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## **Location**

Some might call us tenacious. Our buildings have been located in the same neighborhood since 1872. We were in the center of Wichita through years of prosperity and adversity, persevering through the booms and busts of our city's history. Our neighborhood is now a transitioning urban area. We rub shoulders with businesses, Old Town Entertainment District, courthouses, major resource organizations for the economically disadvantaged, and city government. The entire spectrum of our city, from powerful to destitute, meets at our doorstep. It is an energizing mix.

Our large building is an asset that accommodates worship in multiple cultural styles. We minister to individuals speaking Arabic, English, Chinese, Laotian and Spanish, as well as a unique ministry with our urban poor and homeless neighbors. You will find us at the northwest corner of Second and Broadway, with parking immediately north from the building to Third Street.

## **Who are we?**

First Baptist is a diverse body of people who share a love for Christ, God's Word, and each other, and we have a passion for reaching out with God's love.

Our church body has a continuing association with the American Baptist Churches, USA. Baptists around the world share an emphasis on the Lordship and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, believers' baptism, the ability of believers to be in direct relationship with God and to interpret Scripture, the importance of the local church, the assurance of freedom in worship and opinion, and the need to be Christ's witnesses within society.

We come from distinct cultures but are unified by one Lord. Walking through our building will reveal Asian and Arab, wealthy and poor, black and white. A quick look reveals our differences. Linger will reveal our unity.

## What is our mission?

This declaration is perhaps the best description of who we are becoming. We affirm and rejoice in the fact that God's work isn't complete in us yet. We want to become:

**Serious disciples** of Jesus Christ,  
**united** in a **worshipping** **missionary**  
**community**

## Serious disciples

We are intentional followers of Jesus Christ. His teaching is our standard for determining what is right and wrong and how to live that out. Jesus' own words were: *"You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself."*(Matthew 22:37-39, NLT)

We believe we must know the Lord in order to love Him, which makes time with Him in God's Word and prayer essential.

Placing God first in our lives causes the details of life to fall together. As God changes us, we are able to love others because the love of Jesus motivates and empowers us. It is this love for others that marks us as disciples.

## United

The most powerful unity is never based on conformity, but on the Lordship of Christ. In this way, God is creating in us a picture of His multi-cultural family. It is breathtakingly obvious when we gather around the communion table. Unity is close to our Savior's heart, and was the focus of one of His last earthly prayers: *"May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."* (John 17:23b) Unity is a growth edge for us – ever changing us as we grapple with Christ's call to love each other.

*"Real wisdom, God's wisdom is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, not two-faced. You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor."* (James 3:17 – 18, The Message)

## Worshipping

God initiates a relationship with us, and by His grace, through faith in Christ, He brings us into His big family. Worship is a natural response to His grace, and as we worship our Lord together the joy is multiplied.

**On most Sundays**, our services of worship occur in five places in the building, at differing times and in differing languages. (See schedule on the back.) Anywhere you join us, worship will include reading and preaching of God's Word, music, and giving gifts to God.

**On the first Sunday of the month**, we join together at 9:30 AM in the main sanctuary with some translation available. We celebrate baptism and communion while we are all together. This Sunday is a joyous celebration and a partial picture of what is to come: *All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed.* (From Revelation 15:4, NLT)

## Missionary

We are passionate about mission. From the beginning of our history together we have encouraged the founding of new churches and supported ministry throughout our city. We are intentional about an outward focus.

Today, we are finding mission coming to us. Our building is surrounded by an urban neighborhood full of need. God has revealed to us the effectiveness of relationship as we minister with to differing cultures and language groups. It is those rich relationships that have developed into our multiple ministries.

Outreach beyond our city is also important to us, and we support many individuals and groups. Short-term mission trips occur every year. We have built homes in Mexico, supported an orphanage in Laos, and assisted in development of community and churches in Haiti.

## Community

Everyone needs a place to belong, a community, but it is an expression that is used more often than experienced. We know that connections with other people are vital to spiritual health and growth.

One of our favorite ways of pursuing community is through LifeGroups that meet in homes. These groups bring us into friendships that are life giving. In our LifeGroups we aim to be candid with each other and apply biblical truth as we listen to and support each other. Another way to connect is to serve with a group of people in an area of interest, such as music, the Sunday breakfast, medical clinic, or children's ministry.

On Sunday morning, there is a coffee time from 10:45 to 11:15 for everyone. In addition, there are a variety of Bible Studies, prayer groups, Sunday school classes and special events on Sunday morning and throughout the week.

## What do we believe?

The following five pages are our basic and most important beliefs, which we call a **Statement of Core Beliefs**. They are based on many specific Bible passages. If you would like the complete document, which contains all the Bible references, we would be pleased to provide it.

## **Bible**

We believe that the sixty-six books of the Bible, as originally given, are, in their entirety, without error in all areas in which they speak and are the inspired word of God. Therefore, they are the supreme and final authority for faith and practice. The Bible clearly reveals the essentials necessary for our salvation and the appropriate conduct of our lives. It is to be interpreted humbly and responsibly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Private, individual interpretations of Scripture that are novel and contradict the generally accepted view of the historic Christian Church are suspect.

## **God**

We believe in the one and only almighty God of the Bible, the Creator and Ruler of all, who is eternally one God in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is personal and perfect in all of His attributes as revealed in the Bible. He is worthy of praise, worship, honor and obedience.

## **Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, fully divine and fully human. He lived a perfect, sinless life, died in our place as a sacrifice of atonement for our sin, rose bodily from the dead, and ascended into Heaven. He will return bodily and visibly to the earth as King of kings and will righteously judge every human being who has ever lived.

## **Salvation**

We believe that all human beings are sinful, and because the holy God is intolerant of sin, we are thus separated from God and stand condemned before Him. Salvation from God's righteous anger and entrance into a right standing with Him (justification) are secured only through personal faith in Jesus Christ. No one comes to the Father except through our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. In salvation, we are rescued from God's righteous anger and just punishment by His unmerited grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ's righteousness alone.

## **Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit – the eternal third person of the Trinity – regenerates (gives spiritual birth) and indwells all who receive Christ as Savior and Lord, and thereafter teaches and works sanctification (growth in holiness) in every believer.

## **Future**

We believe that all who have received God's gracious gift of salvation will be bodily resurrected to receive rewards and live forever with Him in a new heaven and a new earth. The unsaved will also be bodily resurrected to face the judgment of God. Eternal separation from God (hell) is the ultimate destiny of unsaved humanity, Satan, and his entire demonic host.

## **The Church**

We believe that the Christian Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated and empowered for service by the Holy Spirit. All Christians, privately and in fellowship with other Christians, strive to worship, serve and glorify God through prayer, praise, diligent study and application of the Scriptures, evangelism, holy living, works that glorify God, and observance of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

## **How does this affect me?**

We hope it is clear that we believe our greatest need is to connect to God in a satisfying and transforming relationship. To cultivate that life, God provides the power of the Holy Spirit and the encouragement of other believers. Over time, we gain lives and relationships that are beyond what we can create on our own, and that glorify Him.

Our influence is multiplied as we pool our resources, and in many practical ways, formal commitment helps us do that. The membership process begins when you express a desire to join us, and focuses on getting to know you and you getting to know us, as we talk together about your journey and ours. You can speed this process by requesting an application from the office.

There is always room to join our family. Will you come with us? (A covenant that delineates our aspirations is on the next two pages.)

## *Member's Covenant*

For God's glory, we believe we have been called by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Having professed our faith and been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this church, joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ, under the authority of His Word.

We strive, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to walk together and serve one another in love, to build up one another the knowledge and holiness of Christ, to admonish one another in brotherly love, to attend worship and participate in the Lord's Supper on a regular basis, and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We will seek to maintain family and personal devotions, to educate our children in the faith, to seek the salvation of the lost, to remember one another in prayer, to aid one another in sickness and distress, to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation, and to walk by the Spirit, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, remembering that we have been bought with a price and are therefore to live exemplary lives.

In the event God calls us from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.