnel policies, discipline, and discharge. All

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applicants are extended an equal opportunity to gain employment, and all employees are extended an equal opportunity to progress in their fields of endeavor.

This policy does not waive the ministerial exception or any other exceptions to any federal, state or local legislation, including, but not limited to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **More about First Baptist**

#### **Our Mission Statement**

In Christ for Community. In Community for Christ.

#### **Our Vision Statement**

At First Baptist, we're striving toward the following Christ-honoring goals so that, as described in **Acts 1:8**, we can reach those people who are our closest neighbors and then reach the world beyond. We hope to do this through:

A welcoming *FACILITY*.

Transformative *EDUCATION* & formation.

Being on *MISSION* for Christ.

Engaging *WORSHIP*.

A multigenerational *CONGREGATION*.

#### **Our Statement of Faith**

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to a lost world. The ordinances of the church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

#### **A Statement of Baptist Beliefs**

The following is adapted from *Four Fragile Freedoms* (1993) by Walter Shurden:

*BIBLE FREEDOM* is the historic Baptist affirmation of the belief that the Bible, under the Lordship of Christ, must be Central in the life of the individual and the Church. Christians are both free and obligated to study and obey the Scripture.

*SOUL FREEDOM* also known as the priesthood of all believers, affirms the freedom and responsibility of every person to relate to God without the imposition of creed or control by clergy or the government.

*CHURCH FREEDOM* is the historic belief that the local churches are free, under the Lordship of Jesus, to determine their membership and leadership, to order their worship and work, to ordain whomever they perceive to be gifted for ministry, and to participate in the larger Body of Christ (other churches and other denominations).

*RELIGIOUS FREEDOM* is the historic Baptist affirmation of freedom of religion, freedom for religion, and freedom from religion. Churches and individuals should be free to worship in

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whatever manner they choose and with whomever they choose. All people, no matter their religious background, should be free from any coercion to worship and free from the intervention of the state in matters of religion.

### **General Overview**

#### **Supervision**

Each employee at First Baptist is accountable to an individual supervisor or to a supervisory committee. The chief supervisory committee at First Baptist is the Committee on Personnel.

Daily work assignments rest with each employee's immediate supervisor. Administration of additional employment matters detailed in this Handbook is the responsibility of the Committee on Personnel.

#### **Classification of Employees**

As required by law, each position at First Baptist is classified as either exempt or non-exempt based on the government definition of what positions are eligible for overtime pay. If your position is classified as exempt, you are not eligible to be paid for overtime. If your position is classified as non-exempt, you are eligible for overtime pay (see "Overtime Pay" below). The Committee on Personnel will advise you which category your position falls into when you are hired.

Employees are also classified as full-time, part-time, or temporary for pay and benefits purposes. Employees who are approved to work 35 or more hours per work week are full-time. Employees who are approved to work fewer than 34 hours per week but more than 20 hours per week are part-time. Temporary workers may be called in to work either full-time or part-time hours but for a limited duration of time, usually not more than 6 weeks at one time.

#### **Attendance and Work Schedules**

The normal church business office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. although the Senior Pastor may be available in the Pastor's Study at other times and other ministerial staff members may also hold office hours as they deem necessary and appropriate. Those staff members who are expected to participate in or direct worship, Sunday School, or other functions on Sunday may elect to have Friday or Monday as a day off in lieu of Sunday. Time away from the church for visitation, conference assignments/meetings, youth trips, etc. will be considered time worked. If these occur on an employee's regularly scheduled day off, the employee's supervisor may grant equivalent time off during the following week. This time may not be accumulated. Employees who have scheduled ministerial events outside of normal office hours (board meetings, rehearsals, etc.) may, with their supervisor's prior approval, adjust their work schedule for that day.

#### **Workweek**

The workweek at First Baptist runs from Sunday at 12:00 a.m. to Saturday at 11:59 p.m.

#### **Payment of Wages**

Depending on the nature of your position, you may be paid by salary or hourly wage. You will be notified of this by the Committee on Personnel.

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First Baptist is on a biweekly pay period. Employees are paid by check on Thursdays. In the event that the scheduled pay day falls on a weekend or holiday, employees will be paid on the last workday prior to the pay day.

Employees are paid on a current basis. On the first paycheck you receive, you will be paid for all scheduled hours during the first pay period if you start in the first week of the pay period. If you start in the second week of the pay period, you will be paid two weeks plus the hours worked the first week.

All non-exempt employees are responsible for recording their hours on weekly timesheets, which must be submitted to the Church Administrator for approval. Employees should not work more than their approved hours or overtime without prior approval from the Senior Pastor. (See the "Overtime Pay" section.)

Payroll records are held in strict confidence and can be reviewed only by the Committee on Personnel.

### **Payroll Advances**

The First Baptist Church does not provide payroll advances or extend credit to staff.

### **Absences from Work**

If, for any reason, you cannot report for work on time, telephone or e-mail the church on 423/743-9156 or [leslie@erwinfirst.org](mailto:leslie@erwinfirst.org) as far in advance of your starting time as possible to inform the Church Administrator why you will be absent and how long you expect to remain absent or late.

All leave, with the exception of sick leave or emergencies, should be approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor. Following return to work, an employee's absence must be documented on the employee's time sheet or, in the case of exempt staff, on the Absentee Form, available from the Church Administrator.

Unexcused tardiness or absences are not permissible. Unless a leave of absence has been granted by the Committee on Personnel (see "Leaves of Absence" below), absence from work in excess of an employee's accumulated vacation leave, sick leave, or other leave is not permitted. Such time off will not be paid and may result in discipline up to and including termination. An unexcused absence of three or more consecutive days is considered a voluntary termination of employment by the employee.

### **Change of Status**

So that we can properly communicate employment information and administer employee benefits to you, notify the Committee on Personnel as soon as practicable if you have a change to any of your employee information:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Address               | <input type="checkbox"/> Number of dependents                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance beneficiary | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone number                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marital status        | <input type="checkbox"/> Person to notify in case of emergency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name                  |  |

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## Overtime Pay

Overtime compensation is not available for exempt employees.

For non-exempt employees, the following guidelines apply:

1. Non-exempt employees are expected to work only the hours per week approved for their specific position.
2. From time to time, job requirements may necessitate that a non-exempt employee work in excess of his or her approved hours in a week. This must be approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor and, in the event it results in overtime pay, by the Committee on Personnel.
3. Employees who work in excess of forty (40) hours in one working week will be paid at the overtime rate required by law.

Overtime is based on actual hours worked. Time off on annual leave, sick leave, or other leave will not be considered hours worked for purposes of performing overtime calculations.

Furthermore, overtime is based only on hours worked over forty (40). Thus, even if you are regularly scheduled to work only thirty (30) hours, you will not be paid overtime wages for hours worked over thirty (30) but less than forty (40).

### **Job Description**

When you begin work at First Baptist, you will be given a job description to outline your duties. Your immediate supervisor, the Church Administrator, and/or the Committee on Personnel will review the job description with you to answer any questions.

### ***Holidays and Leave Policies***

#### **Holidays**

All full-time and part-time employees will be granted the following paid holidays each year:

New Year's Day	January 1st
King Holiday	Third Monday in January
Washington's Birthday	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Juneteenth	June 19th
Independence Day	July 4th
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Columbus Day	Second Monday in October
Veterans Day	November 11th
Thanksgiving Holiday	Fourth Thursday and Friday in November
Christmas Eve	December 24th
Christmas Day	December 25th
New Year's Eve	January 31st

Generally, when a holiday falls on a Saturday, the previous Friday will be the day off. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday will be the day off. If your work requires attention during a holiday or other scheduled time off, your supervisor or the Committee on Personnel will work with you to provide other time away from your work. If a holiday falls on your regularly scheduled day off, you may arrange with your supervisor for an alternative day off around the same time period. This holiday schedule may not always apply to clergy,

Effective September 1st, 2023

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programming staff, and others who must be involved in special services or worship or related holiday activities. With the approval of the Senior Pastor, those persons may arrange for other scheduled time off. Holidays do not accumulate and may not be carried over from year-to-year. You will not be paid for any unused holidays at the time your employment with First Baptist ends.

### **Vacation Leave**

Vacation is intended to be a refreshing and meaningful break in an employee's regular work schedule. We encourage you to work with your supervisor to schedule vacation as early as possible to ensure a smooth continuation of work during your absence. Vacation leave is on a calendar year basis and is calculated based upon the number of years employed at First Baptist and, for non-exempt, part-time and full-time employees, upon the number of hours approved to work per week. All full-time employees earn vacation leave as follows:

<u>Accumulated Service</u>	<u>Earned Vacation Leave</u>
1 month but fewer than 10 months	1 work day per full calendar month (maximum 10 days)
10 months but fewer than 5 years	2 work weeks
5 years but fewer than 9 years	3 work weeks
9 or more years	4 work weeks

Vacation step increases take effect on January 1 in the year following your employment anniversary. For example, if your fifth anniversary is on July 1, you are eligible for three weeks of vacation starting the following January 1.

Vacation step increases take effect on January 1 in the year following your employment anniversary. For example, if your 5th anniversary is on July 1, you are eligible for 3 weeks of vacation starting the following January 1.

At the end of the calendar year, employees may carry over up to a cumulative total of the equivalent of five (5) working days of earned but unused vacation leave, but all such carried over vacation leave must be used in the next calendar year or it will be forfeited. All other accrued unused vacation leave is forfeited at year-end.

### **Sabbatical Plan**

The Senior Pastor's vacation package shall be separate from the above Vacation Leave policy as approved by the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee should also consider, at the Senior Pastor's request, the implementation of a sabbatical plan.

For employees whose employment with First Baptist ends, accrued unused vacation leave will be handled in accordance with the separation policy set out in this Handbook.

### **Sick Leave**

Everyone desires a healthy work environment. In the event you or a family member become ill, experience a medical emergency, or schedule a doctor's appointment, time off for illness, with pay, is provided. It is your responsibility to contact your immediate supervisor or the Committee on Personnel to request approval of sick leave. He or she will need to know the reason for your absence and medical documentation may be required. When the need for leave is foreseeable, requests for sick leave should be made in advance of the need for leave. In all other circumstances, the request should be made as soon as practicable. The Church Administrator maintains accumulated sick leave records.

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A maximum of five (5) workdays per calendar year of sick leave is available to all full-time and part-time employees. For hourly non-exempt employees, one sick day is calculated as follows: the number of hours you are approved to work in one week divided by five.

Sick leave accrues from year-to-year and any unused sick leave is banked at year-end. Employees whose employment with First Baptist ends are not paid for accrued unused sick leave.

### **Family or Medical Leave**

In accordance with federal law, First Baptist may grant up to 12 weeks total unpaid Family/Medical Leave during any twelve-month period. The 12 weeks of Family/Medical Leave includes and runs concurrently with other leave such as annual leave, sick leave, or other leave.

Family/Medical leave entitlements will be measured on a rolling 12-month basis. For example, if an employee used four weeks of leave beginning February 1, 2007, four weeks of leave beginning June 1, 2007, and four weeks of leave beginning December 1, 2008, the staff member would not be entitled to any additional leave until February 1, 2008. On February 1, 2008, the employee would be entitled to four weeks of leave; and on June 1, the employee would be entitled to an additional four weeks of leave, and so on.

Family/Medical Leave may be granted under the following conditions:

1. After the birth or adoption of a child by an employee or the placement of a foster child with an employee.
2. To care for an employee's spouse with a serious health condition.
3. To care for an employee's child with a serious health condition.
4. To care for an employee's parent with a serious health condition.
5. In connection with an employee's own serious illness.

The following criteria must be met before Family/Medical Leave can be approved:

1. You must have worked for First Baptist at least 12 months before the leave and at least 1,250 hours during that period.
2. Family/Medical Leave runs concurrent with vacation leave and sick leave where those leaves are used for an FMLA qualifying reason. After all paid leave is exhausted, Family/Medical Leave is unpaid. The total of all types of leave cannot exceed 12 weeks during any 12-month period.
3. A health care provider's written certification must be obtained and presented to First Baptist to verify an employee's or family member's serious health condition.
  - a. The First Baptist Church reserves the right to require an employee to report periodically on his or her status and intention to return to work.
  - b. An employee taking leave due to his or her own serious health condition will be required to obtain a doctor's written certification that he or she is able to return to work before the employee will be permitted to return to work.

In situations where the need for leave is foreseeable, such as leave for birth, adoption, or planned medical treatment, the employee must provide First Baptist with at least 30 days' written notice before Family/Medical Leave can be approved. In all other situations, notice by the employee as soon as practicable is required.



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### Pregnancy Disability Leave

Pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions will be treated like any other disability, and an employee on leave will be eligible for temporary disability benefits in the same amount and degree as any other employee on leave.

Any female employee planning to take pregnancy disability leave should advise the Committee on Personnel as early as possible.

The individual should make an appointment to discuss the following conditions:

- ❑ Employees who need to take pregnancy disability must inform First Baptist when a leave is expected to begin and how long it will likely last.
  - If the need for a leave or transfer is foreseeable, employees must provide notification at least 30 days before the pregnancy disability leave or transfer is to begin.
  - Employees must consult with the Committee on Personnel regarding the scheduling of any planned medical treatment or supervision in order to minimize disruption to church operations. Any such scheduling is subject to the approval of the employee's health care provider.
  - If 30 days' advance notice is not possible, notice must be given as soon as practical.
- ❑ Upon the request of an employee and recommendation of the employee's physician, the employee's work assignment may be changed if necessary to protect the health and safety of the employee and her child.
- ❑ Requests for transfers of job duties will be reasonably accommodated if the job and security rights of others are not breached.
- ❑ Temporary transfers due to health considerations will be granted when possible. However, the transferred employee will receive the pay that accompanies the job, as is the case with any other temporary transfer due to temporary health reasons.
- ❑ Pregnancy leave usually begins when ordered by the employee's physician. The employee must provide First Baptist with a certification from a health care provider. The certification indicating disability should contain the following information:
  - The date on which the employee became disabled due to pregnancy.
  - The probable duration of the period or periods of disability.
  - A statement that, due to the disability, the employee is unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of her position without undue risk to herself, the successful completion of her pregnancy, or to other persons.
- ❑ Leave returns will be allowed only when the employee's physician sends a release.
- ❑ An employee will be permitted to use accrued sick time (if otherwise eligible to take the time) during a pregnancy disability leave. An employee will be allowed to use accrued vacation time (if otherwise eligible to take the time) during a pregnancy disability leave.

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- ❑ Leave duration will be determined by the advice of the employee's physician, but employees disabled by pregnancy may take up to four months.
  - The four months of leave includes any period of time for actual disability caused by the employee's pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition. This includes leave for severe morning sickness and for prenatal care.
  - Part-time employees are entitled to leave on a pro rata basis.
- ❑ Leave does not need to be taken in one continuous time period and may be taken intermittently, as needed. Leave may be taken in increments of four (4) hours.
- ❑ Under most circumstances, upon submission of a medical certification that an employee is able to return to work from a pregnancy disability leave, an employee will be reinstated to her same position held at the time the leave began or to an equivalent position, if available. An employee returning from a pregnancy disability leave has no greater right to reinstatement than if the employee had been continuously employed.

### **Leave of Absence**

The First Baptist Church recognizes that there may be times when an employee needs to be absent from work and the time off is not covered by annual, sick, pregnancy, or Family and Medical Leave. When, for personal, medical (not qualifying for Family/Medical Leave), or other reasons an employee seeks additional time off, he or she may request a general leave of absence from the Committee on Personnel.

The Committee on Personnel of the First Baptist Church is under no obligation to grant a general leave of absence but may do so with or without pay in its sole discretion based on all the surrounding circumstances. A general leave of absence does not guarantee that First Baptist will hold the position open, as First Baptist may find it necessary or beneficial to fill the position. In addition, the following guidelines apply:

1. Wherever practicable, a written request for the leave of absence should be made to the Committee on Personnel at least 30 days before the leave is sought. The request should include a detailed explanation of the need for the leave and the length of leave sought.
2. An employee must utilize all accrued annual, sick, and other leave before a general leave of absence will be granted.
3. This policy is not intended to cover any leaves that qualify under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Such leaves are governed by "Family or Medical Leave" policy above.
4. An initial general leave of absence cannot exceed 90 days. However, a leave may be extended for periods of 30 days or fewer upon submission of a new request and further approval of the Personnel Committee.
5. Before beginning a general leave of absence, the employee must make specific arrangements to continue First Baptist's benefit programs. The First Baptist Church has no obligation to provide holiday pay or vacation benefits during an approved general leave of absence.
6. A general leave of absence does not affect an employee's continuity of employment. The original date of employment remains in effect.
7. If an employee does not return to work at the end of an approved leave, this will be considered a voluntary termination of employment by the employee.

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### Continuing Education Leave

Continuing education is encouraged to help employees develop and improve skills and qualifications directly related to their work responsibilities. For those employees with continuing education allowances, paid continuing education leave is limited to a maximum of five (5) work days per year. Such leave must be approved in advance with the employee's supervisor or the Committee on Personnel. If additional time is needed beyond the five-day limit, the employee must obtain prior approval from the Committee on Personnel, who may grant an unpaid leave of absence for this purpose.

Employees who do not have a continuing educational allowance must have prior approval by their immediate supervisor and the Committee on Personnel.

Reimbursement for continuing education and associated travel must follow the guidelines outlined in First Baptist's "Financial Policies and Procedures Manual."

Continuing education leave does not accrue from year-to-year and any unused continuing education leave is forfeited at year-end. Employees whose employment with First Baptist ends are not paid for accrued unused continuing education leave.

### Jury Duty and Court Subpoenas

If summoned to serve on a jury or subpoenaed to appear in court, you will be excused from work while under summons or subpoena. It is your responsibility to notify your supervisor immediately upon learning of the summons or subpoena, and you will be expected to work normal hours except for the time your presence is required by the court. While serving, you will be paid the difference between jury duty pay and your regular pay. Time for appearance in court for an employee's own case is considered personal business and will be the individual employee's responsibility. Normally, annual or other leave days must be used for this purpose.

### Bereavement Leave

In the event of a death in your family, First Baptist offers the following paid time away from work for all full-time and part-time employees:

<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Paid Leave</u>
Spouse, child, parent, or other family member living in your household	Up to 5 days
Other family members (brothers, sisters, in-laws, grandparents, aunts, or uncles)	Up to 3 days

Pay will not be granted for any day in which the employee is otherwise compensated (such as a paid holiday) or for any day the employee otherwise would not have been at work.

### Volunteer Mission Work

The First Baptist Church supports participation in volunteer mission efforts that benefit both the employee and the mission project. If participation in a mission project does not compromise the work of the office, any full-time or part-time employee may have up to five (5) days leave with pay per calendar year to participate in an organized mission trip. Such leave must be approved in advance with the employee's supervisor. If additional time is needed beyond the five-day limit, the employee must also obtain prior approval from the Committee on Personnel, who may grant an unpaid leave of absence for this purpose. Either the First Baptist Church or the home church of which the employee is an active member must sponsor the mission trip. Mission leave does not accrue from year-to-year and any unused mission leave is forfeited at year-end. Employees whose employment with First Baptist ends will not be paid for accrued unused mission leave.

## Church Employee Handbook **Military Leave**

A leave of absence, without pay, will be granted to an employee who is drafted or called up to serve in the armed services. The armed services includes employees in the U.S. Armed Forces, Public Health Services, National Guard, and Reservists. Employees are requested to notify their supervisors as far in advance as possible of their need to take leave. Leaves and reinstatement upon return from a military leave will be granted in accordance with state and federal law.

## **Benefits**

### **Social Security and Medicare Taxes**

Unless an employee is an ordained pastor, First Baptist is required by law to withhold social security taxes [FICA, including Medicare] from your pay. Except for ordained pastors, First Baptist contributes one-half of the tax while you, the employee, contribute the other half. The federal government determines the percentage of tax withheld from pay.

### **Wage Assignment**

A wage assignment or garnishment is a legal order requiring an employer to withhold part of the staff member's wage in order to pay a debt. Wage assignments that meet legal requirements will be honored when issued. At that time, employees will be presented with written notice of the garnishment.

## ***Employee Conduct, Grievances, and Separation***

### **Employee Conduct**

The First Baptist Church bases its teachings and guidelines for living and working on the Bible. We expect each employee's conduct on the job as well as off the job to be in line with the moral, spiritual, and ethical teachings of the Bible. Conduct that is inconsistent with scriptural standards will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Grievances**

It is the desire of the church to resolve grievances at the lowest level possible. Should you have a grievance against another employee, supervisor, or church member, you are encouraged to share that grievance with your immediate supervisor, unless the nature of the grievance involves that person. In any case, a grievance may be reported to the Committee on Personnel. To the extent possible, grievances will be held in confidence.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The First Baptist Church is committed to providing all of its employees with a work environment free from sexual harassment. Accordingly, First Baptist strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate, condone or allow sexual harassment by or of any of its employees.

For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome or unwanted advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to or rejection of this conduct by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting hiring, evaluation, retention, promotion, or other aspects of employment; or

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- ❑ This conduct reasonably could be expected to and does interfere with an individual's employment or creates an intimidating or hostile work environment.

Sexual harassment also includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender.

If you believe you have been sexually harassed, whether by a co-worker, supervisor, member of the church or a third party, you should report the incident to the Committee on Personnel. If the conduct involves a clergy person, it should also be reported to the Board of Deacons.

Upon a complaint being made, First Baptist will investigate the complaint. Upon conclusion of the investigation, First Baptist will impose such discipline as warranted by the findings of the investigation. First Baptist will not retaliate in any way against anyone who makes a good faith complaint. Likewise, we will not permit any employee to engage in any type of retaliatory conduct. Retaliation is a serious violation of this anti-harassment policy and should also be reported immediately.

This policy does not waive the ministerial exception or any other exceptions to any federal, state or local legislation, including, but not limited to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy**

All persons associated with or employed by the First Baptist Church are entitled to work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination. First Baptist is committed to providing all of its employees with a working environment in which they are treated with respect and dignity. Accordingly, First Baptist strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate, condone or allow harassment or discrimination by or against any of its staff members. This anti-harassment policy prohibits harassment on the basis of gender, race, age, color, national origin, physical/mental disabilities, and any other category protected by federal or state law.

Examples of inappropriate and unacceptable harassment covered by this policy include, but are not limited to, improper or inappropriate harassing comments, harassing gestures or dissemination, and/or publication of harassing and derogatory materials in the work place that are based upon a person's gender, race, color, age, national origin, or disability. Examples of unacceptable discrimination include failure to promote, hire, or transfer based upon a person's race, gender, color, age, national origin, or disability.

If you believe that you have been harassed or discriminated against in violation of this policy, you have the responsibility to report the incident to the Committee on Personnel. If the conduct involves a clergy person, it should also be reported to the Board of Deacons.

Upon a complaint being made, First Baptist will investigate the complaint. Upon conclusion of the investigation, First Baptist will impose discipline as warranted by the findings of the investigation. First Baptist will not retaliate in any way against anyone who makes a good faith complaint. Likewise, we will not permit any employee to engage in any type of retaliatory conduct. Retaliation is a serious violation of this anti-harassment policy and should also be reported immediately.

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## Discipline and Discharge

The purpose of this policy is to state First Baptist's position on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. Although employment with the First Baptist Church is based on mutual consent and both the employee and First Baptist have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause or advance notice, First Baptist may use progressive discipline at its discretion.

It is not possible to list all forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of some of the infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- Theft or misappropriation of the property or funds of the First Baptist Church or of a co-worker.
- Falsification of records.
- Possession, use or distribution of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while working, while on church business, or while operating church-owned or leased vehicles or equipment.
- Possession or distribution of pornographic or obscene materials or communications in the workplace, while working, while on church business, or while using equipment belonging to the church.
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace.
- Gambling in any form on church premises, while on church business, or while using equipment belonging to the church.
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct.
- Sleeping on the job.
- Violation of First Baptist workplace policies and guidelines.
- Sexual harassment or abuse, or other discriminatory, harassing, retaliatory, or unlawful practices.
- Personal conduct offensive to fellow employees, church members/attendees, or vendors.
- Conduct that is inconsistent with scriptural standards.
- Possession of dangerous materials, such as explosives, firearms, or other weapons, in the workplace.

The First Baptist Church reserves the exclusive right to evaluate employee performance and conduct and to take disciplinary action. First Baptist has the sole discretion to determine whether disciplinary action is to be taken in a given instance and to decide what type of discipline is appropriate. Each disciplinary action will be handled on a case-by-case basis, and there is no routine procedure or sequence of disciplinary action. First Baptist will decide in each

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case what action is appropriate based on all the facts and circumstances. Disciplinary action may consist of any of the following:

- Oral warning
- Written warning with a copy to the employee's personnel file
- Suspension – with or without pay
- Discharge

First Baptist does not guarantee that one form of disciplinary action will necessarily precede another, and immediate termination is possible in any given instance at First Baptist's sole discretion.

### **Separation from Employment**

Separation from employment may be through voluntary resignation or through involuntary termination by discharge, position elimination, or reduction in force.

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with the First Baptist Church. Although advance notice of resignation is not required, First Baptist requests at least two weeks written notice from non-exempt employees and 30 days written notice from exempt employees. The notice should be provided to the employee's immediate supervisor or to the Committee on Personnel.

**Note:** If the Committee on Personnel deems it in the best interest of First Baptist, the employee may be dismissed immediately.

Prior to departure, the Committee on Personnel will meet with the individual in an exit interview. On the final day of employment, all building keys, credit cards, and other church property in the staff member's possession will be turned in to the Committee on Personnel.

Employees will be paid through their last day of employment. Only the hours actually worked during the final pay period will be paid, along with any earned vacation leave that has not been used.

The decision on whether to grant an employee severance pay is a matter of discretion for the Committee on Personnel, although generally severance pay will only be considered in instances of termination by position elimination or reduction in force.

### **Christian Conciliation Policy (Mediation/Arbitration)**

This Christian Conciliation Policy is intended to provide a fair, quick, and cost-effective method for resolving any claims or disputes that may arise between First Baptist and its employees. As each side are Christians and believe that the Bible commands them to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian community in conformity with the biblical mandates of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Matthew 5:23-24, and Matthew 18:15-20, it is agreed that any claim or dispute arising out of, or related to, your employment at First Baptist, including claims under federal, state, or local statutory or common law, the law of contract, and the law of tort, shall be settled by biblically-based mediation.

If resolution of the dispute does not result from mediation, the matter shall then be submitted to an arbitrator for binding arbitration in accordance with the "Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation" (Rules) of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, rather than to a judge and/or jury. Consistent with the Rules, each side shall agree to the selection of an arbitrator. If there is an impasse in the selection of an arbitrator, the Institute for Christian Conciliation division of Peacemaker Ministries in Billings, Montana, shall be asked to provide the name of a qualified

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individual who will serve in that capacity. The location of the arbitration shall be Unicoi County. The fees of the arbitrator shall be evenly divided between the parties. Consistent with the Rules, the arbitrator shall issue a written decision opinion within a reasonable time after the arbitration.

Each side agrees these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of the employment relationship, and they expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit against one another in any civil court for such disputes, except to enforce a legally binding arbitration decision. This policy does not change the “at will” status of any employee. Continuing employment with First Baptist constitutes consideration for and acceptance of this policy and a waiver of any right to a court trial. This policy does not waive the ministerial exceptions or any other exceptions to any state or federal legislation, including, but not limited to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **General Policies**

#### **Computers and Electronic Information Systems Use**

This policy provides guidelines for the acceptable use of First Baptist’s Internet, voice mail, electronic mail, word processing, and other electronic communication applications, which are referred to collectively as “electronic information systems.”

Employees are responsible for reading and abiding by the policies and procedures set forth below.

- ❑ **Ownership and Control.** All users have the responsibility to use electronic information systems in a professional, ethical and lawful manner. Users are given access to electronic information systems to assist them in the performance of their jobs. The systems belong to the First Baptist Church and are intended for use for authorized business purposes only. The use of all electronic information systems is a privilege, not a right, and First Baptist reserves the right to terminate any user’s access to electronic information systems and to take other appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in the event the use of those systems is not in accordance with this policy or other policies of First Baptist.
- ❑ **Privacy Waived.** The First Baptist Church considers all electronic information systems and communication stored or transmitted with the use of its computer network and software to be the property of the First Baptist Church and reserves the right to access, review, disclose, disseminate, archive, and delete any and all such electronic information and communication.

Users do not have a right of privacy or confidentiality relating to electronic communications. Users waive any right to privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive.

Although First Baptist has the right, but not the duty, to inspect, monitor, or disclose all electronic communication, it does not routinely inspect, monitor, or disclose the contents of electronic communication. However, the church will inspect, monitor, or disclose electronic information and communication when necessary to ensure the proper functioning of First Baptist’s electronic information systems, to ensure user compliance with this policy, or for any other reason deemed to be in First Baptist’s best interests.



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Use of First Baptist's electronic information systems constitutes consent to inspection, monitoring, and/or disclosure of information created, stored, sent, or received by the user.

- ❑ **Compliance with Applicable Laws and Licenses.** Copying software, using shareware without proper registration, copying graphics for use as screen savers or wallpaper, and forwarding or copying e-mail messages all may constitute copyright infringement. Users must comply with all software licenses, copyrights, and state and federal laws governing intellectual property and online activity.
- ❑ **Communicating Information.** Users should exercise the same care in drafting email, communicating in chat groups and posting items to newsgroups as for any other more formal written communication. Electronic communications tend to be less formal, but can, and likely will, be reviewed and/or used by others.
- ❑ **Virus Protection.** Users must abide by any security guidelines established by First Baptist in the use of email and Internet access and should guard against computer viruses and security breaches. Employees who use the Internet may not transfer or install any software or files from the Internet to any First Baptist computers (i.e., no downloading of software, programs, games, etc.) except in consultation with appropriate technical staff.
- ❑ **Prohibited Uses.** Because electronic information is global in nature, users may encounter material that is inappropriate, offensive, and, in instances, illegal. The First Baptist Church cannot control the availability of this information or restrict access to it, but users should be aware that they are responsible for the material they review. Storing, sending, receiving, displaying, printing, or otherwise disseminating electronic communication is strictly prohibited if the communication exhibits any one of the following criteria:
  - Fraudulent, harassing, illegal, embarrassing, sexually explicit, obscene, intimidating, racist, sexist, defamatory or derogatory. Users encountering such material should report abuses to the Committee on Personnel.
  - Contains attachments that have not been subjected to virus checking.
  - Non-business.
  - Negatively affects network performance.
  - Contains copyrighted material (images or text) without the permission of the owner.
  - Commercial or personal advertisements, solicitations, promotions, destructive programs (that is, viruses, worms, and/or self-replicating code), political material, or any other unauthorized material for personal use.

### **Telephone and Telefacsimile (Fax) Policy**

Telephone and Telefacsimile machines owned by the First Baptist Church are provided for use by employees as business tools. First Baptist has the right to monitor communications on this equipment for purposes of time and content. Personal use of First Baptist's telephones or fax machines for long-distance or toll calls is prohibited; and employees are expected to reimburse

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First Baptist for any charges resulting from their personal use of church telephones or fax machines.

### **Job-Related Injury or Illness**

The First Baptist Church strives to provide a safe workplace to its employees. However, should you experience a work-related injury or illness (regardless of cause or severity), immediately report it to the Committee on Personnel. If the injury or illness appears life threatening, call the **9-1-1** emergency number first; and follow directions. Otherwise, arrangements will be made for first aid or medical care at a facility approved by First Baptist's workers' compensation carrier.

### **Smoking, Vaping, and Tobacco Policy**

The First Baptist Church strives to provide a workplace that is healthy, comfortable, and productive for all employees. Therefore, all church facilities and church-owned or -leased vehicles are designated smoke-, vape-, and tobacco-free.

### **Substance-Free Workplace**

First Baptist expects you to be free of any alcohol or illegal substance when reporting to or performing work for the church. The presence, use, consumption, sale, manufacture, or distribution of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours, on church premises, on church business, or while operating a church vehicle or equipment is strictly prohibited.

If you suspect or know that you have an alcohol or substance abuse problem, you are encouraged to discuss this with the Committee on Personnel. You also are encouraged to seek diagnosis and follow through with treatment as prescribed by a qualified medical practitioner. If you are on prescription drugs, you should be able to provide the appropriate documentation to your supervisor relating to the prescription if requested.

### **Inclement Weather**

It is the First Baptist Church's policy to be open during normal hours of operation. In the event of adverse weather conditions, the Committee on Personnel or Deacon Body may make the decision to close the church business office in accordance with the closure of the Unicoi County School Department. Reasonable efforts will be made to notify employees of office closings.

If the church business office remains open, employees are not expected to endanger themselves when traveling to or from work in adverse weather conditions. Attendance during inclement weather should be a matter of individual judgment based on safety and availability of alternative modes of transportation. Common sense must be exercised. In all cases where employees feel unable to safely make the commute to work, they should contact their supervisor to report this condition before the beginning of their scheduled work hours.

If snow or other inclement weather conditions occur during the business day, the Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Deacon Body, may make the decision to close church business offices. In addition, an employee may request permission from his or her supervisor to leave early.

If an employee is unable to make it to work under inclement weather conditions, or if an employee leaves work early with the permission of his or her supervisor, and the church office opens, or remains open, for normal business, the employee will be required to use vacation or other applicable leave. If the church office closes, employees will not be required to use vacation leave but may, instead, work from his or her home remotely for that time.

## **First** Church Employee Handbook **Confidentiality**

Employees will occasionally handle confidential information. It is expected that employees will keep all such information confidential.

### **Dress and Appearance**

Each employee is encouraged to present a favorable appearance at all times. Cleanliness and neatness should be a top priority. Courtesy and respectfulness to staff, church members, and guests are a must. Employees appearing for work without consideration for cleanliness, neatness, or professional appearance may be asked to take further consideration for such matters in the future.

### **Speaking to the Media**

Employees should not speak to members of the media as official or unofficial spokespersons of the First Baptist Church unless the Senior Pastor or Chairperson of Deacons grants prior written clearance. All inquires from the media should be referred to the Senior Pastor, Chairperson of Deacons, or other designated person within the Church Body.

### **Nepotism and Dating Policy**

No person shall become an employee of First Baptist for any position requiring that person to supervise or be supervised by a member of that person's family unless an exemption is granted by the Committee on Personnel prior to employment.

Dating relationships are not permitted between a supervisor and an employee who reports to that supervisor.

### **Disclaimer**

All policies within this Employee Handbook are intended to comply with the laws of Tennessee and the United States.

If a discrepancy appears, state and/or federal law takes precedence. If any provision of this Handbook is adjudged void or otherwise unenforceable, this shall not affect the validity of the remainder of the Handbook. The offending portion may be stricken and the remaining policies in the Handbook shall remain in full force and effect.

### **Acknowledgement of Receipt**

I acknowledge that I have received this Employee Handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read the Handbook and know its provisions. I understand that this Handbook is **not a contract** for employment and that its provisions are subject to change at any time.

I also understand and acknowledge that my employment at the First Baptist Church is “at will” and that, just as I may terminate my employment at any time with or without notice or cause, First Baptist may do the same.

Employee's Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This form should be signed and returned to the Committee on Personnel.

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Clerk: Please do not punch, staple, fold, or spindle.

