

Church Membership

General

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 shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Candidacy

A person may join the church in any of the following ways:

- By profession of faith and baptism by immersion.
- By recommendation from another Baptist church.
- By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion.

All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor, and in the absence of a pastor, to the chairman of 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 at a regular or special business meeting shall be required to elect any candidates to membership.

Purpose and Goal

Membership within the Church exists to glorify God through unified fellowship, mutual edification, and faithful service in advancing the Gospel. Members are encouraged to live as genuine disciples of Jesus Christ, reflecting His love and truth in their personal and collective witness.

Candidacy

Membership in the universal Church—the Family of God—is granted through faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, publicly expressed through baptism.

Membership in this local body of believers further requires:

1. Baptism by Immersion: Either previously received as a believer or administered upon joining, in accordance with the historic practice of Baptist churches.
2. Agreement: Agree to cooperate harmoniously with the church's Faith Summary (available in the appendix of this document), seeking unity in faith and practice and refraining from speaking or acting against it.
3. Orientation: Completion of a prospective membership orientation class is strongly recommended to foster informed and engaged participation.

Membership may be granted through one of the following methods:

1. Transfer of Membership: From a church of like faith and order, by letter of transfer.
2. Statement of Faith: When a letter of transfer cannot be obtained—such as from a dissolved or unlocatable

We attempted to draw a distinction between those that are in the Family of God by salvation and members of this local church.

Agreement: This addition is simply meant to help us stay united and clear about the beliefs that shape our teaching and ministry. It doesn't require anyone to agree with every detail of our tradition, but it does ask for a willingness to support in word and deed the church's Faith Summary so we can serve Christ together with peace and clarity.

church—upon a credible of faith and baptism from a church of like faith and order.

3. Declaration of Faith: For individuals with no prior church membership or no affiliation with a church of like faith and order. In this case, membership is granted upon meeting the requirements above and, if needed, receiving baptism by immersion.

A majority vote of active members present at a regular or special business meeting shall be required to approve any candidate for membership.

New Member Orientation

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

Rights of Membership

Every member of the church and only members are entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church at a regular or special business meeting provided the member is present.

Every member of the church and only members are eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective office in the church.

Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

New Member Orientation

Moved to *Candidacy*

Rights of Membership

Membership in the church includes the following rights:

1. Christian Accountability and Leadership: Members are accountable to one another in their Christian walk. As well as Spiritual guidance by the church's pastors and ministers.
2. Leadership Eligibility: Church leadership is reserved for active members.
3. Voting Rights: Active members, age 18 and older, will vote on significant matters, including:
 - Annual operating budget and elected leadership.
 - Indebtedness for real estate purchase or construction.
 - Cumulative indebtedness exceeding 2% of the annual budget for other matters.
 - A single purchase at or exceeding 5% of the previous fiscal year's undesignated contributions.
 - Amendments or restatements to the constitution, bylaws, or faith summary or statement.

While any person meeting the member requirements may be a member, only those members 18 years or older may vote.

We are now adding in spending thresholds that must be taken to a church vote.

The new bylaws add several clarified voting rights thus protecting the membership's interest.

- Disposition of substantially all church assets.
- Merger or dissolution of the church.
- Removal of a member following church discipline.
- Confirmation or calling of pastors.
- Accepting of new members
- Other extraordinary actions deemed necessary by pastors or Ministry Teams.

Notification: All items requiring a vote will be communicated to the church at least 14 days in advance.

Voting Method: All votes are taken in person and are public with the exception of Church Discipline. Unless otherwise stated votes require a simple majority threshold to pass.

Delegation and Authorization: The Church delegates authority to the appropriate staff members and/or Ministry Teams to make all other administrative and operational decisions not specifically outlined above.

Membership Expectation

Missing

Membership Expectations

Church Members are considered Active Members when they regularly meet within their abilities the following expectations unless good cause is given.

It is important for any group to clearly communicate what is expected of its members and hold one another accountable.

1. Attendance of Worship Gatherings and Small Groups
2. Volunteer service in some aspect of church life and/or programming
3. Financial contribution and support
4. Continued harmonious cooperation of the church's Faith Summary

Inactive Membership

Missing

Inactive Membership

Members who neglect participation in at least three of the Membership Expectations for six months without good cause will be placed on the inactive roll. Inactive members may not vote and are ineligible for leadership roles. Inactive members may be reinstated as active members upon repentance, reaffirmation of

Those that are not participating in the life of the church or upholding membership expectations for 6 months or longer, would release their vote.

This would not apply to someone who is home bound or serving abroad

commitment to membership expectations and faithful participation.

in the military, lost their job etc.

Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- death of the member,
- joining another Baptist church,
- exclusion by action of this church, or
- erasure upon request by departing member.

Removal of Membership

Church membership is relinquished and the individual's name removed from the membership roll for any of the following reasons:

- Death.
- Request for removal by the member.
- Transfer of membership to another church.
- Failure to uphold Membership Expectations for more than 18 months, following admonishment.
- Unrepentant sin leading to church discipline.

New would be that those who are not meeting the Membership Expectations for more than 18 months would release their membership all together.

Discipline

Any member may be expelled by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular or special business meeting, provided the member in question shall have been given seven (7) days advance notice and an opportunity to be heard at such meeting prior to the vote.

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.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by two-thirds vote of members present at a regular or special business meeting upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation

Church Discipline

1. **Definition:** Church discipline addresses members who are neglectful of their Christian duties or engage in conduct dishonoring to Jesus Christ and detrimental to the church's welfare. Following the biblical instructions in Matthew 18:15-17, discipline occurs when private admonition fails.

2. Steps of Discipline:

- Private admonition by pastors, ministers or other members.
- Suspension from certain privileges (e.g., the Lord's Supper etc.) for a definite period.
- Removal from leadership or office.
- Removal of Membership, if necessary, provided the member in question is given seven days advance notice and an opportunity to be heard at such meeting prior to the vote.

3. **Restoration:** The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by two-thirds

The new bylaws provide a stronger, biblical and detailed church discipline process. The Old Bylaws had only a few paragraphs and no step-by-step process.

This provides clarity and fairness to the church.

vote of members present at a regular or special business meeting upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation

4. **Purpose:** The purposes of church discipline are:

- **Repentance and Growth:** To encourage repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth in the disciplined member (e.g., Proverbs 15:5, Galatians 6:1).
- **Instruction for Others:** To provide a godly example and instruction in righteousness to the congregation (e.g., 1 Timothy 5:20, Titus 1:11).
- **Church Spiritual Health:** To maintain the church's holiness and integrity (e.g., Ephesians 5:27, 1 Corinthians 5:6–7).
- **Witness to Non-Believers:** To uphold the church's testimony before the world (e.g., Matthew 5:16, John 13:35).
- **Glory to God:** To reflect God's holy character (e.g., Deuteronomy 5:11, 1 Peter 2:12).

5. **Mediation:** Members agree to resolve disputes with the church through mediation before pursuing legal action. Mediation will:

- Be conducted by a mutually agreed-upon mediator.
- Follow the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation (Institute for Christian Conciliation).
- Remain confidential, with outcomes not admissible in legal proceedings.

This process reflects the biblical principle of resolving disputes within the church community (1 Corinthians 6:1–7).

Church Officers And Leaders

Church Officers

[Qualifications]

Church Officers

Qualifications and Conduct

In the proposed bylaws this section appears in the 3rd article – Lay Leadership

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church committees shall be members of the church.

Qualifications and Conduct

Church officers must:

1. Be active and faithful members, participating in worship, service, and financial support.
2. Promote unity and avoid behavior that could be perceived as unethical or divisive.
3. Meet the biblical qualifications of a Servant Leader, as defined in the appendix of these bylaws.

The basic outline of the new bylaws is –
Membership
Pastors and Staff
Lay Leadership
Church Business

Terms and Rotation

1. All officer roles, with the exception of Trustees, are elected to one-year terms. Individuals may not serve more than three consecutive terms in the same role.
2. Officers are nominated annually by the Nominating Team and confirmed by a majority vote of the active members present at a duly called Church Conference.
3. The Trustee body shall consist of five (5) members serving staggered five-year terms. One Trustee shall rotate off and be replaced each year.
4. Trustees are nominated by the Nominating Team and confirmed by a majority vote of the active members present at a duly called church conference.

General Governance Rules

1. No individual may serve in more than one officer position at the same time.
2. All Pastors are considered officers of the church by virtue of their calling and position.

[Designated Officers]

The officers of this church shall be the pastor, the executive pastor, associate pastors, the church administrator, the deacon officers, the moderator, the recording secretary, and the trustees.

Designated Officers

The designation of church officers identifies those authorized to make decisions, execute documents, manage church operations, and represent the church in legal and financial matters. This designation provides clarity, ensures accountability, defines roles and responsibilities, and establishes an orderly chain of command for effective governance and external transactions.

The following individuals are designated as Church Officers and are entrusted with leadership and administrative responsibilities essential to the ministry and governance of the church, as approved by the congregation:

- All pastors
- Tier 1 and 2 Staff
- The Clerk
- The Treasurer
- The Trustees
- Deacon Chair

[Officers and their roles]

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 is leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he works with the deacons and staff to: (1) lead the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

Executive Pastor

The executive pastor shall report directly to the pastor and supervise all ministerial and administrative staff and shall serve as an officer of the church.

Associate Pastors

Associate pastors shall report directly to the executive pastor and supervise defined areas of ministry, and shall serve as officers of the church.

Church Administrator

The church administrator shall serve as the financial officer for the church. In absence of the church administrator, the chairperson of the Finance Committee shall serve as financial officer. It shall be the duty of the financial officer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, 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 shall be the duty

Officers Roles

Trustees

Role and Authority

The Trustees serve as the legal representatives of the congregation, safeguarding church property and overseeing legal and financial matters in accordance with applicable laws, the church's governing documents, and the direction of the congregation.

Responsibilities

Trustees are authorized, as approved by the congregation, to:

- Buy, sell, lease, or transfer real or personal property.
- Obtain mortgages or loans.
- Execute contracts and incur obligations of substantial value.
- Authorize disbursement of church funds.
- Monitor the proper handling of church assets.
- Review church policies to ensure they are current, comprehensive and aligned with the church's mission.
- A majority of Trustees' signatures is required for all legal documents.

Each year the Trustees shall elect a Chairperson and a Secretary from among their members to serve one-year terms. The Chairperson convenes and guides meetings and represents the Trustees as needed, and the Secretary maintains accurate records of Trustee actions. Neither role may be held for consecutive terms.

In the proposed we have listed out more details for each of the Lay Leadership/ Officer roles. The pastor and others are explained elsewhere (Pastors and Staff)

The old bylaws mingled officers and committees with less clarity than what is being proposed.

The trustee role has been expanded and clarified.

of the financial officer to prepare an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The financial report and records shall be audited annually by a certified public accountant. The appropriate financial personnel shall be bonded, the church paying for the bond.

Deacon Officers

Deacon Officers are the chairman and vice-chairmen. Governance of Deacons is delineated in "Bylaws – Deacon Group – First Baptist Church – Lewisville, Texas" dated December 1, 2012 (See Bylaws – Deacon Group). In case of conflicts, these Church Bylaws will take priority.

Moderator

The church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the recording secretary shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

Recording Secretary

The church shall elect annually a recording secretary as its clerical officer. The recording secretary shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The recording secretary shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The recording secretary shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The recording secretary shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association.

The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church ministry assistant who will assist the elected recording secretary. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained.

Trustees

The church shall elect three or more trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They

Interim Administrative Authority

In the event of a Lead Pastor vacancy, the Trustees shall serve as the church's administrative authority until a new Lead Pastor is called, in accordance with these bylaws and congregational policy.

Treasurer

Responsibilities:

- Receiving, preserving, and disbursing funds or things of value given to the church.
- Keeping an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.
- Presenting a report of receipts and disbursements to the church at regular intervals.
- Ensuring periodic audits of financial records by a public accountant.

Financial records are the property of the church and will be retained accordingly.

Clerk

Responsibilities:

- Keeping a suitable record of all official church actions.
- Maintaining a register of members, including dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, and a record of baptisms.
- Issuing letters of dismissal as approved by the church.
- Preserving official communications and reports.
- Providing required notices for meetings as specified in these bylaws.
- Preparing the annual church letter to the association.

Clerical responsibilities may be delegated to a staff member to assist the elected Clerk.

All church records remain the property of the church.

Moderator

shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, two or more shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of real property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

The Nominating Committee shall recommend trustees to the church.

Trustees shall serve on a rotation basis, with one new trustee being elected by the membership every three years.

Pastor

The pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a special business meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

The Pastor Selection Committee for the nomination of a Pastor shall be composed of no more than 9 members nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the members. The recommendation of the Pastor Selection Committee shall constitute a nomination to the members. Any church member shall have the privilege of making other nominations to the Pastor Selection Committee until such time as the Pastor Selection Committee has selected a candidate for nomination to the Members. The Pastor Selection Committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one candidate for senior pastor at a time.

Election of pastor shall be conducted by paper ballot and shall require the affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present at a special business meeting called for such purpose. 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 by these bylaws.

The Lead Pastor or his designee will serve as Moderator to guide the Church Conferences and business meetings in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

In the absence of a Lead Pastor, the Clerk shall open the Church Conference and oversee the selection of a Moderator to preside.

Pastors

Qualifications

1. Pastors must meet the Qualifications of a Pastor. These qualifications are outlined in the appendix to this document.
2. Each pastor must also be an active, giving, and serving member of the church.
3. Additional qualifications in the job description.

Responsibilities

Pastors oversee the ministry and resources of the church. Their primary focus is:

1. Prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1–6).
2. Shepherding the congregation (1 Peter 5:1–4).
3. Examining and instructing prospective members.
4. Conducting worship services and overseeing baptism and communion.
5. Equipping members for ministry and encouraging sound doctrine.
6. Administering church discipline and promoting global missions.
7. Ensuring that all who minister the Word align with the church's fundamental convictions.

The Lead Pastor

A well-defined pastor selection, Trustee interim authority and administrative continuity have been added.

The new bylaws will be much greater assistance when the church is without a Lead Pastor.

The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church at the time of resignation.

The church may terminate the pastor. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of 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 or by written petition signed by not less than one-tenth of the total church membership. The moderator for this meeting shall be the chair of the deacons. The vote to terminate shall be by paper ballot; an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present at such meeting being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor so excluded from office, the church will compensate the pastor with not less than one-twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate, and the compensation shall be rendered within thirty days of termination.

1. The Lead Pastor is recognized as particularly gifted and called to full-time ministry, focusing on preaching, teaching, and administration of ordinances.
2. The Lead Pastor oversees the staff, administration, and ministries of the church.

Lead Pastor Selection

- A selection team of 7–9 members, nominated by the Nominating Team and approved by the congregation, will work to identify a candidate after seeking advice and counsel from the Texas Baptists.
- The new Lead Pastor will be called upon a three-fourths majority vote of the active members present at a duly called church conference.
- During the interim period, the Trustees will serve as the church's administrative authority. The composition of the Trustees will not change until a new Lead Pastor is secured.
- The Lead Team may secure one or more individuals to cover the preaching responsibilities. However, the administrative duties of the church including the management of the staff are to be the responsibility of the Trustees

Lead Pastor Dismissal

- The church may vacate the Lead Pastor's position by a majority vote of the Lead Team (excluding the Lead Pastor) and a three-fourths majority vote of active members at a duly called church conference.
- Notice of such action must be given at least 14 days in advance during a regular Sunday service, and it must be communicated by a member of the Lead Team. During this 14-day period, the Lead Pastor will be placed on administrative leave.
- The Lead Pastor must be informed of any charges and given an opportunity to address the congregation.

- The Lead Team may release the Lead Pastor earlier than the notice period, with appropriate severance not to exceed 60-days of pay and benefits as determined by the Human Resources Team.

Lead Pastor Resignation

- The Lead Pastor may resign at any time, providing at least 14 days' notice.
- The Lead Team may release the Lead Pastor earlier than the notice period.

Associate Pastors

- Additional pastors may be called as associates to assist the Lead Pastor.
- These roles may include titles such as Executive or Associate Pastor and are tailored to support the Lead Pastor's responsibilities.

Ministerial Staff

The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices.

The pastor, in consultation with the Personnel Committee and Leadership Council, will develop a position description for each staff member. The Personnel Committee shall recommend to the church executive pastor, associate pastors and ministers at a quarterly business meeting or special business meeting. The Personnel Committee shall have the right to hire associate ministers. The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the pastor, may terminate the employment of any ministerial staff member subject to the right of the church membership to reverse or modify the action of the Personnel Committee.

Church Staff

Tiers, Hiring and Termination

The church shall operate with three distinct tiers of staff employment, in addition to that of the Lead Pastor. Each tier is primarily defined by the nature and scope of responsibility and authority.

All personnel decisions must comply with the Human Resources Policy Manual.

Tier One (Executive)

This tier includes all pastoral staff and any roles with overarching, church-wide authority. This includes, but is not limited to, the Executive Pastors, Associate Pastors and other senior executive positions such as Chief Financial Officer or Administrator.

Hiring: Individuals in this tier require the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and must be approved by a majority vote of both the Human Resources Team and the active members present at a duly called Church Conference.

Here an attempt is made to divide staff by tiers of employment as opposed to the previous model which had ministerial and non-ministerial designations. That previous designation led to lots of confusion when determining which roles were considered "ministry" and what benefits attached to what roles.

The accountability for hiring and termination has been clarified.

Termination: Termination requires the action of the Lead Pastor and the approval of the Lead Team. All terminations must follow the procedures outlined in the Human Resources Policy Manual.

Tier Two (Minister/Administrator)

This tier includes ministers and directors with responsibility over defined areas of ministry or administration.

Hiring: Requires the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and a majority vote of the Human Resources Team. No Church Conference vote is necessary.

Termination: May be initiated by the Lead Pastor and/or the staff member's immediate supervisor, following approval of the Human Resources Team. Terminations must adhere to the Human Resources Policy Manual.

Tier Three (Professional)

This tier includes support staff employed to assist church leadership. In addition to regular staff, the church may engage contract or temporary personnel such as interns, residents, or ministry trainees. These individuals serve under the direction of a supervisor with the approval of the Lead Pastor. Terms of service must align with guidelines set forth in the Human Resources Policy Manual.

Hiring: Conducted by the relevant Supervisor with the consent of the Lead Pastor following the notification of the Human Resources Team.

Termination: May occur at-will by the Supervisor and Lead Pastor, following the notification of the Human Resources Team, subject to the Human Resources Policy Manual.

Qualifications

1. All tier one and two staff must meet the Qualification of a Pastor or Servant Leader.
2. Teach and affirm the church's faith summary and statement in all private and public venues and mediums.

3. Other requirements as specified by the specific job description.

Responsibilities

- Staff responsibilities are determined by the pastor(s) or supervisor and detailed in written job descriptions.
- Staff must adhere to the Church Human Resources Policy Manual issued by the Human Resources Team.

Duration of Service

All church staff serve indefinitely at the discretion of the pastor(s), subject to the terms and procedures set forth in the Human Resources Policy Manual.

Grounds for Termination

Staff employment may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- Voluntary resignation.
- Dismissal due to immorality, misconduct, or failure to perform assigned duties.
- Any cause or process specifically outlined in the Human Resources Policy Manual.

Staff Vacancies During a Lead Pastor Vacancy

In the event of a Tier 1 or Tier 2 staff vacancy occurring during a Lead Pastor vacancy, the position may be filled on a temporary or interim basis. The Human Resources Team will determine the appropriate tier designation for the interim or temporary hire.

Non-ministerial Staff

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for such positions.

The church administrator shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-

Non-ministerial Staff

Removed

See note on previous section.

ministerial staff members in consultation with the Personnel Committee.

Leadership Council

The Leadership Council, operating in cooperation with the pastor, shall be responsible for guarding the integrity of the mission, vision and programs of the church.

Membership shall be composed of the pastor; ministerial staff; church administrator; chair of deacon; chairs of administrative committees; chair of trustees and nine at-large members. These at-large members shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and approved by the church, serving on a rotating, three-year term. The nine membership at-large shall never exceed a 60-40 ratio of either gender.

The primary functions of the Leadership Council shall be to recommend to the church objectives, goals and programs that reflect the church's adopted mission and vision, and collaborate with the pastor to provide an ongoing review and evaluation of the church's health and vitality in light of its mission and vision.

The Leadership Council shall meet at least quarterly, prior to regular business meeting. It may meet more often, if need and opportunity warrant more frequent meetings. All matters approved by the Leadership Council that require church-wide approval shall be referred to the church with the council's recommendation.

Administrative Committees and Ministry Teams

Church members may create one or more working groups to undertake various facets of the governance and missions of the church. Working groups for this purpose include those described and operating as administrative committees, ministry teams, and any other group designed to study, consider, advise and make recommendations regarding church governance and significant activity in the mission of the church.

Section 1 – Administrative Committees

Leadership Council

Moved to *Lead Team* under *Ministry Teams in Lay Leadership*

With the previous bylaws the Leadership Council was widely considered to be confusing and nebulous. This body has been clarified and given greater definition in the new set.

Ministry Teams

Definition

For the purposes of church governance and administration, *Ministry Teams* shall be defined as the standing teams of lay leadership established to assist in guiding and supporting the mission, ministries, and operations of the church. This designation collectively includes all Ministry Teams, the Deacon Team, and the Lead Team.

Purpose

Ministry Teams are formed to support the vision, ministry, and operations of the church. These teams serve as advisory and administrative bodies, enabling lay leaders to

Administrative Committees are now called Ministry Teams.

The new bylaws provide

- Clear composition,
- Purpose,
- Decision-making scope
- Accountability structure,
- Leadership representation,
- Team formation/dissolution

An administrative committee is composed of no less than 6 members who are selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. Each committee shall organize itself and conduct meetings of the whole or its parts to carry out its function, support the ministry teams, and provide resources which will enable the church to sustain a quality ministry. To assist in this work, each administrative committee may select sub-committees from the church membership whose members will serve one year terms which may be renewed annually with approval of the respective administrative committee. Any recommendations of the sub-committees will be approved by the appropriate administrative committee before further action is taken.

The four administrative committees shall be:

- (1) Finance
- (2) Missions
- (3) Nominating
- (4) Personnel

Specific activities and functions of each committee are delineated below in this section. A member may serve on only one administrative committee at a time. The terms of service for administrative committee members shall be staggered in such a manner as determined by the Nominating Committee. A full term of service shall be three years. A member may be elected for a shorter term if filing a vacancy of an unexpired term of service.

No member may serve successive terms on any administrative committee unless a member fulfills an unexpired term of eighteen months or less. After a one-year inactive period, a member may be re-elected to the same or a different administrative committee. No member of a minister's immediate family can serve on an administrative committee.

No two immediate family members may serve on any of the administrative committees during the same time period. (For the purpose of this section of the bylaws, immediate family is defined as parent, sibling, spouse, child or other family member.)

Members of the Nominating Committee shall be recommended by the Leadership Council for

partner with the pastoral staff in fulfilling the church's mission. Each team operates as a representative body of the church, entrusted with decision-making authority within a clearly defined scope of responsibility.

The old bylaws provide little if any of that.

Formation and Dissolution

With the exception of the Deacon Team, Ministry Teams shall be established on an as-needed basis. A Ministry Team may be dissolved when its responsibilities are assumed by church staff or when its function no longer aligns with the church's mission, priorities, or operational capacity. The formation and dissolution of Ministry Teams shall be recommended by the Lead Team with a congregational vote to change these bylaws.

Qualifications

Members of Ministry Teams must:

- Be active church members who meet attendance, financial contribution, and length-of-membership requirements as determined by the Nominating Team.
- Meet the biblical Qualifications of a Servant Leader.

Composition

- Ministry Team composition will aim to reflect the church's diversity (gender, race, generation, etc.)
- Each team will consist of six members unless otherwise defined, plus the Lead Pastor or staff designate.
- In addition, one active member between the age of 16-18 may be nominated to serve as a non-voting member of each Ministry Team. Such non-voting members may be dismissed by the Chair for matters of sensitivity.
- Efforts will be made to ensure that members bring relevant skills and experiences to their respective teams.
- Immediate family members shall not serve concurrently on the same Ministry Team.
- Apart from the Lead Team, members may not serve on more than one Ministry Team, be employed by the church or the immediate family member of any staff member without

approval by church members.

approval by the Lead Team and a special, majority, vote of active members at a duly called church conference.

- All Ministry Team members will be nominated by the Nominating Team and elected by a church vote. Nominees for the Nominating Team will be made by the Lead Team and confirmed by church vote.

Terms of Service

- Ministry Team members will serve three-year terms, with a yearly recommitment, to ensure fresh perspectives and shared leadership opportunities.
- Members may not serve consecutive terms without at least a one-year hiatus unless otherwise approved by the Lead Team and a special, majority, vote of active members at a duly called church conference.

Leadership and Expectations

1. Each team will annually select a Chairperson and a Secretary for a one-year term.
 - The Chair sets agendas in consultation with pastoral staff and represents the team on the Lead Team.
 - The Secretary maintains accurate minutes, submitting them to the church office and the clerk, for record-keeping and team approval.
 - Neither position may serve consecutive terms.
2. Ministry Team members are expected to:
 - Attend all regular team meetings and respond to team communication in a timely manner.
 - Promote church unity and maintain confidentiality in discussions and decisions.

Finance Committee

Bylaw Comparison

Stewardship Team

Purpose: To oversee the judicious

The Finance Committee is now the Stewardship Team.

- (1) draft, promote, and assist in subscribing the annual budget of the church.
- (2) be responsible for presenting monthly reports of receipts and expenditures to the church at the regular business conference.
- (3) generally oversee the total financial program of the church.
- (4) approve and recommend to the church objectives which are not provided for in the budget.
- (5) recommend to the church any budget adjustments required within the budget year.
- (6) direct the stewardship education of the church.

management of the church's financial resources, ensuring integrity and accountability.

The proposed bylaws provide expanded financial clarity and safeguards.

Responsibilities:

- Initiate and lead the annual budget process by setting preliminary allocations for each ministry/team, collaborating with them to refine amounts, and retaining overall responsibility for budget creation while ministries/teams manage approved funds within established controls.
- Present the annual budget to the congregation for approval.
- Review monthly expenditures and, in partnership with the Church Administrator, enforce adherence to budgeted spending limits with grace and flexibility while ensuring financial health.
- Maintain oversight of financial policies and controls.
- Work with staff on significant non-budgeted expenditures and funding allocations.
- Ensure regular third-party audits of the church's financial records.

Proposed bylaws introduce:
A budget formation process, Explicit spending thresholds requiring congregational approval, authorization and delegation, and requirements on notifications.

Old bylaws simply say the Finance Committee drafts a budget.

Missions Committee

- (1) conduct and/ or receive studies and recommend plans for specific mission endeavors as opportunities develop.
- (2) approve and fund mission actions to be carried out by mission ministry teams.
- (3) implement approved mission activities in conjunction with the Minister of Missions or church staff person assigned and the appropriate mission ministry teams.
- (4) establish and maintain communication with appropriate mission agencies and groups outside the church.
- (5) work with other churches, agencies, and groups to carry out mission opportunities in the community, nation or international when appropriate to do so.

Missions Team

Purpose: To coordinate the church's local and global mission efforts.

Responsibilities:

- Maintain active relationships with supported missionaries and mission organizations.
- Obtain and review an annual report from each mission partner.
- Invite mission partner representatives to engage with the church when feasible and economical.
- Visit foreign mission partners on the field, when feasible and economical, and report back to the church.
- Promote missions' awareness within the church.
- Administer the distribution of mission funds, including budgeted and

- (6) prepare, implement and promote a financial strategy to provide adequate funding for mission endeavors that are carried out by the church and/ or other cooperating agencies and mission groups.
- (7) evaluate completed or ongoing mission endeavors in order to improve future actions.

Nominating Committee

- (1) recommend members for pastor selection committee.
- (2) recommend members of administrative committees of the church except for itself.
- (3) recommend trustees.
- (4) recommend at-large members for the Leadership Council.
- (5) recommend the members, duties and scope of work for each ministry team.

designated contributions not otherwise pre-allocated.

Nominating Team

Purpose: To identify and present qualified candidates for all Officers, Ministry Teams and Deacons.

Responsibilities:

- Develop and oversee the process for selecting candidates.
- Interview and vet all nominees to ensure alignment with church values and qualifications.
- Strive for a diverse and representative pool of nominees across the whole of the ministry teams and other nominated leadership roles.

Personnel Committee

- (1) study and determine the staff needs of the church.
- (2) recommend to the Finance Committee salaries and benefits for all church employees.
- (3) work with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the staff responsibilities, relationships, and needs.
- (4) have no members who are in the immediate family of staff.
- (5) work with the pastor, executive pastor and/or administrator in selecting and terminating employees whenever necessary.
- (6) annually assist with staff reviews.
- (7) annually review and revise personnel handbooks.

The Personnel Committee is now the Human Resources Team.

Human Resources Team

Purpose: To assist pastors with personnel management and policy development.

Responsibilities:

- Advise and consent on staffing, tier assignments, and job descriptions and establish salaries and benefits in coordination with the Stewardship Team.
- Where needed approve hirings and terminations.
- Review annual performance evaluations.
- Oversee personnel policies, ensuring compliance with legal standards.
- Assist with staff recruitment, celebrations and transitions.

Buildings and Grounds

Missing

Buildings and Grounds Team

Purpose: To ensure the church's physical campus remains safe, functional, and well-maintained.

Responsibilities:

Created after our previous Bylaws were written.

- Oversee repairs, maintenance, and campus improvement projects.
- Monitor facilities budgets and work with staff to prioritize needs.
- Maintain a biennial property review and report including a personal property inventory.

Safety Team

Missing

Safety Team

Purpose: To protect the church community by implementing security measures against potential physical threats and enforcing policies that ensure the safety of children and vulnerable individuals.

Responsibilities:

- Develop and oversee a church security plan, including emergency response protocols for active threats.
- Train and coordinate a security response team, including collaboration with local law enforcement and first responders.
- Regularly assess and improve the church's physical security, including access control, surveillance, and emergency exits.
- Create and enforce policies that prevent abuse of children and vulnerable individuals by church staff or volunteers, including background checks, screening procedures, and training.
- Ensure all volunteers and staff working with minors complete required safety training and adhere to established child protection policies.
- Oversee compliance with all applicable legal and insurance requirements regarding church safety and child protection.
- Conduct periodic safety drills and evaluations to improve preparedness and response.

This would be a new team for us. The idea is to ensure our campus is safe from threats and our vulnerable members are safe from abuse.

Ministry Teams

A ministry team is composed of church members selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. In conjunction with the staff member assigned by the pastor, these ministry teams will work to

Ministry Teams

Redefined

Committees are now Ministry Teams.

We are not currently using volunteer teams in this formal way. What we will do in the future is

fulfill the church mission in their designated ministry area. In consultation with the Leadership Council each ministry team will develop plans and strategies to enhance ministry, request financial resources to support their work and empower ministry support groups to carry out the work of ministry in assigned areas.

Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee and approval of the church membership, ministry teams shall be established to perform the ministry and educational purposes of the church or disbanded when obsolete or unnecessary.

The terms of service for ministry team members shall be three years. Ministry team members may serve successive terms.

Examples of possible ministry teams are:

- (1) Bereavement Ministry Team
- (2) Child Development Center Ministry Team
- (3) Children's Ministry Team
- (4) Church Tellers Ministry Team
- (5) Christian Life and Ministries Ministry Team
- (6) Greeters and Ushers Ministry Team
- (7) Media Services Ministry Team
- (8) Music Ministry Team
- (9) Prayer Ministry Team
- (10) Preschool Ministry Team
- (11) Senior Adult Ministry Team
- (12) Student Ministry Team
- (13) Sound/Video/Lighting Ministry Team

Deacons

There was no specific section for deacons in our previous bylaws.

allowing our staff and others to simply select a group of members to help them in specific ways.

Deacon Team

Purpose: To assist pastors in ministering to the congregation's practical needs, particularly the vulnerable.

Composition: Due to the reactive nature and scope of care ministry this team is charged to keep the team will be comprised of no less than 7 but no more than 45 men or women holding an active membership.

Responsibilities:

- Provide care for widows, orphans and fostering families.
- Oversee hospital and benevolence ministries.
- Encourage and strengthen the church staff.

Deacons are a specific Ministry Teams. Like that of the Stewardship or Human Resources Team. They hold a special designation though due to size and scope of work.

Whether or not to include females is a decision the church needs to make.

- Support other church projects as requested by the pastors.

Lead Team

Redefined

Lead Team

Purpose: To provide high-level counsel and administrative oversight in extraordinary circumstances.

Composition: Comprises the Chairperson of Ministry and Deacon Teams, all pastors, and a representative of the Trustees.

Responsibilities:

- Advise the Lead Pastor on major projects, and long-term strategy that is not already in the purview of other ministry teams or ministers.
- Ensure alignment and resolution across Ministry and Deacon Teams and arbitrate any disagreements.
- Nominate candidates to serve on the Nominating Team.

This is a repurposed version of the Leadership Council in our previous bylaws.

Assist the Trustees in church administration in the absence of a Lead Pastor.

What follows comprises our fourth article in the new bylaws called Church Business.

Church Ministry Programs

The church shall maintain programs of Bible Study, Discipleship Development, Missions Ministry, and Music Ministry.

Section 1 – Bible Study

Bible Study shall be the church's program for Bible teaching. Its tasks shall be to teach biblical truth, reach people for Christ and for church membership, perform the church functions of care and nurture within its constituency, and present information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The associate pastor for discipleship shall provide overall direction to the church's Bible Study program, supported by age-group ministers. The Bible Study program shall be organized by departments and/or classes, which shall meet at times appropriate to fulfill the church's mission and vision and to meet the ongoing goals of the program.

Church Programming

The primary and anchoring programming of the church will consist of worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and missions.

Section 2 – Discipleship Development

Discipleship Development shall be the church's program for overall training, education and spiritual formation. Its tasks shall be to train church members to perform the functions of the church; train church leaders; orient new church members; teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, and church polity and organization; and present information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The associate pastor for discipleship shall provide overall direction to the church's Discipleship Development program, supported by age-group ministers. The Discipleship Development program shall be organized as both need and opportunity require. Events and courses shall be offered at times appropriate to fulfill the church's mission and vision and to meet the ongoing goals of the program.

Section 3 – Missions Ministry

Missions Ministry shall be the church's program for mission education, support and action. Its tasks shall be to teach missions; support missions through prayer, financial contributions, and church-wide promotion; and present information regarding the work of the church and the denomination. The associate pastor for missions shall provide overall direction to the Missions Ministry, supported by the Missions Committee and lay leaders of various mission organizations, teams and training units. The Missions Ministry program shall be organized as both need and opportunity require. Missions Ministry components may include such organizations as Woman's Missionary Union, Texas Baptist Men, and other age-specific and affinity groups. Events, courses and hands-on ministry opportunities shall be offered at times and in places appropriate to fulfill the church's mission and vision and to meet the ongoing goals of the program.

Section 4 – Music Ministry

Music Ministry shall be the church's program for musical education, training and performance. Its tasks shall be to teach music; train individuals to lead, sing and play music; provide music in the church, community and beyond; and provide and interpret information

regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The associate pastor for worship shall provide overall direction to the Music Ministry, supported by assistant music ministers and lay officers of the church's music groups. The Music Ministry shall be organized as both need and opportunity require. Courses, rehearsals, performances and other music-related events shall be offered at times and in places appropriate to fulfill the church's mission and vision and to meet the ongoing goals of the program.

Church Ordinances

Section 1 – Baptism

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.

The pastor, or whomever the pastor shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for and the observance of baptism. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship.

A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff or deacons. If negative interest is ascertained on the part of the candidate, he or she shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2 – The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of Christ's body, through partaking of the bread and of the fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

The Lord's Supper shall be observed as often as deemed necessary and meaningful in the life of the Church.

The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper, except that other church members or groups of church members may be invited to administer the Lord's Supper when deemed to be meaningful.

Ordinances

Baptism

1. Baptism by immersion will be administered to those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
2. Baptism will be conducted as part of a regular worship service or other church gathering.
3. Baptism may be administered by any active member of the church or by an individual from a church of like faith and order, with the approval of the pastor.

Lord's Supper

- The church will celebrate the Lord's Supper no fewer than three times each year.
- All who have professed faith in Jesus Christ and are in good standing with the church are welcome to participate.
- The Lord's Supper is reserved for church gatherings under the administration of the pastors.

The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor shall direct the services for all church members and for all other who may choose to attend.

Special Services

Special services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar.

Quarterly Business Meetings

The church members shall hold business meetings quarterly. Notice of the date, time, and place of such quarterly business meetings must be given by announcement in the Sunday worship services of the Church one-week prior to the meeting and posted on the church website.

Worship Gatherings

- Regular weekly worship gatherings will be held to glorify God, edify believers, and proclaim the gospel.
- Gatherings may include prayer, worship through music, biblical teaching, and ordinances as appropriate.

Special Services

Unnecessary

Removed

Business Meetings (Church Conferences)

1. The church will hold at least three Church Conferences annually to update members on financial status, ministry progress, and other significant matters.
2. All active members are encouraged to attend and participate in discussions and voting.
3. Additional Church Conferences may be called to address matters of significant and urgent nature, as determined by the Lead Team. These may include, but are not limited to, the confirmation of Executive or Associate Pastors, or decisions regarding pressing business or financial concerns. Any other requests for agenda items must be submitted to the Lead Team, who will determine their appropriateness and timing for inclusion in the agenda of a subsequent regular Church Conference.

Special Business Meetings

The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. Notice must be given for the specially called business meeting. The notice shall include the subject, the date, and time

Special Business Meetings

Moved to the Business Meeting section.

and place; and must be given by announcement in the Sunday worship services of the Church one-week prior to the meeting and posted on the church website.

A special business meeting may be called by the moderator or as otherwise provided specifically in these Bylaws unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical.

Quorum

A quorum consists of those church members who attend any regular or special business meeting.

Parliamentary Rules

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

Church Finance

Budget

Annually the Finance Committee, in consultation with the Leadership Council, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval a comprehensive detailed budget, indicating by line items the amount needed and sought for all expenses.

It is understood that membership in this church involves the financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular tithes.

Accounting Procedures

All funds received for any and all purposes shall be directed to the church administrator, or financial services coordinator, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. Those who have responsibility that involves actual handling of funds shall be bonded with the church paying the bond.

Quorum

Defined throughout

Orderly Conduct

- Church business meetings will follow the Rules of Procedure as specified in the appendix of these bylaws to ensure clarity and fairness in discussions.
- The Moderator will guide the meeting, ensuring respectful dialogue and adherence to meeting procedures.

The Rules of Procedure are an attachment to our bylaws and serve as a simpler easier method of conducting a meeting as opposed to Roberts Rules which very few know or understand.

This allows for everyone to equally understand and participate in the decisions as opposed to just a few that "know the rules".

Church Finance

Budget Practices

- The church will adopt an annual budget, presented by the Stewardship Team and approved by a vote of active members at a duly called church conference.
- The budget will reflect the church's priorities, including missions, staff, and ministries.

Handling of Funds

1. All financial contributions will be counted and recorded by at least two unrelated, approved individuals, in accordance with the church's established financial-control policies.
2. All expenditures must be authorized and documented according to

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall run concurrently with the church year which begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.

Church Operations Manual

A special team of the church selected by the church administrator in consultation with the Leadership Council shall develop a church operations manual to include church policies and procedures and organization charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use there by any member of the church. The recording secretary shall maintain the manual. The Leadership Council or a special team shall review the manual at least annually, with authority to recommend changes for the church to consider. Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual.

Addition, revision, or deletion of church policies and procedures involves consultations with the church officer, organization, committee or ministry team to whose areas of assignment the policy relates, review and approval by the Leadership Council, and if the Leadership Council deems it necessary, approval by the church.

Amendments

Changes in the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular or special business meeting of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each church member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the church constitution and bylaws shall be made

approved financial policies and standard accounting practices.

The Stewardship Team shall maintain financial-handling policies that require multiple individuals, rotating roles, and appropriate internal controls to prevent misuse or the appearance of impropriety.

Fiscal Year

The church's fiscal year will run from January 1 to December 31.

Operation Manual and Policies

1. Each Ministry Team will collaborate with staff to develop and maintain an operational manual detailing their specific responsibilities and procedures.
2. These manuals will be reviewed bi-annually by the Trustees to ensure alignment with church policies and objectives.

Amendments

Policies

The proposed bylaws offer a stronger , clearer amendment process.

Policies developed by Ministry Teams or staff may be amended by the corresponding team or employee. Amendments should be promptly submitted to the Trustees for record keeping and alignment check.

by two-thirds of the church members present and voting.

Bylaws

Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the active members present at a duly called church conference. Notice of the proposed amendment, including its exact wording, must be provided in writing at least two weeks in advance.

Constitution

The Constitution may be amended by two separate votes of the active members present at duly called church conferences. Each vote must pass by a two-thirds majority, with a minimum of 30 days between the votes. Written notice, including the proposed wording, must be given at least two weeks prior to the first vote.

Faith Statement

The Faith Summary and/or the Statement may be amended by two separate votes of the active members present at duly called church conferences. Each vote must pass by a two-thirds majority, with a one-year gap between the votes. Written notice, including the proposed wording, must be given at least two weeks prior to the first vote.

Dissolution

Missing

Dissolution

If the church ceases to exist, all remaining assets will be distributed to another Baptist body of Like Faith and Order, in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas and consistent with the church's Faith Summary and Statement.

What would happen to the church's assets if it no longer existed?

Doctrinal Alignment

Missing

Doctrinal Alignment

All employees and volunteer leadership, including but not limited to ministry teams, teaching roles, worship leadership, group leadership and next generation ministries must affirm and teach the church's faith summary and statement in all private and public venues and mediums.

This ensures that any leadership of our church not only cooperates but affirms what our church believes. As it stands a person of other faiths (Jehovah's Witness, Mormon etc) could not only join our church but teach in it as well.

Church Governance

Undefined

Church Governance

The Church recognizes itself as a Jesus-ruled, Pastor-led, minister-served, and a congregationally accountable body in accordance with New Testament principles.

The new bylaws provide a clear definition of the church governance philosophy.

In this statement minister is understood to be not only those on staff but also those serving on ministry teams.