

**BYLAWS**  
General  
(revised September 22, 2024)

**Article I - Church Membership**

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who will be members of this Church and the conditions of such membership.

**Section 1. Candidacy**

Any person may offer himself/herself as a candidate for membership in this Church. All such candidates will be presented to the church at any regular Church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- (a.) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this Church.
- (b.) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church of the same faith and order as this Baptist Church as defined by Article III of our constitution.
- (c.) By restoration upon the statement of a conversion experience and baptism in a Church of the same faith and order as this Baptist Church as defined by Article III of our constitution when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the Church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of those Church members present, and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

**Section 2. New Member Orientation**

New members of this Church are expected to participate in the Church's new member orientation program.

**Section 3. Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (a.) death of the member,
- (b.) transfer of membership by letter to another Baptist Church,
- (c.) exclusion by action of this Church,
- (d.) erasure upon request by member in writing, or
- (e.) active attendance in another Church. The member will be contacted and asked about his/her desire to remain a member of this Church and the action taken will reflect his decision. If the member still doesn't re-engage with FBC Bellville they will be moved to the Inactive List.

(f.) A member may be moved to the Inactive Membership List by choice or by failure to attend engage in the life of the Church through giving, attending and/or serving. A member on the Inactive List is not eligible to vote during Meetings and Church affairs. An Inactive Member must request reinstatement and be approved by FBC Bellville before resuming active membership.

#### **Section 4. Discipline**

It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, other members of the Church staff, and Deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment. Should some serious condition exist, which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, the Pastor and the Deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18:15-18. If it becomes necessary for the Church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present, and voting is required.

The Church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the Church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. The Church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the person, and by vote of the Church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

### **Article II - Church Leadership**

#### **Section 1. Church Officers**

All Church officers shall be members of this Church. The officers shall be a clerk, a treasurer, and Church directors.

#### **Section 2. Pastor**

The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the Church staff to perform their tasks. The Pastor or his designee will be an ex-officio member of all committees.

The Pastor will work alongside the Deacons and Church staff to lead and guide the Church in the achievements of its mission to proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and care for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. In case of a vacancy, a Pastor selection committee consisting of seven (7) members shall be elected by the Church to seek out a suitable Pastor and its recommendation will constitute a nomination. Any Church member has the privilege of making recommendations to the Pastor selection committee. The committee shall bring to the Church only one name at a time and the election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present and voting being necessary for a choice. Absentee ballots will not be allowed. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the Church's request. He shall preside at meetings of this Church, and if so, designated may serve as moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized in these bylaws.

The Pastor may resign the office by giving at least two weeks' notice to the Church. The matter of compensation will be referred to the personnel committee. Any recommendation for compensation returned by the committee, above budget, will require Church action.

The Church may terminate the employment of the Pastor. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, for which at least one week's public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the personnel committee and the Deacons. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and he/she shall be someone other than the Pastor. The vote to terminate the employment of the Pastor shall be by secret ballot and an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting is necessary to affect that termination. Absentee ballots will not be allowed. Termination will be immediate, and the matter of compensation will be referred to the personnel committee. Any recommendation for compensation returned by the committee, above budget, will require Church action.

### **Section 3. Church Employees**

#### **A. Ministerial Staff**

The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the Church determines and approves the need for such offices. When the need for a staff member is determined the job description shall be written by the personnel committee. The search committee and the personnel committee shall recommend to the Church those candidates for ministerial staff that have shown evidence of a personal call of God to minister. They shall be called by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose. Absentee ballots will not be allowed.

A ministerial staff member may resign by giving at least two weeks' notice to the Church. The matter of compensation will be referred to the Personnel Committee. Any recommendation for compensation returned by the committee, above budget, will require Church action.

The Church may vote to terminate a staff member upon the recommendation of the Personnel Committee at a meeting called for that purpose. An affirmative vote of two-thirds present and voting is necessary to effect that termination. Such termination will be immediate, and the matter of compensation will be referred to the Personnel Committee. Any recommendation for compensation returned by the committee, above budget, will require Church action.

#### **B. Non-ministerial Staff**

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as determined by the Pastor. The Personnel Committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate the services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the Church.

### **Section 4. Deacons**

The Church and/or the Deacon body will nominate candidates for service as Deacons. Those candidates will be referred to the Deacon body for review of qualifications. The Deacon body will present all qualified candidates to the Church. The Church will approve new Deacons at a business meeting. The number of Deacons for assigned service shall be determined by the

Church upon recommendation of the Deacons. There will be no obligation to constitute as an assigned Deacon one who has been a Deacon in another Baptist Church; but in instances as one might be chosen by this Church for assignment as a Deacon, his previous ordination by another Baptist Church of the same faith and order as this Baptist Church as defined by Article III of our constitution shall suffice for this Church. A Deacon candidate must have been a member of this Church for at least six months.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church. Their task is to serve with the Pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministries task of leading the Church in the achievement of its mission, proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and caring for the Church's members and other persons in the community.

The Church may vote to remove any Deacon from service upon recommendation of the Deacon body. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, a two-thirds affirmative vote of those members present and voting is required to affect the removal.

### **Section 5. Moderator**

The Pastor will serve as moderator. In the absence of the moderator, the Chairman of Deacons will preside; or in the absence of both, the Clerk will call the Church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

### **Section 6. Clerk**

The Church will elect annually, at the end of each fiscal year, a Clerk as its clerical officer. The Clerk will be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the Church, except as otherwise herein provided. The Clerk will be responsible for getting all information from a new member and providing that data to the secretary for entry into the membership database system. The Clerk may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a Church secretary. The Clerk, in the event of an absence, may find a suitable substitute to cover responsibilities. All Church records are Church property and will be kept in the Church office.

### **Section 7. Treasurer**

The Church will elect annually, at the end of each fiscal year, a Church Treasurer as its financial officer. It will be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, all money or things of value paid or given to the Church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It will be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the Church at each regular business meeting a report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding period. The Treasurer may delegate some of the financial responsibilities. The Treasurer's report and record will be reviewed annually by an independent auditor. The Treasurer will be bonded, the Church paying for the bond. The Treasurer will be an ex-officio member of the Stewardship Committee and will provide a monthly status report to the Committee.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the Church, the records will be delivered by the Treasurer to the Church Clerk, who will keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the Church. The Treasurer will use sound accounting principles and best practices to fulfill their duties.

## **Section 8. Church Directors**

The Church will elect annually, at the end of each fiscal year, five directors to serve as legal officers for the Church. They will hold in trust the Church property. Upon a specific vote of the Church authorizing each action, they will have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any Church property. When the signatures of the Church Directors are required, they will sign legal documents related to Church approved matters.

## **Section 9. Committees**

Committees are made up from the membership of First Baptist Church of Bellville. There are two types of committees: Standing and Special.

### A. Standing Committees:

Standing Committees divide into two categories: Ministries and Operations. These committees serve the church in a continuous manner. These members will be recommended by the Nominating Committee and voted on by the Church as usual. One third (1/3) of the following Operating Committee members will roll off yearly and remain off for at least one year: Stewardship, Personnel, Nominating, Evangelism and Missions, Constitution and Bylaws and Long-Range Planning. The Ministries Staffing will also be selected by the Nominating Committee. The Ministries Chairman will rotate off the position on a three year basis. They may stay on the committee.

1. Ministries -These have the responsibility to direct ministry programs:

(a.) Benevolence -The purpose of this Ministry is to evaluate need and administer the benevolence fund and recommend for Church action any non-budgeted request for monies exceeding available funds.

(b.) Bereavement- The purpose of this Ministry is to provide and serve meals, and assist as needed, Church families at the time of death of a family member.

(c.) Connections - The purpose of this Ministry is to welcome visitors and new members and introduce them to First Baptist Church of Bellville.

(d.) Men's Ministry -The purpose of this Ministry is to coordinate all activities and ministries for men.

(e.) Flower/Decorating- The purpose of this Ministry is to provide flowers and/or decorations for congregational services and acquire, place and dispose of flower arrangements and decorations.

(f.) Hostess/Hospitality -The purpose of this Ministry is to coordinate total food services when needed for Church functions and facilities and consult with Church leaders to determine food service needs of the Church.

(g.) Women's Ministry -The purpose of this Ministry is to coordinate all activities and ministries for women.

(h.) Church Property and Space-The purpose of this Ministry is to be responsible for the care and maintenance of all property, buildings, and equipment and to form work schedules when necessary to complete assignments needing attention.

2. Operations Committees -These committees have responsibility for the operation and administration of Church business other than direct ministry programs.

(a.) Church Constitution and Bylaws -The purpose of this committee is to determine the contents for the Constitution and Bylaws, then compile, assimilate and present them to the Church for approval and implementation. The Committee shall annually, or as requested, review the current Constitution and Bylaws with input from the Church Council and Church staff to determine the need for possible amendments. Any proposed amendments shall be presented to the Church for approval complying with procedures to effect changes to the Constitution and Bylaws as stated in the most recent edition of the Constitution and Bylaws.

(b.) Nominating -The purpose of this committee is to select, enlist and nominate persons to serve on Church committees for Church approval. The Committee may request recommendations for committee members from the ministerial staff where appropriate. The number to serve on each committee is to be determined by the nature and magnitude of the task. The committee shall select and enlist Church Directors, Clerk, and Treasurer for Church approval and ensure that no Church member chairs more than one of the Standing Committees.

(c.) Personnel - The purpose of the Personnel Committee is to assist the Church in matters related to employed personnel administration.

(d.) Long-Range Planning -The purpose of this committee is to evaluate and recommend the use of space and furnishings in relation to Church programs and activities. The Committee shall have the responsibility to consult with the Church Council and Staff Members to determine the needs of the Church, plan for the growth of the physical needs of the Church, and make recommendations to the Church to call, as needed, Special Committees to implement approved plans.

(e.) Stewardship -The purpose of this committee is to prepare and submit to the Church for approval the annual budget requirements after conferring with the Church Council. The Committee will meet and review the budget on a monthly basis. A Stewardship Committee member will count giving on Sundays along with the Treasurer. The Treasurer will be an ex-officio member of the Stewardship Committee and will provide a monthly status report to the Committee.

(f.) Evangelism and Missions - The purpose of this committee is to evaluate and administer the evangelism and outreach efforts of the Church and in cooperation with the Pastor and staff make recommendations for actions to fulfill The Great Commission and coordinate implementation of such actions as approved by the Church.

#### B. Special Committees:

These committees serve a particular function for a purpose, when the task is completed to Church approval, some will disband. Others will be long-term committees that may require special training or needs. Each of these committees will report progress or standing at church business meetings.

(1.) The Disaster Relief Committee is formed of specifically trained volunteers to meet designated needs. While volunteers are welcomed, training in specific areas is required and will be provided throughout the year to equip new members and existing members to

maintain skills. Deployment is at the request of the Southern Baptists of Texas, but the committee may also serve locally as needed.

(2.) The Safety Committee is formed of specifically trained volunteers to assist in keeping the church as safe and secure as reasonably possible and ensuring compliance with safety, health, and fire regulations. While volunteers are welcomed, training in specific areas is required and will be provided throughout the year to equip and maintain skills for new and existing members.

### **Article III - Church Program Organizations**

The Church will maintain programs of Bible teaching, new member orientation, Bible study, member training, leadership training and discipleship. Church program organizations shall be administered by the appropriate ministerial staff member or committee chairperson and shall be subject to Church approval and coordination. All programs sponsored by or affiliated with First Baptist Church of Bellville shall comply with this Church's Constitution and Bylaws and approved Operations Manual.

### **Article IV - Church Program Services**

The Church will maintain services for the purpose of enriching and extending the Ministries and programs of the Church.

### **Article V - Church Council**

The Church Council will serve the Church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting and evaluating the ministries and programs of the Church and its organizations and will be chaired by the Pastor or his designee. The primary functions of the Church Council will be to recommend to the Church suggested objectives and Church goals; to review and coordinate Ministry and program plans recommended by Church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the Church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities, and to evaluate achievements in terms of Church objectives and goals.

The Church Council shall meet quarterly or when the Pastor calls a meeting. Regular members of the Church Council will be the Pastor, ministerial staff, Chairman of Deacons, Church Officers and Chairmen of Church Committees or their designated representatives.

### **Article VI - Church Ordinances**

#### **Section 1. Baptism**

This Church will receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord,

(a.) Baptism will be by immersion in water.

(b.) The Pastor, or whomever the Church will authorize, will administer the baptism. The Deacons will assist in the preparation for, and the observance of, baptism.

(c.) Baptism will be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.

## **Section 2. The Lord's Supper**

The Church will observe the Lord's Supper regularly or as otherwise scheduled for special services. The Pastor and Deacons will administer the Lord's Supper, the Deacons being responsible for the physical preparations.

## **Article VII - Church Meetings**

### **Section 1. Worship Services**

The Church will meet regularly each Sunday and Wednesday for the worship of Almighty God.

### **Section 2. Special Services**

Revival services and any other Church meetings essential to the advancement of the Church's objectives will be placed on the Church calendar.

### **Section 3. Regular Business Meetings**

The Church will hold regular business meetings. Any item that will require a vote must be submitted to the appropriate committee for approval. Following committee approval, the item will be submitted to the Church at least one week prior to the meeting electronically and via hard copies made available in the sanctuary.

### **Section 4. Special Business Meetings**

A one-week notice must be given for any specially called business meeting. The notice will include the subject, the date and time. An emergency business meeting may be called by the Pastor along with the Chairman of the Deacons.

### **Section 5. Quorum**

The quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

### **Section 6. Parliamentary Rules**

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church.

## **Article VIII - Church Finances**

### **Section 1. Budget**

The Stewardship committee, in consultation with the Church Council, will prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed for all expenses. The membership of this Church will, under God's direction, support the Church and its cause with regular gifts.



## **Section 2. Accounting Procedures**

A system of accounting procedures that will adequately provide for the recording and reporting of all financial activities and ensure compliance with all applicable laws will be the responsibility of the Treasurer.

## **Section 3. Fiscal Year**

The Church fiscal year begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.

## **Article IX – Church Operations Manual**

Each Chairman shall meet with their Committee or Ministry yearly to update and review their operating manual. They will report back to the Church Council if changes should be made. These changes must then be approved at a Church Business Meeting. This manual will be maintained as designated by the Church Council and will include Church practices and procedures and organization charts depicting lines of responsibility and communications in the administration of the Church.

The Church Operations Manual will be kept in the Church office and made available for use there by any member of the Church. The Church secretary will maintain the manual.

Any Church member or Church organization may initiate suggested changes to the manual. Addition, revision or deletion to the Church Operation Manual requires the recommendation of a Church Officer, ministerial staff, committee or organization to whose area of assignments the manual relates, and approval of the Church by two-thirds vote of Church members present and voting at a scheduled business meeting.

## **Article X - Amendments**

Changes in the Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the Church provided each amendment will have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment will have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws will require a two-thirds vote of Church members present and voting.

Bylaws of First Baptist Church, Bellville, Texas, voted on and accepted March 27, 2022. Revised: November 27, 2022, January 21, 2024, and September 22, 2024