

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH *of Farmersville*

Affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention

Constitution & Bylaws Adopted: September 27, 2009

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Constitution and Bylaws

Constitution and Bylaws of First Baptist Church of Farmersville, Texas

Preamble

This Constitution and these Bylaws are made to:

1. Preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. Preserve the liberties of each individual member of the church under the Lordship of Christ.
3. Ensure freedom of action of independence from any religious body or organization.
4. Provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members.

Articles

I. Name

The name of this church shall be FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS.

II. Business Location

The address of the principal office of this church shall be 124 SOUTH WASHINGTON STREET, FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS 75442.

III. Purpose

The FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS, is a local group of Christians bound by covenant who have accepted God's call to join Him in making Christian disciples throughout the world by participating in meaningful worship, effective evangelism, discipleship training, shared ministry, and Christian fellowship.

In order to fulfill our mission, our church must maintain health and balance in five functional areas. They are:

1. WORSHIP: Loving God with all of one's heart.
2. EVANGELISM: Communicating the good news of Jesus Christ.
3. DISCIPLESHIP: Becoming like Christ in all areas of our lives.

4. MINISTRY: Loving our neighbor as ourself.
5. FELLOWSHIP: Sharing one another's joys and bearing one another's burdens.

IV. Articles of Faith

The FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS, believing that the Holy Bible is the inerrant, inspired Word of God, shall adopt and revise from time to time articles of faith detailing the biblical doctrinal convictions of the church.

V. Government

The government of the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS, is vested in its members. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of its life and organization. The assembled congregation holding the right of government of the church, the terms "congregation" and "church" shall be synonymous throughout this Constitution and these Bylaws.

VI. Non-Profit Status and Liquidation

The FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS, is a non-profit organization. Its assets are pledged for use in performing its religious functions. On discontinuance of this organization by dissolution or otherwise, all of its assets and property of every nature and description whatsoever are to be paid over and transferred at the direction of the trustees to the Collin Baptist Association, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, or both.

VII. Authority

In the event that this church shall approve any action, document, or policy that shall conflict with this constitution and these bylaws as most recently amended, this constitution and these bylaws as most recently amended shall prevail over such action, document, or policy as the governing authority of the church.

VIII. Amendment

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by means of the following procedure:

1. Any proposed amendment shall be presented in writing at a regular church business meeting. At this first meeting the proposed amendment shall be eligible for discussion, but not for a vote.
2. The leadership of the church shall make available at public worship to the membership of the congregation the proposed amendment for no fewer than three Sundays.
3. The leadership of the church shall announce in every general worship service for no fewer than two consecutive Sundays the date, time, and location of the business meeting at which the proposed amendment will be considered for adoption.
4. The Moderator and congregation shall provide reasonable time for discussion of any proposed amendment
5. Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws shall be by a ballot vote with at least two-thirds of the members of the church in good standing who are qualified to vote and are present at the business meeting voting in the affirmative.

Bylaws

I. Church Membership

1. Qualifications

Membership of the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS, shall consist of people having made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who, having been scripturally immersed, are covenanted together with the remainder of the congregation in agreement with the Church Covenant.

2. Standing

- a. Members with cases of Church Discipline pending against them shall not be eligible to vote or make motions pertaining to the allegations against them, but shall otherwise retain the privileges of a member in good standing for so long as the congregation has not with regard to them completed the process detailed in Bylaw V (Church Discipline).
- b. Members excluded by the process detailed in Bylaw V (Church Discipline) shall not be considered members in good standing and shall not be entitled to a vote in church meetings nor to any of the privileges of membership.
- c. Members restored after being excluded as detailed in Bylaw V § 2 shall be considered members in good standing with all of the privileges appertaining thereunto.
- d. Although good standing in membership is prerequisite to many positions of service within the congregation, it is not a guarantee of eligibility for any position of service. The congregation retains unto itself the right to exclude members in good standing from positions of service for reasons including, but not limited to, questions of fitness raised by pending or past actions of church discipline.

3. Reception

The congregation regulates its own membership. Membership in the church may be attained by the majority vote of the church in any of its regular business meetings in recognition that the candidate for membership is joining by one of the following mechanisms:

- a. By scriptural immersion pursuant to a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
- b. By letter of recommendation attesting that the candidate is a member in good standing of another Baptist church of like faith and order.
- c. By the candidate's own testimony (statement of faith) of prior conversion and scriptural immersion in another Baptist church of like faith and order.

4. Termination

Membership in this church shall be terminated by one of the following mechanisms:

- a. The granting of a letter of recommendation.
 - i. The church shall only grant a letter of recommendation to another church of like faith and order upon that church's request.
 - ii. The church shall only grant a letter of recommendation for members who are in good standing. Otherwise, the church shall reply to the requesting church with a letter explaining why the member in question is not in good standing.
- b. The death of the member.
- c. The erasure of the member from the membership rolls
 - i. Members who no longer consider themselves to be member of this congregation may request to have their names erased from the membership roll.
 - ii. The congregation may vote to erase that member's name from the membership roll.

5. Orientation of New Members

The church membership reserves unto itself the right to specify procedures for the orientation of new church members.

II. Church Officers

No person shall serve as an officer of this church who is not also a member of this church in good standing.

1. Biblical Offices

- a. Pastors / Elders / Overseers
 - i. The biblical titles of *pastor*, *elder*, and *overseer* are three titles that refer to precisely the same office (I Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:17, 28). It shall be the duty of the men who hold this office to shepherd the flock, oversee the spiritual lives of the membership, and serve as elders in the proclamation and governance of the church as detailed by the job descriptions adopted by the congregation for each pastoral office.
 - ii. The church shall restrict this office to males who meet the qualifications and undertake the duties given in I Timothy 2:12-15, 3:1-7, 4:6-16, 5:17, 22; II Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4; I Corinthians 14: 34-36.
 - iii. Ordination to the Gospel Ministry by a Baptist church of like faith and order shall be prerequisite to serving in a pastoral office in this congregation.

- iv. The church shall designate one leading pastor and as many associate pastors as the congregation deems appropriate.
 - 1) The leading pastor shall consult with and give leadership to the associate pastors in the administration of the church.
 - 2) The leading pastor shall, either directly or indirectly through another associate pastor, supervise the ministries of the church.
- v. Either the leading pastor or an associate pastor of his choosing shall serve as an *ex-officio* member of every committee, ministry team, or other ministry or leadership structure in the church.
- vi. The leading pastor shall serve as Moderator of the congregation during business meetings whenever present and able.
- vii. Pastors shall come to serve in this church by the election of the congregation.
 - 1) Members who have previously been ordained as pastors, unless they have been specifically elected to serve within this congregation, shall hold no office.
 - 2) Election of the leading pastor.
 - a) The process of electing a new leading pastor shall commence solely and promptly upon the vacancy of the office of leading pastor.
 - b) The congregation shall select a Pastor Search Committee to search for a new leading pastor.
 - i) The Pastor Search Committee shall consist of seven members and two alternates.
 - ii) The Pastor Search Committee shall receive recommendations and prayerfully perform the necessary investigations to recommend one candidate at a time for the congregation's consideration as leading pastor.
 - c) The Pastor Search Committee shall present a candidate for the office of leading pastor to the congregation for consideration and approval at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks notice shall be given publicly in the worship services.
 - d) An affirmative ballot vote of at least three-fourths of all members in good standing voting shall be necessary to extend a call to a pastor, although the congregation may stipulate prior to the vote an even higher affirmative percentage necessary to extend a call. The Pastor Search Committee shall provide the precise numeric breakdown of the vote at the request of the candidate.
 - e) Upon his acceptance of an extended call, the candidate shall be considered elected as leading pastor of the congregation.

3) Election of associate pastors.

- a) The process of electing an associate pastor shall commence solely at the request of the congregation by vote in business meeting. The Personnel Committee is authorized to make recommendations to the church regarding the number and job descriptions of associate pastors and to advise the congregation of vacancies in associate pastor positions.
- b) The congregation shall select an Associate Pastor Search Committee to search for a new associate pastor.
 - i) Unless the office of leading pastor is vacant, the leading pastor shall serve as a voting member of the Associate Pastor Search Committee.
 - ii) Except as otherwise specified in this section (“Election of associate pastors”), the process of electing an associate pastor shall follow that of electing the leading pastor.

4) Election of interim pastors.

- a) Interim leading pastors
 - i) The process of electing an interim leading pastor shall commence solely and promptly upon the vacancy of the office of leading pastor.
 - ii) The Deacon body shall receive recommendations and prayerfully perform the necessary investigations to recommend one candidate at a time for the congregation’s consideration as an interim leading pastor.
 - iii) The Deacon body shall present a candidate for the office of interim leading pastor to the congregation for consideration and approval at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks notice shall be given publicly in the worship services.
 - iv) An affirmative ballot vote of at least three-fourths of all members in good standing voting shall be necessary to extend a call to an interim leading pastor. The Deacon body shall provide the precise numeric breakdown of the vote at the request of the candidate.
 - v) Upon his acceptance of an extended call, the candidate shall be considered elected as interim leading pastor of the congregation.
 - vi) The Deacon body of the church shall, for so long as the office of interim leading pastor is vacant, secure preachers for the continuation of the church’s worship services.

- b) Interim associate pastors
 - i) The Personnel Committee shall, in consultation with the leading pastor, make recommendations to the congregation concerning the interim staffing of vacant associate pastor positions.
 - c) Upon the successful election of a pastor or associate pastor or upon the discontinuation of the search for a pastor or associate pastor, any interim pastorate associated with the position shall be terminated.
- viii. Pastors shall cease to serve in this church by one of the mechanisms given herein:
- 1) By the death of the pastor.
 - 2) By the congregation's acceptance of the pastor's resignation.
 - 3) By the removal of the pastor by the vote of the congregation.
 - a) A motion to remove a pastor must be made in writing at a regular church business meeting. At this first meeting the motion shall not be eligible for discussion or voting.
 - b) The motion to remove a pastor shall be automatically referred for mediation.
 - i) Motions to remove the leading pastor shall be referred to the Deacon body. Motions to remove an associate pastor shall be referred to the leading pastor and the Deacon body.
 - ii) The mediators shall consult with the pastor in question, the author of the motion, and any other parties it deems to be relevant, in an attempt to resolve the issues involved, following the instructions of I Timothy 5:19-21.
 - c) The mediators shall promptly conclude their work and bring a full and thorough report including recommendations to a business meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks notice shall be given publicly in the worship services. The full findings of the mediators shall be given publicly in accord with I Timothy 5:20.
 - d) An affirmative ballot vote of a majority of all members in good standing voting shall be necessary to remove a pastor from office.
 - e) While a pastor is involved in mediation pursuant to this Bylaw, the church may vote to suspend him with full pay from the performance of his duties pending the outcome of mediation.
- ix. The successful election of any pastor shall, if the pastor or any members of his household are members of another congregation, constitute a *de facto* request by the new pastor and consent of the congregation to add the new

pastor and all eligible members of his household to the membership of the church by some appropriate mechanism specified in Bylaw I (Church Membership).

b. Deacons

i. Number

No fixed number of deacons is mandatory upon the congregation, the number of qualified candidates and the needs of the church being subject to variation. Nevertheless, a suitable ratio of deacons to members being important to an effective deacon ministry, the church endeavors to maintain one active deacon for each group of approximately thirty resident members of the church in good standing.

ii. Qualifications

- 1) Deacons shall have been ordained for deacon service by a Baptist church of like faith and order. Any successful deacon candidate who has not been ordained by a Baptist church of like faith and order shall submit to ordination by the church before taking office.
- 2) Deacons shall be males of at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- 3) Deacons shall have been a member of the church in good standing for at least the twelve months prior to the time of nomination.
- 4) Deacons shall meet the spiritual qualifications as set forth in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-12.
- 5) Deacons shall at the time of election support the full program of the church, including organizations.
- 6) Deacons shall be men who faithfully tithe to the church.

iii. Duties

- 1) The deacons shall cooperate with, advise, and assist the pastors in the discharge of their duties.
- 2) The deacons shall, from time to time, recommend policies to the congregation.
- 3) The deacons shall actively promote and participate in outreach visitation, minister to the members of the congregation, and minister to the sick, poor, and distressed in the community.
- 4) The deacons shall labor to resolve conflict and promote the harmony and peace of the congregation.
- 5) The deacons shall participate in serving the Lord's Supper to the congregation.
- 6) The deacons shall advise the congregation as needed regarding the supervision of the leading pastor.

iv. Policies

The congregation shall adopt and maintain policies governing the deacons. These policies shall specify the procedures governing the election and activation of new deacons; establishing and defining the roles and terms of any deacon officers; stipulating the frequency, parameters, and procedures for the calling of deacons' meetings; and the procedures for the removal of inactive or disqualified deacons from the active deacon body.

v. Openness of Meetings

Deacons' meetings shall be open to any member of the congregation in good standing as an observer except in those situations of a sensitive nature in which the leading pastor or the chairman of deacons has called the body into executive session.

vi. Deacon Emeritus

The designation Deacon Emeritus shall be bestowed upon those deacons who have faithfully served the church as active deacons but who are unable to continue to participate actively due to reasons of health or age. The leading pastor and chairman of deacons will recommend, when appropriate, to the deacons those persons to be given this designation. Upon recommendation of the deacons and approval of the congregation, the leading pastor shall write a letter bestowing the designation and conveying the thanks and appreciation of the congregation for the deacon's faithful service.

c. Ordination

i. Ordination is prerequisite to service in one of the biblical offices.

ii. The congregation shall maintain a record of ordinations and the revocation of ordinations.

iii. The congregation shall, when a Baptist church of like faith and order inquires about a specific person, provide information about whether that person currently holds valid ordination from this church.

iv. From time to time the congregation may acknowledge that God has called one of its male members in good standing into pastoral ministry.

1) The congregation may vote to license such a member to preach, thereby acknowledging to other congregations that the church recognizes in the man gifts and a calling to preach and that the church commends the man to other congregations as an itinerant preacher. The church may issue a license to preach to encourage a man potentially bound for eventual ordination to exercise his gifts among other congregations in preparation for eventual service as a pastor.

2) The congregation may vote to ordain to the gospel ministry a man who is a member in good standing, thereby acknowledging to other congregations that the church recognizes in the man gifts and a calling to the pastoral office and that the church commends the man to other congregations as a pastor.

- a) The congregation will not ordain any man until God has led a congregation, missions-sending institution, or similar entity to extend a definite call to the man to serve in a pastoral office.
 - b) The congregation will not ordain any man who does not meet the qualifications to serve as one of its own pastors.
- v. The congregation shall not ordain any man to the office of deacon except to activate him immediately as a serving deacon within the congregation.
- vi. The congregation shall perform ordinations in the following manner.
 - 1) No less than three weeks prior to the ordination service the congregation shall notify area Baptist churches of like faith and order of the time and place of the ordination service as well as a listing of the individual candidates seeking ordination.
 - 2) An ordination council shall examine candidates for ordination.
 - a) Before the ordination service by no more than one week, the congregation shall convene an ordination council consisting of ordained men from within its own membership, from the membership of churches invited pursuant to paragraph 1), and any other invited ordained men who may be members of Baptist churches of like faith and order.
 - b) The ordination council shall question each candidate individually as to doctrinal soundness, certainty of calling, and qualification for office.
 - c) The ordination council shall deliver to the church a recommendation either to ordain or not to ordain the candidate.
 - i) In the event that the council shall recommend not to ordain the candidate, the council shall notify the candidate privately beforehand, giving specific cause for the council's concerns. The candidate shall be given the opportunity to withdraw his candidacy, in which case the council will make no recommendation to the church.
 - ii) In the event that the council shall recommend to ordain the candidate, the members of the council shall affix their signatures to the certificate of ordination pending congregational acceptance of their recommendation.
 - d) The members of the ordination council are by virtue of their position invited to attend and participate in the ordination service.
 - 3) The congregation shall conduct an ordination service consisting at least of the following elements:
 - a) The candidates for ordination shall each give public testimony before the congregation of their conversion to Christianity, their sense of God's calling upon the candidate, and the vitality of their present life as a Christian disciple.

- b) When the congregation is performing ordination to the office of pastor, the ordination council shall bring its recommendations to the congregation. Members in good standing of First Baptist Church of Farmersville shall, pursuant to receiving the recommendations of the ordination council, vote either to ordain or not to ordain each man who has come before the congregation as a candidate.
 - c) The congregation shall, upon as many of the candidates as it has voted to ordain, lay hands in prayer and exhortation for their ministry.
- vii. The congregation may, upon convincing demonstration that a man previously ordained by this congregation no longer meets the qualifications under which he was ordained, vote to revoke the ordination of the man in question.
- 1) The congregation takes upon itself no responsibility for monitoring the behavior of those who leave its fellowship to serve in other congregations, those congregations being autonomous and empowered to govern their own fellowships. Men ordained by this congregation do not act as the congregation's agents or in any way under the congregation's authority. In circumstances outside the bounds of its fellowship when revocation of ordination is appropriate, the congregation is dependent upon the willingness of other congregations to provide in good faith the information necessary for the congregation to take action.
 - 2) Conviction of any sexual offense shall in every case constitute violation of pastoral qualifications for the purposes of this section.

2. Corporate Offices

a. Church Clerk

- i. The church clerk shall be elected by the congregation to serve for an indefinite term until removal or resignation.
- ii. The church clerk shall keep accurate minutes of all business meetings.
 - 1) In the event that the church clerk is unavailable or incapacitated at the time of a church business meeting, the congregation shall, as its first item of business, elect an interim church clerk to serve for the duration of that meeting.
 - 2) The church clerk shall at the beginning of each business meeting present for correction and approval the minutes of the previous business meeting.
 - 3) In the event that the church is unable to employ a staff member to correspond with affiliated cooperative organizations, keep a record of transactions and current status of church membership, issue and request letters of recommendation for membership transfers, and maintain current contact information for church members, these duties shall devolve upon the church clerk.

b. Financial Secretary

- i. The financial secretary shall be elected by the congregation to serve for an indefinite term until removal or resignation.
- ii. The financial secretary shall oversee the receipt, counting, recording, and depositing of all church offerings.
- iii. The financial secretary shall provide to each contributor a quarterly and/or annual record of contributions made by that contributor.
- iv. The financial secretary shall be the custodian of all monies of the church, disbursing them by check as authorized by the church.
- v. The financial secretary shall keep at all times and provide upon request to any church member in good standing an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.
- vi. The financial secretary shall render and publish monthly and annual reports detailing the financial position of the church.

c. Moderator

- i. The church moderator shall be, in order of succession, the leading pastor, chairman of deacons, vice-chairman of deacons, or any person elected by the congregation to serve in the capacity of moderator.
- ii. The moderator shall preside over all business meetings of the congregation, executing all functions of a presiding officer as specified in the congregation's current parliamentary rules.

d. Trustees

- i. At least three trustees shall be elected by the congregation to hold in trust the property of the church.
- ii. The trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the congregation without a specific vote of the congregation authorizing each action.
- iii. The trustees shall sign any and all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or lease of church property or any other legal documents requiring the signature of the trustees for and in behalf of the church.

e. Vacancies

In case of vacancy in any corporate office, the vacancy shall be filled by the church at a regular or special meeting as soon as possible after such vacancy has occurred.

III. Church Committees

1. The congregation shall form and empower or dissolve standing or *ad hoc* committees as it deems prudent for successfully accomplishing the mission and purpose of the church. No committee shall have any authority other than that which the congregation has

specifically delegated to the committee. The congregation cannot ultimately surrender any point of authority to any committee, as it retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of its life and organization.

2. No person shall serve on any committee of the church who is not a member in good standing of the congregation.
3. Term
 - a. Except as specified otherwise by the congregation, each appointment to a standing committee shall be for a two-year term of service. Members filling a mid-term vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.
 - b. Except as specified otherwise by the congregation, each appointment to an *ad hoc* committee shall be for an indefinite term of service.
4. All committees shall consist of at least three members including a single chairperson.
5. The leading pastor or a pastor of his designation shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees.
6. No committee shall meet except after providing advance notification to every committee member of the time, location, and agenda of the meeting, such notification to be adequate to provide every committee member with reasonable opportunity to attend.
7. All committees shall keep and make available to the congregation a record of all meetings and all official actions. All committees shall follow the congregation's parliamentary rules. The quorum of a committee meeting shall consist of 51% or more of the committee membership, provided that proper notification of the meeting has been given as stipulated above.
8. Constitutionally Mandated Committees

The church must maintain the following committees, which must perform the duties assigned herein and may undertake other tasks as assigned by the congregation.

- a. Personnel Committee
 - i. The Personnel Committee shall recommend to the congregation the creation and dissolution of staff positions other than the leading pastor.
 - ii. The Personnel Committee shall recommend to the congregation the creation, revision, and maintenance of job descriptions for all staff positions other than the leading pastor.
 - iii. The Personnel Committee shall advise the congregation as needed regarding the supervision of all staff positions other than the leading pastor.
 - iv. The Personnel Committee shall make annual budget recommendations to the Budget & Finance Committee regarding staff salaries.
 - v. No person may serve more than one consecutive term on the Personnel Committee.
- b. Budget & Finance Committee

- i. The Budget & Finance Committee shall compile and recommend to the congregation each year an annual church budget.
 - ii. The Budget & Finance Committee shall monitor the financial performance of the congregation and make necessary recommendations to the congregation regarding receipts and expenditures of funds.
 - iii. The Budget & Finance Committee shall make recommendations to the church regarding any unbudgeted expenditure of undesignated funds.
 - iv. The Budget & Finance Committee shall assist the congregation in teaching and promoting good biblical stewardship practices for its members.
 - v. No person may serve more than one consecutive term on the Budget & Finance Committee.
- c. Committee on Committees
- i. In their first meeting on or after May 1 of each year, the deacons shall, by nomination from the floor, elect a proposed Committee on Committees consisting of seven church members in good standing.
 - ii. At the next congregational business meeting, the deacons shall recommend to the congregation the election of the proposed Committee on Committees. The congregation shall, with full right of discussion and substitution, elect the Committee on Committees.
 - iii. The Committee on Committees shall serve a term of one year, with no member serving more than two consecutive terms.
 - iv. The Committee on Committees shall no later than December 31 of each year recommend to the congregation the election of specific replacements for the naturally expiring terms of all standing committees of the church.
 - v. The Committee on Committees shall as needed recommend to the congregation the election of specific replacements for unanticipated vacancies in all standing and *ad hoc* committees. Members elected to fill unanticipated vacancies shall serve on the committee for the duration of the unexpired term of the position vacated.
 - vi. The Committee on Committees shall make recommendations to the congregation regarding questions of the fitness or ability of any committee member to continue in committee service.
 - vii. The congregation shall, pursuant to any recommendation from the Committee on Committees, elect committee members with full right of discussion and substitution.
- d. Nominating Committee
- i. No person may serve more than one consecutive term on the Nominating Committee.
 - ii. The Nominating Committee shall, on or before June 1 of each year and in cooperation with the staff and the lay leadership of the church's various

program organizations, recommend to the church the election of church members in good standing to all volunteer positions of duration of two months or longer within the congregation and all of its program organizations, excepting those positions of committee service filled through the processes of the Committee on Committees.

- 1) In the conduct of its work the Nominating Committee shall solicit and give due consideration to staffing recommendations from the lay leadership of the various program organizations.
 - 2) In the event of an interim vacancy of duration shorter than two months, the leading pastor, in consultation with the lay leadership of the affected program organization or group, shall be vested with the authority to appoint a church member in good standing as a replacement *ad interim*.
 - 3) In the event of an interim vacancy of duration of two months or longer, the Nominating Committee shall recommend to the church the election of a church member in good standing as a replacement.
- iii. Upon receipt of the Nominating Committee's recommendation, the congregation shall, with full right of discussion and substitution, elect members in good standing to all volunteer positions of duration of two months or longer.
- iv. The Nominating Committee shall make recommendations to the congregation regarding the terms of all teaching and administrative volunteer positions in all of the church's program organizations. These shall not exceed the duration of one year with starting and ending dates set as practicable for each program organization. In any position filled by the Nominating Committee, a member of the church in good standing may serve as many consecutive terms as the church deems appropriate.

IV. Church Meetings

1. Regular Business Meetings

Christ being the Sovereign Lord of the church and the congregation being under obligation as His servants to seek His will for the church, the congregation shall make every effort to provide adequate time for members to consider prayerfully and soberly all congregational decisions and to pursue jointly the will of God for the church.

- a. The congregation shall publish annually a schedule of the time and location of regular business meetings to occur approximately once each month as the congregation may deem appropriate. Any changes to this schedule must be announced in the worship services of the congregation for at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
- b. Members in good standing of the congregation, church committees, and church program organizations may request of the staff to place items of business upon the agenda of a regular business meeting on or before the day one week before the scheduled day of the regular business meeting. So long as the proposed item of business has been submitted properly according to the provisions of this document, the right of any member in good standing to place an item of business upon the agenda shall not be abrogated. Items placed upon the agenda must still obtain a

second, be ruled in order, and proceed subject to the church's parliamentary rules in order to receive consideration in business meeting.

- c. The staff shall publish the agenda of any regular business meeting and make it available in the church office and at the church's corporate worship services for a time span including at least one Wednesday and one Sunday morning.
- d. Items of business introduced in a regular business meeting but not closely related to items on the agenda shall automatically be referred by the moderator to an appropriate committee for research and a report back to the congregation at its next regular business meeting. If the item is not germane to the assigned duties of any committee, the congregation may choose to form an *ad hoc* committee to research the item and promptly to report back to the congregation at its next business meeting, or if the congregation is unwilling to do so, the moderator shall automatically postpone consideration of the item until the next regular business meeting.

2. Special Business Meetings

- a. Special business meetings may be called from time to time by the moderator or by action of the congregation to consider special matters of a significant nature.
- b. The time, location, and agenda of a special business meeting must be announced to the congregation in the Sunday morning worship services prior to the meeting.
- c. No items may be introduced at a special business meeting that are not closely related to the items published on the agenda for the meeting.

3. Quorum

The quorum consists of those members of the congregation in good standing who attend the business meeting—provided that it is a valid meeting—the time, location, and agenda of which have been published as stipulated above. Only members of the congregation in good standing shall be entitled to vote in business meetings.

4. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order in its most recent revision shall serve as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the congregation and for all other meetings within the congregation, including committee meetings, at which church members may vote.

V. Church Discipline

1. The congregation retains unto itself the right to govern its own membership. Should any member of the congregation breach the provisions of the Church Covenant, the congregation shall follow in a tender spirit the scriptural procedure given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-18.
 - a. A member shall approach the accused member privately and seek his repentance and restoration.
 - b. Restoration not having been achieved, the member shall return with one or two more witnesses and seek his repentance and restoration.

- c. Restoration not having been achieved, the member shall, at a business meeting of the congregation, bring a motion to exclude the accused member from the membership of the congregation.
 - i. Upon receiving a motion and a second to exclude a member from church membership, the moderator shall immediately recognize the member making the motion to specify the breach of the covenant and the time, place, members in attendance, and outcomes of the meetings constituting steps *a* and *b* described above. If the member cannot satisfactorily provide the details of those meetings, the moderator shall immediately rule the motion out of order until such time as the provisions of Matthew 18:15-17 shall have been completed.
 - ii. The moderator shall next recognize the accused member, if present, for the purpose of presenting a defense against the charges or expressing repentance and seeking restoration.
 - iii. Once the congregation has pursued whatever discussions, actions, inquiries, or referrals it deems necessary for a sufficiently thorough investigation of the charges, the congregation may vote either to exclude or to retain as a member in good standing the accused member.
 - iv. Members excluded in this manner shall not be considered members in good standing and shall not be entitled to any of the privileges of membership.
 - d. An ongoing pattern of initiating church discipline against fellow members in a frivolous and unsubstantiated manner or in a haughty and arrogant spirit shall itself be considered a breach of the Church Covenant and subject to an action of church discipline.
2. Should any member of the congregation formerly excluded by any action of church discipline seek restoration to membership in good standing, the congregation shall consider whether the member is contrite and repentant and shall vote regarding restoration of the candidate to membership in good standing. Throughout this process the congregation shall follow in a tender spirit the scriptural principles articulated by our Lord in Matthew 18:19-35.

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