



***Interested in more information on becoming a member  
of First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland?***

***We are:***

Historic First Baptist Church of Cleveland was founded in 1833 in downtown Cleveland. Over the years we moved several times until in 1928, this large Gothic revival building was erected as a tribute to people of strong faith and colorful diversity here on Fairmount Boulevard in Shaker Heights. The steeple towers over the community as a witness of God's love to inspire others to reach up to God as He has reached down to us through his Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

We are a church driven to encourage and support people in their search for a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. A diverse church which is loving and accepting as we may come from different backgrounds led together by God's Spirit and inspired by His Word.

***Our Purpose & Mission:***

As a body of Christ, First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland's purpose is to carry out our purpose by answering Jesus' call to love God, love and serve each other, and all people as develop disciples. Our identity is scripturally inspired, and we are an accepting, multicultural, inclusive, and creative community of faith.

***Membership Eligibility***

Persons are eligible for membership in this Church who:

- 1) Believe in Jesus Christ and accept his teachings as revealed in the New Testament and interpreted by faith through the guidance of God's Spirit;
- 2) Offer themselves to God in personal commitment toward realization of God's commandments that we love God with all our heart, mind, body and spirit, and that we love our neighbor as ourselves; and
- 3) Covenant together with other FBC members to become actively involved in the life of the church through a grateful sharing of our time, talent and financial resources and by so doing fulfill the mission of Jesus.

***Admission of Membership***

Persons who are eligible for membership are received into membership by recommendation and acceptance by the Church Council (the governing board of the church.)

- 1) Baptism following their profession of faith in Jesus;
- 2) Transfer of membership by letter from another Christian church; or
- 3) Profession of their Christian faith by those previously or currently holding membership in a Christian church, but from whom a letter of transfer is not available.

## ***Baptist Beliefs***

Baptists share many basic biblical convictions with other Christians including the belief in one God, the Trinity, the human and divine nature of Jesus Christ, and the significance of his crucifixion and resurrection for salvation. Though they have many historic “confessions of faith”, Baptists are not a “credal people”. They prefer simply to affirm the authority of the Scriptures for all matters of faith and practice, and allow each Christian the right to interpret the Bible for himself or herself. However, the distinctive combination of beliefs held among Baptists can readily be identified and have come to be known as “Baptist Distinctives.”

- 1. Jesus is Lord** Baptists believe that Jesus Christ, being eternally God, only begotten Son, and the visible expression of the invisible God, effectively procured salvation for all creation through his death, burial and resurrection. He is the one assigned by God the Father to rule with authority over all of creation. Every area of the believer’s life and the life of the church is to be subject to the Lord.
  - 2. The Word of God is the Authoritative Rule of Faith and Practice.** Baptists believe that God communicates his will through the inspired Word of God. For Baptists, the Bible is the final authority in matters of faith and practice.
  - 3. The Priesthood of All Believers** The Bible affirms the value of each person as having been created in the image of God, and also declares each person morally responsible for his/her own nature and behavior. Baptists believe that inherent in the worth of each person is also the right and competency of each individual personally to deal directly with God through Jesus Christ. In essence, each person, by faith, becomes his/her own priest before God; hence, the cherished term “priesthood of all believers”. This implies that all believers share as equals in Christ’s Body, the church, and in turn, have a priestly role toward each other. A further extension of this principle means that Baptists believe that no group or individual has any right to compel others to believe or worship as they do. Baptists ideally are champions of the cause of religious liberty.
  - 4. A Believers’ Church** Baptists believe that Jesus Christ chooses to form his church by bringing together believers for the purpose of worship, witness, fellowship, and ministry (both spiritual and social). Baptists recognize the church universal as all who truly profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. They also profess their understanding of the church as being visibly expressed in local congregations. Each local church must thus be made up of believers who, upon their profession of faith and their baptism (almost always by immersion), are incorporated into the local church through the activity of the Holy Spirit.
  - 5. Believer’s Baptism by Immersion** Baptists believe that baptism is an ordinance required by the New Testament, and is to be administered by the local church. Baptism is intended to represent Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection; baptism by completely immersing the candidate in water is seen as the only adequate outward expression for the spiritual faith-union with Jesus Christ. Baptism should be administered only to believers. It is one of the first significant acts through which the believer proclaims personal faith in Christ and is initiated into church life and ministry.
  - 6. Congregational Government** Government in a local church is controlled by the principles of the priesthood of all believers, the Lordship of Christ, the authority of the Scriptures, and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Christ, present in the lives of congregational members, leads them corporately to discover and obey his mind and will. Such “congregational government” calls for and expresses the equality and responsibility of believers under the Lordship of Christ.
- Baptists also believe that the principle of the Lordship of Jesus Christ gives each individual congregation a certain degree of autonomy and freedom from coercion by other bodies. However, just as a believer must temper his/her doctrinal interpretation and personal behavior to satisfy the greater needs and unity of the community of believers, Baptist churches also recognize the need to temper the exercise of their autonomy in order to “associate” with a larger body of churches.
- 7. Separation of Church and State** A further extension of the principle of the Lordship of Christ and the priesthood of believers is to be found in the Baptist conviction that there must exist a separation between the church and civil governments. There is the easy recognition that God has given legitimate roles to both church and state, but also the deep conviction that neither is to encroach upon the rights or obligations of the other. They are, however, under obligation to recognize and reinforce each other as each seeks to fulfill its divine function. The function of individual believers and the church is to become part of the conscience of the community and nation. Please fill out the following information regarding membership:

**If you are considering membership. Please fill out and return to the church office or give to pastoral staff. Thank you.**

Full Name: (Mr./ Mrs./ Ms./ Dr./ Rev.) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By what name do you prefer to be called? \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Anniversary Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Names of Children: (regardless of age)	Gender	Birth Date
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Do you wish to join by: (check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Desire to be baptized

\_\_\_\_\_ 2) Transfer of letter from another church Church \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 3) Experience (faith & baptism already) Address \_\_\_\_\_

Have you held a leadership position in a church? (please circle) Yes No

In what capacity did you serve? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to dedicate your time and talent in some capacity? Yes No

Please return to the Church office or to a member of the staff of FBC GC. Thank You!

**It is my desire to become a member of the First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_